



Ascension PCA

December 14, 2025



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

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us,
O long-sought with-ness for a world without,
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.

Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name,
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame,

O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
be folded with us into time and place,
unfold for us the mystery of grace
and make a womb of all this wounded world.

O heart of heaven beating in the earth,
O tiny hope within our hopelessness,
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,
to touch a dying world with new-made hands
and make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

~ Malcolm Guite

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

from Luke 1

**P: My soul magnifies the Lord,
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;
for He who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is His name.
And His mercy is for those who fear Him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts;
He has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
in remembrance of His mercy,
as He spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.**

SONGS OF PRAISE

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

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

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 42:1-9

- 1 Behold My servant, whom I uphold,
My chosen, in whom My soul delights;
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the nations.
- 2 He will not cry aloud or lift up His voice,
or make it heard in the street;
- 3 a bruised reed He will not break,
and a faintly burning wick He will not quench;
He will faithfully bring forth justice.
- 4 He will not grow faint or be discouraged
till He has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for His law.
- 5 Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people on it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
- 6 "I am the LORD; I have called You in righteousness;
I will take You by the hand and keep You;
I will give You as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations,
7 to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
- 8 I am the LORD; that is My name;
My glory I give to no other,
nor My praise to carved idols.
- 9 Behold, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth
I tell You of them."

Matthew 12:9-21

⁹ He went on from there and entered their synagogue. ¹⁰ And a man was there with a withered hand. And they asked Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" — so that they might accuse Him. ¹¹ He said to them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?" ¹² Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³ Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And the man stretched it out, and it was restored, healthy like the other. ¹⁴ But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, how to destroy Him.

¹⁵ Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and He healed them all ¹⁶ and ordered them not to make Him known. ¹⁷ This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸ "Behold, My servant whom I have chosen,
My beloved with whom My soul is well pleased.
I will put My Spirit upon Him,
and He will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
¹⁹ He will not quarrel or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets;
²⁰ a bruised reed He will not break,
and a smoldering wick He will not quench,
until He brings justice to victory;
²¹ and in His name the Gentiles will hope."

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 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 GOOD NEWS

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.**

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.

PASTORAL PRAYER

READING OF THE WORD

Luke 1:57-79

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸ And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, ⁶⁰ but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." ⁶¹ And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." ⁶² And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. ⁶³ And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. ⁶⁴ And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. ⁶⁵ And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, ⁶⁶ and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷ And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit
and prophesied, saying,
⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for He has visited and redeemed His people
⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of His servant David,
⁷⁰ as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old,
⁷¹ that we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us;
⁷² to show the mercy promised to our fathers
and to remember His holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath that He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
⁷⁴ that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve Him without fear,
⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways,
⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to His people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow
of death,
to guide our feet into the way of 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

"From Silence to Song"

Pastor Nate Hitchcock

SERMON NOTES: _____



PRAYER

GIVING TO THE LORD

1 Corinthians 9:15

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

SPECIAL MUSIC

APC Choir

RECEIVING OF NEW MEMBERS SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Oliver Chase & Layla Torres

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 brother
and sister as members of this body?

P: We do.

M: Do you promise to take seriously your responsibilities
to build up 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.

SONG OF MEDITATION

Silent Night, Holy Night

**Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from Thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

**Silent night! Holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing
alleluia to our King;
Christ, the Savior is born!
Christ, the Savior is born!**

Words by Joseph Mohr (1818);
translated by John Freeman Young (circa 1850).
Music by Franz Gruber (1818).
PUBLIC DOMAIN

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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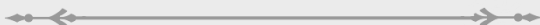
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ASCENSION PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ASCENSION-PCA.ORG

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