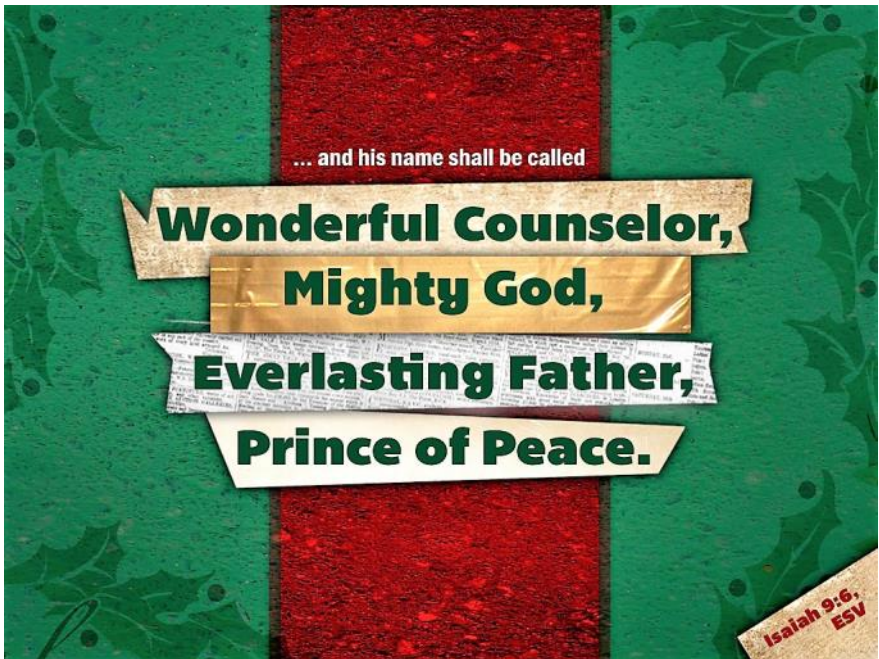




Ascension PCA

December 18, 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 season of Advent means there is something on the horizon
the likes of which we have never seen before...*

*What is possible is to not see it, to miss it,
to turn just as it brushes past you.*

*And you begin to grasp what it was you missed,
like Moses in the cleft of the rock,
watching God's [back] fade in the distance.*

So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder.

There will be time enough for running.

For rushing. For worrying. For pushing.

For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon.

~ J.L. Richardson

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

Isaiah 40:25–26, 28–31

M: To whom then will you compare Me,
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes on high and see:
who created these?

**P: He who brings out their host by number,
calling them all by name;
by the greatness of His might
and because He is strong in power,
not one is missing.**

M: Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
and young men shall fall exhausted;

**P: But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.**

PRAYER OF ADORATION & INVOCATION

SONGS OF PRAISE

Holy, Holy, Holy!

**Holy, holy, holy!
Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning
our song shall rise to Thee.
Holy, holy, holy!
Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons,
blessed Trinity!**

**Holy, holy, holy!
All the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns
around the glassy sea.**

**Cherubim and seraphim
falling down before Thee,
Who wert, and art,
and evermore shall be.**

**Holy, holy, holy!
Though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man
Thy glory may not see.
Only Thou art holy;
there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in pow'r,
in love, and purity.**

**Holy, holy, holy!
Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name
in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy!
Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons,
blessed Trinity!
God in three Persons,
blessed Trinity!**

Words by Reginald Heber (1783–1826). Music by John B. Dykes (1861).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

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).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

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 and Vikki Cook.
© 2014 Sovereign Grace Worship (ASCAP)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Psalm 2

Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
"Let us burst Their bonds apart
and cast away Their cords from us."

He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the LORD holds them in derision.
Then He will speak to them in His wrath,
and terrify them in His fury, saying,
"As for Me, I have set My King
on Zion, My holy hill."

I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, "You are My Son;
today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your heritage,
and the ends of the earth Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son,
lest He be angry, and you perish in the way,
for His wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.

John 17:1-11, 14-16

When Jesus had spoken these words, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I glorified You on earth, having accomplished the work that You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Me in Your own presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed.

I have manifested Your name to the people whom You gave Me out of the world. Yours they were, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they know that everything that You have given Me is from You. For I have given them the words that You gave Me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one.

I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

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: Eternal and merciful Father,
You have loved us with a love beyond understanding,
and You have set us on paths of righteousness
for Your name's sake.**

**Yet we have strayed from Your way;
we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed,
through what we have done
and what we have left undone.**

**As we remember Your lavish gift of grace
in Your Son Jesus,
we praise You and give You thanks that You forgive us.
Grant us now, we pray, the grace to die daily to sin,
and to rise daily to new life in Christ,
who lives and reigns with You,
in Whose strong name we pray. 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.

CORPORATE PRAYER OF ASSURANCE

based on Ephesians 1:3–18

**P: All glorious God, we give You thanks!
In Your Son, Jesus Christ,
You have given us every spiritual blessing
in the heavenly realms.**

**You chose us, before the world was made,
to be Your holy people, without fault in Your sight.
You adopted us as Your children in Christ.
You have set us free by His blood;
You have forgiven our sins.**

**All praise and glory be Yours, O God,
for the richness of Your grace,
for the splendor of Your gifts,
for the wonder of Your love.**

SONG OF ASSURANCE

Depth of Mercy

**Depth of mercy! Can there be,
mercy reaching even me?
God, the Just, His wrath forbears,
me the chief of sinners, spares.
So many times my heart has strayed
from His kind and perfect ways;
Making clear my desp'rate need,
for His blood —
poured out for me.**

**Give me grace, Lord, let me own,
all the wrongs that I have done.
Let me now my sins deplore,
look to You and sin no more.
There, for me, the Savior stands
holding forth His wounded hands,
Scars which ever cry for me;
Once condemned ...
but now set free.**

Words by Charles Wesley (1707–1788). Music by Bob Kauflin (1997).
Words: PUBLIC DOMAIN. Music: © 1997 Sovereign Grace Praise

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

“Father Forever”

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

SERMON NOTES: _____

PRAYER

GIVING TO THE LORD

Psalm 24:1

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

There Is a Redeemer

**There is a Redeemer:
Jesus, God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.**

*Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
And leaving Your Spirit 'til
the work on earth is done.*

**Jesus, my Redeemer,
name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
hope for sinners slain.**

*Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
And leaving Your Spirit 'til
the work on earth is done.*

**When I stand in glory,
I will see His face,
There I'll serve my King forever,
in that holy place.**

*Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
And leaving Your Spirit 'til
the work on earth is done.*

*Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
And leaving Your Spirit 'til
the work on earth is done.*

Words and music by Melody Green (1982).
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(Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

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

**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,
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.**

**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.

SONG OF MEDITATION

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.*

*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.*

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

Words and music by Lisa Clow and Bob Kauflin (2020)
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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

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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.