

*The beginning of the prelude is a call to silent,
personal preparation for the worship of God.*

Gathering around the Word

Prelude

Two Settings of “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” David Johnson
and Gerald Near
My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord Johann Sebastian Bach
Of the Father’s Love Begotten. Wilbur Held

*Call to Worship

Leader: *Good news of great joy!*
People: People who walked in darkness now live in great light.
Leader: *Good news of great joy!*
People: Oppression and war will not have the last word.
Leader: *Good news of great joy!*
People: A Savior is born, who is the Messiah, the Lord.
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth,
peace, and good will to all people.

Christmas Prayer of Praise

*Hymn 132 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

God of Love Incarnate, we confess that,
with the shepherds, we are terrified of your glory,
for in glory’s light we see plainly all that is wrong in the world:
how oppression still enslaves;
how garments of war are still stained with blood;
how those seeking refuge still find no place of safety.

We also see what is wrong in us:
how passionately we pursue the things of this world
but forget to ponder the mystery of faith;
how we do not practice the peace you intend in our relationships,
our community, or even in the church.

Forgive us, we pray, and help us not to be afraid.
Like the shepherds, we want to follow and find you.
We pray in the name of Christ, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.

**Stand as you are able.*

Sung Response (*unison*)

“Love Has Come” (*verse 1*) The Hymnal, 110

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.

Declaration of Pardon

Leader: *Friends, believe the good news:*
People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Psalter (*responsively*)

Psalm 98 Old Testament, page 521

Solo

“Eia, Eia” German carol

*To us in Bethlehem city was born a little son,
in him all gentle graces were gathered into one, Eia, Eia.*

*And all our love and fortune lie in his mighty hands;
our sorrows, joys and failures he sees and understands, Eia, Eia.*

*O shepherd ever near us, we’ll go where thou dost lead,
no matter where the pasture, with thee at hand to lead, Eia, Eia.*

First Lesson

Isaiah 52:7–10 Old Testament, page 642

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

Luke 2:7–19 New Testament, page 54
Minister: *The Word of the Lord.*
People: Thanks be to God.

Christmas Meditation Nanette Sawyer

Responding to the Word

*Hymn 121 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

*Affirmation of Faith (*unison*) A Christmas Creed from Latin America

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Gospel
which began in Bethlehem.
I believe in the One whose spirit glorified a small village,
of whose coming the shepherds saw the sign,
and for whom there was no room in the inn.
I believe in the One whose life changed the course of history,
for whom the kings of the earth had no power,
and who was not understood by the proud.
I believe in the One to whom the poor, the oppressed, the discouraged,
the afflicted, the sick, the blind, and the leprous gave welcome
and accepted as Savior.
I believe in the One who, with love,
changed the hearts of the proud, and with his life,
showed that it is more important to serve than to be served,
and that the greatest joy is in giving your life for others.
I believe in peace, which means justice
among all peoples and nations and love among all.
I believe in reconciliation, forgiveness and
the transforming power of the gospel, now and forever. Amen.

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 Solo

“Gesu Bambino”Pietro Yon

When blossoms flowered amid the snows upon a winter night was born the child, the Christmas rose, the King of love and light. The angels sang, the shepherds sang, the grateful earth rejoiced, and at his blessed birth the stars their exultation voiced. O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord. Again the heart with rapture glows to greet the holy night that gave the world its Christmas rose, its King of love and light. Let every voice acclaim his name, the grateful chorus swell, from paradise to earth he came that we with him might dwell. O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

*Offering 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

God Emmanuel, we give you thanks that you have given yourself to us so freely and abundantly. Take and bless these offerings we give back, so that they may be used to the greatest good and for the healing of your world. Take and bless the offerings of our lives, so that we may be transformed and sent with grace to serve your world and your people. Amen.

Bearing the Word into the World

*Hymn 119 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

*Benediction

Postlude

Improvisation on “On This Day Earth Shall Ring”

Gifts supporting Christmastime Sanctuary adornments have
been made in memory and in honor of family, friends, and loved ones.

In Memory of

Mary Shawn Addington
Alma Murdock Anderson
Henry L. Anderson
Roy and Evelyn Anderson
Ruth Andrews
Evelyn Artwick
Bonnie Bader
James Louis Bailey
Helen and Oscar Ban
Mr. and Mrs. O.E. Banker
Laura Jean Barrows
Henry and Eleanore Bates
E. James Bennett
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Marvin and Anna Bomgaars
Allan and Florence Book
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Gertrude Cleary
Clifford, Betty, and Dannen
Sally, Mike, and Mary Alice Conlon
The parents of Lesley Conzelman
and Ellen Schaller
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Chet Currier
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THE FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

Church office: 126 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago, IL 60611.2014 • 312.787.4570

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Worship Leaders

Nanette Sawyer, Roger Wilson

The Music Today

Carol Carpenter, soloist
Thomas E. Gouwens, Associate Organist

Worship Notes

THE “LIGHT UP A LIFE” OFFERING is being received this Christmas season. “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.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31. We will gather here in the Sanctuary at 8:00 a.m. (Communion), 9:30, and 11:00 a.m. Matt Helms will be preaching, and nursery care will be provided during the 9:30 and 11:00 services. We will also have our annual candlelit New Year’s Eve Taizé service at 7:30 p.m. in Buchanan Chapel.

SOURCES AND CREDITS: The Call to Worship and Prayer of Confession are adapted from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 1: Advent through Pentecost*. 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.

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

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Church office: 126 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago, IL 60611.2014
www.fourthchurch.org | www.facebook.com/fourthchurch
312.787.4570 | Voicemail 312.787.2729 | Fax: 312.787.4584