



Ascension PCA

December 15, 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

*He was created of a mother
whom He created.
He was carried by hands
that He formed.
He cried in a manger
in wordless infancy.
He, the Word,
without whom all human eloquence is mute.*

~ Augustine

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

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

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

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

**Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
join the triumph of the skies.
With angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."**

***Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"***

**Christ, by highest heav'n adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold Him come,
offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail, th'incarnate Deity!
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.**

***Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"***

**Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth.**

***Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"***

Words by Charles Wesley (1739, 1753; alt.).
Music by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1840);
arr. by William H. Cummings (1856).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Isaiah 35:1-10

- 1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;
- 2 it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.
- 3 Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
- 4 Say to those who have an anxious heart,
"Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you."
- 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
- 6 then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
- 7 the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
- 8 And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.
It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.
- 9 No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
- 10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

James 5:7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

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

**P: God of salvation,
in Christ Jesus You have done great things —
our hearts are filled with joy.**

**But we confess that we too easily forget You
and ignore Your ways. Forgive us.**

**Forgive us for the things we've neglected,
and for the sin we've willfully done.**

**Come to us anew, that by Your grace,
we may receive You**

with joy, as the shepherds;

with gratitude, as Simeon;

with obedience, as Mary;

with love, as You have loved us.

Even so: come, Lord Jesus, 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

based on Isaiah 40:1-2

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Your sins are pardoned.
The penalty is paid.

SONG OF ASSURANCE

The Unbelievable

**Come and see the inconceivable
and believe the unbelievable:
God has come to dwell with us.
Begotten Son born into Adam's earth,
Promised One fulfilling ancient words,
God has come to dwell with us.
*Who could ever know the depths
of the myst'ry of Your grace?
Though our minds can't take it in,
Lord, our hearts are filled with praise.***

**He will heal the unhealable,
He will save the unsavable;
God has come to dwell with us.
Heaven's joy will drink our bitter cup,
emptied out as He is lifted up;
God has come to dwell with us.
*Who could ever know the depths
of the myst'ry of Your grace?
Though our minds can't take it in,
Lord, our hearts are filled with praise.***

**Lord, we're lost in overwhelming awe
at the thought of such amazing love;
God has come, God has come,
God has come to dwell with us.
God has come, God has come,
God has come to dwell with us.**

Words and music by Steve and Vikki Cook.
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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.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READING OF THE WORD

Matthew 1:1-6 & 2 Samuel 11:1-27

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, ⁴ and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵ and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.

¹ In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

² It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. ³ And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" ⁴ So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. ⁵ And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."

⁶ So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ When they told David, "Uriah did

not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"

¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." ¹² Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵ In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die." ¹⁶ And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. ¹⁷ And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died. ¹⁸ Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting. ¹⁹ And he instructed the messenger, "When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, ²⁰ then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?' ²¹ Who killed Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"

²² So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell. ²³ The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. ²⁴ Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall. Some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." ²⁵ David said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to Joab, 'Do not let this matter displease you, for the sword devours now one and now another. Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it.' And encourage him."

²⁶ When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. ²⁷ And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

GIVING TO THE LORD

*O Mighty One, You have done and are doing great things for us,
and holy is Your Name.*

*Bless all we offer You — ourselves, our time, and our possessions —
that through us Your grace and favor may be known to all the world,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.*

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

O Come, All Ye Faithful

**O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!**

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!

**Come and behold Him,
born the King of angels.**

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

**Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,**

Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!

**Glory to God,
glory in the highest:**

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
born this happy morning:**

Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n!

**Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:**

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Words by John Francis Wade (1751); tr. by Frederick Oakeley (1841; alt.).

Music from John Francis Wade's *Cantus Diversi* (1751).

PUBLIC DOMAIN

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Do you believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God
and the final authoritative rule of life and faith?

Do you acknowledge your need for the grace of God,
humbling yourself,
offering no morality or righteousness of your own,
but asking only for the mercy of God in Christ?

Do you accept Christ as the sacrifice for your sin,
as the Prophet for all your truth,
and as the King of all your life,
resting on Him and His righteousness alone
for your salvation?

Do you pledge to live a life worthy of your calling
by reliance on the Holy Spirit
according to the Word of God?

Do you promise to support this communion
with your prayers and offerings,
to strive for its purity and peace,
and to submit to its leadership in all biblical things?

TO THE BODY OF CHRIST: (PLEASE STAND)

M: Do you as a congregation, now welcome this these brothers
and sisters as a members of this body?

P: We do.

M: Do you promise to take seriously your responsibilities
to build them up and to seek to practice with them
true Christian community and true Biblical church life?

P: We do.

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.*

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

PRAYER | 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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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
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ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

10:00AM: Worship Service (in-person & livestream)

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