



Ascension PCA

December 10, 2023



SECOND 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

It was love, mere love; it was free love that brought the Lord Jesus Christ into our world...

Let the birth of a Redeemer, which redeemed us from sin, from wrath, from death, from hell, be always remembered; may this Savior's love never be forgotten!

But may we sing forth all His love and glory as long as life shall last here, and through an endless eternity in the world above!

May we chant forth the wonders of redeeming love and the riches of free grace, amidst angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, without intermission, forever and ever!

~ George Whitefield

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

M: Jesus, Son of the living God, splendor of the Father,
eternal Light.

P: Lord, we praise You!

M: Jesus, King of Glory, Sun of Righteousness,
Son of the virgin Mary.

P: Lord, we praise You!

M: Jesus, Wonderful Counselor, everlasting Lord,
Prince of Peace.

P: Lord, we praise You!

M: Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, our help and refuge.

P: Lord, we praise You!

M: Jesus, Good Shepherd, true Light, our way and our life.

P: Lord, we praise You! Amen.

SONGS OF PRAISE

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

Tell Out, My Soul

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of His word;
in God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!
Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!
Powers, dominions lay their glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight;
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of His word!
Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!**

Words by Timothy Dudley-Smith (1961);
Music by Holly Dutton (2001);
Words: ©1961 Hope Publishing Company. Music: ©2001 Dutton, Holly

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.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Isaiah 40:1-11 / Luke 3:1-6

Comfort, comfort My people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD'S hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Go on up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Behold your God!"
Behold, the LORD GOD comes with might,
and His arm rules for Him;
behold, His reward is with Him,
and His recompense before Him.
He will tend His flock like a shepherd;
He will gather the lambs in His arms;
He will carry them in His bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make His paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall become straight,
and the rough places shall become level ways,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

**P: Great and glorious God, through Jesus Christ our Savior
You have shown us that the blessed age of grace has
appeared and the hoped-for time of salvation has come.**

**Yet we confess that we too often cling to the glories
of the present age; worldly passions and pursuits,
self-indulgent, crooked, and ungodly ways.**

**We choose to walk in darkness,
unwilling to see the evil that Your light exposes.**

**Cleanse us and free us;
break the yoke we choose to carry
through Christ, who gave Himself for us,
so that we might be Your people,
holy and whole. 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

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 Berghold, Ed Cash, Franni Cash,
Martin Cash, Scott Cash
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Cash Publishing Designee; We The Kingdom Music

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

Micah 5:1-5a

- 1 Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops;
siege is laid against us;
with a rod they strike the judge of Israel
on the cheek.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 And He shall be their peace.

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 Strong Shepherd"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

PRAYER

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Once in Royal David's City

**Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.**

**He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and His shelter was a stable,
and His cradle was a stall:
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.**

**And our eyes at last shall see Him,
through His own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above.
And He leads His children on
to the place where He is gone.**

**Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see Him, but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
When like stars His children crowned
all in white shall wait around.**

Words by Cecil F. Alexander (1848).
Music by Henry J. Gauntlett (1849).
PUBLIC DOMAIN.

GIVING TO THE LORD

Psalms 24:1

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.

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

from the Belgic Confession, article 18

P: We profess that God fulfilled the promise that He had made to the early fathers by the mouth of his holy prophets when He sent His only and eternal Son into the world at the time set by Him.

The Son took the "form of a servant" and was made in the "likeness of man," truly assuming a real human nature, with all its weaknesses, except for sin; being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, without male participation.

And He not only assumed human nature as far as the body is concerned, but also a real human soul, in order that He might be a real human being. For since the soul had been lost as well as the body, He had to assume them both to save them both together. In this way He is truly our Immanuel — that is: "God with us".

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

As A Beggar I Come To Thee

**As a beggar, I come to Thee.
As a beggar, I come to Thee.
With empty hands, without one plea.
As a beggar, I come to Thee.**

**At Thy table I find a feast.
At Thy table I find a feast.
Here come the poor, the lame, the least.
At Thy table I find a feast.**

**Precious Savior, how can it be?
Precious Savior, how can it be?
Thine own dear blood was shed for me!
Precious Savior, how can it be?**

**All my days, Lord, Thy will be done.
All my days, Lord, Thy will be done.
Long I to see Thy kingdom come.
All my days, Lord, Thy will be done.**

**Come, Lord Jesus, O quickly come!
Come, Lord Jesus, O quickly come!
With lifted hearts our prayer is sung:
Come, Lord Jesus, O quickly come!
With lifted hearts our prayer is sung:
Come, Lord Jesus, O quickly come!**

Music and words by Luke Morton (2012).
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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.

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*