
Gathering around the Word

Prelude

- Creator of the Stars of Night John Barr
Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice Aaron David Miller
Four Advent Pieces Robert Powell
 Prepare the Way, O Zion
 Now the Heavens Start to Whisper
 People, Look East
 Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers

Introit

- “Our King and Savior Draweth Nigh” Stephen Sturk
Our King and Savior draweth nigh; O come, let us adore him.

- *Doxology (*sung*). The Hymnal, 606

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

- *Call to Worship and Liturgy of the Advent Wreath

Reader 1: *In Isaiah 35:5–6, the prophet declares that
when God comes among us,
the deaf shall hear, the blind shall see,
and the tongue of the speechless shall sing for joy.*

Reader 2: *We light this candle as a sign of our hope
that God's love in Christ brings healing to us
and to the whole world.
As we witness to the power of healing love,
in ourselves and in others—*

All: Risen Christ, Light of the world, shine in our lives
And shine among us now.

- Sung Response (*unison*) “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

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.

*Stand as you are able.

*Prayer of Praise

*Hymn 347 “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

Creative God, we confess before you today those places in our hearts where we have refused you entrance: people we have refused to love; destructive habits we never change; good things we have left undone; and the ways in which we hurt you, ourselves, and others.

Come to us, O God, in the light of Christ. Shine on those places we try to hide from you. Show us new ways to live.

May Christ make a home among us, now and forever. Amen.

Declaration of Pardon

Minister: *Friends, believe the good news:*

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Sacrament of Baptism (9:30)

Unison Prayer (9:30)

Holy God, remind us of the promises given in our own baptism and renew our trust in you.

Make us strong to obey your will and to serve you with joy; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Concerns of the Church

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Psalter (*responsively*)

Psalms 146:5–10 Old Testament, page 549

Anthem

“Confortamini et iam nolite timere”. Orlandus Lassus
Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.

First Lesson

Isaiah 35:1–10 Old Testament, page 623

Leader: *The Word of the Lord.*

People: Thanks be to God.

*Gloria Patri (*sung*) The Hymnal, 581
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.

Second Lesson

Matthew 11:2-11 New Testament, page 10
Leader: *The Word of the Lord.*
People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Shannon J. Kershner

Responding to the Word

*Hymn 106 “Prepare the Way, O Zion”

*Affirmation of Faith (*unison*) Apostles’ Creed
I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Commissioning of Stephen Ministers (11:00)

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.

Prayer Response

“Amen” Richard Warner

Offertory Anthem

“Christ the Apple Tree” Stanford Scriven

*The tree of life my soul hath seen, laden with fruit and always green;
the trees of nature fruitless be compared with Christ the apple tree.
This beauty doth all things excel, by faith I know, but ne’er can tell
the glory which I now can see in Jesus Christ the apple tree.
For happiness I long have sought, and pleasure dearly I have bought;
I missed of all, but now I see ’tis found in Christ the apple tree.
This fruit doth make my soul to thrive; it keeps my dying faith alive,
which makes my soul in haste to be with Jesus Christ the apple tree.
I’m wearied with my former toil, here I will sit and rest awhile;
under the shadow I will be, of Jesus Christ the apple tree.*

*Presentation of the Offering and Response

For the life that you have giv - en, for the love in Christ made known,
with these fruits of time and la - bor, with these gifts that are your own:
here we of - fer, Lord, our prai - ses; heart and mind and strength we bring.
Give us grace to love and serve you, liv - ing what we pray and sing.

*Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

Thanks be to you, O God, maker of heaven and earth—
hope of the afflicted, giver of justice, and friend of the poor.
Your faithfulness never fails. Take and use these gifts we offer
to further your purpose in the world and to fulfill the promise
of the world to come; through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

Bearing the Word into the World

*Hymn 94 “Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”

*Benediction and Response

Postlude

On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry. Aaron David Miller

Baptism at Fourth Presbyterian Church

Baptism is the sign and seal of God's grace and covenant in Christ. The baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith. The congregation, on behalf of the whole church, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized children in the Christian life. In the unison prayer we also remember that we too were baptized and as children of God are part of the worldwide family of faith.

Being baptized at the 9:30 worship service

Ada Grace Albertson, child of Matthew and Nicole Albertson

Jack Kenneth Bathrick, child of Kerry and Anna Bathrick

Kate Ann Bourdo, child of Thomas and Julie Bourdo

August Matthew Jones-Rasp, child of Kevin Rasp and Brady Jones

Pierce Walker Larson, child of Jon and Kristin Larson

William Benjamin Rose, child of Frederick and Melissa Rose

Stephen Ministry

Through one-to-one relationships that are confidential, Stephen Ministers extend the pastoral care of Fourth Church clergy staff by providing regular weekly or biweekly spiritual support for those who are facing one or more of life's many challenges or transitions.

Each Stephen Minister has completed fifty hours of intensive training and committed to two years of service. They also participate in peer supervision twice per month throughout their service. While they are not counselors or therapists, problem-solvers, casual visitors, or errand runners, they are individuals willing to care, support, listen, and pray.

New Stephen Ministers being commissioned at the 11:00 service

Joy Anderson, Robert Crouch, Jon Galloway, Julie Montgomery, Robert Montgomery, Constance Mussa, Lindsey Novak, and Josie Phelps.

Including those being commissioned today, nineteen Fourth Church members are now serving this congregation as Stephen Ministers. In addition, our Stephen Ministry Leaders are Paula Addington, Jeannine Forrest, Ellen Schaller, Barbara Timberlake, Roger Wilson, and Judy Watt (staff support).

Stephen Ministry is for those who are experiencing loneliness; hospitalization; terminal illness; loss of spouse, child, close family member, or friend; unemployment; childbirth; separation or divorce; retirement changes; or being homebound. If you or someone you know might benefit from a Stephen Ministry relationship, please call the Stephen Ministry voicemail number—312.573.3365—where you can leave a confidential message.

Worship Leaders

Nanette Sawyer, Judith L. Watt, Shannon J. Kershner

Lighting the Advent Wreath

9:30 Brad Pierce, Melanie Oh Pierce, and Sarah Pierce

11:00 Josie, Greg, Meredith, and Andrew Phelps

The Music Today

The Morning Choir; Carol Carpenter, flutist

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

Thomas E. Gouwens, Associate Organist

Worship Notes

THE “LIGHT UP A LIFE” OFFERING is being received throughout Advent. “Light Up a Life” provides opportunity to support congregational programs, mission, and community outreach—including Chicago Lights programs—as well as denominational efforts. “Light Up a Life” gifts can be made using the special offering envelopes found in the pew racks or by writing “Light Up a Life” on the memo line of a check made payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church.

THE ADVENT BANNERS, in the form of wings, convey the idea of Advent stillness and of waiting in the presence of angels. They were designed and painted by Eliza Linley of Berkeley, California.

SOURCES AND CREDITS: Hymn tune names—as well as composers of the music and authors of the text—are listed in the hymnal with each hymn. The words to “For the Life that You Have Given” are by Carl P. Daw Jr. © 1987; music is by Morgan Simmons © 1990, 1992 Hope Publishing Co.

Shannon J. Kershner Pastor

Victoria G. Curtiss Associate Pastor for Mission

Matt Helms Associate Pastor

for Children and Family Ministry

Hardy H. Kim Associate Pastor for Evangelism

Rocky Supinger Associate Pastor for Youth Ministry

Judith L. Watt Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care

Nanette Sawyer Minister for Congregational Life

Jeffrey Doane Parish Associate for Older Adults

Abbi Heimach-Snipes Pastoral Resident

John Buchanan Pastor Emeritus

This worship bulletin is printed on recyclable paper that contains recycled post-consumer waste and is acid free. All bulletins and inserts left in the baskets by the doors are recycled.

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