

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 18 January 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 98:1-3

Opening Psalm: 34C Through All the Changing Scenes of Life

Confession of Sin

Almighty God, Who are rich in mercy to all those who call upon You; Hear us as we humbly come to You confessing our sins; And imploring Your mercy and forgiveness. We have broken Your holy laws by our deeds and by our words; And by the sinful affections of our hearts. We confess before You our disobedience and ingratitude, our pride and willfulness; And all our failures and shortcomings toward You and toward fellow men. Have mercy upon us, Most merciful Father; And of Your great goodness grant that we may hereafter serve and please You in newness of life; Through the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Colossians 1:11-14

Psalm of Preparation: 61B O Hear My Urgent Cry

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 2:15d-22

New Covenant Reading: 1 Peter 2:1-12

Sermon Title: *Character and Identity*

Psalm of Response: 27A The LORD's My Light

Confession of Faith: Ten Commandments

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Psalm: 69B Thy Lovingkindness, Lord, Is Good and Free

PM Worship

433 Amazing Grace!

289 All Praise to Christ

507 Thy Mercy Lord, Is What I Need

Old Covenant Reading: 2 Chronicles 6:18-23

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Sermon Title: *Forgiveness in Love*

Adult Sunday School – Fellowship Lunch – No Sunday School

Suggested Preparations

Monday (1/12) Read and discuss Exodus 2:15–22

When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. When they came home to their

father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come home so soon today?” They said, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.” He said to his daughters, “Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.” And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.” (ESV)

Duanne Garrett writes:

The account of Moses meeting his future wife at a well alludes to Gen 24:11 (where Abraham’s servant finds a wife for Isaac at a well) and Gen 29:1-10 (where Jacob meets Rachel at a well). The latter parallel is especially close, since Jacob, like Moses, came to the well while fleeing for his life from his homeland. Also, Jacob first talked to some local shepherds and then assisted Rachel in a heroic manner by single-handedly removing a stone that covered the well, an act analogous to the heroism of Moses at the well. The allusion in Exodus to these episodes indicates that Moses is taking the place of Isaac and Jacob to be a new father to the nation.

We learn in this text of the birth of one son to Moses, Gershom. The origin of the name is unknown, but it was somewhat popular among the Levites; one of Levi’s sons was called Gershom and Phinehas the priest has a descendant name Gershom. The explanation Moses gives for the name, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land,” is a wordplay and not a formal etymology.

Read or sing Psalm 34C Through All the Changing Scenes of Life

Tuesday (1/13) Read and discuss Exodus 2:11–15c

One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?” He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. (ESV)

Christopher Wright observes:

Before Moses struck the Egyptian dead, “he turned this way and that and he saw that there was no man.” This is usually taken to mean he believed

he was unobserved, which is then, to his horror, contradicted by what is said to him in verse 14. However, there is one other place where we find that expression, “he saw that there was no man.” It is Isaiah 59:15-16:

The LORD looked and was displeased
that there was no justice.
He saw that there was no one,
He was appalled that there was no one to intervene;
so His own arm achieved salvation for Him,
and His own righteousness sustained Him.

One rabbinic commentator suggests this verse actually quotes Exodus 2:12 deliberately, meaning that God had to act on His own to accomplish His redemptive justice, just as Moses did. Nobody else would help. That means Moses saw that nobody – whether Hebrew or Egyptian – was coming to deliver the Hebrew slave from a potentially fatal beating, and so he took matters into his own hands and struck down the Egyptian aggressor.

Read or sing Psalm 61B O Hear My Urgent Cry

Wednesday (1/14) Read and discuss 1 Peter 2:1–12

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture:

“Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”

So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”

and

“A stone of stumbling,

and a rock of offense.”

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (ESV)

Stephen Motyer writes:

The hidden but coming Lord was rejected by men (v. 4), who did not see the estimation placed upon Him by God. In their present rejection, therefore, Peter’s readers are sharing the fate of Jesus Himself. He was like the stone the builders rejected. Peter carries through his theme of God’s Word by quoting three “stone” passages which were applied to Jesus from a very early date. A stone can look most unimpressive – but it can perform a vital function if made the cornerstone of a large building; or it can bring a person tumbling to the ground if he or she stumbles over it. Jesus has become the cornerstone of God’s spiritual temple, and there are two possible responses. We can either take our own angle and position from the Cornerstone, and line ourselves up on Him; or we can refuse to live by reference to Him, and stumble over Him instead. It is a vivid picture.

Peter urges his readers to see that they are being built in line with Christ: sharing all the angles of His life, experiencing His rejection as well as the glory. His opponents stumble fatally, but those joined to Christ are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, contrary to all appearances. In verses 9 and 10 Peter piles up phrases from the Old Testament to show how all that is true of God’s chosen covenant people is true for those who believe in Jesus, however rejected and weak they may seem.

Read or sing Psalm 27A The LORD’s My Light

Thursday (1/15) Read and discuss 2 Chronicles 6:18–23

“But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you, that your eyes may be open day and night toward

this house, the place where you have promised to set your name, that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. And listen to the pleas of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen from heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

“If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, then hear from heaven and act and judge your servants, repaying the guilty by bringing his conduct on his own head, and vindicating the righteous by rewarding him according to his righteousness. (ESV)

Andrew Bowling writes:

Solomon ... turns to a paradox which, in varying forms, has troubled many theologians: that between God’s transcendence on the one hand and His interaction with mankind on the other. God is so great that He cannot live on earth with men [in the sense of the earth containing Him]. Does this mean that God is inattentive to man’s prayers? Solomon prays that God will hear prayers directed toward the temple. He then catalogues those prayers which may be heard.

When a man wrongs his neighbor, God will hear and judge that man’s oath. The foreign wars of Solomon and David made enslavement a reality. Yet no matter how far away such slaves are, they will never get beyond God’s ear. God’s forgiveness, and God’s ability to restore. When natural disasters come, if God’s people repent and pray, God will forgive them.

Friday (1/16) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 2:5–11

Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs. (ESV)

James Davis writes:

Paul penned a third letter to the church [between 1 and 2 Corinthians] the purpose of which he now seeks to explain. It was written so that on his next return to Corinth he might not “be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice,” in confidence and trust that such distress could be avoided so as to produce a joyful visit for all. But in order to achieve its end Paul’s letter had first to deal openly and honestly with the source of the problem.

To write such a letter was certainly not easy, for its purpose was not simply to rebuke but to share with the church the anguish of an unrequited love.

The letter seems to have achieved its intent (v. 9), and with reconciliation now possible, Paul hastens to make sure that it is accomplished. He urges the cessation of the punishment inflicted upon the individual who had opposed his authority, causing distress both for Paul and for the church, and counsels forgiveness, granting it freely himself in concert with the rest of the church. Then, with particular pastoral sensitivity to the needs of the offender as well as those of the body as well as those of the body and himself, Paul encourages the community not only to forgive the offender but also to comfort him and to reaffirm its love for him lest he be ‘overwhelmed with excessive sorrow’ and the discipline that was meant to be remedial become simply retributive, thus allowing Satan yet another entrance into the situation.

Read or sing Psalm 69B Thy Lovingkindness, Lord, Is Good and Free

Saturday (1/17) Read and discuss Read and discuss Exodus 2:15–22

When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, “How is it that you have come home so soon today?” They said, “An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.” He said to his daughters, “Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.” And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.” (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

Moses’ encounter with his soon-to-be-wedded wife, Zipporah, once more takes us back to Genesis. Both Isaac and Jacob meet their wives at watering wells. Because Moses stands in this patriarchal tradition, the Israelites are expected to receive him as God’s gift. They will, at first. But as Exodus unfolds, the relationship becomes strained until it almost ends.

At the watering well, we see Moses – for the third time in the chapter – championing the rights of oppressed people. Earlier it was a Hebrew slave being beaten by an Egyptian. Then it was a Hebrew beating a Hebrew. Now

it's a group of women being harassed by evil shepherds. Moses has a big heart for small people.

Surprisingly, while the Israelites reject Moses (Exodus 2:14), the Midianites receive him – and with great acclaim (Exodus 2:19). Consequently, in the span of a few verses, we learn that Moses protects and shepherds. He's also outcast and rejected. More than that, Moses' actions anticipate what God will do to rescue Israel. The list is impressive. Both Moses and God ...

- “see” Israel’s oppression and subsequently act.
- “strike” the enemy; and
- “save” and “deliver” those in need.

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