

Gathering around the Word

Prelude

Gabriel's Oboe Ennio Morricone

Introit

"We Wait and Hope for the Lord" Dale Wood

*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

Leader: *We come to glorify God, to rejoice in the One who saves us.*

People: *God comes, so we may believe, so we may be blessed.*

Leader: *Our hearts leap for joy! For God is coming to us in a child.*

People: *God comes for those who hunger for hope,
for those who thirst for grace.*

Leader: *Holy is the One who comes in God's name,
who fulfills every promise of God.*

People: *God comes to walk with those who follow in faith,
to bring peace to a shattered world.*

*Hymn 87 "Comfort, Comfort Now My People"

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

We confess, Advent God, we are not the people you hope us to be. The ones you favor? Too often we ignore them or, worse, ridicule them. The ones you knock off their pedestal? We continue to admire them, seeking to emulate their ways. The drumbeat for more and more? We live into that rhythm so easily that we risk being sent away empty. Forgive us, powerful God who comes in the vulnerability of a baby. Look with grace upon us, so we may see your love shining all around. We could live secure in your hope, we could be the ones of peace for our world, we could learn to do your will if we but welcome Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, into our hearts and lives. Help us to do so . . . (*Please hold silence.*)

*Stand as you are able. [†]Or "Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost."

Kyrie (*sung*). The Hymnal, 551
Lord, have mercy; Christ have mercy; Lord, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy; Christ have mercy; Lord, have mercy upon us.

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

*Exchange of Peace
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.”

Concerns of the Church

Listening for the Word

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson
Micah 5:2–5a Old Testament, page 815
Leader: *The Word of the Lord.*
People: Thanks be to God.

Anthem
“And the Glory of the Lord” from *Messiah*. George Frideric Handel
*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*

Second Lesson (*sung*)
“To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary” The Hymnal, 98

*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.

Third Lesson
Luke 1:46–55 New Testament, page 53
Leader: *The Word of the Lord.*
People: Thanks be to God.

[†]Or “to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost.”

Sermon

“An Unlikely Candidate” Victoria G. Curtiss

Responding to the Word

*Hymn “If I Saw My Toddler”

If I saw my toddler with hands in the air
in fearful surrender to someone, somewhere,
I’d search for a people in some other place
who practiced their preaching and showed love and grace.

If I had to flee from the madness of war—
from terror and violence and things I abhor,
I’d search for a nation with arms open wide,
with safety and beauty and friendships inside.

Be with me, Lord Jesus, as I seek to be
a friend to the stranger and poor refugee,
and as I remember you once had no bed,
may I give up fear and give welcome instead.

*Affirmation of Faith Philippians 2:5–11

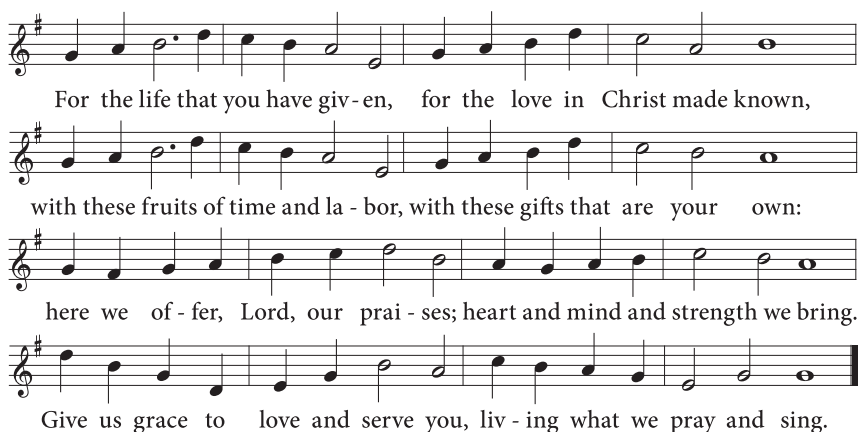
Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess to the glory of God:
Jesus Christ is Lord! Amen.

Offering

Offertory Solo

“Ave Maria” Johann Sebastian Bach/Charles Gounod
*Hail Mary, full of grace, God is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*

*Offertory 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.

Sealing the Word

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Invitation

Great Thanksgiving

Leader: *The Lord be with you.*

People: *And also with you.*

Leader: *Lift up your hearts.*

People: *We lift them up to the Lord.*

Leader: *Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.*

People: *It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

Prayer

Leader: *It is truly right and our greatest joy . . .*

. . . forever singing to the glory of your name:

Sanctus (*sung*) The Hymnal, 552

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

Leader: . . . *Great is the mystery of faith:*

Memorial Acclamation (*sung*) The Hymnal, 553

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*) The Hymnal, page 35

The Communion

Communion Anthem

"Jesus Comes" Donald James

Jesus comes with all his grace, comes to save a fallen race; object of our glorious hope, Jesus comes to lift us up. Let the living stones cry out, let the sons of Abraham shout; praise we all our lowly King, give him thanks, rejoice and sing. We shall gain our calling's prize; after God we all shall rise filled with joy and love and peace, perfected in holiness.

*Prayer after Communion (*unison*)

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bearing the Word into the World

*Hymn 384 "Soon and Very Soon"

*Charge

*Benediction and Response

Postlude

Dialogue from *Magnificat* Jean François Dandrieu

Worship Leaders

Rocky Supinger, Victoria G. Curtiss

The Music Today

Chancel Choir; Laura Perkett, oboist; Laura Kubelka, soloist

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

Thomas E. Gouwens, Associate Organist

Worship Notes

THIS MORNING, COMMUNION IS SERVED by intinction. The congregation comes forward by the center aisle to receive the bread, which they then dip into the chalice of grape juice. (Gluten-free bread is available in a small tumbler in each basket of bread.) Worshipers return to their pews by the side aisles.

The invitation to the Lord's Supper is not just for Presbyterians or "members of the church." All who confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper.

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; by writing "Light Up a Life" on the memo line of a check made payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church; or online at www.fourthchurch.org/give-online

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