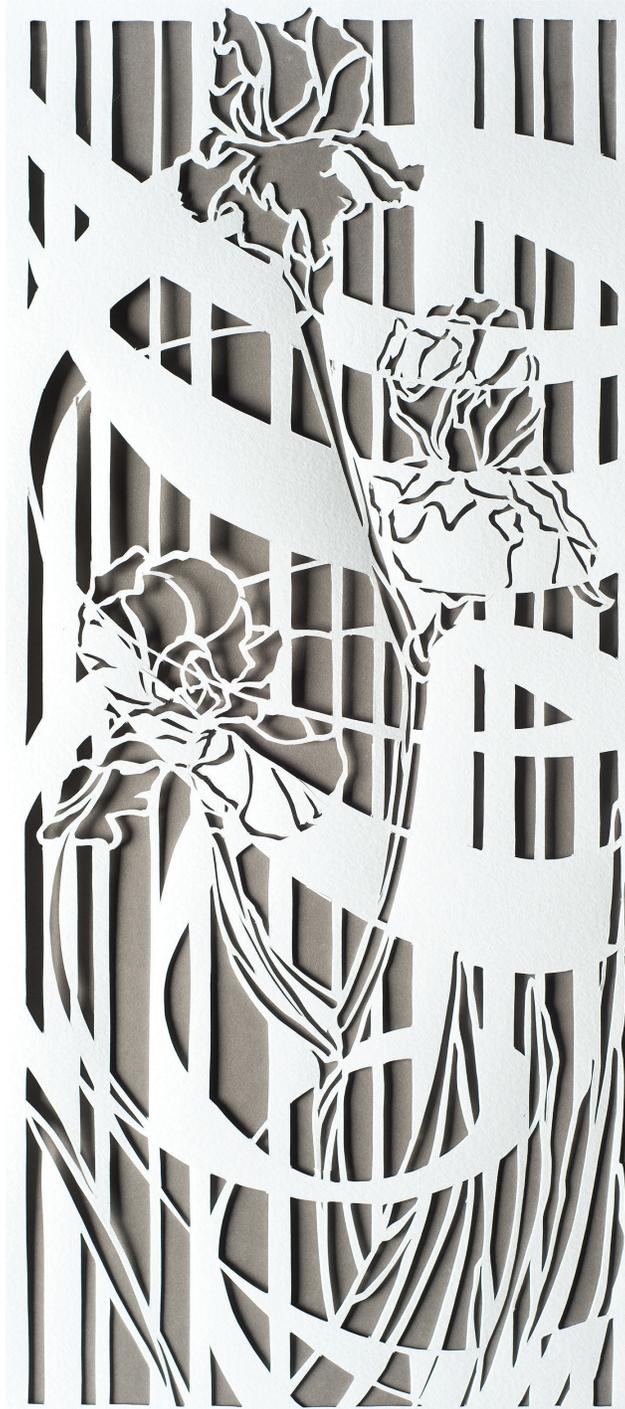

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ DECEMBER 6, 2020



“The Flower Fades” by Hannah Garrity | Paper lace | Inspired by Isaiah 40:1–11 (*See page 12*)

THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO



Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2020

Gathering around the Word

Prelude

Jesu, Joy of All Desiring Johann Sebastian Bach; arr. Mike Carson
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Robert Lau

Introit # “Who at My Door Is Standing?” English melody; arr. K. Lee Scott

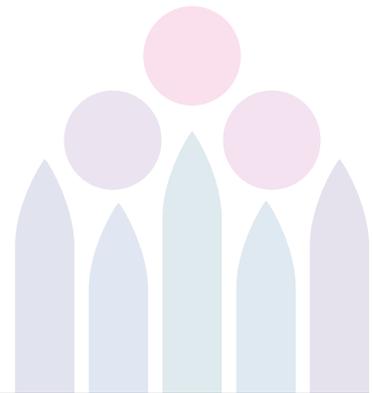
*Who at my door is standing, there patiently drawing near; who, entrance is demanding?
Whose is the voice I hear? Sweetly the tones are falling, “Now open the door for me.
If thou wilt heed my calling, I will abide with thee.” Within, the rooms are darkened,
all filled with dust and sin; how shameful, how unworthy for Christ to enter in.
Yet the tones are falling, “Now open the door for me. If thou wilt heed my calling,
I will abide with thee.” Door of my heart, I hasten, thee will I open wide.
Though he rebuke and chasten, he shall with me abide. Sweetly the tones are falling,
“Now open the door for me.” Lord God, I hear thee calling, come now, abide with me.*

*Doxology (sung)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.† Amen.**

Welcome and Call to Worship

Prayer of Praise



†Or “praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

Hymn “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth, our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture, in the body and the blood,
he will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day,
that the powers of hell may vanish as the shadows clear away.

At his feet the six-winged seraph, cherubim, with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,
“Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord most high!”

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Holy God, we wish that peace was something we could buy.
We wish that peace could be ordered in a subscription service,
found on a map, downloaded in an app, or voted for in a ballot.
We wish that peace was as easy as a one-time choice when we are feeling our best.
However, what we have found is that peace involves everyday decisions
over and over, whether or not we are feeling our best.
So today we confess that we need your help in this Advent season.
Prepare the way for greater peace, and teach us how to be a part of it.
Forgive us, God.
Surround us with your guiding hands,
and in your presence may we know comfort.
In your presence may we know peace.
Now hear us, O God, as we come before you in silence,
confessing those sins that we do not speak aloud, but hold in our hearts . . .
(*Please hold silence.*)

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Declaration of Pardon

Leader: *Friends, believe the good news:*

All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Psalter Psalm 85:1–2, 8–13

You have been gracious to your land, O Lord;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to you.

Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

The Lord will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness shall go before the Lord and shall prepare for God a pathway.

Gloria Patri (*unison*)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:† as it was in
the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Scripture Lessons Isaiah 40:1–11; Mark 1:1–8

Sermon # “Those Who Dream . . . Prepare the Way” Shannon J. Kershner

†Or “to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost.”

Responding to the Word

Hymn “Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning”

It’s our faith makes us happy; it’s our faith makes us happy;
it’s our faith makes us happy, for the time is drawing nigh.

Refrain

Sisters, don’t grow weary; brothers, don’t grow weary;
children, don’t grow weary, for the time is drawing nigh.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Invitation

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We will lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise . . .

The Lord’s Prayer (*unison*)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

The Communion

Communion Solo

“Let Us Break Bread Together” African American spiritual; arr. Gordon Myers

*Let us break bread together on our knees; when I fall down on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.*

*Let us drink wine together on our knees; when I fall down on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me.*

*Let us praise God together on our knees; when I fall down on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun, O Lord, have mercy on me, if you please.*

Psalm 23 (unison)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;

 thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;

 and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Offertory Solo :: “What Child Is This” English ballad; arr. Patrick M. Liebergen

What child is this, who laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the Son of Mary.

So, bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come one and all to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the Son of Mary.

Bearing the Word into the World

Hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily:
to us the path of knowledge show; and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven’s peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Charge and Benediction

Postlude # O Come, O Come, EmmanuelGeorge Schafer



Throughout Advent we are receiving a **“Light Up a Life” offering**, which helps shine God’s light of love on those who need it most this season, including those in need of the warmth, clothing, and nourishment provided by our Chicago Lights Social Service Center and Fourth Church Meals Ministry programs. Gifts can be made to this offering by noting “Light Up a Life” in the comments section (*or memo line of a check payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church*) when giving online via Venmo or the Fourth Church website (www.fourthchurch.org/give-online).

Again this holiday season we have a variety of additional opportunities to share love and light as well. You can **honor a loved one with a contribution toward the Christmas flowers and garlands** that will decorate the Sanctuary for our online worship services this Advent and Christmas. A list of those individuals remembered will be printed in the Christmas bulletin. Contributions can be made online at www.bit.ly/FPCgifts; **contributions must be received by this Friday, December 11** for names to appear in the bulletin. For more information about gifts toward Christmas flowers or our “Light Up a Life” offering, contact Andrea Miller (amiller@fourthchurch.org). * Although we will not have our annual Cookies-and-Cocoa reception this year, Women at Fourth is still **inviting individuals to bake cookies, brownies, and other sturdy sweets** to share with our Sunday Night Supper guests on December 20. For details, email Anne Ellis (aellis@fourthchurch.org). * **Christmas gift bags for guests of Sunday and Monday Night Suppers** are being prepared by Meals Ministry staff and volunteers. Donations toward purchasing the items for the bags—which will include a food gift card, gloves, hygiene items, and a mask—can be made at www.bit.ly/giftbags2020

The Longest Night Service, for those experiencing grief and loss this season, will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, December 15 at 7:00 p.m. For Zoom details, register at www.bit.ly/longestnight20 or email Carol Allerton (callerton@fourthchurch.org). * **On Thursday, December 24**, we will have two online services: the **Children’s Pageant** at 4:00 p.m. and the **Christmas Eve service** at 8:00 p.m. (*with a choral prelude beginning at 7:30 p.m.*). The services will be available on **our website**, www.fourthchurch.org, at www.bit.ly/FPCworship as well as via **Facebook Live** (www.facebook.com/fourthchurch) and **YouTube** (www.bit.ly/fpcvideos), where they can also be viewed afterwards. Those without Internet access are invited to join the services by **listening to them via phone by calling 888.916.9166 (toll-free)** at the time of the service. * Our online **Christmas Day service** will be available via the same platforms, including by phone, at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, December 25. * Likewise our online **New Year’s Eve Taizé service** will be available at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 31.

Ensure you receive the latest updates from Fourth Church by adding your email address to our distribution list. Simply sign up at www.bit.ly/newsfromfpc

Advent devotions written by Fourth Church members and staff are available as a **resource for personal meditation and prayer**. You can receive them in your inbox daily (sign up online at www.bit.ly/fpcdevotions) or read them online (www.fourthchurch.org/devotions), via Facebook (www.facebook.com/fourthchurch), or Twitter (www.twitter.com/fourthchicago).

This year's **Christmas with Tower Brass concert** will be online on Saturday, December 19 at 5:00 p.m. at www.bit.ly/fpcprograms * **Harpist Kara Bershada** will be playing this **Friday's weekly Noonday Concert**, which will be streamed at 12:10 p.m. at www.bit.ly/fpcprograms, where the weekly performances can also be viewed in the following days.

If you would like to connect with others for a time of fellowship following worship today, please join us following the postlude for **virtual Coffee Hour via Zoom at www.bit.ly/fpcfellowship** (Zoom details are posted at www.fourthchurch.org). You can also take part in Coffee Hour **by phone**: dial 312.626.6799 and enter meeting ID number 963 5583 1751#. * Another opportunity to connect with others is in our **small groups**, which meet via Zoom once a week for four to six weeks. To express interest in joining one of the groups forming in 2021, email Anne Ellis (aellis@fourthchurch.org). * This Wednesday, December 9 we will gather online with friends from Chicago Sinai Congregation for **"Our Neighbors: Deepening Interfaith Relationships,"** an opportunity to share stories of life and faith as we reflect on the metaphor of light in this season. Register at www.bit.ly/3ohxKZk to receive Zoom details.

Books by Women will meet via Zoom this Tuesday, December 8 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss ***An Invisible Thread* by Laura Schoff**. * The **Benevolent Guild**, which is making face masks, meets via Zoom on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. * On Thursday, December 17 at 6:00 p.m. **Women at Fourth** will hold a **"Christmas Joy"** Zoom fellowship time for women. For details about any of these three opportunities, email Anne Ellis (aellis@fourthchurch.org).

David Handley's class on Harry Emerson Fosdick's ***The Meaning of Prayer*** concludes this Sunday, December 6 at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom (register at www.bit.ly/prayermeaning). * Continuing this Sunday is a closer look at **"Scriptural Journeys: The Enduring Power of Migrations in the Bible,"** the current theme in our online "Foundations of Faith: An Hour a Week with the Bible" class, which is being led this month by Joe Morrow on Sundays at 12:30 p.m. For Zoom details, register at www.bit.ly/fpcff20 * Also meeting via Zoom are **Men's Bible Study** on Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. and the **Horizons Bible Study for women** this Wednesday, December 9 at 12:00 p.m. For details, email Anne Ellis (aellis@fourthchurch.org). * **"God in the Cubicle,"** a two-week online class taught by Lois Snavelly and beginning next Sunday, December 13 at 9:30 a.m., will look at what it means to be called by God to a world of "secular" service and how we can bring the sacred into the secular without isolating ourselves. For Zoom details, register at www.bit.ly/aflcubicle

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Sunday School and family activities are being held online. For details, email Briana Belding-Peck (bbelding-peck@fourthchurch.org). For details about **youth groups and Confirmation**, email Katie Patterson (kpatterson@fourthchurch.org). * **TwentiesThirties** offers online opportunities for young adults. For details, email Joe Morrow (jmorrow@fourthchurch.org). * For details about the **Center for Life and Learning** lectures and exercise classes for adults sixty and over, see www.fourthchurch.org/cll or email Susan Quaintance (squaintance@fourthchurch.org).

For the foreseeable future we are gathering online for **livestream-only worship**. * In addition to livestreaming our 11:00 a.m. Sunday service at www.bit.ly/FPCworship (*where the service is available throughout the week*), we make the service available via **Facebook Live** (facebook.com/fourthchurch) and **YouTube** (www.bit.ly/fpcvideos) at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. * Those without Internet access are invited to join the service by **listening to the service live via phone by calling 888.916.9166 (toll-free)** at the time of the service (*the prelude typically begins around 10:45 a.m.*). * During the week we also make the service and sermon available via **podcast on iTunes and Spotify** (www.bit.ly/FPCpodcast); you can also receive our sermons **by email** (www.bit.ly/fpcsermons).

On Wednesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. we gather for **Morning Prayer via Zoom**. Email Carol Allerton (callerton@fourthchurch.org) for the details. * **If you have a prayer request**, Dave Handley (dhandley@fourthchurch.org) is receiving these requests as part of our Morning Prayer and Deacon Prayer Ministries. * **If you would like to talk to a pastor**, please call the church (312.787.4570). * **To explore options for teletherapy** with our Replogle Center for Counseling and Well-Being, call the Center at 312.787.2729, ext. 2260. * If you would like to have a **one-time phone conversation with a Stephen Minister or arrange for ongoing talks**, please leave a confidential message at 312.573.3365.

We are looking for Fourth Church members with **gifts for compassionate listening** to become Stephen Ministers and walk alongside individuals experiencing life challenges. The next fifty-hour **training course for new Stephen Ministers** will be offered in March 2021; for information about applying for the training, see www.fourthchurch.org/caring/stephen-ministers.html

Watch our **website** (www.fourthchurch.org) for additional resources and ways to connect. Online events are posted on the church calendar at www.fourthchurch.org/calendar; we also encourage you to follow us on **Facebook** (facebook.com/fourthchurch) and **Instagram** (instagram.com/fourthchurch) for updates, sermon quotes, images from Fourth Church, and more.

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Worship Leaders

Jeffrey Doane, Lucy Forster-Smith, Shannon J. Kershner

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Gavin, Eve, and Declan Daniels

The Music Today

Cole Seaton, Soloist; Mio Nakamura, Pianist

Members of the Morning Choir

Jeanne Bishop, Laura Bottei, Laura Kubelka, Craig Palmer, Les Ventsch

John W. W. Sherer, Organist and Director of Music

Worship Notes

EACH SUNDAY DURING ADVENT we sing, after the sermon, one verse of “Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning.” This traditional gospel blues song, which is included in many hymnals, is attributed to Willie Johnson, an African American singer and evangelist who recorded about thirty songs between 1927 and 1930.

OFFERING GIFTS can be made at fourthchurch.org/give-online (or via the “To Make a Gift” button on our website: www.fourthchurch.org); via Venmo (@Fourth-Church); or via a check made payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church.

Shannon J. Kershner Pastor
Lucy Forster-Smith Senior Associate Pastor

Associate Pastors

Matt Helms Children and Family Ministry
Joseph L. Morrow Minister for Evangelism and
Community Engagement (*Associate Pastor-Elect*)
Nanette Sawyer Discipleship and Small Group Ministry
Rocky Supinger Youth Ministry

David Handley Interim Minister for Caring Ministries
Jeffrey Doane Parish Associate for Older Adults
Maggie Shreve Parish Associate for Jail Ministry
John Buchanan Pastor Emeritus

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THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO
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TO NOTIFY PASTORAL STAFF of personal concerns, illness, hospitalization, or deaths or to request prayer, contact David Handley (dhandley@fourthchurch.org; 312.573.3360). (Please note: hospitals do not inform churches when a member is admitted.) Those experiencing difficult times are invited to consider meeting with a Stephen Minister: leave a confidential message at 312.573.3365.

(On page 1)

“The Flower Fades”

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by Isaiah 40:1-11 | Paper lace

The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

In this image a single iris stalk rises up with three flowers. Representing the inconstancy of the people, the flower is just beginning to fade and the grasses begin to bend. The breath of the Lord swirls through the frame.

*In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.”*

In the background, straight vertical lines represent the paths made straight, the leveling of the ground, the smoothing of the rough places. Yet, in our inconstancy, God is there for us. There is hope, as Isaiah cries out, for God continues to speak peace into being within us. God continues to whisper Their meaning and purpose into us, teaching us to rely on Them and to bend our trajectory toward righteousness.

In this moment, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our physical ways of reaching out and encircling each other in love are stripped away. We must speak. We must speak the peace that we normally act out; we must speak it into being. Can we find the words? Can we reach out to those with whom we can connect? Can we, together, make space for God to speak peace through us?

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