

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 25 January 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5

Opening Hymn: 233 O Father, You Are Sovereign

Confession of Sin

O eternal God and merciful Father, we humble ourselves before your great majesty, against which we have frequently and grievously sinned. We acknowledge that we deserve nothing less than eternal death, that we are unclean before you and children of wrath. We continually transgress your commandments, failing to do what you have commanded, and doing that which you have expressly forbidden. We acknowledge our waywardness, and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We are not worthy to be called your children, nor to lift up our eyes heavenward to you in prayer. Nevertheless, O Lord God and gracious Father, we know that your mercy toward those who turn to you is infinite; and so we take courage to call upon you, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Forgive all our sins for Christ's sake. Cover us with his innocence and righteousness, for the glory of your name. Deliver our understanding from all blindness, and our hearts from all willfulness and rebellion, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. *Amen*

Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 103:8-10

Hymn of Preparation: 492 How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 2:23-3:6

New Covenant Reading: Revelation 4:1-11

Sermon Title: *God of Compassion and Awe*

Hymn of Response: 230 Holy, Holy, Holy!

Confession of Faith: 1 Heidelberg Catechism (p. 872)

Doxology (Hymn 568)

Closing Hymn: 463 O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus!

PM Worship

45B My Heart Does Overflow

420 Christ for the World We Sing

419 O Zion, Haste, Your Mission High Fulfilling

Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 45

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

Sermon Title: *In the Procession of Christ*

Adult Sunday School – Josep Folta presenting on Wycliff Bible Translators

Suggested Preparations

Monday (1/19) Read and discuss Exodus 2:23–25

During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

Suddenly, having been unmentioned throughout this whole chapter so far, the God who was last seen blessing the midwives who feared Him in chapter 1 bursts into the text, named five times in two verses. We are not told that the Israelites cried out *to God*, but we are told that their cry “went up to God.” And God’s response is emphatic. Four verbs follow immediately, each one repeating God as subject. The NIV seems to weaken the rhetorical force by omitting that repeated subject and translating the final verb “was concerned for them.” The ESV captures it rather better: “God heard ... and God remembered ... and God saw ... and God knew.” The implication is clear. The Israelites may think their suffering is forgotten. The Egyptians may think their crimes are committed with impunity. Moses may think he can never help his people again after his first two-day failed attempt. *But God is on the case.* God now steps from backstage, the hidden hand in events, and takes front-and-center charge of the action.

These two verses are pivotal to the present narrative. They link the appalling reality of chapter 1 to the story of redemption that will fill the coming chapters by explaining theologically the divine character and motivation behind the whole sequence of events. The exodus will be the monumental demonstration of God’s rectifying justice against the perpetrators of oppression, God’s compassion for their victims, and God’s faithfulness to His covenant promise – all of which are implied in the statements that God saw and heard all that was going on and God remembered and knew who these people were. God will soon affirm these central points to Moses (3:7-9) and to the Israelites (6:6-8).

These closing verses of the chapter are also programmatic in the whole story of God in the Bible. God repeatedly proves Himself to be the God who hears, sees, remembers, and knows. On that foundation rest the praises and the protests of the psalmists, the celebration of John the Baptist's father (Luke 1:67-79), and the comfort of the martyrs of all ages (Rev 6:9-11).

Read or sing Hymn 233 O Father, You Are Sovereign

Tuesday (1/20) 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)

Doug Stuart writes:

The account of the encounter at the well in Midian tells several things about Moses' character: his flight from Egypt had not blunted his instinct for intervening against injustice and righting wrongs; he was quick to act against oppression, even alone, isolated, and with the odds against him; he was sufficiently imposing and/or assertive to intimidate several shepherds; he was physically vigorous enough to chase off a group of shepherds and then do work that seven girls were planning to do; he was not easily cowed himself; he was generous and helpful to people he hardly knew, acting from principle rather than merely from personal loyalty; and he did not ask for a personal reward for what he had done. All of these characteristics are seen again in various ways as Moses responded to God's call to deliver the Israelites from Egypt. In other words, the Moses we see here is basically the same Moses we have already seen as an adult in Egypt and whom we will see again through the Pentateuch - a figure whom God continued to prepare for a great and daunting task yet for whom such a task, potentially dispiriting, would not be something inimical to his basic nature.

These verse tell us a bit more about Moses as well. He was, though surely not yet romantically, attracted to the daughters of Reuel, the priest of

Midian. Something about their looks and/or demeanor awakened his interest and concern. Perhaps, in light of his extensive education already in Egypt, he was well aware of the family connection between Midian and Israel and thus was warmly predisposed toward a group of Midianite women. He obviously knew that he was in Midianite territory and might already have been looking for a place to settle down. Additionally, it should not be surprising in light of his eventual betrothal and marriage to one of Jethro's daughters that he should be inspired to include in the narrative the details of how he met his wife. He was also recognizably dressed and presumably tonsured like an Egyptian; otherwise the girls would not have described him so readily as "an Egyptian." Although these Midianite women may not have spoken any Egyptian, it would not have surprised them that an Egyptian might speak a recognizable form of Semitic. The Egyptians, whose Hamitic tongue was not cognate to Hebrew or Midianite, had over the centuries sent armies, occupation forces, diplomatic representatives, and traders into Midianite regions, and thus the women would know what an Egyptian looked like and would not have been surprised that one would know their language. In addition to this, the opportunity was once again presenting itself for Moses to benefit from the intervention of women on his behalf, as the following verses indicate. He had rescued them; they in turn provided hospitality for him, eventually a living arrangement and marriage, and later one of them would save his son's life put in danger by his own neglect.

Read or sing Hymn 492 How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds

Wednesday (1/21) Read and discuss Revelation 4

After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal.

And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. And the four living creatures, each of them

with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!”

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.” (ESV)

Mitchell Reddish writes:

No other work in the canon has such a strong emphasis on the transcendence of God. To experience John’s Apocalypse is to be brought in touch with the awesome majesty and mystery of the God of the universe. God is holy, the four living creatures remind us, as they sing “Holy, Holy, Holy” to the one seated on the throne. Like the prophet Isaiah, John declares the radical otherness of God. God is distinct from creation.

This emphasis on the transcendence of God is evident in the liturgical sections that undergird the entire Apocalypse. For John, the community of faith is a worshiping community. Worship is not an option or an addendum to the Christian life. Worship is at the heart of the people of God. John’s vision of the heavenly throne room is a worship setting. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures offer prayers and words of praise to God day and night without ceasing. It is from within this worship setting that the majority of the book takes place. The visions of chapters 4-22 all originate from the throne room of God, while in the background the four living creatures and twenty-four elders continue their worship in song and adoration. They provide a never-ending heavenly chorus of praise that quietly sustains the movement of the Apocalypse, but that occasionally breaks forth in the book in an extended “Hallelujah.” It is no wonder that the lofty and inspiring music of Handel’s Messiah and especially his “Hallelujah Chorus,” derives its text from the book of Revelation. Because John, like other apocalyptic writers, sees the events in heaven as models of earthly realities, the heavenly worship serves as a paradigm for the earthly worship of God.

Read or sing Hymn 230 Holy, Holy, Holy!

Thursday (1/22) Read and discuss Psalm 45

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song.

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

You are the most handsome of the sons of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you forever.
Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your splendor and majesty!

In your majesty ride out victoriously
for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;
let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!
Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;
you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;
your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.
From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;
daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;
at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear:
forget your people and your father's house,
and the king will desire your beauty.
Since he is your lord, bow to him.
The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts,
the richest of the people.

All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.
In many-colored robes she is led to the king,
with her virgin companions following behind her.

With joy and gladness they are led along
as they enter the palace of the king.

In place of your fathers shall be your sons;
you will make them princes in all the earth.
I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore nations will praise you forever and ever. (ESV)

Timothy Saleska writes:

Christians are attracted to Psalm 45's exalting description of the Davidic king because at the center of our lives stands Jesus, the Son of David, the Son of God, true man but also true God in one person, the King of kings. In other words, in language that is hyperbolic and figurative in reference to David and the rest of his human offspring before Christ, we see a literal and appropriate description of his Son, Jesus. In a mystery too deep to comprehend, we know that Jesus is the promised Son of David, whom God has blessed forever and in whom God fulfilled the covenant He made with David (2 Samuel 7). But at the same time, Jesus is God Himself, the one clothed in majesty and glory from all eternity. Jesus is the one who, in tune with the will of His Father, rode on behalf of truth and humility-righteousness and conquered every nation.

As Paul tells us, because Jesus humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, "therefore, God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow – of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth – and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 45 as his own description of Jesus: "But of the Son, He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.'" (Heb 1:8-9)

Friday (1/23) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 2:12–17

When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to

one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ. (ESV)

Scott Hafemann writes:

Paul's argument for his legitimacy as an apostle calls into question the prevailing view of the ministry in our day. It was the character of Paul's life and the transforming work of the Spirit, not his personality and his "success" in growing large churches, that recommend him as a true representative of Jesus Christ. In direct defiance of his opponents' criticism, Paul's argument in 2:12-3:3 reflects his persuasion that the condition of the heart, not the performance of the preacher, determines a person's response to the proclamation of the gospel.

Paul's understanding of the nature of Christian ministry strikes a piercing blow against all attempts, whether in Paul's day or our own, to fashion ministries and messages around techniques and technology. As children of the entertainment age, our culturally conditioned reflex is to make creating right environments for hearing the gospel our priority, instead of relying first and foremost on the power of the Spirit to call people to repentance. Our tendency is to concentrate on "working the angles" instead of relying on Christ to work. Rather than viewing the pastor as a mediator of the Spirit in conjunction with the proclamation of the Word, the minister becomes a "professional" whose job is to manage the corporate life of the congregation and oversee the creation of meaningful worship "events." David Wells has poignantly pointed out the dangerous consequences of this movement in contemporary American culture:

AS the technological world has encroached upon the pastorate, management by technique has come to replace management by truth.

The result, according to Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, is practical atheism. It is an atheism that reduces the Church to nothing more than the services it offers or the good feelings the minister can generate. In other words ... the ministry will typically be deprived of its transcendence and reduced to little more than a helping profession. ... It is under the guise of piety – indeed, of professionalization – that pastoral unbelief lives out its life.

Read or sing Hymn 463 O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus!

Saturday (1/24) Read and discuss Exodus 2:23–25

During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

God knows the pain of His people. That’s the comforting truth stemming from these last three verses in Exodus 2. Isaiah 63:9 builds upon the idea – stating that God shares in His people’s sadness. Yahweh isn’t detached, aloof, or indifferent. When Israel suffers, Yahweh [identifies with them in their suffering]. Israel’s enemies are Yahweh’s enemies. Whoever strikes Israel strikes the apple of Yahweh’s eye.

This same line of thinking continues into the New Testament, where, for example, Jesus tells His disciples, “The one who rejects you rejects *Me*” (Luke 10:16). God isn’t an unmoved mover. When He sees us agonizing over life’s harsh realities, His heart is moved with love and mercy. God hears us. Loves us. Forgives us. Empowers us. God comes to us in the most unlikely places – a hill called Calvary and an empty garden tomb.

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