



Fourth Presbyterian Church

First Sunday of Christmas

December 29, 2024 • 10:00 a.m.

Gathering around the Word

Prelude

Variations on “What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright” Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck

Variations on “O Come, All Ye Faithful” Marcel Dupré

Introit

Under the Stars George F. Reynolds

Under the stars one holy night, a little babe was born.

Over his head a star shone bright and glistened 'til the morn.

And wise men came from far away, and shepherds wandered

where he lay upon the lowly bed of hay, under the stars one night.

***Doxology**

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.

***Call to Worship**

One: *Praise the Lord, all of creation!*

All: **God is exalted in heaven and earth.**

One: *Raise up your horns, lift up your voice,*

All: **for God is exalted in heaven and earth! Hallelujah!**



**Please rise in body or spirit. †Or “Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”*

***Hymn 110** “Love Has Come”

Love has come: a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus with and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Holy God,
though we are in awe of the dawn of your light in Jesus Christ,
we remain self-centered and cling to the sin of the world.
We celebrate the birth of our savior,
yet we struggle in our commitment to follow him.
We are called to pursue justice, love kindness,
and walk humbly with you;
yet we are content to seek our own comfort
and conveniently ignore the cries of those in need.
By the light of the Christ child,
lead us on a path of goodness and righteousness,
as we seek to love all of your bountiful creation.

Declaration of Pardon

One: *Friends, believe the good news.*
All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

***Sharing the Peace of Christ**

Leader: *The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*

People: And also with you.

We invite you to greet those around you, wishing them “peace” or “the peace of Christ,” and encourage those online to text or email someone to let them know you are thinking of them.

Welcome and Announcements

Please take a moment to let us know you are with us today! There are information pads in the pews for those in the Sanctuary and a digital form (use the link or QR code on screen) for those online.

Anthem

“A Child Is Born in Bethlehem” Samuel Scheidt
A child is born in Bethlehem, alleluia, and joy is in Jerusalem, alleluia. Rejoice, sing high, sing low, alleluia, benedicamus Domino, alleluia. To thee, O Lord, be glory paid, alleluia, thou Son of Mary, mother maid, alleluia. To Holy Trinity give praise, alleluia, with Deo gratias always, alleluia.

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Psalter Psalm 148

One: *The Word of God for the people of God.*

All: Thanks be to God.

***Gloria Patri**

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 Reading. Luke 2:41–52

One: *The grass withers, and the flower fades,*

All: *but the word of our God shall stand forever.*

Sermon Nancy Benson-Nicol

Responding to the Word

***Hymn 144** “In the Bleak Midwinter”

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, 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 incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there;
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

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.

***Affirmation of Faith** (*unison*) from the Confession of 1967

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;
out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus.
His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God.
He was the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation,
and the pioneer of the new humanity.
He gave history its meaning and direction
and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.

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

Offertory Anthem

“En Natus Est Emmanuel” Michael Praetorius
Behold is born Emmanuel, Christ the Lord, him foretold by Gabriel, Christ the Lord, the Savior of the world. He lieth in a manger bed, Christ the Lord, wondrous little boy he is, Christ the Lord, the Savior of the world. The light appeareth on this day, Christ the Lord, born of Mary, virgin maid, Christ the Lord, the Savior of the world.

*Offertory Response. Hymn 712, verse 3

In gratitude and humble trust we bring our best today,
to serve your cause and share your love with all along life's way.
O God who gave yourself to us in Jesus Christ your Son,
help us to give ourselves each day until life's work is done.

*Prayer of Dedication

God Most High, receive the gifts of our lives
 as an offering of gratitude for your grace.
Overshadow us with your Holy Spirit,
 and let it be with us according to your word,
 for nothing is impossible with you. Amen.

Bearing the Word into the World

***Hymn 136** “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o’er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (*Refrain*)

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior’s birth. (*Refrain*)

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (*Refrain*)

***Charge and Benediction**

Postlude

Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella Keith Chapman



You belong here!

This may be your first time in worship at Fourth Presbyterian Church, or perhaps you worship here so often you call Fourth Church “home”; in either case, **we are grateful for your presence** today. Inspired by the radical hospitality of Jesus Christ, we welcome everyone—without exception—into the life of this congregation. No matter where you may be in your faith journey, no matter what questions or burdens you may bring to this place, we take seriously that God loves everyone, so you belong here.

Every Sunday we read the old biblical stories and sing hymns (some of which our grandparents sang), while also engaging the world we live in this minute through liturgy, prayers, and sermons. **By connecting the story of our lives to the story of Christ’s life**, we discover hope and even joy, and are inspired to reflect the light of Christ to the city.

If you are new to us, stick around after worship. Join us for Coffee Hour, or speak to one of our pastors. We have many programs to expand your spirit and enrich your life. We would love to tell you more. **Give us a try; soon you too might be calling Fourth Church “home.”**

Worshiping in Person at Fourth Church

Each Sunday our worshiping body is a wonderful mix of those online, on the phone, and in the pews. If you like to worship with us in person, next Sunday, January 5 we resume our regular schedule of worshiping at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Entering the building

A half hour prior to each service the doors open for worship, with three fully accessible entrances, without steps, that lead to the Sanctuary: on Michigan Avenue, through the glass Loggia doors, as well as at 126 E. Chestnut—where the reception desk is located—and at 115 E. Delaware.

Sound

- Worship can be heard through “T” or “T-coil” settings of hearing aids.
- Please silence electronic devices during worship.

Parking

Sunday parking is available at 900 N. Michigan (*access from Rush or Walton*) at the rate of \$10 for 6 hours (*and \$20 for up to 12 hours*) and at the Hancock garage (875 N. Michigan, *enter from Delaware or Chestnut*) for \$10 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Validation tickets for the garages must be picked up from ushers.

Worshipping Online

This worship service is being livestreamed on our YouTube channel: bit.ly/fpcvideos; next Sunday we resume livestreaming the 9:30 a.m. service.

Accessing the service

Worship can be viewed anytime after the service begins. For tips on how to watch—from the beginning—a service that is already in progress, see fourthchurch.org/watch-from-the-beginning

Online extras

Links to make an online offering gift, view or print the worship bulletin, and more can be found in the descriptive text below the worship video (*after exiting full screen*) as well as on our website.

For those without Internet

Those without Internet access are invited to listen via phone by calling 888.916.9166 at 9:30 a.m.

Let Us Know You're Here

We are grateful to be worshipping with you today and would welcome knowing you are here. Please take a moment to fill out an information form.

In person

Those worshipping with us in person are asked to add their names to the pads in the pews, passing the pads to the center of the row and then back again so worshipers have opportunity to greet one another by name following worship.

Online

Those worshipping via livestream will find a link to the online form in the text below the video (*after exiting full-screen view*); a QR code is also displayed during the “Welcome” that can be scanned with a phone camera to take you to the form.

Sunday Opportunities

Sunday morning fellowship

If you are worshipping with us in person, we encourage you to stop by Anderson Hall after the service for Coffee Hour, an opportunity to greet each other and learn about ways to connect with one another and Fourth Church.

Praying with a Deacon

If you would like to offer individual prayers with a Deacon today, you are invited to do so in Stone Chapel (*through the door to the right of the pulpit*) following the service.

Organ tour

Following the service, a tour of our pipe organ begins at the front of the Sanctuary.

“Christian Mysticism: Roots to Today”

“Christian Mysticism: Roots to Today” will be the topic of a three-week adult education class beginning next Sunday morning, January 5 at 11:00 a.m. Taught by Vicky Curtiss, former Fourth Church Associate Pastor and current Program Director for Siena Retreat Center, the class will meet in Borwell Dining Room and via Zoom. For details, register at bit.ly/mysticism202501

New Year's Eve Taizé

This Tuesday, December 31 we invite you to join us, our neighbors, and our friends from Holy Name Cathedral at 6:30 p.m. in our Sanctuary for a candlelit New Year's Eve Taizé service (in person only). With music, prayer, and meditative pause, Nanette Sawyer and staff from Holy Name will lead us in reflecting on the year past and looking ahead to the year to come. A time of fellowship will follow in Anderson Hall.

Children and Youth

Children are always welcome in worship! If you need to step out to comfort your child, the Hospitality Suite, on the second floor of the Gratz Center, is a quiet space for families where worship is livestreamed.

Also during morning worship, nursery care is available on the fourth floor of the Gratz Center for infants through two-year-olds.

Sunday school

Sunday school for three-year-olds through fifth graders is taking a two-week break, with no classes on December 29 or January 5.

Sunday school will resume on Sunday, January 12 with classes at 9:30 a.m. on the fourth floor of the Gratz Center. During the 11:00 a.m. hour, families are encouraged to bring their children to worship in the Sanctuary.

Youth gatherings

Youth groups are also taking a two-week break, with no gatherings on December 29 or January 5.

Youth groups will resume meeting weekly on Sunday, January 12, with Junior Highs gathering at 9:30 a.m. in the Bumpus Room and Senior Highs meeting at 11:00 a.m., also in Bumpus.

Joining the Fourth Church Family

If you are interested in becoming a member of Fourth Church, please join us for a one-session Inquirers' Class either via Zoom on January 8 at 6:30 p.m. (register at bit.ly/inquirers12025) or in person on Sunday, February 2 at 12:15 p.m. (register at bit.ly/inquirers22025). If you would like more information, please contact Matt Helms (mhelms@fourthchurch.org; 312.573.3362). He would welcome the opportunity to get to know you!

Information Sessions with Tom Are

On Friday, December 27 Interim Pastor Tom Are emailed a video message to the congregation, sharing an update on 2025 ministry and budget. If you have not yet seen that video, you can find it on our website home page: fourthchurch.org

You are invited to join Tom for an information session expanding on that video message. The session will be offered twice: Monday, January 6 at 6:00 p.m. and Tuesday, January 7 at 6:00 p.m. Both sessions will take place in Anderson Hall and via Zoom. Please register, using the following links, for the session you plan to attend:

Monday, January 6: bit.ly/infomeetingjan6

Tuesday, January 7: bit.ly/infomeetingjan7

Congregational Meeting: January 12

As Tom Are shared in the congregational video message described above, several staff positions are being eliminated in 2025 as part of the reductions made by Session and Trustees to help Fourth Church move toward a balanced budget.

Among the positions being eliminated is the Associate Pastor for Discipleship and Small Group Ministry, which is currently filled by Nanette Sawyer.

Session has thus called a Congregational Meeting for Sunday, January 12 at 12:00 p.m., at which time you will be asked to recommend that the Presbytery of Chicago dissolve Nanette's pastoral relationship with us.

There will also be opportunity that morning for us to express our deep gratitude to Nanette for sharing her many gifts with us over the past nine years and to wish her Godspeed in the unfolding future.

Pastor Nominating Committee

The Pastor Nominating Committee is at work searching for a candidate for pastor to recommend to the congregation. To suggest possible candidates, share what you hope the PNC will consider in the search and discernment process, or ask questions, email pnc@fourthchurch.org

Making Year-End Gifts

For those wanting to have a year-end gift applied to our 2024 budget or fulfill a 2024 Stewardship pledge by credit card, charges must be made to the card by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, December 31 in order for those gifts to be credited as 2024 contributions.

For those wanting to make a gift or pledge fulfillment by check and have the gift recorded as a 2024 gift, those checks can be placed in today's offering. Mailed checks need to arrive in envelopes postmarked with a 2024 date.

If you have any questions about year-end giving, please email giving@fourthchurch.org

Fourth Church in Florida

If you live in or travel to Florida, please let us know—at bit.ly/florida2025 or by contacting Shawn Fiedler (sfiedler@fourthchurch.org)—so we can keep you informed about in-person gatherings with Tom Are in February.

Caring for One Another

When the season is difficult

Feelings of grief over losses can be heightened at this time of year. Expectations for the holidays can be different from the realities. Fourth Church's Replogle Center for Counseling and Well-Being offers various resources and a supportive environment for reflecting on, exploring, and coping with such experiences. To learn how the Replogle Center can help, call the Center at 312.787.8425 or visit repluglecenter.org

Prayer requests and pastoral care

If you would like to talk to a pastor or notify pastoral staff of personal concerns, illnesses, hospitalizations, or deaths or share a prayer request, please email Gloria Fleming (gffleming@fourthchurch.org). If immediate attention is required, please call the church at 312.787.4570 to be connected to the Minister on Call.

Stephen Ministry

For a one-to-one listening presence through life challenges, we invite you to consider being paired with a Stephen Minister. To learn more about this resource, contact Nancy Benson-Nicol (nbenson-nicol@fourthchurch.org) or leave a confidential message for a Stephen Minister at 312.573.3365.

Gala of Hope 2025

The 2025 Chicago Lights Gala of Hope will be held on Friday, March 7 at the Old Post Office. See chicagolights.org/events for tickets and ways to contribute, or email Katy Frey Bever (kbever@fourthchurch.org) for more details.

Stay Connected!

Look for information, updates, and snapshots of life at Fourth Church in our weekly email newsletter. Subscribe at bit.ly/newsfromfpc and visit our news archive at fourthchurch.org/news

Calendar for December 29, 2024–January 4, 2025

Sunday, Dec. 29 10:00 a.m. Worship Sanctuary / Online
 10:00 a.m. Infants/Parents Comfort Room. Hospitality Suite
 10:00 a.m. Nursery. Room 4A
 11:00 a.m. A Time of Prayer Stone Chapel
 11:00 a.m. Coffee Hour Anderson Hall
 4:00 p.m. Sunday Night Supper (until 5:30) Anderson Hall
 4:00 p.m. Meals Ministry Medical Service Borwell Dining Room

Monday, Dec. 30 4:15 p.m. Monday Night Supper Catholic Charities

Tuesday, Dec. 31 7:30 a.m. Men’s Bible Study Zoom A
 7:45 a.m. Sacred Pause Online
 11:30 a.m. Meals Ministry Bag Lunch. Anderson Hall
 1:00 p.m. Labyrinth Available to Walk (until 3:00) Buchanan Chapel
 1:00 p.m. Shower Ministry. Showers
 6:30 p.m. New Year’s Eve Taizé Sanctuary
 7:30 p.m. Fellowship Anderson Hall

Wednesday, Jan. 1 New Year’s Day • Church Offices and Campus Closed All Day

Thursday, Jan. 2 9:00 a.m. Meals Ministry Sandwich-Making Borwell Dining Room
 11:30 a.m. Meals Ministry Bag Lunch. Anderson Hall
 1:00 p.m. Labyrinth Available to Walk (until 3:00) Buchanan Chapel

Friday, Jan. 3 12:10 p.m. Noonday Concert Sanctuary / Online

Saturday, Jan. 4 Church Offices and Campus Closed All Day
 8:30 a.m. Sacred Pause Online

Preaching on Sunday, January 5 at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.: Matt Helms

Worship Leaders

Matt Helms, Reb Banker, Nancy Benson-Nicol

The Music Today

Morning Choir

Michael Rees, Associate Organist

Worship Notes

OUR ANNUAL “LIGHT UP A LIFE” OFFERING is being received throughout the Christmas season. Gifts designated to this offering provide funds for Fourth Church programs that support our neighbors and congregation; for Chicago Lights, as it extends kindness and love to those who are most vulnerable; and for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, as it cares for communities affected by crises and catastrophic events. You can make a gift to “Light Up a Life” by indicating that designation when giving via fourthchurch.org/give or on the memo line of a check payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church. Those worshipping in the Sanctuary can also use the special offering envelopes found in the pew racks.

Tom Are Jr. Interim Pastor

Rocky Supinger Senior Associate Pastor

Associate Pastors

Nancy Benson-Nicol Caring Ministries and Spiritual Formation

Matt Helms Children, Family, and Welcoming Ministries

Joseph L. Morrow Evangelism and Community Engagement

Nanette Sawyer Discipleship and Small Group Ministry

Amy Pagliarella Parish Associate for Caring Ministries

John Buchanan Pastor Emeritus

SOURCES AND CREDITS: The Call to Worship and the Prayer of Dedication are from calltoworshipjournal.org/december-29-2024-first-sunday-of-christmas; “Love Has Come” text © 1996 LNWhymns.com (admin. Music Services); music arr. © 2012 Eric T. Myers. “Go Tell It on the Mountain” music harm. © 1989 Melva Wilson Costen. OneLicense.net. License A-712340. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

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