



Ascension PCA

December 1, 2024



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

On this side of eternity, Christmas is still a promise.
Yes, the Savior has come,
and with Him peace on earth,
but the story is not finished.
Yes, there is peace in our hearts,
but we long for peace in our world.
Every Christmas is still a "turning of the page"
until Jesus returns.
Every December 25 marks another year
that draws us closer to the fulfillment of the ages,
that draws us closer to ... home.
Christmas is an invitation to a celebration yet to happen.
If you've got Christmas longing,
you're about to be satisfied...
just hold on and say with me...
Maranatha! Come Lord!

~ Joni Eareckson Tada

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

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

Glorious and Mighty

**Majesty, Your glory is shining
brighter than the moon and the stars.
Marveling, we honor and fear You
above all gods.**

*Glorious and mighty,
You're awesome in beauty.*

Joyful songs we raise!

*Glorious and mighty,
You're awesome in beauty,
greatly to be praised!*

**Majesty, You fashioned the heavens,
Your decrees can never be changed.
Over all the plans of the nations,
Your judgments reign.**

*Glorious and mighty,
You're awesome in beauty.*

Joyful songs we raise!

*Glorious and mighty,
You're awesome in beauty,
greatly to be praised!*

**Majesty, we'll sing with creation
when You come again in the clouds.
Every knee will bow down and worship
the one true God.**

***Glorious and mighty,
You're awesome in beauty.
Joyful songs we raise!
Glorious and mighty,
You're awesome in beauty,
greatly to be praised!***

Words by Bob Kauflin, Joel Sczebel, Todd Twining.
Music by Joel Sczebel, Todd Twining.
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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; Words for st 2-3 © 1978 Intersivity Christian Fellowship

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Isaiah 49:1-7

- ¹ Listen to me, O coastlands,
and give attention, you peoples from afar.
The LORD called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother He named my name.
- ² He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of His hand He hid me;
He made me a polished arrow;
in His quiver He hid me away.
- ³ And He said to me, "You are My servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
- ⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my right is with the LORD,
and my recompense with my God."
- ⁵ And now the LORD says,
He who formed me from the womb to be His servant,
to bring Jacob back to Him;
and that Israel might be gathered to Him —
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,
and my God has become my strength —
- ⁶ He says:
"It is too light a thing that you should be My servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
- ⁷ Thus says the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel and His Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation,
the servant of rulers:
"Kings shall see and arise;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves;
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

Matthew 3:1-12

- ¹ In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ³ For this is He who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,
"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
make His paths straight.'"
- ⁴ Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt
around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were
going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river
Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" ⁸ Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

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.

CORPORATE CONFESSION OF SIN

adapted from The Valley of Vision

P: Eternal God, how we mourn our sin and ingratitude.

**All things in heaven, earth, around, within, without,
condemn us —**

**the sun which sees our misdeeds,
the darkness which is as light to You,
the cruel accuser who charges us,
Your presence which scans our secret sins,
Your righteous law, Your holy Word,
our sin-soiled consciences.**

**We frame no excuse but confess,
"Father, we have sinned."**

Yet still we live,

**and fly repenting to Your outstretched arms;
You will not cast us off,
for Jesus brings us near,
You will not condemn us,
for He died in our place,**

**You will not mark our mountains of sin,
for He leveled all,
and His beauty covers our deformities.**

**O God, we bid farewell to sin
by clinging to His cross,
hiding in His wounds,
and sheltering in His side. 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 FORGIVENESS

Isaiah 53:5-6

M: He was pierced for our transgressions;
He was crushed for our iniquities;
upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with His wounds we are healed.

P: **All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned — every one — to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on Him
the iniquity of us all.**

SONG OF ASSURANCE

Behold The Wondrous Mystery

**Come behold the wondrous myst'ry,
in the dawning of the King.
He the theme of heaven's praises,
robed in frail humanity.
In our longing, in our darkness,
now the light of life has come.
Look to Christ, who condescended,
took on flesh to ransom us.**

**Come behold the wondrous myst'ry,
He the perfect Son of Man.
In His living, in His suff'ring,
never trace nor stain of sin.
See the true and better Adam,
come to save the hell-bound man.
Christ, the great and sure fulfillment
of the law; in Him we stand.**

**Come behold the wondrous myst'ry,
Christ the Lord upon the tree.
In the stead of ruined sinners
hangs the Lamb in victory.
See the price of our redemption,
see the Father's plan unfold.
Bringing many sons to glory;
grace unmeasured, love untold.**

**Come behold the wondrous myst'ry,
slain by death, the God of life.
But no grave could e'er restrain Him.
Praise the Lord; He is alive!
What a foretaste of deliv'rance,
how unwavering our hope.
Christ in power resurrected,
as we will be when He comes.
What a foretaste of deliv'rance,
how unwavering our hope.
Christ in power resurrected,
as we will be when He comes.
Christ in power resurrected,
as we will be when He comes.**

Words and music by Matt Boswell, Matt Papa, Michael Bleecker
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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

ending in the Lord's Prayer

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for Thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

READING OF THE WORD

Matthew 1:1-3 & Genesis 38:1-25

¹ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

² Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³ and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram...

¹ It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.

² There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her and went in to her, ³ and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. ⁴ She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan.

⁵ Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him.

⁶ And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. ⁷ But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. ⁸ Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother."

⁹ But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. ¹⁰ And what he did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and He put him to death also. ¹¹ Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house, till Shelah my son grows up" — for he feared that he would die, like his brothers. So Tamar went and remained in her father's house.

¹² In the course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died. When Judah was comforted, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. ¹³ And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," ¹⁴ she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage. ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶ He turned to her at the roadside and said, "Come, let me come in to you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" ¹⁷ He answered, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." And she said, "If you give me a pledge, until

you send it —” ¹⁸ He said, “What pledge shall I give you?” She replied, “Your signet and your cord and your staff that is in your hand.” So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹ Then she arose and went away, and taking off her veil she put on the garments of her widowhood.

²⁰ When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite to take back the pledge from the woman’s hand, he did not find her. ²¹ And he asked the men of the place, “Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim at the roadside?” And they said, “No cult prostitute has been here.” ²² So he returned to Judah and said, “I have not found her. Also, the men of the place said, ‘No cult prostitute has been here.’” ²³ And Judah replied, “Let her keep the things as her own, or we shall be laughed at. You see, I sent this young goat, and you did not find her.”

²⁴ About three months later Judah was told, “Tamar your daughter-in-law has been immoral. Moreover, she is pregnant by immorality.” And Judah said, “Bring her out, and let her be burned.” ²⁵ As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, “By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant.” And she said, “Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff.”

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

“Family Ties: Tamar”

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

SERMON NOTES: _____

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

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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Scott Cash Publishing Designee; We The Kingdom 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.

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.
Gluten-free bread and grape juice are available from the trays.
Please HOLD elements until we can all partake TOGETHER.*

PRYER | MEDITATION

PRAYER

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 on the back page.

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ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

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