

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 14 December 2025

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 105:1-3

Opening Hymn: 298 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Confession of Sin

Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done. And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But You, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore those who are penitent; According to Your promises declared to mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father; For His sake; That we may hereby live a godly, righteous, and sober life; To the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 103:1-3

Psalm of Preparation: 11B The LORD Is My Refuge

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 1:15-22

New Covenant Reading: 1 Peter 5:6-11

Sermon Title: *The Triumph of the Meek*

Psalm of Response: 9B Wholehearted Thanksgiving

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 301 Song of Mary

PM Worship

111B O Give the LORD Wholehearted Praise

434 A Debtor to Mercy Alone

429 Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 111

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 1:12-22

Sermon Title: Our Plans and God's Promises

Adult Sunday School – Congregational Meeting to Vote on Electing Serhiy Likhanov to be ordained and installed as a Deacon in our Congregation – No Sunday School

Suggested Preparations

Monday (12/8) Read and discuss Exodus 1:15–22

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth

before the midwife comes to them.” So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.” (ESV)

Doug Stuart writes:

The story of the midwives is a story of heroic resistance. So noteworthy was their courage that their personal names are recorded, in contrast to any of the elders of Israel (3:16, 18; 4:29) and even the pharaoh. Thus these two midwives’ names, along with the names of Jacob’s children and Moses’ family, are the only names actually mentioned in the early chapters of the book. But again, the Egyptian plan backfires. This strategy also yielded nothing but more Israelite population growth – even within the families of the midwives, where it would not have been expected.

In part this section of the book is also implicitly about Moses. Like any male Hebrew child, he was endangered by the escalation of population control to actual genocide of male children. His preservation was also a defiance of pharaoh’s orders. But it would be a mistake to take this section as mainly related to Moses’ birth because this was still the stage at which Israelites were *not* dying. This stage was still focusing on Israel as a people, not Moses, and the only heroes in sight were the midwives, from the human point of view, and God, who kept growing His people in spite of the best Egyptian attempts to retard their growth.

Read or sing Hymn 298 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Tuesday (12/9) Read and discuss Exodus 1:15–22

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, “When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live.” But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and let the male children live?” The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.” (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

In the midst of the great matters of state, of government policies and edicts, of imperial building projects that will stand for millennia, who are the heroes of this first chapter? Two otherwise unknown women who feared

God and saved the lives of an unknown number of little sons of Israel. Among those who would participate in the exodus some eighty years later would be many who owed their lives (or their father's lives) as much to Shiphrah and Puah as Moses owed his own life to his mother and sister.

The Bible is full of such important/unimportant people, many of them also women, whose words or actions saved lives, sometimes of key people in the story of God. Without Ruth, there would have been no David. Abigail saved his conscience; Michal saved his life. With the widow of Zarephath, no Elijah on Mount Carmel. Rahab, Esther, Eved-Melech, the little nephew of the Apostle Paul ... the list goes on.

And the story goes on, for time and again it is the little people, the unsung people, the most unlikely people, whom God chooses to use as His agents in carrying forward His purposes. The God of Moses is also the God of Shiphrah and Puah, and our God still.

Read or sing Psalm 118 The LORD Is My Refuge

Wednesday (12/10) Read and discuss 1 Peter 5:6–11

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

For most of the time in this letter we have been aware of persecution coming from the surrounding non-Christian culture. Part of it will have been unofficial, simply involving ordinary people sneering, criticizing, ostracizing or using occasional violence. Some of it, though, will have been official, as the local authorities took a hand and made life difficult for the Christians. How easy it will have been, as it still is, for the Christians then to demonize their visible, human opponents, to regard them as the real source of their problem. Now at last we see that this isn't the case. There is a real enemy. Like the mosquito, this enemy is seriously dangerous, particularly when ignored.

Peter, however, uses a more obvious animal as the image to describe the enemy. The enemy is like a roaring lion, looking for someone to swallow up. The word Peter uses is far more than simply 'eat;' it implies that the lion

will simply gulp you down in a single mouthful. No time to protest or struggle. You'll be gone.

It's a terrifying image, and one which alerts us at once to the serious nature of the Christian life. Too many Christians soft-pedal the idea of actual spiritual warfare, of a real confrontation with a real devil. As C.S. Lewis said when writing about his world-famous book *The Screwtape Letters*, consisting of letters from a senior devil to a junior one on how to tempt people, some people dismiss the idea of a devil by thinking of a ridiculous little person with horns and hooves wearing read tights. They can't believe in a creature like that, so they decide they can't believe in the devil. Other people become so fascinated with the devil that they can think of little else, and suppose that every ordinary problem in life, or difficulty in someone else's personality, is due to direct devilish intervention. Lewis steers a wise path between these two extremes, and so should we. But perhaps, for many of my readers, the danger may be more in ignoring the tempter than in over-dramatizing him.

Read or sing Psalm 9B Wholehearted Thanksgiving

Thursday (12/11) Read and discuss Psalm 111

Praise the LORD!
I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
Great are the works of the LORD,
studied by all who delight in them.
Full of splendor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.
He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and merciful.
He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.
He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.
The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy;
they are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.
He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant forever.
Holy and awesome is his name!
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever! (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

Psalm 111 describes God and Psalm 112 how His people come to resemble their God. We were made in His “image.” That means we were made to relate to him and reflect back to Him His own character [Note from Pastor Booth: And also, we were made to reflect His character into the world]. So who is this God we should be like? God is a worker who makes things (verse 2). He is righteous (verse 3), compassionate (verses 4-5), and a God of truth (verses 7-8). Finally, He is a God of integrity, who keeps His promises (verse 9). We will become like this not simply by obeying His rules (as important as that is) but through “the fear of the LORD” (verse 10), worshipping Him with awe. We become like the things we love most

Friday (12/12) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 1:12–22

For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand—just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace. I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. (ESV)

Tom Wright comments:

The Corinthian church had clearly been upset to get messages saying – so it seemed – first one thing and then another. To get from Ephesus to Corinth by sea wasn’t difficult. It’s about two hundred and fifty miles, more or less due west, with the boat no doubt stopping here and there on the way through the Greek islands. Traders made the journey all the time. Paul himself had done it not long before, as we shall see, making a quick but painful visit which still reverberated through his memory and that of the church.

He had originally thought that he would go that route again: straight across to Corinth, north by land to Macedonia (to his dear friends in Thessalonica and Philippi), and then back to Corinth again, before setting off for Judaea once more. But something had happened to make him change his mind; and now he was coming the long way, by the land route around the northern Aegean. Travelling by land was usually slower and more dangerous than by

sea, and Paul must have had good reason for the change of plan. Maybe his terrible experiences in Ephesus had left him unwilling to face a sea voyage just at the moment. But there may have been another reason too. If he travelled by land, he could send messengers ahead to prepare the Corinthians for his visit. After the disaster last time, he didn't want to risk just showing up and finding them unprepared.

But, though he has good reasons for his change of plan, the Corinthians have got the impression that he is vacillating, unable to make his mind up, perhaps deliberately sending mixed signals about his intentions. He's like a person who says 'Yes, yes,' out of one side of the mouth and 'No, no,' out of the other. "Not so," Paul declares: "I have always had Yes as my answer to you. It may come out in different ways, but I have been completely consistent." He has lived, prayed, and planned on the basis of the gospel itself; and the gospel is all about God saying Yes to people through the gospel of His son, the Messiah.

There is a triple Yes involved in the gospel. First, there is the Yes to all the promises God made in the Bible. For over a thousand years Israel had lived on those promises, trusting that the God who had called Israel to be His people would lead them forward, and accomplish in the end what He had planned and purposed. Paul's whole life was built on the belief that in Jesus of Nazareth God had done exactly that: Jesus was the Messiah, the culmination and crown of Israel's long story, the answer to all Israel's hopes and prayers, the fulfilment of all the promises. God had finally said yes, and had said it so loudly through Jesus' resurrection that it was now echoing all around the world.

Read or sing Hymn 301 Song of Mary

Saturday (12/13) Read and discuss Read and discuss Exodus 1:15–22

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them." So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live." (ESV)

Doug Stuart writes:

“Feared God” does not ... carry the connotation of the New Testament language in which “feared God” had come to mean “was a Gentile convert to Judaism.” In the Pentateuch “fear God” tends to mean “to be honest, faithful, trustworthy, upright, and, above all, religious.” The midwives may not have had great knowledge of the traditions of the Patriarchs and like all their contemporary Israelites certainly did not yet have what we would call “scriptural” knowledge, but they did understand that right and wrong are not human inventions but part of a divinely created order. This is the perspective of many proverbs from all over the ancient world, not merely those of the Old Testament, which reflect the idea that the fear of God is the most important orienting truth available in the world. To fear God does not mean being afraid of Him in general but being afraid of the consequences of disobeying Him. Since death was the presumed consequence of disobeying the pharaoh, this verse is one of many in the Bible that implicitly witnesses to a belief in life after death and a final judgment. These women clearly feared what God could do to them after death more than the death of the pharaoh could put them to.

Prayer: Please lift up tomorrow’s morning and evening worship services.