



**Ascension** PCA

**December 6, 2020**



**A community of worshipping, maturing,  
and multiplying disciples of Jesus Christ,  
to the glory of God the Father,  
by the power of His Spirit,  
and in the hope of God's Kingdom.**

## A word about our liturgy

The elements and sequence that make up our worship service (the liturgy) is the way we tell ourselves, one another, and all in this place, the grand story of the Triune God: the story of God pursuing a people despite their wanderings and forgetfulness, and shaping them into His people for His glory.



## QUIETING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

*And Mary said,  
"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant.  
For behold, from now on all generations  
will call me blessed;  
for He who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is His name.*

Luke 1:46-49

The only people whose soul can truly magnify the Lord are people like Elizabeth and Mary — people who acknowledge their lowly estate and are overwhelmed by the condescension of the magnificent God.

– John Piper

# GOD CALLS US TO WORSHIP

*We gather at the invitation of God through His Word.  
He speaks first, revealing Himself to us,  
and we respond with one voice in joy and thanksgiving!*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

*Hebrews 12:22–24, 28–29*

**M:** You have come to Mount Zion  
and to the city of the living God,  
the heavenly Jerusalem,  
and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,  
and to the assembly of the firstborn  
who are enrolled in heaven,  
and to God, the judge of all,  
and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,  
and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant,  
and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word  
than the blood of Abel.

**P:** **Therefore let us be grateful  
for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken,  
and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship,  
with reverence and awe,  
for our God is a consuming fire.**

## PRAYER OF ADORATION

## SONGS OF PRAISE

*Psalms 66*

**All lands to God in joyful sounds,  
Aloft your voices raise;  
Sing forth the honor of His name,  
And glorious make His praise.  
Sing forth the honor of His name,  
And glorious make His praise.**

...

**Yes, all the earth shall worship Thee  
And unto Thee shall sing;  
And to Thy name most glorious,  
Their songs of praise shall bring.  
And to Thy name most glorious,  
Their songs of praise shall bring.**

**O all ye people, bless our God;  
Aloud proclaim His praise,  
Who holdeth safe our soul in life,  
Our feet from sliding stays.  
Who holdeth safe our soul in life,  
Our feet from sliding stays.**

*Words based on Scottish Psalter (1650), the Book of Psalms (1871), and The Psalter (1912).  
©1994 Trinity Psalter, Crown & Covenant Publications*

### *Tell Out, My Soul*

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;  
Tender to me the promise of His word;  
In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!  
Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;  
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;  
His holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!  
Powers, dominions lay their glory by;  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight;  
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of His word!  
Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.  
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
To children's children and for evermore!**

*Words by Timothy Dudley-Smith (1961); ©1961 Hope Publishing Company  
Music by Holly Dutton (2001); © 2001 Dutton, Holly*

# SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

*Isaiah 40:1-11*

- 1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.  
2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that her warfare is ended,  
that her iniquity is pardoned,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.
- 3 A voice cries:  
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
4 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.  
5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
- 6 A voice says, "Cry!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
All flesh is grass,  
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.  
7 The grass withers, the flower fades  
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;  
surely the people are grass.  
8 The grass withers, the flower fades,  
but the word of our God will stand forever.
- 9 Go on up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good news;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;  
lift it up, fear not;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Behold your God!"  
10 Behold, the LORD GOD comes with might,  
and His arm rules for Him;  
behold, His reward is with Him,  
and His recompense before Him.

...

<sup>11</sup> He will tend His flock like a shepherd;  
He will gather the lambs in His arms;  
He will carry them in His bosom,  
and gently lead those that are with young.

*Luke 3:1-6*

<sup>1</sup> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

<sup>4</sup> As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the LORD,  
make His paths straight.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall become straight,

<sup>6</sup> and the rough places shall become level ways,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

## **GOD CLEANSSES US**

*We gather each week as sinners in constant need of His mercy. The corporate confession of sin acknowledges this and invites honest expression before God.*

*However, God isn't silent as we cry out to Him —*

*He assures us that His grace is bigger than our sin.*

*God's forgiveness is for all those who humble themselves before Him in Christ Jesus.*

# CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

*from Psalm 25*

**P: To you, O Lord, we lift up our souls;  
in You we trust, O God.**

**Do not let us be put to shame,  
nor let our enemies triumph over us...**

**Remember, O Lord, Your great mercy and love,  
for they are from of old.**

**Remember not the sins of our youth  
and our rebellious ways;  
according to Your love remember us,  
for You are good, O Lord...**

**For the sake of Your name, O Lord,  
forgive our iniquity, though it is great...**

**Turn to us and be gracious to us...  
Look upon our affliction and our distress  
and take away all our sins.**

**For Jesus' sake. Amen.**

## SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

*In these moments, we confess our personal sins to God  
so that we may take hold of the forgiveness  
won for us by Christ, our Redeemer.*

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

**M: We have an advocate with the Father,  
Jesus Christ the righteous;  
and He is a propitiation for our sins  
and not only for ours,  
but also for the sins of the whole world.  
Believe these words and live in peace. Amen.**

# SONG OF ASSURANCE

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

**Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us;  
Let us find our rest in Thee.**

**Israel's Strength and Consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art,  
Dear Desire of ev'ry nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.**

**Joy to those who long to see Thee,  
Dayspring from on high, appear;  
Come, Thou promised Rod of Jesse,  
Of Thy birth we long to hear!**

**O'er the hills the angels singing  
News, glad tidings of a birth:  
"Go to Him, your praises bringing;  
Christ the Lord has come to earth."**

**Come to earth to taste our sadness,  
He whose glories knew no end;  
By His life He brings us gladness,  
Our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.**

**Leaving riches without number,  
Born within a cattle stall;  
This the everlasting wonder,  
Christ was born the Lord of all.**

**Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a king,  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.**

**By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all sufficient merit,  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.**

Words by Charles Wesley (st 1,4) & Mark E Hunt (st 2-3).  
St 1,4: PUBLIC DOMAIN; Words for st 2-3 © 1978 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship  
Music by Rowland Hugh Pritchard (1855)

# GOD SPEAKS TO US

*The Holy Spirit makes the reading and preaching of God's Word a crucial means of growing and comforting God's people and awakening people to new faith in Jesus.*

## PASTORAL PRAYER

## READING OF THE WORD

### *Ruth 1:1–22*

<sup>1</sup> In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. <sup>2</sup> The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.

<sup>3</sup> But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup> These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, <sup>5</sup> and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

<sup>6</sup> Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited His people and given them food. <sup>7</sup> So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

<sup>8</sup> But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. <sup>9</sup> The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. <sup>10</sup> And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."

...

<sup>11</sup> But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?" <sup>12</sup> Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, <sup>13</sup> would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." <sup>14</sup> Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

<sup>15</sup> And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." <sup>16</sup> But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. <sup>17</sup> Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." <sup>18</sup> And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

<sup>19</sup> So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" <sup>20</sup> She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. <sup>21</sup> I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

<sup>22</sup> So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

## GLORIA PATRI

**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.**

## PREACHING OF THE WORD

*"Vision in the Valley"*

*Rev. Nate Hitchcock*

## PRAYER

## SONG OF RESPONSE

*He Will Hold Me Fast*

**When I fear my faith will fail,  
Christ will hold me fast;  
When the tempter would prevail,  
He will hold me fast.  
I could never keep my hold  
Through life's fearful path;  
For my love is often cold;  
He must hold me fast.**

***He will hold me fast,  
He will hold me fast;  
For my Savior loves me so,  
He will hold me fast.***

...

**Those He saves are His delight,  
Christ will hold me fast;  
Precious in His holy sight,  
He will hold me fast.  
He'll not let my soul be lost;  
His promises shall last;  
Bought by Him at such a cost,  
He will hold me fast.**

***He will hold me fast,  
He will hold me fast;  
For my Savior loves me so,  
He will hold me fast.***

**For my life He bled and died,  
Christ will hold me fast;  
Justice has been satisfied,  
He will hold me fast.  
Raised with Him to endless life;  
He will hold me fast;  
'Till our faith is turned to sight,  
When He comes at last!**

***He will hold me fast,  
He will hold me fast;  
For my Savior loves me so,  
He will hold me fast.***

***He will hold me fast,  
He will hold me fast;  
For my Savior loves me so,  
He will hold me fast.***

Lyrics vv. 1-2 by Ada Habershon (1861-1918) PUBLIC DOMAIN  
Alt words vv.1-2, lyrics v.3, and music by Matt Merker  
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# GOD COMMUNES WITH US

*The Lord's Supper is a meal for the family of God, given by Jesus the night before His death to be celebrated until His return. It points back to the cross, forward to the return of King, and spiritually nourishes us for today as we eat and drink in faith.*

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

*Pastor Ed Volz*

## CONFESSING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

*The Apostles' Creed*

**P: 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 Ghost,  
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 sits on  
the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from there He shall come to judge  
the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

*Please come forward to receive the elements at the table, then return to your seats. Please HOLD elements until we can all partake TOGETHER.*

# SONG OF MEDITATION

## *It Is Well with My Soul*

**When peace, like a river,  
Attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot,  
Thou hast taught me to say,  
"It is well, it is well with my soul."**

*It is well* (it is well),  
*With my soul* (with my soul);  
*It is well, it is well with my soul.*

**Though Satan should buffet,  
Though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control;  
That Christ has regarded  
My helpless estate,  
And has shed His own blood for my soul.**

*It is well* (it is well),  
*With my soul* (with my soul);  
*It is well, it is well with my soul.*

**My sin — O the bliss  
Of this glorious thought! —  
My sin — not in part, but the whole —  
Is nailed to the cross,  
And I bear it no more;  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!**

*It is well* (it is well),  
*With my soul* (with my soul);  
*It is well, it is well with my soul.*

**And Lord, haste the day  
When my faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,  
The trump shall resound,  
And the Lord shall descend;  
Even so, it is well with my soul.**

*It is well* (it is well),  
*With my soul* (with my soul);  
*It is well, it is well with my soul.*

# GOD SENDS US

*We end by receiving God's promises to us as His people.  
He will be with us as we serve Him in this world,  
to the end of all time.*

## BENEDICTION

## DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from Whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him all creatures here below.  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.**

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Scripture text from

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## **ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

**9:30AM: Worship Service  
(in-person & livestream)**

### **Meeting Address:**

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### A NOTE ABOUT GIVING

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and that any automatic payments are being sent  
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