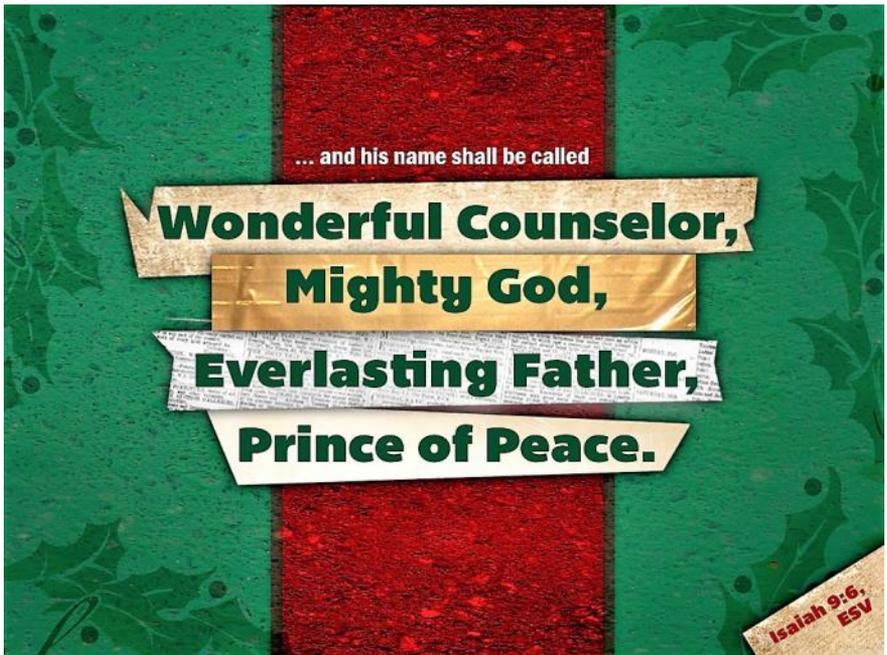




Ascension PCA

December 11, 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.

WELCOME TO ASCENSION!

Thank you for joining us for worship today.

**We are delighted that you are here,
especially if this is your first time with us.**

Connect with One Another:

We would love to know that you were here this morning and encourage you to fill in a *Connect Card* so that we can follow up with you, answer your questions, or pray for you. Our practice of wearing *Name Tags* is to make you feel more comfortable among us, help you to identify staff and leadership, and make it easier for you to connect with us. See our back page for contact information. We heartily invite you to join us for *refreshments* and conversation after the service.

To Parents of Young Children:

If you would like to utilize it, we have a staffed *Nursery* for children through age 3 across the hall. We encourage younger children to remain with us during the service. They are not a distraction! *Clipboards for kids* are available to encourage our children to participate in our worship together. Stop by the special Kids Table to pick up clipboards and crayons for your child. Feel free to sit up front where your child can more easily see and hear what is happening.

Free Biblical Resources:

If you don't have a copy of God's Word, please help yourself to one of the free Bibles as our gift for you to take home. You are also welcome to browse the literature and resources available to you on the Welcome Table, carts, and stands.

Joyfully worshipping together
as the family of God,
with reverence and awe,
mindful of our heritage
as well as our present context.



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 only people whose soul can truly magnify the Lord are people like Elizabeth and Mary — people who acknowledge their lowly estate and are overwhelmed by the condescension of the magnificent God.

~ John Piper

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

Psalm 73:1–3, 16–17, 24–26, 28

- M: Truly God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,
my steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task,
until I went into the sanctuary of God;
then I discerned their end.
- P: You guide me with Your counsel,
and afterward You will receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but You?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire
besides You.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.
But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the LORD GOD my refuge,
that I may tell of all Your works.**

PRAYER OF ADORATION & INVOCATION

SONGS OF PRAISE

Tell Out, My Soul

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of His word;
In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!
Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!
Powers, dominions lay their glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight;
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of His word!
Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore!**

Words by Timothy Dudley-Smith (1961). Music by Holly Dutton (2001).
Words: ©1961 Hope Publishing Company. Music: ©2001 Dutton, Holly

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).
Music by Rowland Hugh Pritchard (1855)
St 1,4: PUBLIC DOMAIN; Words for st 2-3 © 1978 Intervarsity Christian Fellowship

Prepare Him Room

**O behold, the mystery now unfolds;
See the star shine on the virgin foretold.
Angels sing and light up the sky,
Hope rings out in a newborn's cry;
Swing wide, you ancient gates,
For Christ is born today!**

***Prepare Him room,
Prepare Him room,
Let the King of glory enter in.***

**God with us, the promise has come to be;
This, the One, the prophets were longing to see.
In the darkness a blazing light,
To the hungry the words to life;
His kingdom now is near,
For those with ears to hear.**

***Prepare Him room,
Prepare Him room,
Let the King of glory enter in.***

**Oh, our hearts, as busy as Bethlehem,
Hear Him knock; don't say there's no room in the inn.
Through the cradle, cross, and grave,
See the love of God displayed;
Now He's risen and He reigns.
Praise the Name above all names!**

***Prepare Him room,
Prepare Him room,
Let the King of glory enter in.***

***Prepare Him room,
Prepare Him room,
Let the King of glory enter in.***

Words and music by Rebecca Elliot & Dave Fournier
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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Psalm 146:5-10

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets the prisoners free;
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.

The LORD watches over the sojourners;
He upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked He brings to ruin.

The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

John 9:1-7

As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

Having said these things, He spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then He anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

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

**P: Great and glorious God,
through Jesus Christ our Savior You have shown us
that the blessed age of grace has appeared
and the hoped-for time of salvation has come.**

**Yet we cling to the glories of the present age —
worldly passions and pursuits,
self-indulgent, crooked, and ungodly ways.**

**We choose to walk in darkness,
unwilling to see the evil that Your light exposes.**

Cleanse us and free us;

**break the yoke we choose to carry
through Christ, who gave Himself for us,
so that we might be Your people, holy and whole. 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.

THE GOOD NEWS

Jeremiah 33:8 & Acts 10:43

M: I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against Me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against Me.

**P: To Him all the prophets bear witness
that everyone who believes in [Jesus]
receives forgiveness of sins through His name.**

SONG OF ASSURANCE

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy 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).
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

Isaiah 9: 1-2, 6-7

¹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time He brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time He has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

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

"Heroic God"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

PRAYER

GIVING TO THE LORD

O Mighty One, You have done and are doing great things for us,
and holy is Your Name.

Bless all we offer You —
ourselves, our time, and our possessions —
that through us Your grace and favor may be known
to all the world, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

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.
Music: Irish Traditional melody, arr. by Rory Cooney.
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WELCOMING OUR COVENANT KIDS TO THE LORD'S TABLE

Anneka & Olivia DeGroot

Do you believe the Bible is God's Word
and is to be believed and obeyed?

Do you acknowledge that you are a sinner
and in need of God's grace and mercy?

Do you accept Jesus as your Lord
and only hope for salvation?

Do you now promise, by the Holy Spirit
and with the strength God gives,
to live as a follower of Jesus?

Will you now pray for and serve this church,
give to God's work when you are able,
and submit to its leadership in all biblical things?

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 TOGETHER

The Apostles' Creed

M: Do you believe in God the Father?

**P: I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.**

M: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**P: I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord;
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
He 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.**

M: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**P: I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

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.**

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Please come forward to receive the elements from the elders at the table, then return to your seats. Please HOLD elements until we can all partake TOGETHER.

PRAYER | MEDITATION

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

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Scripture text from

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

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ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

**10:00AM: Worship Service
(in-person & livestream)**

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Mon & Wed & Fri (9:00AM-5:00PM)

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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.