



Ascension PCA

December 3, 2023



FIRST SUNDAY OF
ADVENT

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

When the Father longed to show,
a love He wanted us to know,
He sent His only Son and so,
became a holy embryo.
That is the mystery!
More than you can see.
Give up on your pondering,
and fall down on your knees.
No fiction as fantastic and wild.
A mother made by her own child.
The hopeless babe who cried,
was God incarnate and man deified.

~ "To the Mystery" by Michael Card

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 ADORATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

from Revelation 19:5-7

M: Praise our God, all you His servants,
you who fear Him, both small and great!

**P: Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns!
Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!**

SONGS OF PRAISE

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

**Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set Thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in Thee.**

**Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth Thou art,
dear Desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of every longing heart.**

**Joy to those who long to see Thee,
Dayspring from on high, appear;
come, Thou promised Rod of Jesse,
of Thy birth we long to hear!**

**O'er the hills the angels singing
news, glad tidings of a birth:
"Go to Him, your praises bringing;
Christ the Lord has come to earth."**

**Come to earth to taste our sadness,
He whose glories knew no end;
by His life He brings us gladness,
our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.**

**Leaving riches without number,
born within a cattle stall,
this the everlasting wonder,
Christ was born the Lord of all.**

**Born Thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by Thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to Thy glorious throne.**

Words by Charles Wesley (st 1,4) & Mark E Hunt (st 2-3).
Music by Rowland Hugh Pritchard (1855)
St 1,4: PUBLIC DOMAIN; St 2-3 © 1978 Intersarsity Christian Fellowship

Come, Holy One

**Hasten now, O loving Lord, to us ...
we're thirsty.
Fill these souls, Spirit, every hour ...
we need Thee.**

***Come, come Holy One, come meet us.
All, all for Your glory... Lord Jesus.***

**Lead us on the perfect path, O Lord,
and may we ...
... sin no more — this spotless bride, the Church,
is Yours.**

***Come, come Holy One, come meet us.
All, all for Your glory ... Lord Jesus.
Come, come Holy One, come meet us.
All, all for Your glory ... Lord Jesus.***

Words and music by Eric J. Marshall.
© 2016 Scot Family Reunion Songs (BMI)

Light of the World

**Light of the World, Treasure of Heaven,
brilliant like the stars in the wintery sky.
Joy of the Father, reach through the darkness,
shine across the earth, send the shadows to flight.**

**Light of the World, from the beginning
the tragedies of time were no match for Your love.
From great heights of glory, You saw my story.
God, You entered in and became one of us.**

***Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah,
sing hallelujah for the things He has done!
Come and adore Him, bow down before Him.
Sing hallelujah to the Light of the World.***

**Light of the world, crown in a manger,
born for the cross, to suffer, to save.
High King of Heaven, death is the poorer.
We are the richer by the price that He paid.**

***Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah,
sing hallelujah for the things He has done!
Come and adore Him, bow down before Him.
Sing hallelujah to the Light of the World.***

**Light of the World, soon will be coming.
With fire in His eyes, He will ransom His own.
Through clouds He will lead us straight into glory,
and there He shall reign forevermore.**

***Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah,
sing hallelujah for the things He has done!
Come and adore Him, bow down before Him.
Sing hallelujah to the Light of the World.***

Words & music by Andrew Bergthold, Ed Cash, Franni Cash,
Martin Cash, Scott Cash
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Cash Publishing Designee; We The Kingdom Music

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.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Genesis 3:15 / Revelation 21:1-7

"I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
He shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise His heel."

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven
and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.
And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of
heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her
husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

And He who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also He said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be My son. ”

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

P: Father, forgive our sins.

**Forgive the sins that we remember,
and the sins we have forgotten.**

**Forgive our many failures in the face of temptation,
and those times when we have been stubborn
in the face of correction.**

**Forgive the times we have been proud
of our own achievements,**

and those when we have failed to boast in Your works.

**Forgive the harsh judgments we have made of others,
and the leniency we have shown ourselves.**

**Forgive the lies we have told to others,
and the truths we have avoided.**

**Forgive us the pain we have caused others
and the indulgence we have shown ourselves.**

Have mercy on us and make us whole.

Through Jesus we plead, 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: While it is true that we have sinned,
it is a greater truth that we are forgiven
through God's love in Jesus Christ.

To all who humbly seek the mercy of God...
in Jesus Christ your sin is forgiven.

P: Thanks be to God!

SONG OF ASSURANCE

His Mercy is More

***Praise the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins they are many, His mercy is more!***

**What love could remember no wrongs we have done?
Omniscient, all-knowing, He counts not their sum.
Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore;
Our sins they are many, His mercy is more.**

**What patience would wait as we constantly roam?
What Father, so tender, is calling us home?
He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor.
Our sins they are many, His mercy is more.**

***Praise the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins they are many, His mercy is more!***

**What riches of kindness He lavished on us.
His blood was the payment, His life was the cost.
We stood 'neath a debt we could never afford.
Our sins they are many, His mercy is more.**

***Praise the Lord, His mercy is more!
Stronger than darkness, new every morn.
Our sins they are many, His mercy is more!***

Music and words by Matt Boswell and Matt Papa
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Publishing,
Messenger Hymns

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

Hosea 3:1-5

¹ And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." ² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. ³ And I said to her, "You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you." ⁴ For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. ⁵ Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to His goodness in the latter days.

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

"The Pursuing Lover"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES: _____

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

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.

GIVING TO THE LORD

Hebrews 13:16

And do not forget to do good and to share with others,
for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

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

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.

SONG OF MEDITATION

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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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

The Holy Bible, **English Standard Version.**

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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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