



# ASCENSION

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PUBLIC WORSHIP • DECEMBER 17, 2023  
THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT



THE WORD



## CALL TO WORSHIP • Psalm 136:1-3

Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.  
Give thanks to the God of gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.  
Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever.

# Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

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

Alto

The musical score is written for an Alto voice in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of nine staves of music. 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 includes bar numbers 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, and 19.

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."

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**

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**

*Father, Son, and Spirit—our Triune God—you are the only true and living God. We know that you alone are good, yet we still turn to false gods for strength, for pleasure, for comfort, for life. But this is death. We confess that we have sinned, both in the evil we have done, and in the good we have done in order to avoid you. We do not know all the ways our hearts are far from you; we have deceived ourselves. We cannot even confess every sin, or know all our false gods, to turn away from them to you. We are utterly at your mercy. O Lord Jesus, be gracious to us. O Father, assure us of your love that makes all things new. O Holy Spirit, dwell in us and have your way with us. We pray in Christ our Savior. Amen.*

(silent confession)

## **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS • Hebrews 2:11, 17**

He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers... 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 • Matthew 6:2-4**

“When you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

## **CHORAL OFFERTORY: “Jesus, My Delight and Savior” (after J. S. Bach)**

## **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 60:1-7**

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...

Lord, you built your church and promised to dwell with her forever.  
*Bless all who guard and feed your sheep, those who shepherd souls, those who care for the poor, those who minister praise, as well as those who teach your Word, that, as you are lifted up, men and women will be drawn to you.*

Lord, likewise, you rule over all the nations of the earth.  
*We pray for peace in every corner of the world: where there is war, where there is persecution, where there is starvation, where there is sickness, as well as every nation where there is suffering, that you will be glorified among the nations.*

Lord, out of the depths of eternity you moved in history in the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*In him was life and the life was our light. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Cause that light to shine ever brighter in us and through us.*

We pray as 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.*

# It Came Upon The Midnight Clear

Text: Edmund H. Sears • Music: Richard S. Willis • Public Domain

Alto

It came up - on the mid - night clear, that  
Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with  
3 And ye, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose  
glo - rious song of old, from  
peace - ful wings un - furled, and  
6 form are bend - ing low, who  
an - gels bend - ing near the earth to  
still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er  
8 toil a - long the climb - ing way with  
touch their harps of gold: "Peace  
all the wea - ry world: A -  
11 pain - ful steps and slow, Look  
on the earth good will to men, from  
bove its sad and low - ly plains they  
13 now! For glad and gold - en hours come  
heav - en's all - gra - cious King;" the  
bend - on hov - 'ring wing, and  
16 swift - ly on the wing: O  
world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels  
ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the bles - sed an - gels  
rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels  
19  
sing.  
sing.  
sing.

For lo, the days are hast'ning on, by prophet bards foretold,  
When with the evercircling 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.

# Good Christian Men Rejoice

Text: John Mason Neale • Music: German Melody • Public Domain

Tenor

8

3

7

8

10

13

8

Good Chris - tian men, re - joice, with  
heart and soul and voice, give ye heed to what we say:  
Je - sus Christ is born to-day; earth and heav'n be -  
fore Him bow, and He is in the man - ger now.  
Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice!

Now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!

He hath opened heaven's door, and man is blessed evermore.

Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice!

Now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!

Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

## GOSPEL READING • Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” <sup>9</sup> After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup> And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ.  
*Praise be to you, O Christ!*

## SERMON • “Christmas Gifts” (Rev. Eric Costa)

“What is most mysterious is God’s superabundant life pouring itself forth, the love of God who gives and gives again but is never emptied in the giving. This self-giving is at the very heart of who God is. The incomprehensibility of God lies in the utter gratuity of life and love, in God’s constant coming as gift. God is inexhaustible Gift, Given, and Gift/ing. This is who God is and how God is...

“Our first response to gift is not to respond, but to receive. And then, without burden of cost or interest, to live freely with, in, and from the gift.” (Michael Downey, *Altogether Gift: A Trinitarian Spirituality*)

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:10-11)



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.<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> 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].)

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Or, “universal.”



# I Wonder As I Wander

Text and Tune: Appalachian Carol • Public Domain



I wonder as I wander out  
When Mary birthed Je - sus, 'twas  
If Je - sus had I want - ed for  
I won - der as I wan - der for out

3  
un - der the sky, how Je - sus, the  
in a cows' stall, with wise men in and  
an - y wee thing; A how star in the the  
un - der the sky, how Je - sus, the

6  
Sav - ior, did come for to die. For  
far - mers and shep - herds and all. But  
sky, or a bird on the wing; or  
Savi - ior, did come for to die. For

9  
poor, or - nery peo - ple like you and like  
high from God's heav - en a star's light did  
all of God's an - gels in heav - en to  
poor, or - nery peo - ple like you and like

12  
I; I won - der as I wan - der, out  
fall, and the prom - ise of a - ges it  
sing, He sure - ly could have had it, 'cause  
I; I won - der as I wan - der out

15  
un - der the sky.  
then did re - call.  
He was the King!  
un - der the sky.

# We Three Kings

Text & Music: John Henry Hopkins • Public Domain



We three kings of O - ri - ent are:  
Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain:  
Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I:  
Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume  
Glo - rious now be - hold Him a - rise:



Bear - ing gifts we trav - erse a - far;  
Gold I bring to crown Him a - gain,  
In - cense owns a De - i - ty nigh;  
King and God and Sac - er - ing gloom -



Field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain  
King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er  
Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing,  
Sor - r'wing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing,  
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia!



Fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
O - ver us all to reign.  
Wor - ship Him, God on high.  
Sealed in the stone tomb.  
Earth to heav'n re - plies.



O star of won - der, star of night,



Star with roy - al beau - ty bright, West - ward lead - ing,



still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.

# Within A Crib My Savior Lay

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, Matthew H. Curl

Music: Matthew H. Curl • Used by Permission

Tenor

With-in a crib my Sav-ior lay, a woo-den man-ger  
filled with hay, come down for love on Christ-mas day:  
All glo-ry be to Je-sus! Up-on a cross my  
Sav-ior died, to ran-som sin-ners, cru-ci-fied, His lov-ing arms still  
o-pen wide: All glo-ry be to Je-sus! And this is  
love! And this is grace! He came to earth our souls to  
save! All glo-ry be to Je-sus!

A victor's crown my Savior won,  
his work of love and mercy done,  
the Father's high ascended Son:  
all glory be to Jesus!

And soon to glory we will rise,  
because of our Lord's sacrifice,  
new life through him, the crucified:  
All glory be to Jesus!

And this is love! And this is grace!  
He came to earth our souls to save!  
And this is love! And this is grace!  
That Christ, our God, did come to save!  
All glory be to Jesus.  
All glory be to Jesus.

## BENEDICTION • Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

~

**After Worship Today** • Join us at 11:30 for Sunday School (kids) and Sermon Discussion (adults).

### Midweek Studies

- 8:15am Tue. men's study of the Book of Judges, at Longbottom Coffee.  
Contact: Eric Costa (rev.eric.costa@gmail.com).
- 1:30pm Wed. women's study of *Jesus through the Eyes of Women* (McLaughlin).  
Contact: Cheryl Boden (wu.gardens@gmail.com).
- 6:30am Thu. men's study of *Habits of the Household* (Earley), at the Starbucks on Walker & 158th.  
Contact: Joe Pope (pope.joe@gmail.com).
- 7pm Thu. women's study of *Jesus through the Eyes of Women* (McLaughlin).  
Contact: Holly McGarry (hollykiewer8@gmail.com).

**Youth Group** • We're taking a break until the new year. Contact: Tim Sery (fiby2020@gmail.com).

**Lessons & Carols** • 6:30pm Sun., Dec. 24 at the Stevensons' home.

RSVP: robert.james.stevenson@gmail.com.

**Shepherding Meetings** • The elders want to check in with the members of the church. We like to use these questions to kickstart our conversations: 1) *What are you thankful for?* 2) *Where are you seeing the grace of God at work in your life?* 3) *How can we as elders (or the deacons) serve you?*

We're available for these meetings on a regular basis on the third Sunday of each month for lunch or dinner. To schedule a shepherding meeting with us on one of these Sundays, or during some other time, contact Eric (rev.eric.costa@gmail.com).

**Email Newsletter** • Visit [ascensionpc.org/newsletter](http://ascensionpc.org/newsletter) to subscribe to weekly announcements.

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### PRAY FOR THE MINISTRIES & MISSIONARIES WE SUPPORT

Our Denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (pcanet.org)

Our Presbytery (pacificnorthwestpresbytery.com)

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

Betsy L., Missionary in Spain with Serge (serge.org)

Love INC, Hillsboro (loveincgreaterhillsboro.org)

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

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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.