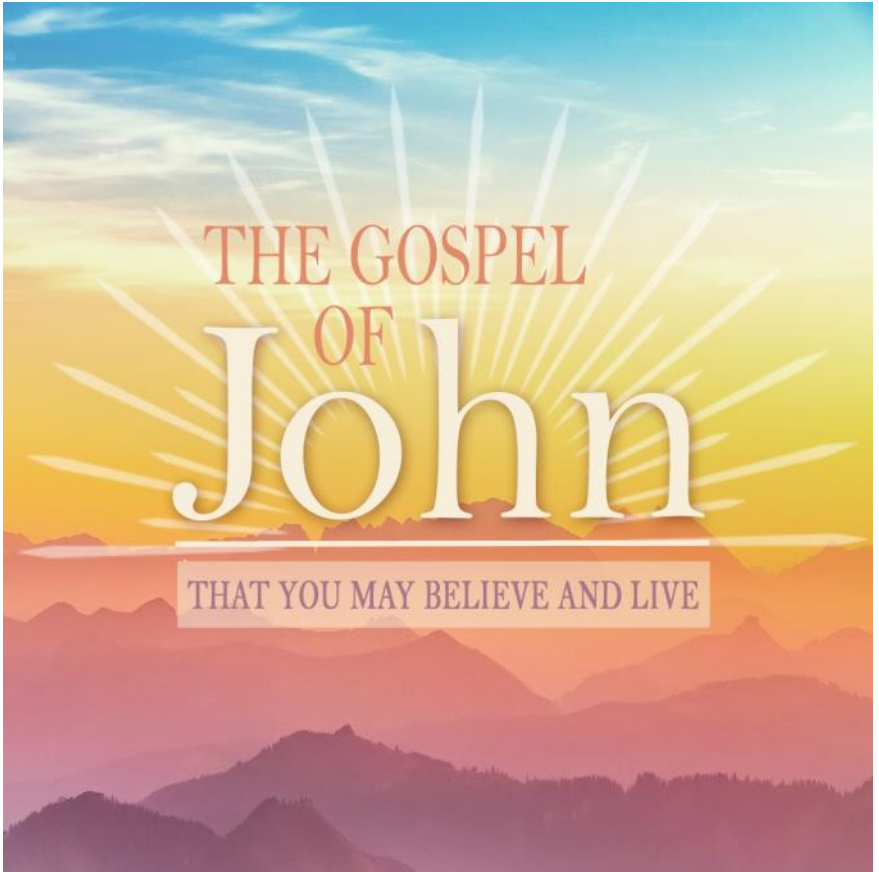




Ascension PCA

July 16, 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

Who are we, Lord God, that You have brought us here, to present ourselves before You? Who are we, that we have through Christ access by one Spirit to the Father?

Whom have we in heaven but You? We desire no one besides You. No one compares to You. When our flesh and our heart fail, be the strength of our heart and portion forever.

You are the portion of our inheritance in the other world, and of our cup in this world. Our heritage is good.

We will trust in Your mercy, O God, forever and ever.

We will wait on You. Amen.

~ Matthew Henry

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

Zephaniah 3:14-17

M: Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
He has cleared away your enemies.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
"Fear not, O Zion;
let not your hands grow weak.
The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
He will rejoice over you with gladness;
He will quiet you by His love;
He will exult over you with loud singing."

SONGS OF PRAISE

Our Great God

**Eternal God, unchanging,
mysterious and unknown;
Your boundless love, unailing,
in grace and mercy shown.
Bright seraphim in endless flight
around Your glorious throne;
They raise their voices day and night
in praise to You alone.**

***Hallelujah! Glory be to our great God!
Hallelujah! Glory be to our great God!***

**Lord, we are weak and frail,
helpless in the storm.
Surround us with Your angels,
hold us in Your arms.
Our cold and ruthless enemy,
his pleasure is our harm.
Rise up, O Lord, and he will flee
before our Sovereign God.**

***Hallelujah! Glory be to our great God!
Hallelujah! Glory be to our great God!***

**Let every creature in the sea
and every flying bird,
Let every mountain, every field,
and valley of the earth;
Let all the moons and all the stars
in all the universe
Sing praises to the living God
who rules them by His Word.**

***Hallelujah! Glory be to our great God!
Hallelujah! Glory be to our great God!
Hallelujah! Glory be to our great God!
Hallelujah! Glory be to our great God!***

Words and music by Fernando Ortega and Mac Powell.
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PUBLIC DOMAIN

Oh, How Good It Is

**Oh, how good it is when the family of God
dwells together in spirit, in faith and unity.
Where the bonds of peace, of acceptance and love
are the fruit of His presence here among us.**

***So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord;
and with one heart we'll live out His Word.
Till the whole earth sees the Redeemer has come,
for He dwells in the presence of His people.***

**Oh, how good it is on this journey we share,
to rejoice with the happy and weep with those who mourn.
For the weak find strength, the afflicted find grace,
when we offer the blessing of belonging.**

***So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord;
and with one heart we'll live out His Word.
Till the whole earth sees the Redeemer has come,
for He dwells in the presence of His people.***

**Oh, how good it is to embrace His command
to prefer one another, forgive as He forgives.
When we live as one, we all share in the love
of the Son, with the Father, and the Spirit.**

***So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord;
and with one heart we'll live out His Word.
Till the whole earth sees the Redeemer has come,
for He dwells in the presence of His people.***

Words and music by Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty, Ross Holmes, Stuart Townend
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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

Psalms 46

Elder Chris Sledge

- 1 God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
- 3 though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*
- 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- 5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.
- 6 The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
He utters His voice, the earth melts.
- 7 The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*
- 8 Come, behold the works of the LORD,
how He has brought desolations on the earth.
- 9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
He burns the chariots with fire.

- ¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!"
- ¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Selah

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

**P: Almighty and everlasting God,
Who forgives the sins of the penitent,
we confess to You now:**

**We have not obeyed You
with all our heart, mind, and strength,
nor have we loved our neighbors as ourselves.
O Lord, hear us! O Lord, forgive us!**

**Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,
that we might be declared forgiven
through the righteousness of Your Son.**

This we plead through 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.*

THE PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

from II Corinthians 5

God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ,
not counting men's sins against them ...

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us,
so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

SONG OF ASSURANCE

Rejoice, the Lord is King!

**Rejoice, the Lord is King; your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing, and triumph evermore.**

***Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!***

**Jesus, the Savior, reigns, the God of truth and love;
when He had purged our stains He took His seat above.**

***Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!***

**His kingdom cannot fail, He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
the keys of death and hell are to our Jesus giv'n.**

***Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!***

**Rejoice in glorious hope! Our Lord, the Judge, shall come,
and take His servants up to their eternal home.**

***Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!***

Words by Charles Wesley (1744); Music by John Darwall (1770).
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

John 2:23 – 3:21

²³ Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs that He was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus on His part did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to bear witness about man, for He himself knew what was in man.

¹ Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." ³ Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

⁹ Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

¹⁸ Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

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

"New Birth"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

GIVING TO THE LORD

from Ephesians 5:1-2

As God's dear children, then, take Him as your pattern,
and follow Christ by loving as He loved you, giving Himself up
for us as an offering and a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God.

SONG OF RESPONSE

Rock of Ages

**Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in Thee;
let the water and the blood,
from Thy wounded side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure;
cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.**

**Not the labors of my hands
can fulfil Thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears forever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.**

**Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to Thy cross I cling;
naked, come to Thee for dress;
helpless, look to Thee for grace;
foul, I to the Fountain fly;
wash me, Savior, or I die.**

**While I draw this fleeting breath,
when my eyelids close in death,
when I soar to worlds unknown,
see Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in Thee.**

Words by Augustus Montague Toplady (1776).

Music by James Ward (1985).

Words: PUBLIC DOMAIN. Music: ©1985 James Ward 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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

CONFESSING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

The Apostles' Creed & The Mystery of Faith

- 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.**
- M: Great is the mystery of faith:
- P: Christ has died;
Christ is risen;
Christ will come again.**
- M: Praise to you, Lord Jesus:
- P: Dying, You destroyed our death;
Rising, You restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**
- M: According to His commandment:
- P: We remember His death;
We proclaim His resurrection;
We await His coming in glory.**

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

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.**

**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 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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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.

STAFF & LEADERSHIP

PASTOR:

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

PASTOR EMERITUS:

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

OFFICE MANAGER:

Rina Kroes *office@ascension-pca.org*

ELDERS:

Brett Chase *brett@ascension-pca.org*

C.J. DeGroot *cjdegroot@ascension-pca.org*

Chris Sledge *chris@ascension-pca.org*

Philip Suh *philipsuh@ascension-pca.org*

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

DEACONS:

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*

MEDIA (SOUND & PROJECTION):

Dave Ball *dave@daveball.net*



ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

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

9:00AM: Discipleship Hour

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*