



Ascension PCA

December 31, 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

*God reveals His presence: let us now adore Him,
and with awe appear before Him.*

*God is in His temple: all within keep silence,
prostrate lie with deepest reverence.*

*Him alone God we own, Him our God and Savior:
Praise His Name forever!*

*O Thou fount of blessing purify my spirit,
trusting only in Thy merit:
like the holy angels who behold Thy glory,
may I ceaselessly adore Thee.*

*Let Thy will ever still rule Thy Church terrestrial,
as the hosts celestial.*

~ Gerhard Tersteegen

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

Psalm 68:32-35

M: Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth,
sing praise to the LORD,
to Him who rides the ancient skies above,
who thunders with mighty voice.
Proclaim the power of God,
whose majesty is over Israel,
whose power is in the skies.
You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary;
the God of Israel gives power and strength to His people.
Praise be to God!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

**P: Mighty God, powerful and majestic,
Heavenly Father, most gracious and most kind,
We come to You as Your children,
because we are in need of You
and we want to be with You.
We come to You as our Lord and God,
because we are in awe of You
and desire to worship You.
We come to You in the name of Jesus
because You have promised to be with us
when we gather together in His name.
All glory be to You, O Father,
and to You, Eternal Son,
and to You, Holy Spirit —
One God, forever blessed! Amen.**

SONGS OF PRAISE

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

**Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.**

**Unresting, unfasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might.
Thy justice, like mountains high soaring above;
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.**

**Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight.
All praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!**

Words by Walter Chambers Smith (1867).
Traditional Welsh hymn melody.
PUBLIC DOMAIN

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
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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

Psalm 66

Elder Brett Chase

- 1 Shout for joy to God, all the earth;
- 2 sing the glory of His name;
give to Him glorious praise!
- 3 Say to God, "How awesome are Your deeds!
So great is Your power that Your enemies come cringing to You.
- 4 All the earth worships You
and sings praises to You;
they sing praises to Your name." *Selah*
- 5 Come and see what God has done:
He is awesome in His deeds toward the children of man.
- 6 He turned the sea into dry land;
they passed through the river on foot.
There did we rejoice in Him,
- 7 who rules by His might forever,
whose eyes keep watch on the nations —
let not the rebellious exalt themselves. *Selah*
- 8 Bless our God, O peoples;
let the sound of His praise be heard,
- 9 who has kept our soul among the living
and has not let our feet slip.

10 For you, O God, have tested us;
 You have tried us as silver is tried.
 11 You brought us into the net;
 You laid a crushing burden on our backs;
 12 You let men ride over our heads;
 we went through fire and through water;
 yet You have brought us out to a place of abundance.
 13 I will come into Your house with burnt offerings;
 I will perform my vows to You,
 14 that which my lips uttered
 and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.
 15 I will offer to You burnt offerings of fattened animals,
 with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;
 I will make an offering of bulls and goats. Selah
 16 Come and hear, all you who fear God,
 and I will tell what He has done for my soul.
 17 I cried to Him with my mouth,
 and high praise was on my tongue.
 18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
 the LORD would not have listened.
 19 But truly God has listened;
 He has attended to the voice of my prayer.
 20 Blessed be God,
 because He has not rejected my prayer
 or removed His steadfast love from me!

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

from The Valley of Vision

**P: Merciful Lord, pardon all my sins
 of this day, week, year,
 all the sins of my life,
 of lip, life and walk,
 of hard-heartedness, unbelief, presumption, pride,
 of lack of bold decision in the cause of Christ,
 of deficiency in outspoken zeal for His glory,
 of bringing dishonor upon Your great name,
 of impurity in thought, word, and deed,
 of covetousness, which is idolatry.**
**Sins in private and in the family,
 in the study of thy Word and in the neglect of it,
 in prayer irreverently offered and coldly withheld,
 in time misspent,**

**In yielding to Satan's wiles,
in opening my heart to his temptations,
in being unwatchful when I know him nigh,
in quenching the Holy Spirit.**

**Pardon all my sins,
known and unknown,
felt and unfelt,
confessed and not confessed,
remembered or forgotten.**

Good Lord, hear; and hearing, forgive.

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

Titus 3:4-5a

When the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,
He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done,
but because of His mercy...

SONG OF ASSURANCE

I Will Wait for You (Psalm 130)

**Out of the depths I cry to You,
in darkest places I will call,
incline Your ear to me anew,
and hear my cry for mercy, Lord.**

**Were You to count my sinful ways,
how could I come before Your throne?
yet, full forgiveness meets my gaze,
I stand redeemed by grace alone.**

*I will wait for You, I will wait for You,
on Your word I will rely.*

*I will wait for You, surely wait for You
till my soul is satisfied.*

**So put Your hope in God alone,
take courage in His power to save,
completely and forever won
by Christ emerging from the grave.**

***I will wait for You, I will wait for You,
on Your word I will rely.
I will wait for You, surely wait for You
till my soul is satisfied.***

**Now He has come to make a way,
and God Himself has paid the price,
that all who trust in Him today
find healing in His sacrifice.**

***I will wait for You, I will wait for You
through the storm and through the night.
I will wait for You, surely wait for You,
for Your love is my delight.***

***I will wait for You, I will wait for You
through the storm and through the night.
I will wait for You, surely wait for You,
for Your love is my delight.***

Words and music by Jordan Kauflin, Keith Getty, Matthew Merker,
Stuart Townend
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Songs

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

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

¹ Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.

² We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly
mentioning you in our prayers, ³ remembering before
our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love
and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For
we know, brothers loved by God, that He has chosen you,

⁵ because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸ For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything. ⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

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

“Three Little Words for a Big Year”

Pastor Ed Volz

PRAYER

SERMON NOTES: _____

GIVING TO THE LORD

Proverbs 3:5,9

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.

Honor the LORD with your wealth
and with the firstfruits of all your produce.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

**Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.**

**I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
hold me with Thy powerful hand.**

**Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more;
feed me till I want no more.**

**Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;**

**Let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through;**

**Strong Deliv'rer, strong Deliv'rer,
be Thou still my strength and shield,
be Thou still my strength and shield.**

**When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of deaths, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.**

**Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee;
I will ever give to Thee.**

Welsh hymn: words by William Williams (1745);
stanza 1 translated by Peter Williams (1771),
stanza 2-3 translated by William Williams (1772)
PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Yet Not I, But Through Christ in Me

**What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer;
there is no more for heaven now to give.
He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom,
my steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace.**

*To this I hold: my hope is only Jesus;
for my life is wholly bound to His.
Oh, how strange and divine,
I can sing: all is mine!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

**The night is dark, but I am not forsaken;
for by my side the Saviour He will stay.
I labor on in weakness and rejoicing,
for in my need His power is displayed.**

*To this I hold: my Shepherd will defend me;
through the deepest valley He will lead.
Oh, the night has been won,
and I shall overcome.
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

**No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven;
the future sure, the price it has been paid.
For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon,
and He was raised to overthrow the grave.**

*To this I hold: my sin has been defeated;
Jesus now and ever is my plea.
Oh, the chains are released,
I can sing: I am free!
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

**With every breath I long to follow Jesus;
for He has said that He will bring me home.
And day by day I know He will renew me,
until I stand with joy before the throne.**

*To this I hold: my hope is only Jesus;
all the glory evermore to Him.
When the race is complete,
still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.
When the race is complete,
still my lips shall repeat:
Yet not I, but through Christ in me.*

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
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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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