



Gathering

Gathering Music “Three Little Words” Harry Ruby and Bert Kalmar
“Morning Has Broken” Gaelic Melody and Eleanor Farjeon

Greeting

*Opening Responses

(The congregational responses are in boldface type)

In the beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God.

And the Word became flesh.

God gives us speech we can touch;

a Word alive among us.

Let us wait and worship together.

* Stand as you are able

Inspired by the radical hospitality of Jesus Christ, Fourth Church welcomes all of God's children into the life of the church regardless of sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnicity, physical or mental ability, mental health, educational background, economic situation, religious background, or documentation status.

***Opening Song** “Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

Please note

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Advent Prayer of Confession

In Advent, in the waiting, we gather around this wreath.
It's circular. No beginning. No end. A sign of God's constant love and faithfulness.
God's love encircles us, no matter who we are or where we've been,
and sets us free to love and serve our neighbor in response.
Let's lay down our burdens in this waiting.
Let's burrow into grace a little deeper as we pray together.

God of restless waiting and comfort, how long have we held our tongues?

How long have we stifled our cries?

You call us to wait for the day when we will be reconnected.

To trust that the day of fullness is coming. But we grow impatient.

We try to save ourselves. We try to fill ourselves.

We wade in shallow waters, drowning. We consume falsehoods, starving.

Give us the comfort of your promise that the fullness of Christ comes.

For all of us. Grace upon grace.

(Please hold silence.)

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Assurance of Pardon

Each candle we light, a constant, familiar glow, flickers in us.
Enlivens us for the waiting and warms us toward what is to come.
Friends, grace is becoming real. Believe it.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

***Passing of the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

All are invited to stand and share the peace of Christ with one another.

***Song** "Soon and Very Soon" Andrae Crouch

Welcome

Hearing and Proclaiming the Word

Canticle Isaiah 40:1–11 (*the congregation sings the antiphon*)

ANTIPHON (*unison*) **With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come.**

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "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.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

ANTIPHON (*unison*) **With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come.**
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

ANTIPHON (*unison*) **With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come.**
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Scripture Reading

John 1:1–8, 14–18 (*New Testament, page 86*)

Sermon "Touching Words" *Alex Wirth*

Responding to the Word

Musical Reflection

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.

Sharing of Gifts *(Please place gifts, pledges, and prayer cards in the plate as it is passed.)*

Offertory Music "People Get Ready" *Curtis Mayfield*

***Doxology** *Lucy Smith*

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

The Great Thanksgiving

(The congregational responses are in boldface type)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise!

Sanctus *Lucy Smith*

The Communion

Communion Music "One Bread, One Body" *John B. Foley, SJ*

Prayer after Communion (*unison*)

Arriving God,
Word becoming flesh,
push us past comfort.
In our waiting, keep us restless.
Keep us moving,
until you come.
Amen.

Sending

***Closing Song.** "Prepare the Way, O Zion"

*Benediction

Sending Music

Worship Leaders

Alex Wirth	Minister for Evangelism
Abbi Heimach-Snipes	Pastoral Resident
Clyde Yancy	Lay Liturgist
Mary Lenox	Lighting the Advent Wreath
Lucy Smith Quartet	Allison Orobia, vocals Bryan Doherty, bass Marcus Evans, drums Amr Fahmy, piano

A note on inclusive language

Incorporating ancient and contemporary traditions in this service, God is named corporately in a variety of ways that are gender neutral. This allows for your personal expressions as you are led to name the Holy in ways meaningful to you.

Acknowledgments

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FOURTH
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
A Light in the City

PASTORAL STAFF

Shannon J. Kershner, Pastor
Victoria G. Curtiss, Associate Pastor for Mission
Matt Helms, Associate Pastor for Children and Family Ministry
Rocky Supinger, Associate Pastor for Youth Ministry
Judith L. Watt, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care
Nanette Sawyer, Minister for Congregational Life
Alex Wirth, Minister for Evangelism
Jeffrey Doane, Parish Associate for Older Adults
Abbi Heimach-Snipes, Pastoral Resident
John Buchanan, Pastor Emeritus

Advent and Christmas

The Festival of Advent Lessons and Music service of worship will take place this evening at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. A cookies-and-cocoa reception hosted by Women at Fourth will follow.

Gifts to the “Light Up a Life” offering touch countless lives by supporting congregational programs, mission, and community outreach—including Chicago Lights programs—as well as denominational efforts. Gifts can be made using the envelopes in the pew racks; by writing “Light Up a Life” on the memo line of a check made payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church; or online at www.bit.ly/FPCgifts

Las Posadas Family Night will take place this Friday, December 15 at 5:30 p.m. in the Gratz Center with a time for food, games, and festivities.

The Christmas musical *Where’s the Newborn King?* will be presented by the Children’s and Youth Choirs next Sunday, December 17 at 10:30 a.m. in Buchanan Chapel.

The Christmas cantata “In Nativitatem Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Canticum” by Marc-Antoine Charpentier will be sung by the Morning Choir as part of the 9:30 and 11:00 a.m. services of worship next Sunday, December 17.

Daily Advent devotions are available via email (sign up online at www.bit.ly/fpcdevotions); at facebook.com/fourthchurch, Twitter (@FourthChicago), and www.fourthchurch.org; and in the literature racks.

The “Longest Night” service, which will be held Wednesday, December 20 at 6:30 p.m. in Buchanan Chapel and is hosted by Stephen Ministers, recognizes feelings of loneliness, grief, and alienation that are often present during the holiday season.

The Christmas with Tower Brass concert will be Saturday, December 23 at 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary; a freewill donation will be received at the door.

Some Christmas Eve candlelight times will be different this year. With Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday, that morning of December 24 we will worship at 11:00 a.m. only. (*There will be no 8:00 or 9:30 a.m. services that day.*) We will also gather for four candlelight Christmas Eve services:

4:00 p.m. Children’s Pageant
6:00 p.m. Family Service with Jazz
8:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols
10:00 p.m. Lessons and Carols

Christmas Day worship will take place at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

A New Year’s Eve Taizé service will be held at 7:30 p.m. in Buchanan Chapel on Sunday, December 31. That day we will also worship in the morning at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m. (*There will be no 4:00 p.m. jazz service on December 31.*)

Taking Communion to homebound members is part of the Deacon ministry this Advent. If you know of Fourth Church members who would like to receive Communion at home, please call Carol Allerton at 312.640.5448.

Today is the last day for Christmas flower gifts to be made in memory or honor of friends and loved ones. Contributions will make possible this year’s Christmas flowers in the Sanctuary, and the names of those remembered—and submitted no later than December 10—will be printed in the Christmas bulletin. Contributions can be made by using the forms in the literature racks or online at www.bit.ly/FPCgifts



News and Opportunities

Worship

The labyrinth in Buchanan Chapel is available for walking this week on Monday and Tuesday from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; and Saturday from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Sacred Pause meditative silence is offered on Tuesdays at 7:45 a.m. in Stone Chapel.

Morning Prayer is held on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. in Buchanan Chapel as a time to pray for Fourth Church members and those in need.

We gather for worship each Sunday at 8:00 a.m. (with Communion), 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and, for Jazz at Four with Communion, at 4:00 p.m.

News and Resources

We are counting on gifts pledged for 2017 to be fully fulfilled by year end to ensure the budgets of Fourth Church and Chicago Lights can be met. If you anticipate being unable to fulfill your pledge, please let Andrea Miller know (312.640.2576) so we might plan accordingly. Thank you!

Individuals experiencing life challenges can benefit from being paired with a Stephen Minister, who walks alongside them as a listening presence. The next fifty-hour training course for new Stephen Ministers begins February 3. Details are available in the literature racks.

Music and the Arts

The Bach and Beethoven Ensemble will perform this week's free Friday Noonday Concert at 12:10 p.m. in Buchanan Chapel.

Enrichment

The adult education class "Reformed and Always Reforming: Doing Church Differently," led by Abbi Heimach-Snipes, meets on Sundays at 11:00 a.m. in Room 5D.

Books by Women meets this Tuesday, December 12 at 6:00 p.m. in the Bumpus Room to discuss *A Fatal Grace* by Louise Penny.

Women's Horizons Bible Study (*monthly*) meets this Wednesday, December 13 at 12:00 noon in Room 5H.

Men's Book Club meets on Monday, December 18 at 7:30 a.m. in Parish House Dining Room to discuss *A Christmas Memory* by Truman Capote.

Men's Bible Study next meets Tuesday, December 19 in the Loop at 7:30 a.m. To RSVP (*required*), contact Anne Ellis (312.573.3369; aellis@fourthchurch.org).

A meditation group hosted by the Replogle Center meets on Tuesdays from 7:00 to 7:45 p.m. in the Boyle Conference Room.

A spiritual pilgrimage to Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, will be held April 6–13. Details are available in the literature racks.

Children, Youth, and Family

Sunday School classes meet at 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

Youth groups and Confirmation meet on Sundays at 11:00 a.m., with a weekly time for fellowship beforehand at 10:30 a.m.

Choirs for children and youth meet on Sundays in Room 4F: Cherub Choir (age 3–grade 1) at 9:00 a.m., Youth Choir (grades 6–12) at 10:00 a.m., and Children's Choir (grades 2–5) at 10:30 a.m.

Tunes for Tots, a time for parents and children up to two years old to sing simple songs together, meets on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. in Day School Classroom B.

Mission and Outreach

Filled and decorated holiday bags for guests of Fourth Church Meals Ministry Sunday Night and Monday Night Suppers are to be returned to the reception desk today for distribution at upcoming meals.

The “Christmas Wishes” gift project collects gifts for Chicago Lights Tutoring students who might not otherwise receive them. Wish lists are available from Anne Ellis (312.573.3369; aellis@fourthchurch.org). Volunteers are also needed to help inventory and wrap gifts.

The Benevolent Guild gathers on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. in Room 5B to create gifts for hospitalized children.

A candlelit prayer vigil for peace will be held this Wednesday, December 13 at 6:00 p.m. in Buchanan Chapel. On this anniversary of the Sandy Hooks shooting, we remember those who have been killed in Chicago and in other national tragedies.

Information about 2018 mission trips to Cuba; Mexico; and Washington, D.C., is available at www.fourthchurch.org/mission/trips and also in brochures in the literature racks.

Fourth Church Prison Ministry will be launching in the new year. Those interested in learning more or taking part are invited to a one-session information time offered on Sunday, January 7 at 12:20 p.m. and repeated on Sunday, January 14 at 12:20 p.m.

Chicago Shares voucher booklets—which offer a way to give to those in need on the streets while knowing that the \$1 gift will be redeemed at a grocery store or restaurant—are available by emailing Nancy Davis (ndavis@fourthchurch.org).

Gala of Hope 2018 will be Friday, March 2 at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel.

Volunteers/Donations Needed

Servers for the congregational Christmas dinner (volunteers needed 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Monday, December 25)

Hosts on weekdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for the Calvin College January Series shown in the Page Smith Room

Leaders for 2018 youth mission trips; details and a sign-up form are online at www.bit.ly/youthtrips18

Single-serving snack items for Fourth Church Meals Ministry and the Social Service Center

Large paper shopping bags for use by guests of the Social Service Center Share Shop and Food Pantry

Men’s clothing (all sizes) for guests of the Chicago Lights Elam Davies Social Service Center Share Shop

Donations can be left at the reception desk. To sign up—or for additional volunteer opportunities—contact Robert Crouch, Director of Volunteer Ministry, at 312.981.3382 (rcrouch@fourthchurch.org).

Fellowship

Young Adults, a group for those in their twenties and thirties, meets for their weekly Sunday Gathering—a time to discuss a different topic each week—at 12:30 p.m. in Room 5A. This week they will also gather for an Advent/Christmas Party on Thursday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish House Dining Room.

Take part in our chili cook-off on Sunday noon, January 7! Enter your chili into the contest by signing up at www.bit.ly/chili1718

For ways to connect with the community of Fourth Church, visit www.fourthchurch.org/community

During Today's Worship

All are encouraged to use the prayer card, found in this worship bulletin, to offer joys and/or concerns. The cards will be collected during the Sharing of Gifts (simply place the card in the offering plate as it is passed). The prayer requests will be read by the pastoral staff during the week.

All, including children, are invited to the Lord's Table to receive Communion, which is served by intinction. The congregation will come forward by the center aisle to receive the bread (gluten-free bread is available in the paper "cup" within the basket of bread), which they will then dip into the chalice of nonalcoholic grape juice. Worshipers will return to their pews by the side aisles.

Worship also can be heard through the "T" setting of hearing aids.

Please silence all electronic devices when in the Sanctuary.

If your infant or small child needs care during the worship service, you may leave the Sanctuary and return as you wish. There is also an area in the left-side aisle where your child can play quietly.

Worship folders, containing quiet activities and a bulletin for children, are available from a greeter.

Printed copies of sermons recently preached at Fourth Church are available in the literature racks. They are also available at www.fourthchurch.org/sermons/index.html.

To notify pastoral staff of personal concerns, illnesses, hospitalizations, or deaths; to pass along a prayer request; or to arrange homebound Communion with a Deacon, contact Judy Watt, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care, at 312.573.3360 (jwatt@fourthchurch.org).

If You Are New to Fourth Church

Inquirers' Class explores Presbyterian history and beliefs. This one-session class is also a prerequisite for membership. Attend Sundays, January 14, February 11, or March 11 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Page Smith Room. We invite you to worship with us at 8:00 a.m. or 4:00 p.m. the day you attend the class. For details or membership information, contact Alex Wirth (awirth@fourthchurch.org; 312.981.3399) or go to www.fourthchurch.org.

Information about opportunities and resources available to you here at Fourth Church is available in the literature racks as you're leaving the church. You can also find information on our website (www.fourthchurch.org), our page on Facebook (facebook.com/fourthchurch), and in our weekly email newsletter (send addresses to news@fourthchurch.org).

If you are interested in considering baptism or membership at the 4:00 p.m. service at Fourth Church, please contact Nancy Davis (ndavis@fourthchurch.org) or any pastor involved in the service. Information is available about the Baptism Seminar and Inquirers' Class, which are necessary for preparation. A monthly opportunity to be baptized or join the church at the 4:00 service is available on December 24.

Sunday parking is available at 900 North Michigan (access from Rush or Walton Street) at the rate of \$8 between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Validation tickets for the 900 garage must be picked up from the Chestnut Street reception desk.

The Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago

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