



Ascension PCA

December 5, 2021



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

The true Christian religion is incarnational
and thus does not begin at the top,
as all other religions do;
it begins at the bottom.
You must run directly to the manger
and the mother's womb,
embrace the infant and virgin's child in your arms
and look at Him —
born, being nursed, growing up,
going about in human society,
teaching, dying, rising again,
ascending above all the heavens,
and having authority over all things.

~ *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: Jesus, Son of the living God,
splendor of the Father, eternal Light.

P: Lord, we praise You!

M: Jesus, King of Glory,
Sun of Righteousness,
Son of the virgin Mary.

P: Lord, we praise You!

M: Jesus, Wonderful Counselor,
everlasting Lord, Prince of Peace.

P: Lord, we praise You!

M: Jesus, gentle and humble of heart,
our help and refuge.

P: Lord, we praise You!

M: Jesus, Good Shepherd, true Light,
our way and our life.

P: Lord, we praise You! Amen.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

SONGS OF PRAISE

Canticle of the Turning

**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?**

***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.**

***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 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,
'Til the spear and rod
can be crushed by God,
Who is turning the world around.**

***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!***

Words by Rory Cooney (1990) from the *Magnificat*, Luke 1:46–55, UBP
© 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.
Music by Nathan Partain (2002), UBP

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)

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Isaiah 11:1-5 / John 15:1-8

- 1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump
of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
- 2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- 3 And His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what His eyes see,
or decide disputes by what His ears hear,
- 4 but with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and He shall strike the earth with the rod of His
mouth,
and with the breath of His lips
He shall kill the wicked.
- 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His waist,
and faithfulness the belt of His loins.

¹ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.
² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples."

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 the Heidelberg Catechism

M: Christ teaches us that the law is summarized by this:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength."

This is the first and the great commandment; and the second is like it:

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Can you keep all this perfectly?

P: In no way, for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor.

M: And the prophets and apostles have told us:
“Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do
everything written in the Book of the Law.”
Is there no way by which we may escape
that punishment and be again received into favor?

**P: God will have His justice satisfied;
and therefore we must make this full satisfaction,
either by ourselves or by another.**

M: Can we ourselves then make this satisfaction?

**P: By no means; but on the contrary,
we daily increase our debt.
What sort of mediator and deliverer, then,
must we seek?**

M: For one who is truly man and perfectly righteous;
and yet more powerful than all creatures;
that is, one who is also truly God.

P: Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

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

Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 56

M: What do you believe concerning
“the forgiveness of sins”?

**P: I believe that God,
because of Christ’s atonement,
will never hold against me
any of my sins nor my sinful nature
which I need to struggle against all my life.
Rather, in His grace
God grants me the righteousness of Christ
to free me forever from judgment.**

SONG OF ASSURANCE

O Come, All Ye Unfaithful

**O come, all you unfaithful.
Come, weak and unstable.
Come, know you are not alone.**

**O come, barren and waiting ones,
Weary of praying. Come,
See what your God has done.**

***Christ is born.
Christ is born.
Christ is born for you.***

**O come, bitter and broken.
Come, with fears unspoken.
Come, taste of His perfect love.**

**O come, guilty and hiding ones,
There is no need to run.
See what your God has done.**

***Christ is born.
Christ is born.
Christ is born for you.***

***He's the Lamb who was given,
Slain for our pardon.
His promise is peace
For those who believe.***

**So come, though you have nothing.
Come, He is the offering.
Come, see what your God has done.**

***Christ is born.
Christ is born.
Christ is born for you.***

Words and music by Lisa Clow and Bob Kauflin
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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.

PASTORAL PRAYER

READING OF THE WORD

1 John 5:1–12

¹ Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey His commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

...

⁶ This is He who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the One who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. ⁹ If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that He has borne concerning His Son. ¹⁰ Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning His Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

SONG OF RESPONSE

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 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

from Hebrews 9 & 10

M: For this reason Christ is the mediator
of a new covenant,
that those who are called may receive
the promised eternal inheritance —
now that He has died as a ransom to set them free.

**P: Therefore, since we have confidence to enter
the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,
by a new and living way opened for us
through the curtain, that is, His body,
and since we have a great priest
over the house of God,
let us draw near to God with a sincere heart
in full assurance of faith,
having our hearts sprinkled
to cleanse us from a guilty conscience
and having our bodies washed with pure water.
Let us hold unswervingly
to the hope we profess,
for He who promised is faithful.**

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

O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide

**O Savior, rend the heavens wide;
Come down, come down with mighty stride;
Unlock the gates, the doors break down,
Unbar the way to heaven's crown.**

**O Morning Star, O radiant Sun,
When will our hearts behold Your dawn?
O Sun, arise; without Your light
We grope in gloom and dark of night.**

**Sin's dreadful doom upon us lies;
Grim death looms fierce before our eyes.
Oh come, lead us, with mighty hand
Through exile to the promised land.**

**There shall we all our praises bring
Ever to You, our Savior King;
There shall we laud You and adore,
Forever and forever more.
Forever and forever more.
Forever and forever more.**

Words from Old German spiritual song (1623); tr. by Martin L. Seltz (1909-1967)
Music by Nathan Partain © 2009, 2003, UBP

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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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.