



December 21, 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.**

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## **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**

The Maker of man, He was made man,  
so that the Director of the stars might be a babe at the breast;  
that Bread might be hungry, and the Fountain thirsty;  
that the Light might sleep,  
and the Way be weary from a journey;  
that the Truth might be accused by false witnesses,  
and the Judge of the living and the dead  
be judged by a mortal judge;  
that Justice might be convicted by the unjust,  
and Discipline be scourged with whips;  
that the Cluster of Grapes [the Vine] might be crowned  
with thorns,  
and the Foundation be hung up on a tree;  
that Strength might grow weak,  
eternal Health be wounded, Life die...  
[He] was made in the mother whom He made;  
so that He might exist here for a time,  
being born of her who could never and nowhere  
have existed except through Him.

*~ 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

## CALL TO WORSHIP

P: God of Israel, with expectant hearts  
    we Your people await Christ's coming.  
As once He came in humility,  
    so now may He come in glory,  
that He may make all things perfect  
    in Your everlasting kingdom.  
For He is Lord forever and ever.

**P: Amen.**

## 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?  
Say what may the 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

## *Once in Royal David's City*

**Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.**

**He came down to earth from heaven  
who is God and Lord of all,  
and His shelter was a stable,  
and His cradle was a stall:  
With the poor, and mean, and lowly,  
lived on earth our Savior holy.**

**And our eyes at last shall see Him,  
through His own redeeming love;  
for that child so dear and gentle  
is our Lord in heav'n above.  
And He leads His children on  
to the place where He is gone.**

**Not in that poor lowly stable,  
with the oxen standing by,  
we shall see Him, but in heaven,  
set at God's right hand on high;  
When like stars His children crowned  
all in white shall wait around.**

Words by Cecil F. Alexander (1848).

Music by Henry J. Gauntlett (1849).

PUBLIC DOMAIN.

## 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT SCRIPTURE READINGS

### *Isaiah 53:1-7*

- <sup>1</sup> Who has believed what he has heard from us?  
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
- <sup>2</sup> For He grew up before Him like a young plant,  
and like a root out of dry ground;  
He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him,  
and no beauty that we should desire Him.
- <sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men,  
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;  
and as one from whom men hide their faces.  
He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

4 Surely He has borne our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed Him stricken,  
smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But 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.

6 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.

7 He was oppressed, and He was afflicted,  
yet He opened not His mouth;  
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,  
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,  
so He opened not His mouth.

*John 1:29-34*

<sup>29</sup> The next day he [John] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

<sup>30</sup> This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because He was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know Him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to Israel."

<sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on Him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

## GOD CLEANSES 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

*Psalm 130:1-6*

**P: Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord!**  
    O Lord, hear my voice!  
**Let Your ears be attentive**  
    **to the voice of my pleas for mercy!**  
**If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities,**  
    **O Lord, who could stand?**  
**But with You there is forgiveness,**  
    **that You may be feared.**  
**I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,**  
    **and in His word I hope;**  
**my soul waits for the Lord**  
    **more than watchmen for the morning,**  
    **more than watchmen for the morning.**

## 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

**L:** Hear this good news of great joy:  
    in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

**P: Thanks be to God!**  
    **Glory to God in the highest,**  
    **and peace to God's people on earth!**

## SONGS OF ASSURANCE

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

**It came upon the midnight clear,**  
    **that glorious song of old,**  
**from angels bending near the earth**  
    **to touch their harps of gold.**  
**"Peace on the earth, good will to men,**  
    **from heav'n's all-gracious King."**  
**The world in solemn stillness lay,**  
    **to hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come,**  
    **with peaceful wings unfurled,**  
**and still their heav'nly music floats**  
    **o'er all the weary world.**

Above its sad and lowly plains  
    they bend on hov'ring wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
    the blessed angels sing.

O ye, beneath life's crushing load,  
    whose forms are bending low,  
who toil along the climbing way  
    with painful steps and slow.

Look now! For glad and golden hours  
    come swiftly on the wing.

O rest beside the weary road,  
    and hear the angels sing!

For lo, the days are hastening on,  
    by prophet bards foretold,  
when with the ever-circling years  
    comes round the age of gold.

When peace shall over all the earth  
    its ancient splendors fling,  
and the whole world give back the song  
    which now the angels sing.

Words by Edmund Hamilton Sears (1850).  
Music by Richard Storrs Willis, 1819–1900 (1850).  
PUBLIC DOMAIN

### *Prepare Him Room*

O behold, the mystery now unfolds;  
See the star shine on the virgin foretold.  
Angels sing and light up the sky,  
hope rings out in a newborn's cry;  
 Swing wide, you ancient gates,  
for Christ is born today!

*Prepare Him room,  
Prepare Him room,  
Let the King of glory enter in.*

God with us, the promise has come to be;  
This, the One, the prophets were longing to see.  
In the darkness a blazing light,  
to the hungry the words to life;  
His kingdom now is near,  
for those with ears to hear.

*Prepare Him room,  
Prepare Him room,  
Let the King of glory enter in.*

Oh, our hearts, as busy as Bethlehem,  
hear Him knock; don't say there's no room in the inn.  
Through the cradle, cross, and grave,  
see the love of God displayed;  
Now He's risen and He reigns.  
Praise the Name above all names!

*Prepare Him room,  
Prepare Him room,  
Let the King of glory enter in.*

*Prepare Him room,  
Prepare Him room,  
Let the King of glory enter in.*

Words and music by Rebecca Elliot & Dave Fournier  
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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 2:1-20*

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will

be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those  
with whom He is pleased!”

<sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

## 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

## *“Christmas Humility”*

*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 Choir

# 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.

## EUCARISTIC PRAYER

### CONFESSING OUR FAITH TOGETHER

*The Apostles' Creed & Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 35,36*

**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.**

**M:** What does it mean that He "was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary"?

**P: That the eternal Son of God,  
    who is and remains true and eternal God,  
took to Himself,  
    through the working of the Holy Spirit,  
        from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,  
            a truly human nature  
so that He might become David's true descendent,  
    like His brothers in every way except for sin.**

M: How does the holy conception and birth of Christ benefit you?

**P: He is our mediator,  
and with His innocence and perfect holiness  
He removes from God's sight my sin —  
mine since I was conceived.**

## 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

*APC Brass Quintet*

## 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 You 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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Scripture text from

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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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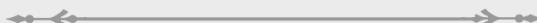
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**ASCENSION-PCA.ORG**

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

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