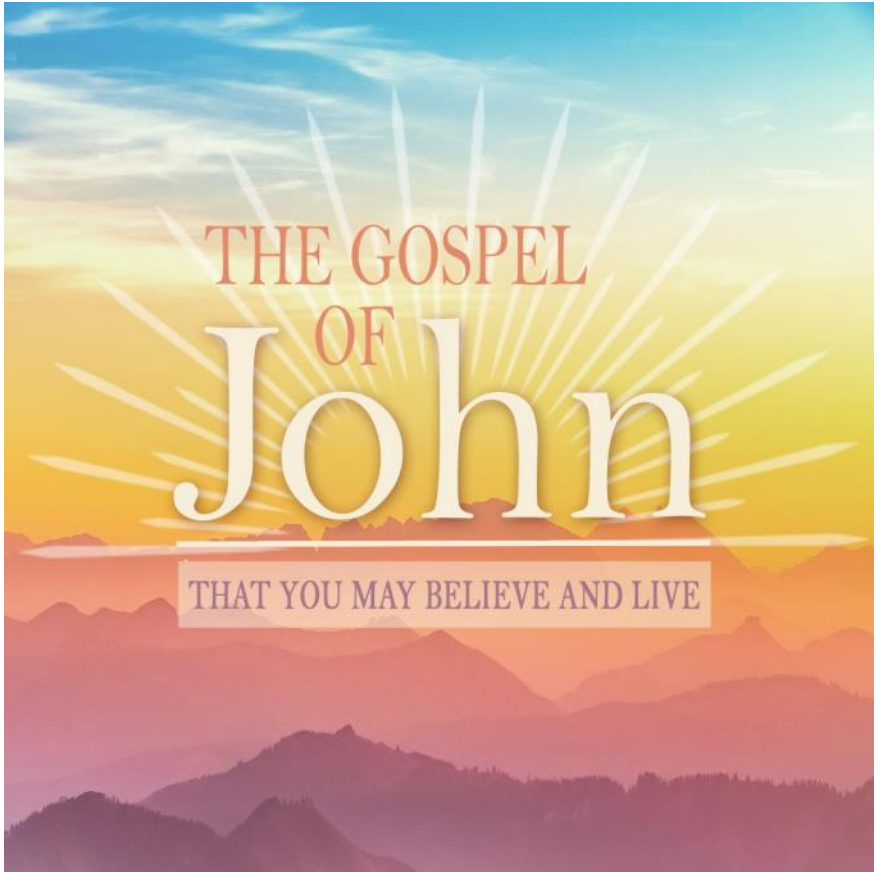




Ascension PCA

September 17, 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

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a Way, as gives us breath:
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:
And such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
Such a Joy, as none can move:
Such a Love, as none can part:
Such a Heart, as joys in love.

“The Call” by George Herbert

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 Colossians 2:13-14 & Psalm 32:11

M: Grace and peace to you who were dead in your sins,
for God has made you alive with Christ and forgiven all your sins.
Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing all you who are now upright in heart!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION & ADORATION

SONGS OF PRAISE

Come, Thou Almighty King

**Come, thou Almighty King,
help us Thy name to sing,
help us to praise.
Father, all glorious,
o'er all victorious,
come and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.**

**Come, Thou Incarnate Word,
gird on Thy mighty sword,
our prayer attend.
Come, and Thy people bless,
and give Thy Word success;
Spirit of holiness,
on us descend.**

**Come, Holy Comforter,
Thy sacred witness bear
in this glad hour.
Thou who almighty art,
now rule in every heart,
and ne'er from us depart,
Spirit of pow'r.**

To the great One in Three
eternal praises be,
hence evermore.
His sovereign majesty
may we in glory see,
and to eternity
love and adore.

Words Anonymous (ca. 1757). Music by Felice de Giardini (1769).
PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens

**Praise the Lord! Ye heavens adore Him;
praise Him angels, in the height;
sun and moon, rejoice before Him;
praise Him, all ye stars of light.**

**Praise the Lord, for He hath spoken;
worlds His mighty voice obeyed;
laws which never shall be broken
for their guidance He hath made.**

*All creation join the song of praise.
Let every tongue declare His mighty ways,
and we will sing of Your goodness and mercy
all of our days!*

**Praise the Lord! for He is glorious;
never shall His promise fail;
God hath made His saints victorious;
sin and death shall not prevail.**

*All creation join the song of praise.
Let every tongue declare His mighty ways,
and we will sing of Your goodness and mercy
all of our days!*

*Glory, glory, all glory to You, Lord!
Glory, glory, all glory to You, Lord!
Glory, glory, all glory to You, Lord!*

**Praise the God of our salvation!
hosts on high, His power proclaim;
heaven and earth, and all creation
laud and magnify His Name!**

...

**All creation join the song of praise.
Let every tongue declare His mighty ways,
and we will sing of Your goodness and mercy
all of our days!
and we will sing of Your goodness and mercy
all of our days!**

Words and music by Eric J. Marshall.

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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 His mercy 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

Psalm 55

Elder Chris Sledge

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David.

- 1 Give ear to my prayer, O God,
and hide not Yourself from my plea for mercy!
- 2 Attend to me, and answer me;
I am restless in my complaint and I moan,
- 3 because of the noise of the enemy,
because of the oppression of the wicked.
For they drop trouble upon me,
and in anger they bear a grudge against me.
- 4 My heart is in anguish within me;
the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
- 5 Fear and trembling come upon me,
and horror overwhelms me.
- 6 And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest;
- 7 yes, I would wander far away;
I would lodge in the wilderness;
- 8 I would hurry to find a shelter
from the raging wind and tempest."
- 9 Destroy, O LORD, divide their tongues;
for I see violence and strife in the city.

Selah

10 Day and night they go around it
on its walls,
and iniquity and trouble are within it;
11 ruin is in its midst;
oppression and fraud
do not depart from its marketplace.
12 For it is not an enemy who taunts me —
then I could bear it;
it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me —
then I could hide from him.
13 But it is you, a man, my equal,
my companion, my familiar friend.
14 We used to take sweet counsel together;
within God's house we walked in the throng.
15 Let death steal over them;
let them go down to Sheol alive;
for evil is in their dwelling place and in their heart.
16 But I call to God,
and the LORD will save me.
17 Evening and morning and at noon
I utter my complaint and moan,
and He hears my voice.
18 He redeems my soul in safety
from the battle that I wage,
for many are arrayed against me.
19 God will give ear and humble them,
He who is enthroned from of old, *Selah*
because they do not change
and do not fear God.
20 My companion stretched out his hand against his friends;
he violated his covenant.
21 His speech was smooth as butter,
yet war was in his heart;
his words were softer than oil,
yet they were drawn swords.
22 Cast your burden on the LORD,
and He will sustain you;
He will never permit
the righteous to be moved.
23 But you, O God, will cast them down
into the pit of destruction;
men of blood and treachery
shall not live out half their days.
But I will trust in You.

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

**P: Holy Father, You see us as we are,
and know our inmost thoughts.**

**We confess that we are unworthy of Your gracious care.
We too easily forget that all life comes from You
and that to You all life returns.**

**We have not sought to do Your will with our whole hearts.
We have not lived as grateful children,
nor loved as Christ loved us.**

**Apart from You, we are nothing.
Only Your grace can sustain us.**

**Lord, in Your mercy, forgive us,
heal us, and make us whole.**

**Set us free from our sin,
and restore us to the joy of Your salvation
now and forever. 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

Isaiah 55:6-7

Seek the LORD while He may be found;
call upon Him while He is near;
let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

SONGS OF ASSURANCE

Nothing but the Blood of Jesus

**What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
*Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

***Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

**For my cleansing this I see:
*Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

**For my pardon this my plea:
*Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

***Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

**This is all my hope and peace:
*Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

**This is all my righteousness:
*Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

***Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow;
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.***

Words and music by Robert Lowry (1876).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

O Love that Will Not Let Me Go

**O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
that in Thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.**

**O Light that follow'st all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.**

**O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain
and feel the promise is not vain,
that morn shall tearless be.**

**O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.**

Words by George Matheson (1882). Music by Christopher Miner (1997)
Words: PUBLIC DOMAIN; music: ©1997 Miner, Christopher

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 6:1–21

¹ After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. ² And a large crowd was following Him, because they saw the signs that He was doing on the sick. ³ Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. ⁵ Lifting up His eyes, then, and seeing that a large crowd was coming toward Him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little." ⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they for so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, about five thousand in number. ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed them to those who were seated. So also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² And when they had eaten their fill, He told His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost." ¹³ So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with fragments from the five barley loaves left by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that He had done, they said, "This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" ¹⁵ Perceiving then that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by Himself.

¹⁶ When evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were frightened. ²⁰ But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹ Then they were glad to take Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going.

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

"Mission Impossible"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES: _____

GIVING TO THE LORD

Matthew 10:8

Freely you have received, freely give.

SONG OF RESPONSE

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

**Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
as Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.**

***Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!***

**Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.**

***Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!***

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!**

***Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!***

Words by Thomas Obediah Chisholm (1923).

Music by William Marion Runyan (1923).

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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

**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,
and 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 Ghost,
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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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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