

Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 9 August 2026

AM Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3

Opening Hymn: 243 How Firm a Foundation

Confession of Sin

Almighty and everlasting God, Glorious Creator of all things, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; We have sinned against Your holy Name, by failing to glorify You in our lives as your redeemed children. Our unthankfulness extends to every thought and deed, as well as to our failure to thank you with our lips. We have not lived to the praise of the glory of Your grace. We have not esteemed the reproach of Jesus Christ our Savior to be greater than the riches of this world. We have failed to estimate the infinite cost of the salvation won for us at the cross through the shed blood of Jesus. We have not been faithful to You as You have been faithful to us in all things. Father, forgive us for our ingratitude through the reconciling sacrifice of Jesus Christ our all-sufficient Mediator, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Hebrews 10:19-22

Psalm of Preparation: 66A O Shout to God with Joy

Old Covenant Reading: Exodus 14:15-31

New Covenant Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Sermon Title: *Victory at Sea*

Hymn of Response: 247 We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)

Doxology (Hymn 569)

Closing Psalm: 145B I Will Exalt You, God, My King (1-5)

PM Worship

408 For All the Saints

520 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

223 Thee We Adore, Eternal Lord!

Old Covenant Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-22

New Covenant Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:11-13

Sermon Title: *Authentic and Authenticated*

Suggested Preparations

Monday (8/3) Read and discuss Exodus 14:15–31

The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses. (ESV)

Christopher Wright comments:

For us, ... living in the light of this story poses ... two challenges. At one level, the story is *an encouragement to our faith*, as Hebrews uses it. Facing the impossible, Moses trusted God and inspired the Israelites to do the same – at least on this occasion. No situation could be worse than the Israelites found themselves in that night, trapped between an overwhelming enemy and a darkened, wind-swept sea. They faced certain death behind them and in front of them. But God provided the way of escape. They trusted. God delivered. Perhaps that part of the story was in Paul's mind also when he wrote 1 Corinthians 10:13.

At another level, however, and because we know all the failures that come next, the story is a challenge to our obedience. Assuming we have experienced the redeeming grace of God, sacramentally sealed in our

baptism into Christ, will we then live in a way worthy of that gift and calling or in a way that dishonors both? Will we follow the example of the Israelites in a life of ingratitude and repeated rebellion, or will we follow the example of the Lord Jesus who, after His won baptism and “water crossing” in the Jordan, came through His forty days of testing in the wilderness as the Scripture strengthened, Father-trusting, faithful and obedient Son?

Read or sing Hymn 243 How Firm a Foundation

Tuesday (8/4) Read and discuss Read and discuss Exodus 14:1–14

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’ And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.” And they did so.

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

Experts say that 75 percent of all communication is negative. Who knew? If you don’t believe that, then just listen to talk radio! By the time we’re four years old, we’ve heard over 350,000 nos, don’ts, shouldn’ts, wouldn’ts, and who-do-you-think-you ares. A lot of voices specialize in catastrophizing, awfulizing, and doomsdayizing.

It's much better to listen to God's servant Moses. When the Israelites see the advancing Egyptian army and chariots, Moses says, "Fear not!" ...

Faith isn't natural. Fear is natural. Doubt is natural. Wanting to manipulate everything to meet our every need is natural. ... Faith, though, is anything but. It takes faith to walk through a newly created water canyon on dry ground. Just ask Israel!

Let me put it this way.

Imagine you're hiking and you come to a narrow, rickety-looking-footbridge – one hundred feet above a raging river. The only way to the other side is that bridge, but you're not sure it will hold. You slowly begin making your way across, testing each step before moving on. You've got to have faith in the bridge to get to the other side. **But it's not your faith in the bridge that keeps you from falling. It's the bridge.**

I can have just a little faith in a good bridge and slowly crawl to the other side. Or I can have a lot of faith in a bad bridge, only to have it give way under my feet. Do you see the lesson? Faith is only as good as the object of faith. Moses invites us to make Yahweh – the God of the sea and dry land – the object of our faith.

Read or sing Psalm 66A O Shout to God with Joy

Wednesday (8/5) Read and discuss 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words. (ESV)

The Rapture and the Second Coming in this passage are written against the backdrop of the Roman Triumph. Since most of you don't think a great deal about the Roman Triumph, let me give you a few of the details.

The Ancient Roman Empire was frequently at war. Back then, just as today, the people back in the capital cared a great deal about how the war was going. But they didn't have CNN, or Fox News, or the Internet. So, they would be in the dark about really important events until a messenger arrived with news of the battle.

Suppose a great General like Pompey was off fighting an important battle or war. After he achieved victory, Pompey would send messengers back to Rome – and they would announce “Good News! Good News! Pompey has been victorious over our enemies!” In fact, the Greek word that they would use – is *euangellion* – the same word we use for announcing the good news of Jesus Christ. Now, if the victory was important enough, Pompey would be honored when he returned to Rome with a Roman Triumph. You can think of this as something like a Ticker-Tape-Parade – but Roman Triumphs were much less common, and they were a much greater honor.

Here's where it gets really interesting: When Pompey returned to Rome, he would not immediately enter the city. Instead, while he was just outside the city, he would call his loyal supporters back in Rome to come out and meet with him. Normally, these were just important people – like Roman Senators. These were people who had championed his cause ... and although these people didn't participate in the war at all, they would march back into the city – in Pompey's Triumph celebration – **as though they were conquering heroes** who had helped to secure the great victory!

Do you see the pattern? Pompey wins the great victory. He sends messengers back to the capital who proclaim the **good news** of that victory. He returns to Rome and calls his loyal supporters to meet him **outside** the city – not so that they can return to the battlefield or travel with Pompey to a distant land. He calls his loyal supporters out to meet with him, so that they can return to Rome with him in his victory triumph.

This is precisely what Jesus does as well. Now Jesus doesn't simply conquer some petty kingdom here or there. Jesus has conquered the greatest enemies: Satan, sin, and death on behalf of His people. Then Jesus sends out messengers, **that would be us!** Jesus sends out messengers who proclaim the good news of His victory. Then, when Jesus returns to planet earth, He pauses, as it were, and He calls every single person who has trusted in Him *throughout all of redemptive history* to meet with Him in the air – not so that we can go back to heaven with Him for seven years – but so that we will return with Christ in **His glorious appearance** as He publicly celebrates ... **His victory triumph!**

Christ's coming will be glorious, BOTH for our Lord and also for all of His people!

Here's the most amazing part: Although Christ won this victory ALL BY HIMSELF ... many centuries before you were even born ... if you will trust Him right now ... on that day ... Christ will treat YOU as though you had been His loyal supporter all along.

Read or sing Hymn 247 We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator

Thursday (8/6) Read and discuss Deuteronomy 18:15–22

“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.’ And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’—when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him. (ESV)

Adolph Harstad writes:

The test of a prophet rests on whether his words consistently come to true fulfillment. Stated negatively, the true test is *not* based on his signs and wonders. Even false prophets can sometimes display signs and wonders, as implied by 13:1-3. Note that the precise question is how Israel can know that a word has *not* been spoken by Yahweh. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 does not say that a prophet whose words do come true is therefore a true prophet of Yahweh. If the words of a false prophet come true, he may have received them from the demonic realm or gotten lucky. Isn't it true that “even a blind squirrel finds a nut once in a while” and that “a dead clock is right twice a day”? When the words of a spiritually blind and dead prophet *do not come true*, however, there is no question that he is a false prophet. Note from Deuteronomy 18:18 that God promises to put His words into the mouth of the prophet. A false “word” cannot come from God. A false prophet has no knowledge of the judgments of God, though he may guess about a coming calamity and be “right” by presumption. An inconsistent record of prophecy and fulfillment will reveal a false prophet.

Friday (8/7) Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 12:11–13

I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong! (ESV)

David Garland writes:

The Corinthians remain confused about [how] to identify an authentic apostle. Lofty speech and loftier visions are not the proper criteria. Paul reminds them that “the signs of an apostle were worked among” them, something they cannot deny. He leaves vague what these signs are, defining them only as “signs, wonders, and miracles.” Paul does not intend to distinguish between three different types of miracles with these words. Miracles point beyond themselves to spiritual realities. They evoke awe and are seen as mighty acts of God or Christ. They could involve healings, glossolalia, and conversion surrounding dramatic events that attest to the truth of the gospel. Unlike his hardships, Paul chooses not to dwell on them in detail.

He words his remarks carefully and does not say, “I performed signs, wonders, and miracles (deeds of power).” Paul makes no claims to any supernatural power in himself, and the passive voice intimates that God did these things. According to Heb 2:3-4, the salvation brought by Jesus was attested by those who heard Him, and “God also testified by signs and wonders, various miracles.” While Paul does not claim to be powerful himself, he does affirm that God’s power is made perfect in his weakness. God’s power has testified to his genuineness.

Read or sing Psalm 145B I Will Exalt You, God, My King (1-5)

Saturday (8/8) Read and discuss Exodus 14:15–31

The LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the

morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.” So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses. (ESV)

R. Reed Lessing writes:

I’m sure by now it will not surprise you that God’s miracle at the Red Sea employs several motifs from the Book of Genesis. Here are some of them: out of the chaotic waters, God spoke and separate darkness from light (Genesis 1:2-3). Fast forward to the battle between Egypt and Yahweh where God’s Messenger brings darkness over Egypt’s forces while shining light on Israel (Exodus 14:19-20). This miracle of separation appears again. How?

Genesis 1:9 records God as saying, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” God splits the waters of the Red Sea and, sure enough, dry land appears! Here’s another link: the saving wind in Genesis 8:1 comports with the “strong east wind” that made the dry land for Israel to walk upon. Finally, just as Noah’s generation was “covered” in water, so were Egypt’s toughest and most determined warriors.

What do we learn by comparing these events? Through water and the Spirit, the exodus is God’s act of new creation. If you think this sounds a lot like baptism, then you’re tracking with Paul who writes, “Our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were *baptized* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:1-2 ESV). Through water and the Spirit, first appearing together in Genesis 1:2, God is present when we’re baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Through Baptism, God makes us *participants in the exodus story where all things become new*.

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