



Ascension PCA

December 22, 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

*It was love, mere love; it was free love
that brought the Lord Jesus Christ into our world...
Let us celebrate and keep this festival of our church
with joy in our hearts:
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 INVOCATION & ADORATION

CALL TO WORSHIP

from Revelation 11:15-17

- M:** The kingdom of the world has become
the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ,
and He will reign forever and ever.
- P:** **We give thanks to You, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was,
because You have taken Your great power
and have begun to reign.**

SONGS OF PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High

**Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.**

Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!

Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be,
which inspire your heavenly song?**

Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!

Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!

**Come to Bethlehem and see,
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.**

Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!

Glo — ria, in excelsis Deo!

Traditional French carol, translated by James Chadwick (1862).
French carol melody, arranged by Edwin S. Barnes (1937).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Wonderful, Merciful Savior

**Wonderful, merciful Savior,
precious Redeemer, and Friend.
Who would have thought that a Lamb could
rescue the souls of men?
Oh, you rescue the souls of men.**

**Counselor, Comforter, Keeper,
Spirit we long to embrace.
You offer hope when our hearts have
hopelessly lost the way.
Oh, we hopelessly lost the way.**

***You are the One that we praise,
You are the One we adore.
You give the healing and grace
our hearts always hunger for;
Oh, our hearts always hunger for.***

**Almighty, infinite Father,
faithfully loving Your own.
Here in our weakness You find us
falling before Your throne.
Oh, we're falling before Your throne.**

***You are the One that we praise,
You are the One we adore.
You give the healing and grace
our hearts always hunger for;
Oh, our hearts always hunger for.***

***You are the One that we praise,
You are the One we adore.
You give the healing and grace
our hearts always hunger for;
Oh, our hearts always hunger for.***

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT READINGS

Isaiah 7:10-16

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹ "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test."

¹³ And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey when He knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted."

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

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: Eternal and merciful God,
You have loved us with a love beyond understanding,
and You have set us on paths of righteousness
for Your name's sake.**

**Yet we have strayed from Your way;
we have sinned against You
in thought, word, and deed,
through what we have done
and what we have left undone.**

**As we remember Your lavish gift of grace
in Your Son Jesus,
we praise You and give You thanks that You forgive us.**

**Grant us now, we pray,
the grace to die daily to sin,
and to rise daily to new life in Christ,
Who lives and reigns with You,
in Whose strong name we pray. 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.*

THE PROMISE OF FORGIVENESS

Jeremiah 33:8 & Acts 10:43

**M: I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against Me,
and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion
against Me.**

**P: To Him all the prophets bear witness
that everyone who believes in [Jesus]
receives forgiveness of sins through His name.**

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

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.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READING OF THE WORD

Matthew 1:1–6,16

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. ...

¹⁶ ... and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

Luke 1:26–38, 46–50

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."

³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

⁴⁶ And Mary said,
⁴⁷ "My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁸ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant.
For behold, from now on all generations
will call me blessed;
⁴⁹ for He who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is His name.
⁵⁰ And His mercy is for those who fear Him
from generation to generation."

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: Mary"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

SERMON NOTES: _____

PRAYER

GIVING TO THE LORD

Matthew 2:11

And going into the house they saw the child with Mary
His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him.
Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts,
gold and frankincense and myrrh.

SPECIAL MUSIC

APC Christmas Choirs

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

from the Athanasian Creed

**P: We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ,
God's Son, is both God and human, equally.**

**He is God from the essence of the Father
begotten before time
and He is human from the essence of His mother,
born in time...**

**...completely God, completely human
with a rational soul and human flesh;
equal to the Father as regards divinity,
less than the Father as regards humanity.**

**Although He is God and human
yet Christ is not two, but one.
He is one, however, not by His divinity
being turned into flesh,
but by God's taking humanity to Himself.**

**He is one, certainly not by the blending
of His essence,
but by the unity of His person.**

**For just as one human is both rational soul and flesh,
so too the one Christ is both God and human.**

**He suffered for our salvation;
He descended into hell;
He arose from the dead;
He ascended to heaven;
He is seated at the Father's right hand;
from there He will come to judge
the living and the dead.**

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

from Luke 1 and 2

M: Sovereign Lord, You have done what have promised.
Now dismiss Your servants in peace.
For our eyes have seen Your salvation,
which You have prepared in the sight of all people.
Being delivered, may we serve You with fear,
in righteousness and holiness all our days.



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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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