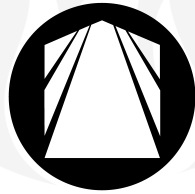


*Master, they say that when I seem
To be in speech with you,
Since you make no replies, it's all a dream,
—One talker aping two.*

C. S. Lewis, "Prayer" (*Poems*)

"Love is something we seek as a lost paradise. Deprived of its presence, we fumble for it in the impression it has left behind. The mark etched by love is the bitterness of loneliness within our soul, a loveless solitude."

Christos Yannaras, *Variations On The Song Of Songs*



ASCENSION
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 20, 2015
THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT



CALL TO WORSHIP • Psalm 81:1

Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob!

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Text: Charles Wesley • Music: Felix Mendelssohn • Public Domain

Alto

The image shows a musical score for an Alto voice part. It consists of ten staves of music in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (F major), and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, 'Glo - ry to the new - born King; peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners re - con - ciled!' Joy - ful, all ye na - tions rise, join the tri - umph of the skies; with th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim, 'Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!' Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, 'Glo - ry to the new - born King.'" The score ends with a double bar line.

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the
new - born King; peace on earth, and mer - cy mild,
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na - tions rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;
with th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in
Beth - le - hem!" Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing,
"Glo - ry to the new - born 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!"

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

The Lord be with you. ^{Ruth 2:4}

The Lord bless you.

Let us pray...

CALL TO CONFESSION OF SIN • John 3:16-17

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

CONFESSION OF SIN

Fountain of Living Waters, you give to all mankind life and breath and everything. But we have refused to honor you or give you thanks. We stubbornly pretend that we don't need you, that we can help ourselves. We actively resist your presence and will in our lives. We thoughtlessly ignore you, which may be the worst slight of all. Yet you remain a God of light and life and love, and, in your grace, you have invaded this world to save us from ourselves. Your presence and will, as seen in Jesus, is better than our autonomy. We are sorry for our foolish rebellion. Please forgive us, and fix our eyes on Christ, who came to seek and save the lost, in whose name we pray. Amen.

(Silent confession)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS • John 19:30

Jesus said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

OFFERING • 1 John 3:16-18

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and truth.

OFFERTORY • Children's Choir: “Joy To The World”

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.

GOSPEL READING • John 19:38 – 20:18

The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray...

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, your unworthy servants, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.

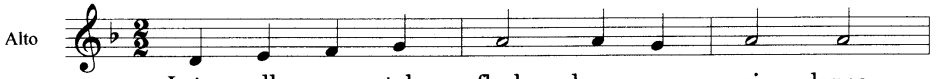
We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,

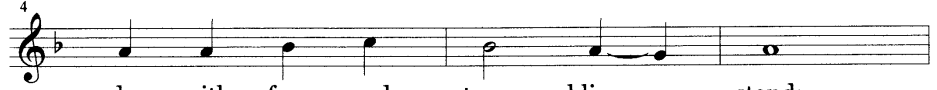
not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

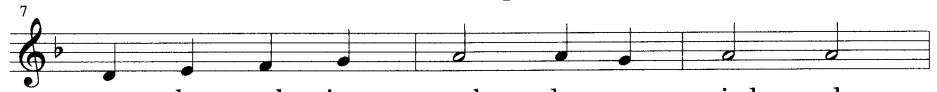
Text: Liturgy of St. James, 5th Century • Music: French Melody • Public Domain



Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence,
King of kings, yet born of Mar - y,
Rank on rank the host of heav - en
At His feet the six - winged ser - aph;



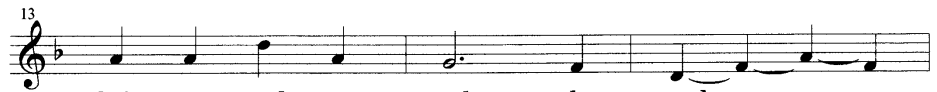
and with fear and trem - bling stand;
as of old on earth He stood,
spreads its van - guard on the way,
cher - u - bim, with sleep - less eye,



pon - der noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed,
Lord of lords, in hu - man ves - ture,
as the Light of light de - - scend - eth
veil their fac - es to the pre - ence,



for with bless - ing in his hand,
in the bod - y and the blood,
from the realms of end - less day,
as with cease - less voice they cry,



Christ our God to earth de - scend - - -
He will give to all the faith - - -
that the pow'rs of hell may van - - -
"Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - - -"




eth, our full hom - age to de - mand.
ful His own self for heav'n - ly food.
ish as the dark - ness clears a - way.
ia. al - le - lu - ia. Lord Most High!"

As With Gladness Men Of Old

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

Tenor



As with gladness men of old did the guid-ing;
As with joy-ful steps they sped to that low-ly;
As they of-fered gifts most rare at that cra-dle
star-be-hold; as there with joy they hailed its light,
rude and bare; so may we bend the knee be-fore joy,
lead-ing whom on-ward, beam-ing bright; so most gra-cious
him whom heav'n and earth a-dore; so may we with
pure, and free from sin's al-loy, all our cost-liest
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.



the **Song** of **Songs**

love's fla - shes are fla - shes of fire, the ve - ry flame of the LORD

OLD TESTAMENT READING • The Song of Songs 5:2-16

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

SERMON • "Absence" (Rev. Eric Costa)



THE UPPER ROOM



CONFESSION OF FAITH • Philippians 2:6-11

What do you believe about Jesus Christ?

I believe that Jesus Christ, being God, made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born a man. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 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 in the back for prayer [James 5:13-16].)

In Mercy Broken

Lyric: Reginald Heber • Music: Matthew H. Curl • Used by Permission

Tenor

8 Bread of the world, in mer - cy bro -
5 Look on the heart by sor - row bro -
8 ken ken Wine of the
9 Look on the
8 soul, in mer - cy shed
13 tears by sin - ners shed
8 By whom the words of life were spo - ken,
18 And be thy feast to us the to - ken
8 And in whose death our sins are
22 That by thy grace our souls are
8 dead. Al - le - lu -
26 fed. Al - le - lu - - -
8 ia! Al - le - lu - - -
31 ia!

What Child Is This?

English Carol • Music: Greensleeves • Public Domain

Alto

The musical score is written for an Alto voice part in G major and 6/8 time. It consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are: 'What child is this who laid to rest on Mar-y's lap is sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - them's sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is Christ the King whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing: haste, haste to bring him laud the babe the son of Mar - y.'

What child is this who laid to rest on Mar-y's lap is
sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with an - them's sweet while
shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
Christ the King whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud the babe the son of
Mar - y.

Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come peasant, king to own him;
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise a song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

Gloria In The Highest

Text: Ambrose (4th Century), Martin Luther (16th Century)

Music: Matthew H. Curl • Used By Permission

Tenor

8 Sa - vior of the na - tions come,
Not by hu - man pow'r or seed
Mar - y then was found with child,
Christ laid down his maj - es - ty,
3 show your - self the vir - gin's son. Fill with won - der
did the wom - an's womb con - ceive; on - ly by the
still a vir - gin chaste and mild. God had fa - vored
6 passed through dark Geth - sem - a - ne. Though he left his
8 all the earth, that our God chose such a birth.
Spir - it's breath was the Word of God made flesh.
her with grace to re - ceive the Prince of Peace.
9 Fa - ther's home, Christ now sits on God's own throne.
8 Glo - ri - a! ____ Glo - ri - a! ____ Glo - ri - a! ____
15
8 In the high - - - est!

Since the star at Bethlehem brought new light to earth again,
may our faith shine bright each day; faithful God, keep sin away.
Christ in glory, intercede for your creature's suff'ring need.
Let your resurrecting pow'r soon complete the vict'ry hour.

(Chorus)

Praise to you, O Lord, we sing, praise to Christ our newborn King!
With the Father, Spirit, one, let your lasting kingdom come!

(Chorus x2)

BENEDICTION • 1 Kings 8:57-58

The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways.

~

Sunday School • After Worship, and some time for fellowship and coffee, join us for Sunday School. Kids will meet in the sanctuary before going to their classes. Adults will meet in the fellowship hall for sermon discussion (young children are welcome to accompany their parents).

Rejoicing In Christ Home Group • Today (Dec. 20) at the home of Joe and Cindy Pope (15953 SW Tuscany, Tigard). Join us as we share lunch and conversation about Michael Reeves' book.

Christmas Eve Service • 7pm Thu., Dec. 24. Invite your friends and family!

Prayer Home Group • The meeting that would normally take place on Sun., Dec. 27 is canceled.

Musicians • Join us on Wednesday nights at 6:30 at the Costa home for fellowship, choir practice, and preparation for the coming Sunday. Families are welcome. Contact Kady Boden (kady@ascensionpc.org).

Nursery Volunteers • Contact: Jerilee Costa (jerilee.costa@gmail.com).

Today: Costa Next Sunday: Aznoe

Refreshments Volunteers • Contact: Nicole Hamilton (neh.hamilton@gmail.com).

Today: K. Boden Next Sunday: Costa

Regular Gatherings • For information about our meetings like home groups and bible studies for men and women, visit ascensionpc.org/calendar.



Worship at 10am Sundays • SE 12th & Walnut, Hillsboro
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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.