



Ascension PCA

January 2, 2022



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

Hebrews 1:1–3

M: Long ago, at many times and in many ways,
God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

**P: but in these last days He has spoken to us
by His Son,**

M: whom He appointed the heir of all things,
through whom He also created the world.

**P: He is the radiance of the glory of God
and the exact imprint of His nature,
and He upholds the universe
by the word of His power.**

M: After making purification for sins,
He sat down at the right hand
of the Majesty on high...

P: Praise God for the gift of the Son!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

SONGS OF PRAISE

Across the Lands

**You're the Word of God the Father
From before the world began;
Every star and every planet
Has been fashioned by Your hand.**

**All creation holds together
By the power of Your voice.
Let the skies declare Your glory;
Let the land and seas rejoice!**

...

***You're the Author of creation,
You're the Lord of every man,
And Your cry of love rings out
Across the lands.***

**Yet You left the gaze of angels,
Came to seek and save the lost,
And exchanged the joy of heaven
For the anguish of a cross.**

**With a prayer You fed the hungry,
With a word You calmed the sea;
Yet how silently You suffered,
That the guilty may go free.**

***You're the Author of creation,
You're the Lord of every man,
And Your cry of love rings out
Across the lands.***

**With a shout You rose victorious,
Wresting vict'ry from the grave
And ascended into heaven,
Leading captives in Your way.
Now You stand before the Father,
Interceding for Your own;
From each tribe and tongue and nation
You are leading sinners home.**

***You're the Author of creation,
You're the Lord of every man,
And Your cry of love rings out
Across the lands.***

***You're the Author of creation,
You're the Lord of every man,
And Your cry of love rings out
Across the lands.***

Words and music by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend
© 2002 Thankyou Music

Psalm 66

**All lands to God in joyful sounds,
Aloft your voices raise;
Sing forth the honor of His name,
And glorious make His praise.
Sing forth the honor of His name,
And glorious make His praise.**

**Yes, all the earth shall worship Thee
And unto Thee shall sing;
And to Thy name most glorious,
Their songs of praise shall bring.
And to Thy name most glorious,
Their songs of praise shall bring.**

**O all ye people, bless our God;
Aloud proclaim His praise,
Who holdeth safe our soul in life,
Our feet from sliding stays.
Who holdeth safe our soul in life,
Our feet from sliding stays.**

Words based on *Scottish Psalter* (1650), the *Book of Psalms* (1871), and *The Psalter* (1912).
©1994 *Trinity Psalter*, Crown & Covenant Publications

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

**Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear.**

**Dark and cheerless is the morn
Unaccompanied by Thee;
Joyless is the day's return
Till Thy mercy's beams I see;
Till Thy inward light impart,
Glad my eyes, and warm my heart.**

...

**Visit then this soul of mine,
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
Fill me, Radiance divine,
Scatter all my unbelief;
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day.
More and more Thyself display,
Shining to the perfect day.**

Words by Charles Wesley (1740). PUBLIC DOMAIN
Music by Luke Morton (2012)
Music: © 2012 Walk Out of the Grave Music

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.

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE READING

Daniel 7:9-14

⁹“As I looked,
thrones were placed,
and the Ancient of Days took His seat;
His clothing was white as snow,
And the hair of His head like pure wool;
His throne was fiery flames;
its wheels were burning fire.
¹⁰ A stream of fire issued
and came out from before Him;
a thousand thousands served Him,
and ten thousand times ten thousand
stood before Him;
the court sat in judgment,
and the books were opened.

...

¹¹ "I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. ¹² As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

¹³ "I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came One like a son of man,
and He came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before Him.
¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve Him;
His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and His kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed."

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

**P: O God, our guide, who once used a star
to lead people to Christ,
we confess to You our poor sense of direction.
We so easily allow ourselves to become confused,
distracted, and we lose our way.
We fail to follow Your Word
and walk in Your ways.
Forgive our waywardness, O God.
Lead us to the Christ
so that we may follow His way to you. 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.*

PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

from Galatians 4

M: When the time had fully come,
God sent His Son,
born of a woman, born under law,
to redeem those under law,
that we might receive the full rights of sons.
Because you are sons,
God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts,
the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."
So you are no longer a slave, but a son;
and since you are a son,
God has made you also an heir.

SONG OF ASSURANCE

Before the Throne of God Above

**Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea:
A great High Priest whose name is "Love,"
Who ever lives and pleads for me.**

**My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart;
I know that while in heav'n He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart;
No tongue can bid me thence depart.**

**When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there,
Who made an end to all my sin.**

**Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me,
To look on Him and pardon me.**

...

**Behold Him there, the risen Lamb!
My perfect, spotless Righteousness.
The great unchangeable I AM,
The King of Glory and of Grace.
One with Himself, I cannot die,
My soul is purchased by His blood.
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Savior and my God;
With Christ, my Savior and my God.**

Words by Charitie Lees Bancroft (1863); Music by Vikki Cook (1997)
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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

Matthew 2:1–12

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him." ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶ "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

...

⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found Him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him." ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

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

"More than a Manger"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES: _____

SONG OF RESPONSE

Be Thou My Vision

**Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me save that Thou art —
Thou my best thought by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.**

**Be Thou my wisdom and Thou my true word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one.**

**Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure Thou art.**

**High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Ancient Irish Poem, translated by Mary E. Byrne (1905), versified by Eleanor H. Hull (1912)
Traditional Irish melody, arranged by David Evans (1927)
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.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

CONFESSING OUR FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

**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.**

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.***

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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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

STAFF & LEADERSHIP

PASTOR:

Rev. Nate Hitchcock *nate@ascension-pca.org*

ASSISTANT PASTOR:

Rev. Edward Volz *volz.edw@gmail.com*

PASTORAL INTERNS:

Austin Clement *clement.austin@gmail.com*

Philip Suh *philipsuh@outlook.com*

OFFICE MANAGER:

Rina Kroes *office@ascension-pca.org*

ELDERS:

Brett Chase *brett@ascension-pca.org*

Bob Miller *bob@ascension-pca.org*

Bo Stocklin *bostocklin@ascension-pca.org*

Chris Sledge *chris@ascension-pca.org*

Theo Vander Wel *theo@ascension-pca.org*

DEACONS:

Peter Contreras *peter@ascension-pca.org*

Fred Wilson *fred@ascension-pca.org*

Kyle Bartlett *kyle@ascension-pca.org*

MUSIC DIRECTOR:

Leandra Howell *leandra.m.howell@gmail.com*

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR:

Monica Sledge *cmkesledge@gmail.com*

MEAL COORDINATOR:

Sheila Bloedow *s.bloedow@comcast.net*

NURSERY COORDINATOR:

Rebecca Wheeler *dieseltheboxer@hotmail.com*

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.