



Ascension PCA

December 13, 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

*If Christ had arrived with trumpets
and lain in a cradle of gold,
His birth would have been a splendid affair.
But it would not be a comfort to me.
He was rather to lie in the lap of a poor maiden
and be thought of little significance
in the eyes of the world.*

Now I can come to Him.

*Now He reveals Himself to the miserable
in order not to give any impression
that He arrives with great power, splendor,
wisdom, and aristocratic manners.*

*But upon His return on that Day,
when He will oppose the high and the mighty,
it will be different.*

*Now He comes to the poor, who need a Savior,
but then He will come as a Judge
against those who are persecuting Him now.*

~ Martin Luther

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

M: The earth is the Lord's, for He made it:

P: Come, let us adore Him.

M: Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness:

P: Come, let us adore Him.

M: The mercy of the LORD is everlasting:

P: Come, let us adore Him.

M: LORD GOD, open our lips.

P: And our mouths shall proclaim Your praise.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

SONGS OF PRAISE

Angels From the Realms of Glory

**Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.**

***Come and worship,
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.***

**Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant Light.**

***Come and worship,
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.***

...

**All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son;
Evermore your voices raising
To th'eternal Three in One.**

***Come and worship,
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.***

Words by James Montgomery (1816, 1825). Music by Henry T. Smart (1867).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

**Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the gloom of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!**

**All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays;
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.**

**Mortals join the happy chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
God the Father reigning o'er us,
Jesus bringing life to man.
Ever singing, by the Spirit,
Victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us onward,
In the blessed song of life.**

Words by Henry van Dyke (1907). Music by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
PUBLIC DOMAIN

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Isaiah 12:2-6

- ² "Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid;
For the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,
and He has become my salvation."
- ³ With joy you will draw water from the wells of
salvation. ⁴ And you will say in that day:
- "Give thanks to the LORD,
call upon His name,
make known His deeds among the peoples,
Proclaim that His name is exalted.
- ⁵ "Sing praises to the LORD, for He has done gloriously;
let this be made known in all the earth.
- ⁶ Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

Matthew 11:2-11

- ² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds
of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples
³ and said to him, "Are You the one who is to come,
or shall we look for another?" ⁴ And Jesus answered
them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:
⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk,
lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear,
and the dead are raised up, and the poor have
good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is
the one who is not offended by Me."
- ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to
the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out
into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?
⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed
in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing
are in kings' houses. ⁹ What then did you go out to see?
A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

...

¹⁰“This is he of whom it is written,

‘Behold, I send My messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹Truly, I say to you, among those born of women
there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist.
Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven
is greater than he.”

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

**P: Great and glorious God,
through Jesus Christ our Savior
You have shown us that
the blessed age of grace has appeared
and the hoped-for time of salvation has come.**

**Yet we confess that we too often cling to
the glories of the present age;
worldly passions and pursuits,
self-indulgent, crooked, and ungodly ways.
We choose to walk in darkness,
unwilling to see the evil that Your light exposes.**

**Cleanse us and free us;
break the yoke we choose to carry
through Christ,
who gave Himself for us,
so that we might be Your people,
holy and whole. 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

Jeremiah 33:8 & Acts 10:43

M: I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against Me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against Me.

P: **To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in [Jesus] receives forgiveness of sins through His name.**

SONG OF ASSURANCE

The Unbelievable

**Come and see the inconceivable
And believe the unbelievable:
God has come to dwell with us.
Begotten Son born into Adam's earth,
Promised One fulfilling ancient words,
God has come to dwell with us.**

*Who could ever know the depths
Of the myst'ry of Your grace?
Though our minds can't take it in,
Lord, our hearts are filled with praise.*

**He will heal the unhealable,
He will save the unsavable;
God has come to dwell with us.
Heaven's joy will drink our bitter cup,
Emptied out as He is lifted up;
God has come to dwell with us.**

...

***Who could ever know the depths
Of the myst'ry of Your grace?
Though our minds can't take it in,
Lord, our hearts are filled with praise.***

**Lord, we're lost in overwhelming awe
At the thought of such amazing love;
God has come, God has come
God has come to dwell with us.
God has come, God has come,
God has come to dwell with us.**

Words and music by Steve & Vikki Cook.
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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.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READING OF THE WORD

Ruth 1:22 – 2:23

²² 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.

¹ Now Naomi had a relative of her husband, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

² And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."³ So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

...

⁴ And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you."

⁵ Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

⁶ And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab."

⁷ She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. ⁹ Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."

¹⁰ Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" ¹¹ But Boaz answered her,

"All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. ¹² The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" ¹³ Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

¹⁴ And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.

...

¹⁵ When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. ¹⁶ And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸ And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

¹⁹ And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." ²⁰ And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers."

²¹ And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

²² And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted."

²³ So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

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

"The Wings of Refuge"

Rev. Nate Hitchcock

PRAYER

SONG OF RESPONSE

O Love that Will Not Let Me Go

**O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.**

**O Light that follow'st all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.**

**O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain
And feel the promise is not vain,
That morn shall tearless be.**

**O Cross that liftest up my head
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.**

Words by George Matheson (1882). PUBLIC DOMAIN
Music by Christopher Miner (1997) ©1997 Miner, Christopher

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 / Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 35,36

**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.**

...

- M: What does it mean that He “was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary”?
- P: That the eternal Son of God,
who is and remains true and eternal God,
took to Himself,
through the working of the Holy Spirit,
from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,
a truly human nature
so that He might become
David’s true descendent,
like His brothers in every way except for sin.**
- M: How does the holy conception and birth of Christ benefit you?
- P: He is our mediator,
and with His innocence and perfect holiness
He removes from God’s sight my sin —
mine since I was conceived.**

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

Yet Not I, But Through Christ in Me

**What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer;
There is no more for heaven now to give.
He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom,
My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.**

***To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus;
For my life is wholly bound to His.
Oh how strange and divine,
I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.***

...

**The night is dark, but I am not forsaken;
For by my side the Saviour He will stay.
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing,
For in my need His power is displayed.**

***To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me;
Through the deepest valley He will lead.
Oh, the night has been won,
And I shall overcome.
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.***

**No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven;
The future sure, the price it has been paid.
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon,
And He was raised to overthrow the grave.**

***To this I hold, my sin has been defeated;
Jesus now and ever is my plea.
Oh, the chains are released,
I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.***

**With every breath I long to follow Jesus;
For He has said that He will bring me home.
And day by day I know He will renew me,
Until I stand with joy before the throne.**

***To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus;
All the glory evermore to Him.
When the race is complete,
Still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.
When the race is complete,
Still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.***

Words and music by Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, Rich Thompson
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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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Holy Bible, **New International Version**®, NIV®

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ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

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

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A NOTE ABOUT GIVING

Please make sure that checks are made out to
Ascension Presbyterian Church
and that any automatic payments are being sent
to the **P.O. Box mailing address** listed.