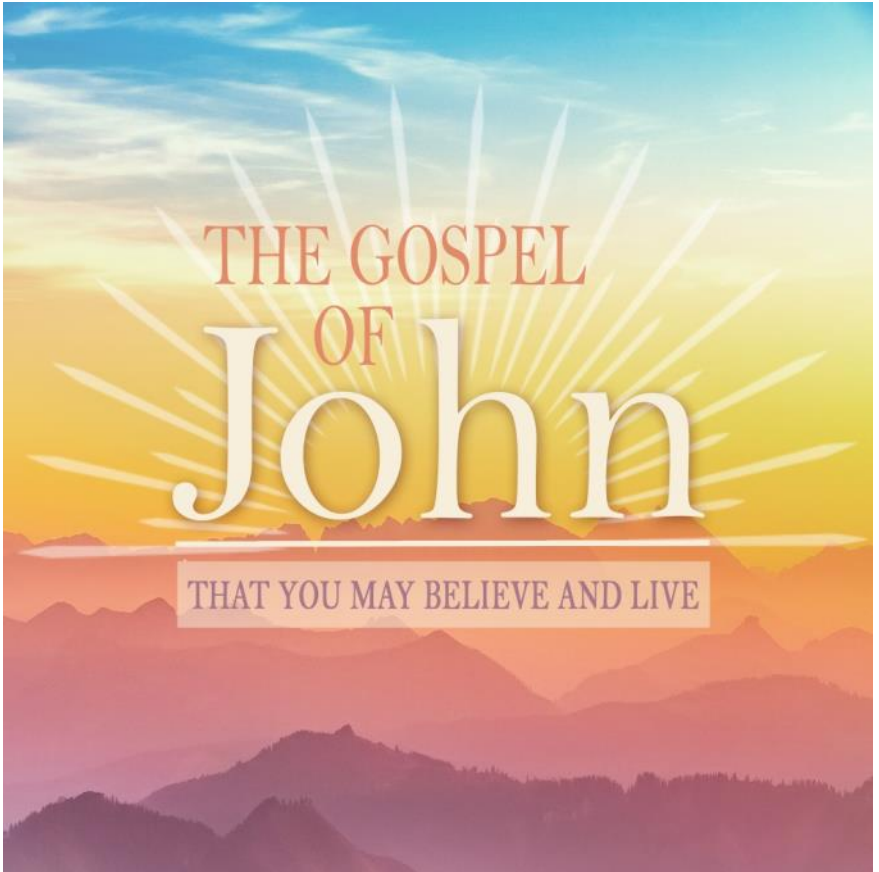




**Ascension** PCA

**May 7, 2023**



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

*Now then, little man,  
for a short time fly from your business;  
hide yourself for a moment from your turbulent thoughts.*

*Break off now your troublesome cares,  
and think less of your laborious occupations.*

*Make a little time for God, and rest for a while in Him.*

*Enter into the chamber of your mind,  
shut out everything but God  
and whatever helps you to seek Him,  
and, when you have shut the door, seek Him.*

*Speak now, O my whole heart, speak now to God:  
"I seek Thy face; Thy face, Lord, do I desire."*

~ Anselm of Canterbury

# 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!

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION & ADORATION

**P: Father,  
whose glory is ever above us,  
whose mercy is ever with us,  
and whose everlasting arms are ever underneath us,  
holy, holy, holy is Your name!**

**Hear us, Father,  
for we gather together in the name of Jesus,  
Your only begotten, well-beloved Son,  
that in Him we might recognize Your presence,  
that in Him we might see Your glory.**

**Hear us, Father,  
we have been too long in our far country.  
Receive us again in the name of Jesus.**

**To You, O Father,  
together with the Son and with the Holy Spirit,  
One God from all eternity and to all eternity,  
be glory, wisdom, power,  
and dominion evermore. Amen.**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

*Hebrews 12:22-24, 28-29*

**M: You have come to Mount Zion  
and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,  
and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,  
and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven,  
and to God, the judge of all,  
and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,  
and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant,  
and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word  
than the blood of Abel.**

**P: Therefore let us be grateful  
for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken,  
and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship,  
with reverence and awe,  
for our God is a consuming fire.**

# SONGS OF PRAISE

## *Only a Holy God*

**Who else commands all the hosts of heaven?  
Who else could make every king bow down?  
Who else can whisper and darkness trembles?  
Only a Holy God.**

**What other beauty demands such praises?  
What other splendor outshines the sun?  
What other majesty rules with justice?  
Only a Holy God.**

***Come and behold Him, the One and the Only.  
Cry out, sing holy, forever a Holy God.  
Come and worship the Holy God.***

**What other glory consumes like fire?  
What other power can raise the dead?  
What other name remains undefeated?  
Only a Holy God.**

***Come and behold Him, the One and the Only.  
Cry out, sing holy, forever a Holy God.  
Come and worship the Holy God.***

**Who else could rescue me from my failing?  
Who else would offer His only Son?  
Who else invites me to call Him Father?  
Only a Holy God,  
Only my Holy God!**

***Come and behold Him, the One and the Only.  
Cry out, sing holy, forever a Holy God.  
Come and worship the Holy God.***

***Come and behold Him, the One and the Only.  
Cry out, sing holy, forever a Holy God.  
Come and worship the Holy God.  
Come and worship the Holy God.***

Words and music by

Dustin R. Smith, Jonny Robinson, Michael Farren, Rich Thompson.

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*Is He Worthy?*

**Do you feel the world is broken? (We do)  
Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do)  
But do you know that all the dark won't stop  
the light from getting through? (We do)  
Do you wish that you could see it all made new? (We do)**

**Is all creation groaning? (It is)  
Is a new creation coming? (It is)  
Is the glory of the Lord to be  
the light within our midst? (It is)  
Is it good that we remind ourselves of this? (It is)**

***Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?  
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?***

***The Lion of Judah  
who conquered the grave,  
He is David's Root and the Lamb who died  
to ransom the slave.***

***Is He worthy, is He worthy  
of all blessing and honor and glory?  
Is He worthy of this? (He is!)***

**Does the Father truly love us? (He does)  
Does the Spirit move among us? (He does)  
And does Jesus, our Messiah,  
hold forever those He loves? (He does)  
Does our God intend to dwell again with us? (He does)**

***Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?  
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?***

***The Lion of Judah  
who conquered the grave,  
He is David's Root and the Lamb who died  
to ransom the slave.***

***From ev'ry people and tribe,  
every nation and tongue,  
He has made us a kingdom and priests to God  
to reign with the Son.***

***Is He worthy, is He worthy  
of all blessing and honor and glory?  
Is He worthy, is He worthy,  
is He worthy of this? (He is!)***

***Is He worthy? Is He worthy?  
He is!***

# 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

*Jeremiah 32:16–35*

*Elder Chris Sledge*

<sup>16</sup> “After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: <sup>17</sup> “Ah, LORD God! It is You who have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for You.

<sup>18</sup> You show steadfast love to thousands, but You repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts, <sup>19</sup> great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds. <sup>20</sup> You have shown signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and to this day in Israel and among all mankind, and have made a name for Yourself, as at this day. <sup>21</sup> You brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror. <sup>22</sup> And You gave them this land, which You swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey.

<sup>23</sup> And they entered and took possession of it. But they did not obey Your voice or walk in Your law. They did nothing of all You commanded them to do. Therefore You have made all this disaster come upon them. <sup>24</sup> Behold, the siege mounds have come up to the city to take it, and because of sword and famine and pestilence the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What You spoke has come to pass, and behold, You see it. <sup>25</sup> Yet You, O LORD God, have said to me, “Buy the field for money and get witnesses” — though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.”

<sup>26</sup> The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>27</sup> “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for Me?

<sup>28</sup> Therefore, thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall capture it. <sup>29</sup> The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city shall come and set this city on fire and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs offerings have been made to Baal and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods, to provoke Me to anger. <sup>30</sup> For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done nothing but evil in My sight from their youth.

The children of Israel have done nothing but provoke Me to anger by the work of their hands, declares the LORD. <sup>31</sup> This city has aroused My anger and wrath, from the day it was built to this day, so that I will remove it from My sight <sup>32</sup> because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah that they did to provoke Me to anger — their kings and their officials, their priests and their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>33</sup> They have turned to Me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction. <sup>34</sup> They set up their abominations in the house that is called by My name, to defile it. <sup>35</sup> They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into My mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.”

## CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

**P: Almighty God,**

**You are rich in mercy to all who call upon You.**

**Hear us as we come to You**

**humbly confessing our sins and transgressions  
and imploring Your mercy and forgiveness.**

**We have broken Your holy laws**

**by our deeds and by our words,  
and by the sinful affections of our hearts.**

**We confess before You**

**our disobedience and ingratitude,  
our pride and willfulness,  
and all our failures and shortcomings  
toward You and toward our fellow men.**

**Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father,  
and out of Your great goodness**

**grant that we may hereafter serve and please You  
in newness of life  
through the merit and mediation  
of Jesus Christ our Lord. 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

M: Take comfort in the assurance  
that even those things  
that are hidden from memory,  
or are too deep for our words,  
are not beyond God's forgiving love.  
God, who knows us completely,  
bestows pardon and peace through Jesus Christ.

**P: Thanks be to God.**

## SONG OF ASSURANCE

*My Jesus, I Love Thee*

**My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine.  
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.  
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;  
If ever I loved Thee,  
my Jesus, 'tis now.**

**I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me,  
and purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree.  
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;  
If ever I loved Thee,  
my Jesus, 'tis now.**

**I'll love Thee in life; I will love Thee in death,  
and praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath.  
And say, when the death-dew lies cold on my brow:  
If ever I loved Thee,  
my Jesus, 'tis now.**

**In mansions of glory and endless delight,  
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;  
I'll sing with the glittering crown upon my brow:  
If ever I loved Thee,  
my Jesus, 'tis now.**

Words by William R. Featherstone (1864).  
Music by Adoniram J. Gordon (1876)  
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.

## PASTORAL PRAYER

### READING OF THE WORD

*John 1:1-5*

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

### 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

*“In the Beginning”*

*Pastor Nate Hitchcock*

### PRAYER

SERMON NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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# GIVING TO THE LORD

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

But as you excel in everything —  
in faith, in speech, in knowledge,  
in all earnestness, and in our love for you —  
see that you excel in this act of grace also.

# SONG OF RESPONSE

*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

## 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 TOGETHER

*Colossians 1:15–23*

**P: He is the image of the invisible God,  
the firstborn of all creation.  
For by Him all things were created,  
in heaven and on earth,  
visible and invisible,  
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities —  
all things were created through Him and for Him.  
And He is before all things,  
and in Him all things hold together.  
And He is the head of the body, the church.  
He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,  
that in everything He might be preeminent.  
For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,  
and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things,  
whether on earth or in heaven,  
making peace by the blood of His cross.  
And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind,  
doing evil deeds,  
He has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death,  
in order to present you holy and blameless  
and above reproach before Him, . . .**

**if indeed you continue in the faith,  
stable and steadfast,  
not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard,  
which has been proclaimed in all creation  
under heaven...**

## 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

*May the Grace of Christ our Savior*

**May the grace of Christ our Savior,  
and the Father's boundless love,  
with the Holy Spirit's favor,  
rest upon us from above.**

**Thus may we abide in union  
with each other and the Lord,  
and possess, in sweet communion,  
joys which earth cannot afford.**

Words by John Newton (1770). Music by Asahel Nettleton (1825).  
PUBLIC DOMAIN



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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.

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## ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

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

**9:00AM: Discipleship Hour**

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