



Ascension PCA

December 25, 2022

... and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God,

Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace.

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

*Big and glossy and loud and fast —
that's how this bent-up world turns.
But God, when He comes — He shows up in this fetal ball.
He who carved the edges of the cosmos
curved Himself into a fetal ball in the dark,
tethered Himself to the uterine wall of a virgin,
and lets His cells divide, light splitting all white.
He gave up the heavens
that were not even large enough to contain Him
and lets Himself be held in a hand.
The mystery so large becomes the Baby so small,
and infinite God becomes infant.
The Giver becomes the Gift, this quiet offering.*

~ Ann Voskamp

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

from Luke 1

**P: My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...
for He who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is His name.
And His mercy is for those who fear Him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts;
He has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
in remembrance of His mercy,
as He spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.**

PRAYER OF ADORATION

SONGS OF PRAISE

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).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

**Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day!**

**All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
earth and heaven reflect Thy rays;
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain
call us to rejoice in Thee.**

**Mortals join the happy chorus,
which the morning stars began;
God the Father reigning o'er us,
Jesus bringing life to man.
Ever singing, by the Spirit,
victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us onward,
in the blessed song of life.**

Words by Henry van Dyke (1907). Music by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

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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SCRIPTURE READINGS

Micah 5:2-5a

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for Me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
Whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore He shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
Then the rest of His brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.

And He shall stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now He shall be great
to the ends of the earth.

And He shall be their peace.

Luke 1:68-79

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for He has visited and redeemed His people
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of His servant David,
as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old,
that we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us;
to show the mercy promised to our fathers
and to remember His holy covenant,
the oath that He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve Him without fear,
in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for You will go before the Lord to prepare His ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to His people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

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: God of salvation, in Christ You have done great things — our hearts are filled with joy.

By Your power You lifted us out of the wasteland of sin and brought us with joy and laughter into Your kingdom.

Salvation is Your gift to us.

But we confess that often we try to replace Your gift with our own efforts.

**We try to complete what is already perfect;
we try to add to what is already full;
we try to earn what we already have.**

Forgive us for our foolishness.

Forgive us for not acknowledging the love that has been shown to us.

Forgive us for occupying ourselves with our own concerns rather than Yours.

Come to us anew, and by Your grace, assist us to receive You

**with joy, as the shepherds;
with gratitude, as Simeon;
with obedience, as Mary;
with love, as You have loved us.**

Even so: come, Lord Jesus, 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.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

based on Isaiah 40:1-2

M: Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Your sins are pardoned.
The penalty is paid.

P: **Thanks be to God.**

SONG OF ASSURANCE

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 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

"Prince of Peace"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

PRAYER

GIVING TO THE LORD

Matthew 2:11

And going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother,
and they fell down and worshipped Him.
Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts,
gold and frankincense and myrrh.

SONG OF RESPONSE

O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide

**O Savior, rend the heavens wide;
come down, come down with mighty stride;
Unlock the gates, the doors break down,
unbar the way to heaven's crown.**

**O Morning Star, O radiant Sun,
when will our hearts behold Your dawn?
O Sun, arise; without Your light
we grope in gloom and dark of night.**

**Sin's dreadful doom upon us lies;
grim death looms fierce before our eyes.
Oh come, lead us, with mighty hand
through exile to the promised land.**

**There shall we all our praises bring
ever to You, our Savior King;
There shall we laud You and adore,
forever and forever more.
forever and forever more.
forever and forever more.**

Words by Friedrich von Spee (1622); translated by Martin L. Seltz (1969).

Music by Nathan Partain (2003).

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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 / RESPONDING IN PRAISE

**P: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for He has visited and redeemed His people.**

**The Dayspring from on high has visited us
to give light to those who sit in darkness,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

**For unto us a Child is born,
unto us a Son is given.**

**God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten Son
that whosoever believes in Him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.**

**For God sent not His Son into the world
to condemn the world;
but that the world through Him might be saved.**

**Mine eyes have seen Your salvation,
which You have prepared in the face of all people.**

Thanks be to God for His Gift beyond words!

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.

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

Do not be afraid,
for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy...
a Savior has been born to you;
He is Christ the Lord.

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

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ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

**10:00AM: 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*

PASTOR EMERITUS:

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

PASTORAL INTERN:

Philip Suh *philipsuh@outlook.com*

OFFICE MANAGER:

Rina Kroes *office@ascension-pca.org*

ELDERS:

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*

Mike Wheeler *mike@ascension-pca.org*

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR:

Monica Sledge *cmkesledge@gmail.com*

MEAL COORDINATOR:

Sheila Bloedow *s.bloedow@comcast.net*

NURSERY COORDINATOR:

Rebecca Wheeler *rwheeler2022@outlook.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.