Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 23 August 2026

AM Worship
Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5
Opening Hymn: 244 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
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: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Hymn of Preparation: 476 It Is Well with My Soul
Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 15:11-21
New Covenant Reading: Colossians 2:8-15
Sermon Title: *A New Day*
Hymn of Response: 220 Give Praise to God
Confession of Faith: 1 Heidelberg Catechism (p. 872)
Doxology (Hymn 569)
Closing Hymn: 219 O Worship the King

PM Worship
36B Transgression Speaks to Wicked Man (1-5)
225 Lord, My Weak Thought in Vain Would Climb
36B Transgression Speaks to Wicked Man (6-10)
Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 36
New Covenant Reading: John 6:22-40
Ships in the Night

Suggested Preparations

Monday (8/17) Read and discuss Exodus 15:11–21

"Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,

awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?
You stretched out your right hand;
the earth swallowed them.

"You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed;
you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.
The peoples have heard; they tremble;
pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.
Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;
all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
Terror and dread fall upon them;
because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone,
till your people, O LORD, pass by,
till the people pass by whom you have purchased.
You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain,
the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode,
the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.
The LORD will reign forever and ever."

For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea." (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

> Verse 13 is beautiful in form and substance. The parallel lines are elegantly balanced in rhythm and purposeful in direction. The two main verbs are confident that God will "lead" and "guide" His people. Since God has just led them, by visible presence in a pillar of fire and cloud, out of slavery, away from pursuing chariots, and through the menacing waters of a sea that had just swallowed their enemy, this is a justified confidence. It is reinforced by the two adverbial phrases attached to the verbs, "in your unfailing love" and "in your strength" – words that are almost rhyming in Hebrew. The faithful, covenanted love of God for His people, which had motivated the exodus, is matched by His strength in action. God's love is no impotent sympathy, but powerfully effective. The God who has led them out will assuredly lead them on and lead them in.

> The endings of each line connect with each other both as past to future, and as action to intention. Who are these "people"? They are the people whom God has "redeemed," repeating the verb first used as a promise, now experienced as a historic reality. What is their destiny (not merely their destination)? To dwell with God in the pasturelands of His holiness. They are to be the holy people of the holy god in God's holy place. That is a future they could scarcely conceive, the goal of their redemption (as it is of ours).

Read or sing Hymn 244 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Tuesday (8/18) Read and discuss Read and discuss Exodus 15:1–10

Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,

"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.
The LORD is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation;
this is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him.
The LORD is a man of war;
the LORD is his name.

"Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea,
and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea.
The floods covered them;
they went down into the depths like a stone.
Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power,
your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy.
In the greatness of your majesty you overthrow your adversaries;
you send out your fury; it consumes them like stubble.
At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up;
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.
The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake,
I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them.
I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them.'
You blew with your wind; the sea covered them;
they sank like lead in the mighty waters. (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

In 1962, a nuclear disaster was as close as the press of a red button – one red button. A Soviet submarine was patrolling along the eastern coast of Florida when the captain began preparing to nuke three American cities. Had it not been for a clear-thinking Russian officer, World War III might have begun in 1962. The officer's name? Vasili Arkhipov.

Back in the day, Soviet subs were designed for cold water – like the North Sea – not the warm water off the Florida coast. Temperatures reached 120 degrees Fahrenheit inside the Russian sub. As it patrolled near the Florida coast, Soviet sailors were exhausted and on edge. The captain finally lost his cool. He issued the order to launch three nuclear missiles – T-minus three minutes and counting!

Vasili Arkhipov asked the captain to reconsider. The captain listened. His anger cooled. The Soviet sub went home. Authorities kept this near brush with World War III secret for decades. It wasn't until 2002 that the public learned of Vasili Arkhipov's heroic stand.

How does this event intersect with our lives? After all, we won't ever spend three weeks in a sweltering Russian submarine – at least I hope we never do! We may, however, spend a semester under a heavy class load. We may fight the headwinds of a financial downturn. We may spend night after night at the bedside of a sick child or a dying parent. We may fight to keep our family together or our business from going under.

In all these scenarios, we'll be tempted to press the red button and launch – not nuclear warheads, but angry outbursts, rash accusations, a hateful retaliation of ugly words. Sometimes we emotionally vomit and deal with the consequences later.

What do you do when the temperature is up, your defenses are down, and you want to go nuclear? How can you keep your finger from pressing the red button? How can you keep your head when everyone else is losing theirs?

Sing.

That's what I said. Sing. Singing is so much better than sobbing, sighing, feeling sorry for ourselves, and then pushing the red button. …

Give your problems to your heavenly Father. Ask Him to help. You don't have to pull and sweat. Instead, sing exodus psalms to your God. That's Paul's strategy as well. "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and

spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God" Colossians 3:16 ESV).

Read or sing Hymn 476 It Is Well with My Soul

Wednesday (8/19) Read and discuss Colossians 2:8–15

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (ESV)

When we look at the Jewish side of those who were troubling the Colossian church, it is clear that some of the troublemakers were legalistic – and they were insisting that, while the Gentile Christians had made a good start, they **really did need to get circumcised** in order to become full-fledged first-class members of the family of God.

This might sound strange to us, but there is a surface plausibility to this claim – particularly when we remember that the saints at Colossae didn't yet have anything like a completed New Testament.

The LORD clearly had given circumcision to His people and the Mosaic Law made clear that no gentile man could participate in the sacrificial system until he had first been circumcised. Not only might it seem like the Gentile Christians should embrace circumcision in their pursuit of more it might appear that they needed to get circumcised just to hold on to what they already have.

Paul responds, "Hold your horses!" Stop and consider that *the sacrament of circumcision* is **a sign** – it isn't the reality. Negatively, circumcision was a mark in every male's flesh to remind him that the kingdom of God was not going to be built in the power of their flesh. Positively, circumcision pointed forward to the cutting off of Christ on the cross. So, if you are united with Christ you have already received not merely the sign of circumcision you have received the reality to which circumcision pointed. Since you already have the reality it would be terribly wrong to move from the reality back to the sign.

We sometimes say that baptism has replaced circumcision. But it isn't as though these are just two different sacraments which covey the same thing. Yes, baptism replaces

circumcision as the outward sign of membership in the people of God but there are actually two steps in the way that baptism replaces and surpasses circumcision.

Baptism is the sign and the seal of your **union** with Jesus Christ. And because you are united with Jesus Christ you have already received not merely the sign but the reality of circumcision **in Him**. You have both died with Christ and been raised with Him. To move from the reality back to the sing in pursuit of "more" is, therefore, utterly foolish.

Read or sing Hymn 220 Give Praise to God

Thursday (8/20) Read and discuss John 6:22–40

On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (ESV)

In verse 39 Jesus says, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.” Right there we have the doctrine of the “Perseverance of the Saints.”

We see in this verse Christ's own sense of vocation. Jesus declares that God’s will for His life is that He would fully save all those whom the Father has given to Him. This is where we see how our vocations intersect with the vocation of our Lord. Quite obviously, we do not atone for anyone else’s sin. God has a strict limit of one Savior per universe, and you and I are not Him. But the LORD has graciously called us to participate in His work of reconciling the world to Himself. As the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians chapter 5:

> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and **entrusting to us the message of reconciliation**.

Amazingly, the LORD has given His Church a role to play in His great work of reconciling the world to Himself and that work is the Great Commission. Whether as missionaries, ministers, or senders of those who preach – we all share in this One great work.

It is helpful to see that our vocation here lines up exactly with that of Jesus. The purpose of Christ’s ministry was **that all the elect** – those chosen and given to Him by God - would be saved. This is also our Lord’s purpose in sending us out to preach and teach the gospel. We can see this, for example, in 2 Timothy 2:8. Paul writes:

> Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything **for the sake of the elect**, that **they also may obtain the salvation** that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Just as Jesus claimed that His vocation was to save the elect, the Apostle Paul says that the reason why he is pouring his own life out in ministry is “for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Friday (8/21) Read and discuss Psalm 36

Transgression speaks to the wicked
deep in his heart;
there is no fear of God
before his eyes.
For he flatters himself in his own eyes
that his iniquity cannot be found out and hated.
The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit;

he has ceased to act wisely and do good.
He plots trouble while on his bed;
he sets himself in a way that is not good;
he does not reject evil.

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mountains of God;
your judgments are like the great deep;
man and beast you save, O LORD.

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light do we see light.

Oh, continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your righteousness to the upright of heart!
Let not the foot of arrogance come upon me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me away.
There the evildoers lie fallen;
they are thrust down, unable to rise. (ESV)

James Mays writes:

> To the character of the wicked the psalm contrasts the character of the LORD. The section of praise describes the LORD's character in the direct address of prayer. The description functions in the prayer as the confession of trust. The praise speaks first of the greatness of God (vv. 5-6) and then of human dependence on God (vv. 7-9). The two principal pairs of attributes of the LORD are said to be cosmic in dimension. Heavens and clouds mark the upper limit of the world; mountains of God and the great deep are terms of immensity. The attributes are loving-kindness and faithfulness (the LORD's firm reliability in His care for those to whom He is related) and righteousness and justice (the LORD's vindication of those who depend on Him and follow His way). Israel had come to know these attributes in its history with the LORD. They were manifest most of all in His saving activity. But here the psalmist speaks of them as manifest in God's salvation of all living things – man and beast – and by salvation means God's ongoing providential care by which He preserves life; verse 9 is anticipated; the life of man and beast depends on the LORD. The thought is quite similar to Psalm 104. This is the first part of the psalm's answer to the character of the wicked – the knowledge of the God who holds the whole world in His hand.

> The irony of it! The wicked who has no fear of God in Himself is incorporated in the great system of divine providential care.

Read or sing Hymn 219 O Worship the King

Saturday (8/22) Read and discuss Exodus 15:11–21

"Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?
You stretched out your right hand;
the earth swallowed them.

"You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed;
you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.
The peoples have heard; they tremble;
pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.
Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed;
trembling seizes the leaders of Moab;
all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.
Terror and dread fall upon them;
because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone,
till your people, O LORD, pass by,
till the people pass by whom you have purchased.
You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain,
the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode,
the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.
The LORD will reign forever and ever."

For when the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them, but the people of Israel walked on dry ground in the midst of the sea. Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea." (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

> God had led the Israelites out of Egypt by a route that avoided too early an encounter with their enemies, but there would be other nations het to face, on the way to the Promised Land and in it. The Israelites need not fear them,

however, for news of what Yahweh had done for Israel would fill those nations with fear. And what fear! The vocabulary of verses 14-16 piles up seven different words to portray the quaking of the nations. That will be their state until God's people "pass by" – or, probably better, "cross over." The verb is used repeatedly in Joshua for the crossing of the Jordan, though, of course, they would have to pass through some of the countries mentioned before that moment. The book of Joshua also records how true this poetic expectation would be. Rahab reports to the spies that her people are "melting in fear" (using some of the same words), because they have heard what Yahweh had done for Israel. The mighty acts of God were performed on an international stage, and word got around.

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