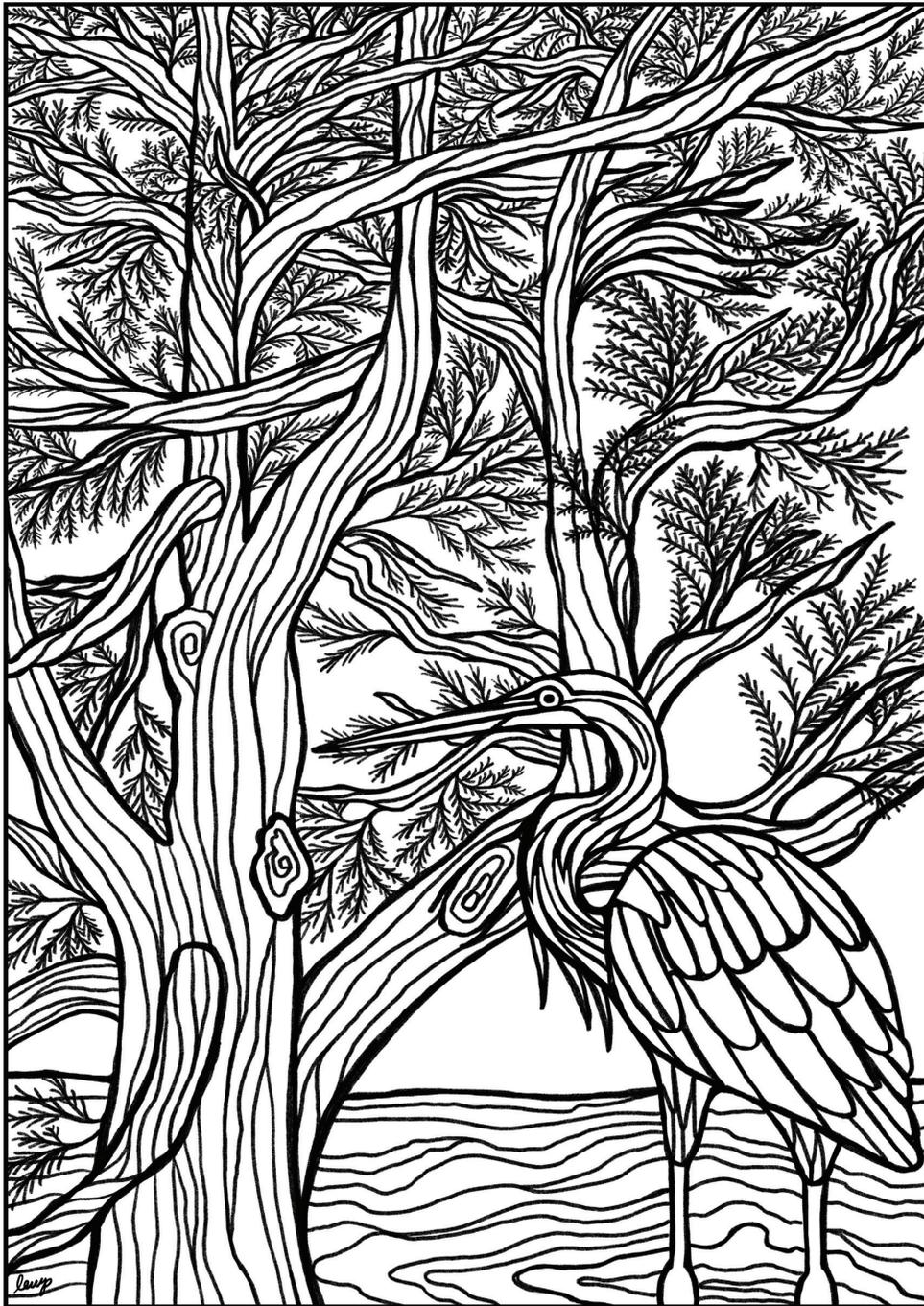


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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ♦ DECEMBER 20, 2020

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“A Heron’s Wisdom” by Lauren Wright Pittman | Digital drawing | Inspired by 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16 (See page 11)

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THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

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# Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2020

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## Gathering around the Word

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### Prelude

Variation Pastorales sur un Vieux Noël . . . . . Marcel Samuel-Rousseau

Introit # “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” . . . . . Polish carol; arr. Brenda Portman

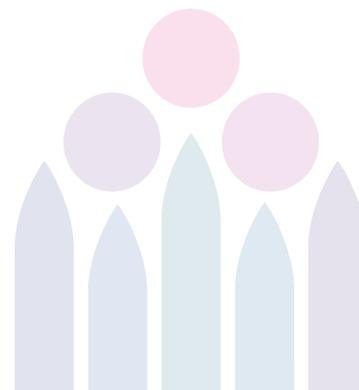
*Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;  
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging angels singing, noels ringing,  
tidings bringing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new  
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of the gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing,  
greet the morrow, Christ the babe is Lord of all.*

### \*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



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

Hymn . . . . . “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?  
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart’s delight!  
O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast,  
to do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me;  
your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.  
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace  
in love, all loves excelling, our lost and fallen race.

You come, O Lord, with gladness, in mercy and goodwill,  
to bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.  
In patient expectation we live for that great day  
when your renewed creation your glory shall display.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

God of Good News, you say to us, “You are highly favored,”  
but we struggle to see how that could be.  
You say to us, “Do not be afraid,” but we are afraid all the time.  
You say to us, “Even the impossible is possible, just look at Elizabeth!”  
But hope slips through our hands like water. The impossible still feels impossible.  
So today we pray: Teach us to sing like Mary.  
Teach us to laugh like Elizabeth. Teach us to trust like the angels.  
Forgive us when we can only do one at a time, or none at all.  
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.

Anthem :: “In the Bleak Midwinter” . . . . . Harold Darke

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan; earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
snow had fallen, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago. Our God, heaven cannot hold  
him, nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away, when he comes to reign: in the bleak  
midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ. Enough for him, whom  
cherubim worship night and day, a heart full of mirth and a manger full of hay. Enough for him,  
whom angel fall down before, the ox and ass and camel which adore. What can I give him, poor  
as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.*

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## Listening for the Word

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Prayer for Illumination

Psalter . . . . . Psalm 89:1–4, 19–26

Your love, O Lord, forever will I sing;  
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.  
For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is established forever;  
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.  
“I have made a covenant with my chosen one;  
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:  
‘I will establish your line forever, and preserve your throne for all generations.’”  
You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people:  
“I have set the crown upon a warrior and have exalted one chosen out of the people.  
I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.  
My hand will hold him fast and my arm will make him strong.  
No enemy shall deceive him, nor shall the wicked bring him down.  
I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.  
My faithfulness and steadfast love are with him,  
and he shall be victorious through my name.  
I will set his hand on the sea, and his right hand on the rivers.  
He will say to me, ‘You are my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.’”

Gloria Patri (*unison*)

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

Scripture Lesson . . . . . Luke 1:26–45

Sermon :: “Those Who Dream . . . Are Not Alone” . . . . . Shannon J. Kershner

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## Responding to the Word

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Hymn . . . . . “Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning”

Every round goes higher, higher; every round goes higher, higher;  
every round goes higher, higher, 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.

Sacrament of Baptism

Prayers of the People

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.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

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<sup>†</sup>Or “to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost.”

Offertory Solo :: “Sweet Little Jesus Boy” . . . . . Robert MacGimsey

*Sweet little Jesus boy, they made you be born in a manger. Sweet little holy child, we didn't know who you were. Didn't know you'd come to save us, Lord, to take our sins away. Our eyes were blind, we could not see, we didn't know who you were. Long time ago, you were born in a manger, Lord, sweet little Jesus boy. The world treats you mean, Lord, treats me mean too, but that's how things are down here. We don't know who you are. You have told us how, we are trying. Master, you have shown us how, even when you were dying. Just seems like we can't do right, look how we treated you; but please sir, forgive us, Lord, we didn't know it was you. Sweet little Jesus boy, born a long time ago. Sweet little holy child, we didn't know who you were.*

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## Bearing the Word into the World

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Hymn . . . . . “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

**Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king.  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
with the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate deity,  
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

Charge and Benediction

Postlude :: Savior of the Nations, Come . . . . . Paul Manz



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” either in the comments section when giving online via **Venmo** or the Fourth Church website (**www.fourthchurch.org/give-online**) or on the memo line of a **check** payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church.

We hope you will join us online in celebrating Christmas this week! 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](http://www.fourthchurch.org), at **www.bit.ly/FPCworship** as well as via **Facebook Live** ([www.facebook.com/fourthchurch](http://www.facebook.com/fourthchurch)) and **YouTube** ([www.bit.ly/fpcvideos](http://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.

If you missed our online **Christmas with Tower Brass concert** or **John Sherer’s organ concert of Christmas favorites**, you can still enjoy them online at [www.bit.ly/fpcprograms](http://www.bit.ly/fpcprograms)

**Devotions for the Christmas season** 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](http://www.bit.ly/fpcdevotions)) or read them online ([www.fourthchurch.org/devotions](http://www.fourthchurch.org/devotions)), via Facebook ([www.facebook.com/fourthchurch](http://www.facebook.com/fourthchurch)), or Twitter ([www.twitter.com/fourthchicago](http://www.twitter.com/fourthchicago)).

Our online **New Year’s Eve Taizé service** will be available at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 31 on our website, [www.fourthchurch.org](http://www.fourthchurch.org), at [www.bit.ly/FPCworship](http://www.bit.ly/FPCworship) as well as via Facebook Live ([www.facebook.com/fourthchurch](http://www.facebook.com/fourthchurch)) and YouTube ([www.bit.ly/fpcvideos](http://www.bit.ly/fpcvideos)).

**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](http://www.bit.ly/newsfromfpc)

**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](http://www.bit.ly/fpcfellowship)** (Zoom details are posted at [www.fourthchurch.org](http://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](mailto:aellis@fourthchurch.org)). \* Also email Anne Ellis if you are interested in Zoom details for the **Benevolent Guild**, which has been making face masks and meets via Zoom on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.

**“God in the Cubicle,”** a two-week online class taught by Lois Snavely, concludes today at 9:30 a.m. It looks 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](http://www.bit.ly/aflcubicle) \* Also meeting via Zoom are **Men’s Bible Study** on Tuesdays at 7:30 a.m. and the **Horizons Bible Study for women** on Wednesday, December 23 at 12:00 p.m. For Bible study details, email Anne Ellis ([aellis@fourthchurch.org](mailto:aellis@fourthchurch.org)).

On Wednesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. we gather for **Morning Prayer via Zoom**. Email Carol Allerton ([callerton@fourthchurch.org](mailto:callerton@fourthchurch.org)) for the details. \* **If you have a prayer request**, Dave Handley ([dhandley@fourthchurch.org](mailto: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](http://www.fourthchurch.org/caring/stephen-ministers.html)

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

**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](http://www.bit.ly/newsfromfpc)

The Session of Fourth Church has called an **online congregational meeting** for Sunday, January 10 following 11:00 a.m. worship. The meeting will be online at [www.bit.ly/fpcprograms](http://www.bit.ly/fpcprograms) (call in at 888.916.9166). The purpose of the meeting will be to elect an **Associate Pastor Nominating Committee** to identify and recommend a candidate to serve Fourth Presbyterian Church as **Associate Pastor for Caring Ministries and Spiritual Formation**.

We encourage you to mark your calendars for two other events planned for January 2021 as well: **“Faith in Uncertain Times: Reflecting on the Past and Envisioning the Future”** is an online Michigan Avenue Forum that will be held Thursday, January 14 at 7:00 p.m. That evening Lucy Forster-Smith will moderate a panel discussion bringing together Shannon Kershner; Horace Smith, Pastor of Apostolic Faith Church; Otis Moss III, Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ; David Crawford, President of McCormick Theological Seminary; and Ozzie Smith Jr., Pastor Emeritus of Covenant United Church of Christ. \* On Saturday morning, January 23 at 10:00 a.m., David Hogue, Professor Emeritus of Pastoral Theology and Counseling at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary will lead a workshop on **“Loving Our Neighbor in a Time of Social Distancing.”** Watch for details about both of these events in the new year.

Also coming up in 2021 is the **Chicago Lights Gala of Hope at Home** on Friday, March 5 at 7:00 p.m. The gala annually benefits the life-changing youth development and social service programs of Chicago Lights—the community outreach arm of Fourth Church—and the community support efforts of our Replogle Center for Counseling and Well-Being.

Resuming in January will be our regular programming for all ages. **Center for Life and Learning** lectures and exercise classes for adults sixty and over begin the week of January 4; for details, see [www.fourthchurch.org/cll](http://www.fourthchurch.org/cll) or email Susan Quaintance ([squaintance@fourthchurch.org](mailto:squaintance@fourthchurch.org)). \* **Sunday School and family activities** also resume online. For details, email Briana Belding-Peck ([bbelding-peck@fourthchurch.org](mailto:bbelding-peck@fourthchurch.org)). \* For details about **youth groups and Confirmation**, email Katie Patterson ([kpatterson@fourthchurch.org](mailto:kpatterson@fourthchurch.org)). \* **TwentiesThirties** offers online opportunities for young adults. For details, email Joe Morrow ([jmorrow@fourthchurch.org](mailto:jmorrow@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](http://www.bit.ly/FPCworship) (*where the service is available throughout the week*), the service is available via **Facebook Live** ([facebook.com/fourthchurch](https://facebook.com/fourthchurch)) and **YouTube** ([www.bit.ly/fpcvideos](http://www.bit.ly/fpcvideos)) at 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. \* Those without Internet access are invited to **listen 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](http://www.bit.ly/FPCpodcast)); you can also receive our sermons **by email** ([www.bit.ly/fpcsermons](http://www.bit.ly/fpcsermons)).

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## Worship Leaders

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Lucy Forster-Smith, Nanette Sawyer, Shannon J. Kershner

## Lighting the Advent Wreath

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John, Tina, and Ian Marr

## The Music Today

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Members of the Morning Choir: *Kate Cole, Bill McMurray, Laura Perkett, Marshall Rollings*  
Kara Bershad, Harpist; Bill McMurray, Soloist  
John W. W. Sherer, Organist and Director of Music

## Worship Notes

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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](http://fourthchurch.org/give-online) (or via the “To Make a Gift” button on our website: [www.fourthchurch.org](http://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

SOURCES AND CREDITS: The Prayer of Confession is by Sarah Are, A Sanctified Art, LLC ([www.sanctifiedart.org](http://www.sanctifiedart.org)).

**THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO**  
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312.787.4570 Voicemail: 312.787.2729 Fax: 312.787.4584

TO NOTIFY PASTORAL STAFF of personal concerns, illness, hospitalization, or deaths or to request prayer, contact David Handley ([dhandley@fourthchurch.org](mailto: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)*

## “A Heron’s Wisdom”

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16 | Digital drawing

I was paddling in my kayak when I saw a heron standing tall at the next bend in the river. I was struggling to paddle upstream, but I desperately wanted to see this creature up close. I paddled as hard and as silently as I could, and as I got within twenty feet of the heron, the moody hues of its feathers—navy, gray, steel blue, and periwinkle—the bright oranges of its beak, and the sunshine yellow of its eyes came into focus. Just as I got close enough to begin to discern the heron’s details, it took flight, landing still in view at the next bend in the river. We continued this dance, bend after bend, with the heron as my guide until I came to the end of my journey. As the heron took off over the tree-laden horizon, I felt gratitude for this heron’s presence. I felt the heron taught me about my relationship with God—this dance of pursuit, intimacy, guidance, and mystery.

So, David wants to build God a house. I love how God takes on this posture of playfulness when expressing how absurd this desire truly is. David wants to build a shelter for the architect of the cedar tree itself. The practice of drawing this cedar tree was a spiritual one. As I sketched the twists and turns in the branches, the flared patterning of the cedar leaves, and the swirling of the bark texture, I found awe for the tree’s Designer. Though we may feel like we are paddling upstream all alone, God is with us. Despite our efforts to grasp God, or put God in a box, God is beyond comprehension, unbound, and everywhere.

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