

"It is not something marginal or accidental, but rather central and determinative for the whole witness of the Bible, that God's actual revelation of himself must be met by rejection and contradiction. The word of the cross is, and must be, scandalous to the Jew and absurd to the Greek."

Lesslie Newbigin

"The glory of the Lord revealed in Jesus has produced disbelief. God's revelation of his glory has caused blindness and hardness."

Rodney Whitacre

"The same sun that melts wax, hardens clay."

Origen



ASCENSION
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PUBLIC WORSHIP • DECEMBER 31, 2017



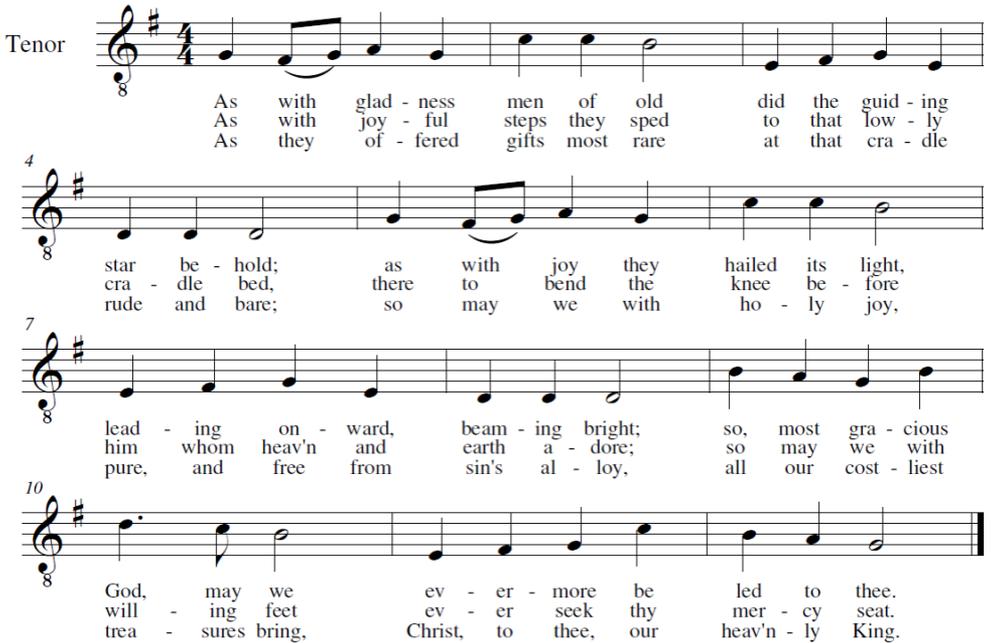
CALL TO WORSHIP • Psalm 33:8

Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!

As With Gladness Men Of Old

Text: William Chatterton Dix • Music: Conrad Kocher • Public Domain

Tenor



8

4

7

8

10

God, may we ev-er-more be led to thee.
will-ing feet ev-er seek thy mer-cy seat.
treas-ures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'n-ly King.

Holy Jesus, ev'ry day keep us in the narrow way;
and when earthly things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glory hide.

In the heav'nly country bright need they no created light;
thou its light, its joy, its crown, thou its sun which goes not down;
there forever may we sing alleluias to our King.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

He is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Let us pray...

CALL TO CONFESSION OF SIN • 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of love, it is your will that we should love you with heart, soul, mind, strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, but we are not sufficient for these things. We confess that our affections continually turn away from you: from purity to lust, from freedom to slavery, from compassion to indifference, from fullness to emptiness. Have mercy on us. Order our lives by your holy Word, and make your commandments the joy of our hearts. Conform us to the image of your loving Son, Jesus, that we may shine before the world to your glory. Amen.

(Silent confession)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS • 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

OFFERING • Acts 2:44-45

All who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

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.

OLD TESTAMENT READING • Isaiah 6:1-10

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray...

Our Lord Jesus Christ, you came into the world to reign in justice as our King:

Cause our President and Congress to love justice and mercy. Help our Mayor and City Council to increase the peace of the city.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, you came into the world to destroy the works of the devil:

Restrain the wickedness in our city by your Law. Destroy the wickedness in our own hearts by your Spirit. Protect us from the temptations, deceit and accusations of the devil.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, you came into the world to bring us peace with God:

Bring peace between nations in Your world; help Ascension to live in your peace together; come again soon to fully establish your peace on earth.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, you came into the world to seek and save that which was lost:

Show mercy to our friends who do not yet know you; deepen our faith in the Gospel of grace.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, you came into the world to destroy death and to bring life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Comfort those who are suffering in grief, in poverty, in sickness, in injustice.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, you came into the world to sympathize with our weaknesses:

Please hear us as we bring you our specific requests. (Silent prayer)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray now in the words you taught us:

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.

God Of My Life

Text: William Cowper (1731-1800) • Music: Benj Pocta, Clint Wells, Brian T. Murphy
©2007 Red Mountain Music



1. God of my life to Thee I _____ call;
2. Friend of the friend - less and the _____ faint,
3. That were a grief I could not _____ bear,



Af - flict - ed at Thy _____ feet I _____ fall;
Where should I lodge my _____ deep com - - paint?
Didst Thou not hear and _____ an - swer _____ prayer;



When the great wa - ter floods pre - - vail,
Where but with Thee whose o - pen _____ door,
But a prayer - hear - ing, an - swer - ing _____ God,



Leave not my tremb - ling heart to _____ fail.
In - vites the help - less and the _____ poor?
Sup - ports me un - der _____ ev - 'ry _____ load.



Poor though I am, des - pised, for - got, _____ Yet God, my God, for -



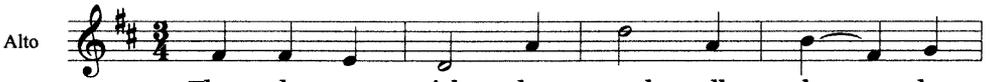
gets me not; _____ And he is safe, and must suc -



ceed, For whom, the Lord is sure to _____ plead. _____

Thou Who Wast Rich Beyond All Splendor

Text: Frank Houghton • Music: French Carol Melody • Public Domain



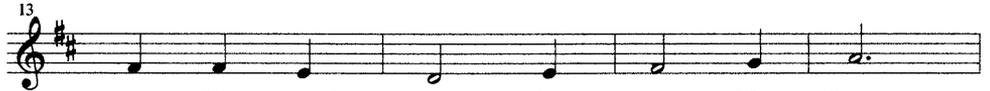
Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor
Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing
Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing



all for love's sake be - cam - est poor;
all for love's sake be - cam - est man;
Sav - ior and King we wor - ship thee.



thrones for a man - ger didst sur - ren - der,
stoop - ing so low, but sin - ners rais - ing,
Em - man - u - el, with - in us dwell - ing,



sap - phire - paved courts for sta - ble floor.
heav'n - ward by thine et - ter - nal plan.
make us what thou wouldst have us be.



Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor
Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing
Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing



all for love's sake be - cam - est poor.
all for love's sake be - cam - est man.
Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship thee.

GOSPEL READING • John 12:36-43

“While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.”

When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

³⁷ Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him,

³⁸ so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

⁴⁰ “He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes,
and understand with their heart, and turn,
and I would heal them.”

⁴¹ Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.

⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

SERMON • “Cryptic Jesus” (Rev. Eric Costa)





THE UPPER ROOM



CONFESSION OF FAITH • The Apostles' Creed

What do you believe?

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 Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic† church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE • Colossians 3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

(Greet one another with the words, “*The peace of Christ be with you.*”)

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE AND PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION • 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

THE MYSTERIUM FIDEI • 1 Corinthians 11:26; 5:7-8

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

GIVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

(All who confess faith in Jesus Christ may partake of this Sacrament: baptized members of a congregation that proclaims the Gospel, who are at peace with God and with their brothers and sisters in Christ, and who seek God’s grace to live more faithfully for him in this world. Please come forward after the musicians. The glasses on your right contain grape juice for those who do not want wine. There are gluten-free crackers on the table. An Elder is available for prayer upon request [James 5:13-16].)

* When the Creed states that Jesus “descended into hell,” we understand it to mean that he suffered the holy wrath of God for the sins of his people.

† Or, “universal.”

A Sinner's Cry

Text: Samuel Medley • Music: Matthew Curl • Used by Permission

Tenor



8 Hear, grac-ious God, a sin - er's_ cry; for
To Thee I come a sin - er__ poor, and
5 To Thee I come a sin - er__ weak, and
8 I have no - where else__ to__ fly. My
wait for mer - cy at__ Thy__ door. In -
9 scarce know how to pray or__ speak. From
8 hope, my on - ly hope's in Thee,__ O__
deed I've no - where else__ to flee,__ O__
13 fear and weak-ness set__ me free,__ O__
8 God, be mer - ci-ful to me. O God, be__
God, be mer - ci-ful to me.
18 God, be mer - ci-ful to me.
8 mer - ci-ful to me! On You alone I rest my
23 plea; I have no o-ther place to flee,__
28 O__ God, be__ mer - ci-ful to me.

To thee I come, a sinner vile;
upon me, Lord, vouchsafe to smile;
mercy, through blood, I make my plea,
O God, be merciful to me.

(Chorus)

To thee I come, a sinner great;
and well thou knowest all my state.
Yet full forgiveness is with thee,
O God, be merciful to me.

(Chorus)

O God, be merciful to me.

The First Noel

Traditional English Carol • Public Domain

Alto

The first Noel the an - gel did
say was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields where they
lay; in fields where they lay keep - ing thier
sheep on a cold win - ter's night that was so
deep. No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el,
born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for the Alto voice part of the carol 'The First Noel'. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 4, 8, 12, 16, and 21 indicated at the beginning of their respective lines. The lyrics are: 'The first Noel the an - gel did say was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields where they lay; in fields where they lay keep - ing thier sheep on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep. No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el, born is the King of Is - ra - el.' The final measure ends with a double bar line.

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.

(Chorus)

And by the light of that same star,
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a King was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.

(Chorus)

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
that hath made heaven and earth of naught,
and with his blood mankind hath bought.

(Chorus)

BENEDICTION • 2 Thessalonians 3:5

May the Lord direct your hearts
to the love of God
and to the steadfastness of Christ.

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Remember: every gathering is an opportunity to invite a friend, to introduce people to the Christ-centered community and life of the church! For information about our regular meetings like home groups, bible studies for men and women, and more, please visit ascensionpc.org/calendar.

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After Worship • Please stay a while and join us for coffee and conversation. *There will be no Sunday School or Sermon Discussion today.*

Monthly Men's Breakfast • 7:30am Sat., Jan. 6 at the Costa home (1890 SE Maple Street). We will begin a series of discussions based on the Lord's Prayer. (Check applyingthegospel.com this week for the blog post we'll discuss together.) RSVP and let Eric know what part of the meal you'll bring, and if you'll have a friend with you (rev.eric.costa@gmail.com).

Mercy Sunday • On the first Sunday of each month (Jan. 7) we participate together in a couple different ministries of mercy and compassion. It's good for us to cultivate regular habits like these so that generosity and helping others become "second-nature" to us and to our children...

- Alms — These gifts go toward a fund the deacons use to meet urgent needs among congregants and in the community as we are made aware of them.
- Food pantry — The elementary school in the church's neighborhood, W. L. Henry, has many families who rely on help like this. To sign up, contact Jerilee Costa: jerilee.costa@gmail.com.

Refreshments Volunteers • Bringing refreshments to share at church is a great way to practice hospitality. Ideally, each Sunday we have two volunteers: one bringing snacks for the children, the other bringing something for the adults. Contact: Nicole Hamilton (neh.hamilton@gmail.com)

Today: ____ / Douglas

Next week: ____ / ____

Nursery Volunteers • Can you play with young children and help their parents once every 6-8 weeks? Join the nursery rotation! Contact: Rainy Aznoe (rainyrr@aol.com).

Today: Jaques

Next week: Bonifield



Worship at 10am Sundays • SE 12th & Walnut, Hillsboro
ascensionpc.org • [facebook.com/ascensionpc](https://www.facebook.com/ascensionpc) • twitter.com/ascensionpc

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(Please fill out this contact card, tear it off, and drop it in the offering.)

Name(s)

Email / Phone

- I am a visitor.
- I want to know more about being a Christian.
- I would like to get coffee with the Pastor.
- Please send me the email newsletter.
- Please use this info for the photo directory.