



ASCENSION

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
DECEMBER 20, 2020



THE WORD



CALL TO WORSHIP • Psalm 105:1-3

Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!

Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wondrous works!

Glory in his holy name;

let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Text: Charles Wesley & Mark Hunt • Music: Rowland Hugh Pritchard • Public Domain

Voice

The image shows a musical score for a voice part. It consists of six staves of music in a 3/4 time signature, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The music is written in a simple, hymn-like style with a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes, and rests.

Come, thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to
set thy peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re -
lease us; let us find our rest in thee. Is - rael's
strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the
earth thou art, dear De - sire of ev - 'ry
na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.

Joy to those who long to see thee, Day-spring from on high, appear;
come, thou promised Rod of Jesse, of thy birth we long to hear!

O'er the hills the angels singing, news, glad tidings of a birth;
"Go to him, your praises bringing; Christ the Lord has come to earth."

Come to earth to taste our sadness, he whose glories knew no end;
by his life he brings us gladness, our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.

Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall;
this the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

He is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Let us pray...

CALL TO CONFESSION OF SIN • Hebrews 3:12-13

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

(silent confession)

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS • Hebrews 2:17

He had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

OFFERING • Acts 20:32, 35

"Now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified... By working hard we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

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 • Mark 8:31–38

Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³² And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

³⁴ And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. ³⁶ For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? ³⁷ For what can a man give in return for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

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...

Jesus, remember us when you come in your kingdom,
Have mercy upon us and hear our prayers.

For all who carry out your ministries within your church,
We ask for grace and wisdom.

For those who don't yet believe the gospel,
We ask for your faithful love.

For governors and rulers in every land,
We ask for your guidance.

For people who suffer and grieve,
We ask for your healing peace.

Holy God, your Son, Jesus Christ has spoken to us the word of reconciliation. We come to you now in the words he taught us, saying:

*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.*

On Christmas Night, All Christians Sing
Traditional English Carol • Public Domain

Tenor

On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing, to
hear the news - the an - gels bring; On
Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing, to
hear the news - the an - gels bring: News of great
joy, news of great mirth,
news of our mer - ci - full - King's
birth.

Then why should men on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad;
then why should men on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad,
when from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty.

When sin departs before your grace, then life and health come in its place;
when sin departs before your grace, then life and health come in its place;
angels and men with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light which made the angels sing this night;
all out of darkness we have light which made the angels sing this night;
"Glory to God and peace to men, now and forevermore, Amen!"

He Is Born (*Il Est Né, Le Divin Enfant*)


Traditional French Carol • Public Domain



He is born, the di - vine Christ child, Play the strings and the




wood - winds mer - ri - ly! He is born the ho - ly child, Sing we all of the



Sa - vior mild.

1. Through long age - s of the past
2. O how love - ly, O how pure
3. Je - sus, Lord of all the world,



pro - phets have fore - told his com - ing; Through long age - s
is this per - fect child of heav - en; O how love - ly,
com - ing as a child a - mong us, Je - sus, Lord of



of the past, now the time has come at last!
O how pure, grac - ious gift of God sent down.
all the world, grant to us your heav - 'nly peace.

NEW TESTAMENT READING • Galatians 5:22-23

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

SERMON • “Self-Control” (Rev. Eric Costa)

27 It is not good to eat much honey,
nor is it glorious to seek one's own glory.

28 A man without self-control
is like a city broken into and left without walls. (Proverbs 25:27-28)

“The substances to which [people] are addicted vary a great deal, but the heart desires that drive these addictions are the same. They are addicted to food, health, drugs, porn, good grades, exercise, thinness, sex, work, alcohol, and even parental approval. The list of possibilities is as long as the list of good things that God has created—things we use to try to make ourselves feel good. When a Christian struggles with a besetting sin in the form of an addiction, it is tempting to try to change the behavior while missing the bigger picture of what God is doing in the heart.” (Barbara Duguid, *Extravagant Grace*)

“*Egkrateia* = *self-control*, the ability to pursue the important over the urgent, rather than to be always impulsive or uncontrolled. The slightly surprising counterfeit is a willpower which is based on pride, the need to feel in control.” (Tim Keller, *Galatians for You*)

“Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism... and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.” (Colossians 2:18-23)





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.

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

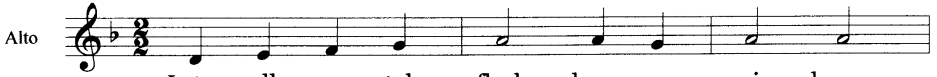
(All who confess faith in Jesus Christ may partake of this Sacrament: baptized members of a congregation that proclaims the Gospel, who are at peace with God and with their brothers and sisters in Christ, and who seek God's grace to live more faithfully for him in this world. Please come forward after 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.

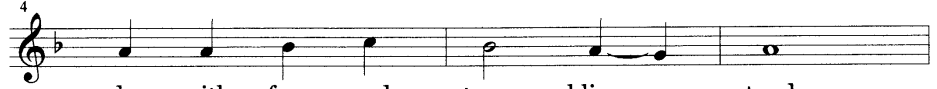
† Or, "universal."

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

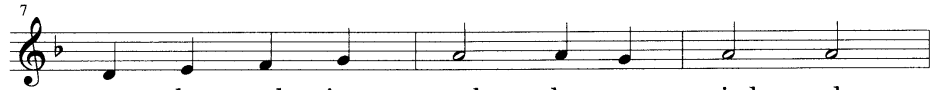
Text: Liturgy of St. James, 5th Century • Music: French Melody • Public Domain



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;



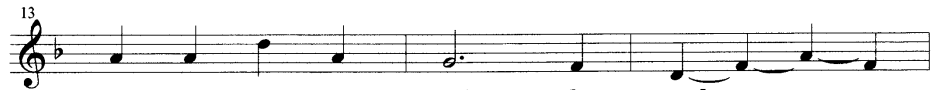
and with fear and trem - bling stand;
as of old on earth He stood,
spreads its van - guard on the way,
cher - u - bim, with sleep - less eye,



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!"

Angels We Have Heard On High

Traditional French Carol • Public Domain

Alto

The musical score is written for an Alto voice part in G major and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The lyrics are: "An-gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains, and the moun-tains in re-ply ech-o back their joy-ous strains. Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o, glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o." The score includes bar numbers 4, 7, 10, 14, and 18. The melody is simple and melodic, with a final cadence at the end.

An-gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing
o'er the plains, and the moun-tains in re-ply
ech-o back their joy-ous strains. Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis
De-o, glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song?

(Chorus)

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

(Chorus)

BENEDICTION • Hebrews 13:20-21

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

~

FOR THOSE JOINING US IN PERSON...

Greetings! In accordance with current state mandates, we are limiting our services to 75 participants each. Please sign up early if you plan to attend a service. (If you need access to the online signup sheet, contact Eric: rev.eric.costa@gmail.com) If your name is not on the list by the time of the service on Sunday, and the service is already full, or if you are experiencing symptoms of illness, we ask that you would instead join us on Zoom.

Please wear a mask and observe “social distancing” (6ft) between households.

During Communion, parents, please distribute the bread and cup to participating children.

Thank you for your help making others feel comfortable joining us for Worship!

FOR THOSE JOINING US ON ZOOM...

Please remain “muted” throughout the service, but feel free to “unmute” afterwards and catch up with each other. (You can find each Sunday’s liturgy posted online at ascensionpc.org/worship.)

ADVENT MINISTERIAL RELIEF FUND OFFERING

Each Advent season we participate in our denomination’s Ministerial Relief Fund offering. This is a practical way to care for widows, retired ministers, and other servants of the church who are in financial distress. If you would like to help others in this way, visit pcarbi.org/lookafter.

•

PRAY FOR THE MINISTRIES & MISSIONARIES WE SUPPORT

Love INC, Hillsboro (loveincgreaterhillsboro.org)

Northwest Church Planting Network (nwcpnetwork.com)

Rev. Drew Burdette, Reformed University Fellowship (ruf.org) at Oregon State

Brian & Faith Janssen, Missionaries in Taiwan with OMF (omf.org/asia/taiwan)

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Printed songs are used by permission under CCLI license #11109756.

ascensionpc.org

-----> (Drop this contact card in the offering, or hand it to the Pastor.)

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.