



**Ascension** PCA

**December 20, 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

*Big and glossy and loud and fast —  
that's how this bent-up world turns.  
But God, when He comes —  
He shows up in this fetal ball.  
He who carved the edges of the cosmos  
curved Himself into a fetal ball in the dark,  
tethered Himself to the uterine wall of a virgin,  
and lets His cells divide, light splitting all white.  
He gave up the heavens that were not even large enough  
to contain Him and lets Himself be held in a hand.  
The mystery so large becomes the Baby so small,  
and infinite God becomes infant.  
The Giver becomes the Gift, this quiet offering.*

~ Ann Voskamp

# 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

*Isaiah 52:7-10, 9:6,7*

M: How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of him who brings good news,  
who publishes peace,  
who brings good news of happiness,  
who publishes salvation,  
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

The voice of your watchmen — they lift up their voice;  
together they sing for joy;  
for eye to eye they see  
the return of the LORD to Zion.  
Break forth together into singing,  
you waste places of Jerusalem,  
for the LORD has comforted His people;  
He has redeemed Jerusalem.  
The LORD has bared His holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

**P: ... For unto us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon His shoulder,  
and His name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of His government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over His kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.**

# PRAYER OF ADORATION

## SONGS OF PRAISE

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

**Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the new-born King!  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies.  
With 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!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

Words by Charles Wesley (1739, 1753; Alt.)  
Music by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1840); arr. by William H. Cummings (1856)  
PUBLIC DOMAIN

*Joy to the World!*

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come,  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room.  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n, and nature sing!**

**Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns,  
Let men their songs employ.  
While fields and floods,  
Rocks, hills, and plains,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness.  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders of His love.**

Words by Isaac Watts (1719)

Music by George Friedrich Händel (1742), arr. by Lowell Mason (1836)

PUBLIC DOMAIN

# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

*Micah 5:2-5a*

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for Me  
one who is to be ruler in Israel,  
whose coming forth is from of old,  
from ancient days.

Therefore He shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has given birth;  
Then the rest of His brothers shall return  
to the people of Israel.

And He shall stand and shepherd His flock  
in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.  
And they shall dwell secure,  
for now He shall be great  
to the ends of the earth.  
And He shall be their peace.”

*Luke 1:68-79*

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for He has visited and redeemed His people  
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of His servant David,  
as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets  
from of old,  
that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember His holy covenant,  
the oath that He swore to our father Abraham,  
to grant us  
that we, being delivered from the hand of  
our enemies,  
might serve Him without fear,  
in holiness and righteousness before Him  
all our days.

...

And you, child, will be called the prophet of  
the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare  
His ways,  
to give knowledge of salvation to His people  
in the forgiveness of their sins,  
because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
to give light to those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

## 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.*

*Pastor Ed Volz*

## CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

**P: God of salvation, in Christ**

**You have done great things —  
our hearts are filled with joy.  
By Your power You lifted us  
out of the wasteland of sin  
and brought us with joy and laughter  
into Your kingdom.  
Salvation is Your gift to us.**

**But we confess that often we try  
to replace Your gift with our own efforts.  
We try to complete what is already perfect;  
we try to add to what is already full;  
we try to earn what we already have.**

...

**Forgive us for our foolishness.  
Forgive us for not acknowledging the love  
that has been shown to us.  
Forgive us for occupying ourselves  
with our own concerns rather than Yours.**

**Come to us anew,  
and by Your grace, assist us to receive You  
with joy, as the shepherds;  
with gratitude, as Simeon;  
with obedience, as Mary;  
with love, as You have loved us.  
Even so: come, Lord Jesus. 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

*based on Isaiah 40:1-2*

**M:** Comfort, comfort My people, says your God.  
Your sins are pardoned.  
The penalty is paid.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

## SONG OF ASSURANCE

*What Child is This*

**What Child is this, who laid to rest,  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

***This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.***

...



**Why lies He in such mean estate,  
Where ox and lamb are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear for sinners here,  
The silent Word is pleading.**

***Nails, spear, shall pierce Him through;  
The cross be borne for me, for you.  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.***

**So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh;  
Come, peasant, king, to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.**

***Raise, raise the song on high;  
The virgin sings her lullaby.  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.  
This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.***

Traditional English carol, adapted by William C. Dix (ca. 1865)  
Music: "Greensleeves", English Melody (16th century)  
PUBLIC DOMAIN

## **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 3*

<sup>1</sup> Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? <sup>2</sup> Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.

<sup>3</sup> Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

<sup>4</sup> But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do."

<sup>5</sup> And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

<sup>6</sup> So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her.

<sup>7</sup> And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. <sup>8</sup> At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet!

<sup>9</sup> He said, "Who are you?"

And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer."

<sup>10</sup> And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. <sup>11</sup> And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman.

<sup>12</sup> And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. <sup>13</sup> Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

...

<sup>14</sup> So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

<sup>15</sup> And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

<sup>16</sup> And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?"

Then she told her all that the man had done for her,

<sup>17</sup> saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

<sup>18</sup> She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

## 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

*"Bold Faith"*

*Rev. Nate Hitchcock*

## PRAYER

# SONG OF RESPONSE

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

**O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant;  
O come ye, O come ye  
to Bethlehem!**

**Come and behold Him,  
born the King of angels!**

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord!*

**Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens  
of heav'n above!**

**Glory to God, all  
glory in the highest!**

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord!*

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,  
born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be  
all glory giv'n;**

**Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing!**

*O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord!*

Latin Hymn, translated by Frederick Oakeley (1841)  
Music by John Francis Wade's Cantus Diversi (1751)  
PUBLIC DOMAIN

# 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

### CONFESSING OUR FAITH — RESPONDING IN PRAISE

**P: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for He has visited and redeemed His people.  
The Dayspring from on high has visited us  
to give light to those who sit in darkness,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

**For unto us a Child is born,  
unto us a Son is given.  
God so loved the world,  
that He gave His only begotten Son  
that whosoever believes in Him  
should not perish,  
but have everlasting life.**

**For God sent not His Son into the world  
to condemn the world;  
but that the world through Him might be saved.  
Mine eyes have seen Your salvation,  
which You have prepared  
in the face of all people.**

**Thanks be to God for His Gift beyond words!**

# 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.*

## PRAYER

## 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

M: Do not be afraid,  
For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy...  
a Savior has been born to you;  
He is Christ the Lord.

## 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

The Holy Bible, **English Standard Version**.

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# **ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

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

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Please make sure that checks are made out to  
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and that any automatic payments are being sent  
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