



Ascension PCA

December 19, 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

*Look into that manger
and see the One who came to die.
Hear the angel's song
and remember that death would be the only way
that peace would be given.
Look at your tree and remember another tree —
one not decorated with shining ornaments
but stained with the blood of the Son of God.
As you celebrate,
remember that the pathway to your celebration
was the death of the One you celebrate,
and be thankful.*

~ Paul Tripp

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 INVOCATION

SONGS OF PRAISE

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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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

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Isaiah 53:1-7 / John 1:29-34

- 1 Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD
been revealed?
- 2 For He grew up before Him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him,
and no beauty that we should desire Him.
- 3 He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.
- 4 Surely He has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed Him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
- 5 But He was pierced for our transgressions;
He was crushed for our iniquities;
upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with His wounds we are healed.
- 6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned — every one — to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on Him
the iniquity of us all.
- 7 He was oppressed, and He was afflicted,
yet He opened not His mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so He opened not His mouth.

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" ³⁰ This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because He was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know Him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to Israel." ³² And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him. ³³ I myself did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son 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

Romans 3:23

**P: We have all sinned and fallen short
of the glory of God.**

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.

PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

from Romans 3:22; Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 21

M: Righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

P: By faith we have a deep-rooted assurance, created in us by the Holy Spirit through the gospel, that, out of sheer grace earned for us by Christ, not only others, but we too, have had our sins forgiven, have been made forever right with God, and have been granted salvation.

SONG OF ASSURANCE

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

**God rest ye merry, gentlemen,
let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Savior
was born on Christmas Day;
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
when we were gone astray.**

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

**From God our heavenly Father
a blessed angel came;
And unto certain shepherds
brought tidings of the same;
How that in Bethlehem was born
the Son of God by name.**

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.*

...

**“Fear not,” then said the angel,
“Let nothing you affright;
This day is born a Savior,
the true and radiant Light,
To free all those who trust in Him
from Satan’s pow’r and might.”**

***O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.***

**Now to the Lord sing praises
all you within this place.
And with true love and brotherhood
each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
all others doth deface.**

***O tidings of comfort and joy,
comfort and joy;
O tidings of comfort and joy.***

Words: English Carol (18th century); Music: English Melody (18th 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

Matthew 1:18–25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the

Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called His name Jesus.

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 Unbelievable”

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES: _____

SONG OF RESPONSE

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

P: We shall do as our Lord commands.

**We proclaim that our Lord Jesus
was sent by the Father into the world,
that He took upon himself our flesh and blood,
and bore the wrath of God against our sin.**

**We confess that He was condemned to die
that we might be pardoned,
and suffered death that we might live.**

**We proclaim that He is risen
to make us right with God
and that He shall come again
in the glory of His new creation.**

This we do now and until He comes again.

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

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 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

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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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.