



CENTRAL  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

# PREPARATION

**December 22, 2024**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

## WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“For grace is given not because we have done good works, but in order that we may be able to do them.”

—AUGUSTINE

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

Raise up your great power, Lord, and come among us to save us; that, although through our sins we are grievously hindered in running the race that is set before us, your plentiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the sufficiency of your Son our Lord, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

## THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:5-10

GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

## PRELUDE

### Instrumental Prelude

*Central Chamber Orchestra*

### Of the Father's Love Begotten (Traditional)

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius · Trans. H. W. Baker

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!

This is He Whom Heav'n-taught singers  
Sang of old, with one accord;  
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets  
Promised in their faithful word.  
Now He shines, the Long-expected;  
Let Creation praise its Lord  
Evermore and evermore!

He assumed our human nature,  
Death and sorrow here to know,  
That the race of Adam's children,  
Doomed by law to endless woe,  
May not henceforth die and perish,  
In the dreadful gulf below—  
Evermore and evermore!

Christ, to Thee, with God the Father,  
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee,  
Hymn and chant with high thanksgiving,  
And unwearied praises be:  
Honour, glory, and dominion,  
And eternal victory,  
Evermore and evermore!

## HYMN

### Once in Royal David's City

Cecil F. Alexander · Henry J. Gauntlett

Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her Baby  
In a manger for His bed;  
Mary, loving mother mild,  
Jesus Christ, her little Child.

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

# CALL TO WORSHIP

## Isaiah 60:1-3

LEADER Arise, shine, for your light has come,

**PEOPLE And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.**

LEADER For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,

**PEOPLE And thick darkness the peoples;**

LEADER But the LORD will arise upon you,

**PEOPLE And his glory will be seen upon you.**

LEADER And nations shall come to your light,

**PEOPLE And kings to the brightness of your rising.**

# HYMN

## Once in Royal David's City (continued)

Cecil F. Alexander · Henry J. Gauntlett

He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And His shelter was a stable,  
And His cradle was a stall.  
With the poor, the scorned, the lowly  
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

Jesus is our childhood's pattern;  
Day by day, like us He grew;  
He was little, weak, and helpless,  
Tears and smiles like us He knew;  
And He feeleth for our sadness,  
And He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,  
Through His own redeeming love;  
For that Child so dear and gentle  
Is our Lord in heaven above;  
And He leads His children on  
To the place where He is gone.

## **PRAYER OF PREPARATION**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in darkness. We confess that we have not welcomed the light, or trusted good news to be good. We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst, expecting little, and hoping for less. Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope, so that we may receive the fullness of your grace, and live in the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen.

## **SILENT CONFESSION**

# WORDS OF ASSURANCE

## 1 John 1:6-7

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

**LEADER**        Hear and receive the good news of the gospel:  
                      in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

**ALL**              **Thanks be to God!**

## PASSING OF THE PEACE

**LEADER**        The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**ALL**              **And also with you.**



# HYMN

## Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley · Felix Mendelssohn, adapted by William H. Cummings

Hark! the Herald Angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
With th’angelic host proclaim: “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! the Herald Angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of the Virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail th’incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the Herald Angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, ris’n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.  
Hark! the Herald Angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

# PROFESSION OF FAITH

## The 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 Spirit  
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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The holy catholic Church,  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen.

## PRAYER WITH CHILDREN

*All preschool and elementary age children are invited to the front of the church and will be dismissed to Children's Church with their teachers where they will read, sing, learn, and play in an environment suited to their language and style. Alternatively, children are always welcome to remain in the sanctuary to worship alongside the adults for the duration of the service.*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*We regularly pray for needs in our congregation, our neighborhood and city, and the world. Please submit prayer requests to [centralchurchnyc.org/prayerrequest](http://centralchurchnyc.org/prayerrequest).*

## OFFERING

*If you are our guest today, please feel no obligation to give. For members and regular attenders of Central, give generously as you are able. We give because all we have has been graciously given to us by God. Our offerings express our joyful dependence upon God and our commitment to join God in his work of renewal.*

*You can give online by texting **centralchurchnyc** to **833-737-6262** or visiting [centralchurchnyc.org/give](http://centralchurchnyc.org/give).*

# OFFERTORY

## Hallelujah

Chris Tomlin · Blessing Chibueze Offor

Wise men followin'  
The brightest star down to Bethlehem.  
They came far for the coming again  
Of the One that's ever been.  
And when they found Him  
They fell onto the ground and  
Joined the angels shouting,  
Singing all around Him, say,

*Hallelujah, Hallelujah,  
That's what the angels cried.  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,  
Precious little child.  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,  
Sound of the angels' joy.  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Little baby boy.*

King of, Every King,  
Prince of Peace and everything.  
God with us, and He's the only  
One that's ever been.  
So when we found Him  
We fell onto the ground and  
Joined the angels shouting,  
Singing all around Him, say,   *Chorus*

# THE DOXOLOGY

Old Hundredth LM

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.

## SCRIPTURE READING

### 1 Timothy 1:12-17

The passage can be found on page 991 of the pew Bible.

<sup>12</sup>I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, <sup>13</sup>though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, <sup>14</sup>and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

<sup>15</sup>The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. <sup>17</sup>To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

## SERMON

### *How Not to Be a Heretic* | How Not to Be a Pelagian

Rev. Jason Harris

# THE THANKSGIVING

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 him thanks and  
praise.**

LEADER                    It is indeed right, our duty and joy, that  
we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks to you, Lord, holy Father,  
Almighty and Everlasting God.

## PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

We do not presume to come to this, your Table, O Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but solely in your great mercy. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your Table, but you are the same Lord who always delights in showing mercy. Grant us, therefore gracious Lord, that we who now receive these gifts of bread and wine, according to our Savior's Word, may share in the body and blood of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that we may dwell in him forever and he in us. Amen.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

# CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

## **Prayer for Those Searching for Truth**

Lord Jesus Christ, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

## **Prayer of Belief**

Lord Jesus Christ, I acknowledge that you are so holy and I am so sinful that you had to die for me. Yet you are so merciful and I am so loved that you were willing to die for me. I confess that I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed by what I have done and by what I have failed to do. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

## **Prayer of Commitment**

Lord Jesus, I know that if I do not love you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, I shall love something else with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. Grant that by loving you first I may be liberated from all lesser loves and loyalties and have you as my first love, my chief good, and my final joy. Amen.

*Communion is served with wine and gluten-free bread.  
Individually wrapped wafers and grape juice are available at  
each station.*

# COMMUNION HYMN

## Gloria

Chris Tomlin · Corey Crowder · Dave Barnes · Tyler Hubbard

In a poor shepherd's field on that silent night,  
The angel appeared and dark turned to light.  
The Savior is born in Bethlehem,  
Wrapped as a spotless Lamb, gloria.

So don't be afraid, I bring good news.  
Though you were lost, God came to you.  
Our Prince of Peace, our only way,  
There in the manger lays, gloria.

*Gloria! Gloria in the highest! Gloria!*  
*The Son of God, the Savior has come.*  
*Our Messiah, here with us, gloria.*

The Word became flesh, with us to dwell.  
God with a face, Emmanuel.  
On this holy night for the world He so loved,  
Jesus was born for us, gloria.   *Chorus*

Oh, the host of heaven sing, "Gloria!"  
Let all creation sing, "Gloria!"   *Chorus*



## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

## BENEDICTION

*We begin our worship with God's gracious invitation, and we conclude with God's blessing, his good Word. It is appropriate to look up and open our palms as we receive the Benediction to symbolize how Jesus Christ lifts our heads and to demonstrate our eagerness to receive God's blessing.*

## DISMISSAL

LEADER            Let us go forth to serve the world as those who  
                         love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

ALL                **Thanks be to God!**

## POSTLUDE

*Members of our prayer team will be available immediately following the service at the front of the sanctuary to pray confidentially for you about any need or concern you might have. We encourage you to avail yourself of this opportunity to receive prayer. ☺*