



Fourth Presbyterian Church

Advent Festival of Lessons and Music
December 12, 2021 • 6:30 p.m.

Prelude :: “Sleepers, Wake!” A Voice Astounds Us” Johann Sebastian Bach

Hymn 95 (*congregation sings while masked*) “Prepare the Way of the Lord”

Prepare the way of the Lord.

Prepare the way of the Lord, and all people will see the salvation of our God.

***Call to Worship**

***Hymn 93** (*congregation sings while masked*). “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven’s employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide.

Let me thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.

First Lesson :: ISAIAH 40:1–11

***Hymn 87** (*congregation sings while masked*). “Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

“Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!” So says our God.

“Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow’s load.

To my people now proclaim that my pardon waits for them!

Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.”

For the herald’s voice is crying in the desert far and near,
calling us to true repentance, since the reign of God is here.

O, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way.

Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.

Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain.

Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God’s holy reign.

For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad,

and all flesh shall see the token that God’s word is never broken.



**Please rise in body or spirit.*

Second Lesson :: “AMAZING PEACE: A CHRISTMAS POEM” Maya Angelou

***Hymn 378** (*congregation sings while masked*). “We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom”

We wait the peaceful kingdom, when wolf and lamb shall lie
in gentleness and friendship without a fear or sigh,
when lion shall be grazing, when snake shall never strike;
a little child shall lead us both strong and weak alike.

Where is the peaceful kingdom? When will this new day start?
We long for peace and comfort to reign within each heart.
Yet not in our lives only, nor simply in our home:
we pray that all creation will one day find shalom.

When wars of desolation and hate come to an end,
when nation meets with nation and calls the other “friend,”
still peace in all its fullness will only have begun:
shalom for all creation begins with justice done.

That little child shall lead us to walk the chosen way,
to share the peaceful kingdom, to greet God’s newborn day.
The child born in a stable is sent to break our chains,
to bring through word and table the day when justice reigns.

Third Lesson :: ISAIAH 11:1–9

***Carol 129** (*congregation sings while masked*). “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

Lo, how a rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse’s lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

Isaiah ’twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God’s love aright she bore for us a Savior, when half spent was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens every load.

Fourth Lesson :: “ADVENT CALENDAR” Rowan Williams

***Hymn 84** (*congregation sings while masked*) “Creator of the Stars of Night”

Creator of the stars of night, your people’s everlasting light,
O Christ, redeemer of us all, we pray you, hear us when we call.

When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in splendor bright,
not as a monarch, but the child of Mary, blameless mother mild.

At your great name, O Jesus, now all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
all things on earth with one accord, like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honor, might, and glory be from age to age eternally. Amen.

Fifth Lesson :: MICAH 5:2–4

***Carol 121** (*congregation sings while masked*) “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

Sixth Lesson :: “MAKING THE HOUSE READY FOR THE LORD” Mary Oliver

***Hymn 103** (*congregation sings while masked*) “Come Now, O Prince of Peace”

Come now, O Prince of Peace; make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.

Come now, O God of love; make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.

Come now and set us free, O God, our Savior.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.

Come, hope of unity; make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.

Seventh Lesson :: LUKE 1:26–38

***Hymn 100** (*congregation sings while masked*) “My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout”

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain:

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. (*Refrain*)

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. (*Refrain*)

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God’s mercy must deliver us from the conqueror’s crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. (*Refrain*)

Eighth Lesson :: “THE GOD WE HARDLY KNEW” Oscar Romero

***Hymn 94** (*congregation sings while masked*) “Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”

Now the heavens start to whisper, as the veil is growing thin.
Earth from slumber wakes to listen to the stirring, faint within:
seed of promise, deeply planted, child to spring from Jesse’s stem!
Like the soil beneath the frostline, hearts grow soft to welcome him.

Heavy clouds that block the moonlight now begin to drift away.
Diamond brilliance through the darkness shines the hope of coming day.
Christ, the morning star of splendor, gleams within a world grown dim.
Heaven’s ember fans to fullness; hearts grow warm to welcome him.

Christ, eternal Sun of justice, Christ, the rose of wisdom’s seed,
come to bless with fire and fragrance hours of yearning, hurt, and need.
In the lonely, in the stranger, in the outcast, hid from view:
child who comes to grace the manger, teach our hearts to welcome you.

Ninth Lesson :: JOHN 1:1–18

***Carol 108** (*congregation sings while masked*) “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

Of the Father’s love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega;
he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore!

By his Word was all created; he commanded; it was done: heaven and earth and
depths of ocean, universe of three in one, all that sees the moon’s soft shining,
all that breathes beneath the sun, evermore and evermore!

O, that birth forever blessed when the Virgin, full of grace, by the Holy Ghost
conceiving, bore the Savior of our race, and the babe, the world’s Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore!

This is he whom seers in old time chanted of with one accord, whom the voices
of the prophets promised in their faithful word. Now he shines, the long-expected.
Let creation praise its Lord, evermore and evermore!

O ye heights of heaven, adore him. Angel hosts, his praises sing. Powers, dominions,
bow before him, and extol our God and King. Let no tongue on earth be silent;
every voice in concert ring, evermore and evermore!

Christ, to thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant
and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be. Honor, glory, and dominion,
and eternal victory, evermore and evermore! 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 Voluntary :: Savior of the Nations, Come Dieterich Buxtehude

*Prayer of Dedication *(unison)*

Holy One, you have done and are doing great things for us. Holy is your name.
Bless all we offer—our lives, our time, our possessions—
that through us your grace and favor may be known to all the world.
This and so much more we offer for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

*Carol 123 *(congregation sings while masked)*. "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near
the earth, to touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good will to all, from
heaven's all-gracious King": the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled, and still their
heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world: above its sad and lowly plains they
bend on hovering wing, and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long; beneath the heavenly
hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong; and we at war on earth hear not the
tidings that they bring; O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!

And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along
the climbing way with painful steps and slow, look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing: O, rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old, when with the ever-circling
years shall come the time foretold, when peace shall over all the earth its ancient
splendors fling, and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

***Benediction**

Postlude :: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. Adolphus Hailstork

*We invite you to enjoy the postlude.
If you need to leave prior to the end of the postlude,
please do so quietly out of respect for those who choose to stay.*

Christmas at Fourth Church

“Longest Night” Service • Tuesday, December 21

6:30 p.m. in Buchanan Chapel *(in person only)*

For those for whom Christmas celebrations are made difficult by loss, grief, or loneliness

Christmas Eve Services • Friday, December 24

4:00 p.m. Children’s Pageant *(online only)*

For health reasons, at all three in-person services on Christmas Eve *(below)* we will be using battery-operated tea lights rather than lit candles during “Silent Night” so that worshipers do not have to blow out candles.

6:00 p.m. Family Service *(socially distanced seating)*

Please note that socially-distanced-only seating at 6:00 will significantly limit the capacity in the Sanctuary at that service to approximately 200 people. Once that capacity is reached, Buchanan Chapel and Borwell Dining Room will be opened for additional socially distanced seating. There will be no reserved seating or reservations for services.

8:00 and 10:00 p.m. Service of Lessons and Carols *(no socially distanced seating)*

The 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve services will be both streamed and also available for later viewing at www.fourthchurch.org

Christmas Day Worship • Saturday, December 25

10:00 a.m. In person only • *Socially distanced seating available*

Christmastide Worship • Sunday, December 26

10:00 a.m. In person and livestreamed at www.fourthchurch.org

4:00 p.m. In Buchanan Chapel (in person only) • Jazz at Four, with Communion

Worship Leaders

Readers (*in order of reading*) Toni Yang, Beverly Washington, Andrew McMillan,
James McMillan, Reb Banker, Colleen Mraz, Matt Gauen

Clergy Matt Helms, Joseph L. Morrow

Music Members of the Morning Choir
Michael Rees, Organ Scholar

Worship Notes

OUR ANNUAL “LIGHT UP A LIFE” OFFERING is being received throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons. Gifts to “Light Up a Life” support the mission and outreach efforts of Fourth Church and Chicago Lights as they extend mercy, kindness, and love to those who are most vulnerable. You can make a gift to this offering by noting “Light Up a Life” in the comments section (when giving online via Venmo or the Fourth Church website: www.fourthchurch.org/give-online) or on the memo line of a check made payable to Fourth Presbyterian Church. Those worshipping in the Sanctuary can also use the special offering envelopes found in the pew racks.

Shannon J. Kershner Pastor

Lucy Forster-Smith Senior Associate Pastor

Associate Pastors

Matt Helms Children and Family Ministry

Joseph L. Morrow Evangelism and Community Engagement

Nanette Sawyer Discipleship and Small Group Ministry

Rocky Supinger Youth Ministry

David Handley Interim Minister for Caring Ministries

Jeffrey Doane Parish Associate for Older Adults

Maggie Shreve Parish Associate for Jail Ministry

John Buchanan Pastor Emeritus

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