



Ascension PCA

CHRISTMAS EVE 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.

LESSONS & CAROLS



Prayer of Preparation

*Living God, on this holy night we gather —
to stand like the shepherds, amazed at Your glory;
to sing with the angels, rejoicing in Your work;
to wait like Joseph, trusting in Your promise;
to sit like Mary, cradling Your love.*

*May the good news of this night move us
to tell the world of our great joy:
for to us is born a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.
Glory and praise to You forever! Amen.*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 96

M: Sing to the LORD a new song;

P: sing to the LORD, all the earth!

M: Sing to the LORD and bless God's name;

P: tell the good news of salvation from day to day.

M: Declare God's glory among the nations,
God's marvelous works among all the peoples.

P: For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised.

M: Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.

**P: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world, and those who live in it.**

M: Let the whole creation sing for joy
at the presence of God, who is coming.

**P: God is coming indeed,
to judge the earth with righteousness,
and the people with equity and truth.
Praise the LORD!**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

"The Gift"

~ written by Bryan Hart

*Come all ye burdened, lowly, and blind,
Come, all who are lost, that is, all mankind,
"To Me, who took eyes that I might you find":
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Who else but the Author of life itself
Would to descend from the heavenly shelf?
Into this tale I have written Myself:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Of love and logos, of philosophy,
The sages dreamt, though only hazily;
But now, at last, can all be seen in Me:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Becoming low, My humiliation
Secures a more splendid transformation;
The lowest I'll raise in exaltation:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

"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)

❧ FIRST LESSON ❧

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you above all livestock
and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go,
And dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
He shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise His heel."

And to Adam He said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return."



*Oh Eve, who heeded what the serpent said,
The shame for commencing sin's crimson thread
Can end — Your seed has come to crush His head:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*From Eden did the angels Adam send,
But now to his offspring they do commend
Me, the new Adam who will the world mend:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

**O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light,
The hopes and fears of all the years,
Are met in thee tonight.
For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God, the King,
And peace to men on earth.
O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!**

Words by Phillips Brooks (1868). Music by Lewis H. Redner (1868).

❧ SECOND LESSON ❧

Genesis 22:15–18

And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."



*In Abraham all nations will be bless'd,
But how? Accomplishing it is My quest;
I come to dress them in My righteousness:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

**O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

**O come, Thou Wisdom, from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
And fill the world with heaven's peace.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

Latin Hymn (1710), translated by John Mason Neale (1851). Music: Plainsong (13th century).

☞ THIRD LESSON ☞

Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
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.
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,
but with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all My holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.



*An ancient stump sends up a royal shoot,
A King to whom all kings pay tribute;
But greater is the prize that I'll impute:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*From Bethlehem that King would come, 'twas said.
But I'll be more, their only House of Bread,
And give My body that all may be fed:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

**It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold.
"Peace on the earth, good will to men
From heav'n's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.**

O ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow.
Look now! For glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold.
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Words by Edmund Hamilton Sears (1850). Music by Richard Storrs Willis, 1819-1900 (1850)

❧ FOURTH LESSON ❧
Isaiah 9:2,6-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.
For to 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.



*Do not ignore My genealogies;
Both sagas of human catastrophes
Are My share in our trade of fam'ly trees:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*For I assume Joseph's ancestral shame,
Attaching its failure to My good name,
So My perfection all failures might claim:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

“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)

FIFTH LESSON

Luke 1:26–35,38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will

be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God. And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.



*Zechariah spoke of coming Sunrise
From God on high, to darkened souls supplies
My light, that mortals I'll immortalize:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Elizabeth carries within her womb
One to straighten My way, a voice from whom
Disciples will learn of the true Bridegroom:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

"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)

❧ SIXTH LESSON ❧

Luke 2:1-16

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.



*A manger contains My body from cold,
The very one Who does the cosmos hold;
The glories of Christmas are manifold!
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Begotten not made, yet born of virgin,
Still a stranger mys'try I illumine:
How sinners are made into God's kinsmen:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*The Shepherds hear first, for to them I am
Inaugurating My ovine program
In which the Chief Shepherd becomes a Lamb:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Mary's heart is my childhood treasury,
Alas, a sword will bring it injury;
Fear not, I'll heal it in My Victory:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Simeon finds that for which many sought,
Open his hands receive what can't be bought;
My grace is never earned but only caught:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

**Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.**

***Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!***

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be,
Which inspire your heavenly song?**

***Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!***

**Come to Bethlehem and see,
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.**

***Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!
Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!***

Traditional French carol, translated by James Chadwick (1862)
French carol melody, arranged by Edwin S. Barnes (1937)

*The Magi seek Me via shining star,
Meet a heavenly Son, brighter by far
Than all other treasure, one without par:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Herod from his throne rules My land with might,
But finds in My infancy cause for fright;
Why, since his sins I have come to make white?
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*My parents to Egypt with Me fly,
So as Israel I identify,
That their wanderings I might rectify:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

❧ MEDITATION ❧
John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.



*Not only thirty years I'll be a man,
My flesh is permanent, so that I can
Be Advocate for an eternal span:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*With sufferers I come to sympathize,
To take their pain and with them agonize;
In Me their High Priest they'll soon recognize:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*Is this not why I've come? I'm born to die
As ransom for many, their souls I'll buy,
That all wretchedness I might beautify:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*The tree of life I made, for man's good;
The cross of death men made, not knowing I would,
As a carpenter's son, trade wood for wood:
Was ever a gift like Mine?*

*So, angels sang celestial chorus,
Immanuel will be the most joyous
Carol men will ever sing: "God with us!"
Never was a gift like Mine.*

"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!*

**God of true God,
Light from Light eternal;
Lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Son of the Father,
Begotten, not created;**

*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,
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!**

Words by John Francis Wade (1751); tr. by Frederick Oakeley (1841; alt.)
Music from John Francis Wade's *Cantus Diversi* (1751)

“Silent Night”

**Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heav’nly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love’s pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous star, lend Thy light;
With the angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!**

Words by Joseph Mohr (1818; Tr. ca. 1850). Music by Franz Gruber (1818)

“Jesus, Name Above All Names”

**Jesus, name above all names,
Beautiful Savior, Glorious Lord;
Emmanuel, God is with us,
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word.**

Words and music by Naida Hearn
© 1974,1979 Scripture in Song; admin by Maranatha! Music

THE BLESSING

M: Go forth to sing and bless God's name.
For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.
May the Lord look upon you with favor,
and give you peace. Amen.



Song lyrics reproduced by permission: CCL#11181050

Scripture text from

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

©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Holy Bible, **New International Version**®, NIV®

Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.

Used by permission. All rights reserved.



ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

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

Meeting Address:

8224 220th Street SW, Edmonds, WA 98026

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 838, Lynnwood, WA 98046

APC Office:

Mon & Wed & Fri (9:00AM–5:00PM)
(425) 286-8617

office@ascension-pca.org