Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 22 November 2026

AM Worship
Call to Worship: Psalm 100:1-5
Opening Hymn: 262 One There Is, above All Others
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: Luke 1:76-79
Psalm of Preparation: 65B Praise Waits for You, O God
Old Covenant Reading: 1 Samuel 9:1-25
New Covenant Reading: Romans 13:1-7
Sermon Title: *In Search of a King*
Hymn of Response: 219 O Worship the King
Confession of Faith: 1 Heidelberg Catechism (p. 872)
Doxology (Hymn 569)
Closing Hymn: 380 Crown Him with Many Crowns

PM Worship
46A God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength
426 How Vast the Benefits Divine
427 I Sought the Lord, and Afterward I Knew
Old Covenant Reading: Psalm 46:1-11
New Covenant Reading: 2 Peter 1:8-11
Sermon Title: *Confirm Your Calling*

Adult Sunday School: Good News for Anxious Christians

Suggested Preparations

Monday (11/16) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 9:1–25

There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us." But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go." Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way." (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer," for today's "prophet" was formerly called a seer.) And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?" They answered, "He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately." So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me." When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people." Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?" Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?" Saul answered, "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"

Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons. And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.'" So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, "See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests."

So Saul ate with Samuel that day. And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep. (ESV)

Walter Brueggemann writes:

> The exchange between Samuel and Saul is freighted and delicate (vv. 19-20). Samuel guides the exchange; Saul understands very little. Before Saul can even ask about the asses, Samuel replies with an answer intended to change the subject. The change is wrought by the double use of the word "mind" (heart). Samuel knows what is on the mind of Saul (v. 19). However, Samuel invites Saul to get his mind off the donkeys for the sake of the "desire of Israel": that is, kingship (v. 20).
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> Samuel's enigmatic response as a question is a subtle assertion about the monarchy. Samuel asserts that everything desirable in Israel is for "you and for your father's house" (v. 20). The statement is not excessively elusive. Even the uncomprehending Saul seems to catch the point. He quickly demurs, in a manner reminiscent of Gideon. Saul's protest is left unresolved and unanswered, but the die is now cast. God's way has been implemented so powerfully and with such determination that it is larger than either Samuel or Saul.

Read or sing Hymn 262 One There Is, above All Others

Tuesday (11/17) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 8

When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations." But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that

they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city." (ESV)

Rick Phillips writes:

> Having learned from his years of experience, Samuel did what the elders should have done: he turned to the LORD in prayer. "The thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us,'" but instead of acting in anger, "Samuel prayed to the LORD." He provides an example of wisdom, remind us to respond to every challenge or need by first turning to God in prayer.
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> The LORD's answer was somewhat surprising, especially since he did not seem as indignant as His prophet. God had three replies to Samuel. First, he ministered to His servant by assuring him that the fault did not lie with him. Samuel had not failed Israel, and the people were not rejecting him: "they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them." In fact, this episode was merely the latest in a long history of Israel's rejecting God's rule: According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking Me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you." From the moment Israel stepped free from the bondage of Egypt, the LORED had been their King.

> Yet Israel's unbelief and rebellion were recurrent problems, so Samuel should not think himself the cause of their disaffection. These words should console every pastor, teacher, or parent whose charges refuse to follow in the way of the LORD: so long as we have been faithful to teach and lead, the failure is not ours, and we share our sense of rejection with the LORD.
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> Second, with this in mind, God knew how to answer the elders: by agreeing to their request! God frequently responds this way to rebellion among His people. When we demand a substitute for God, the LORD will allow us to experience worldly and unbelieving rule, with all its harmful consequences. This is not because God was thwarted by the elders' obstinacy or that God found Himself at wits' end. Rather, God intended a humbling lesson that might result in future repentance and restoration.
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> This reminds us that we should not always be encouraged when God seems to answer our prayers. Here, God's relenting was a sign not of His blessing but His chastisement. The more we realize how sinful our hearts are and how frequently our thoughts and desires run astray, the more we will humbly desire God to overrule in our prayers so that His wisdom will overcome our folly, and His holiness will correct our sin.
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> God's third respond was to command Samuel: "Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." It was remarkably patient of God to provide His obstinate people with a detailed warning about what they were demanding. Accordingly, "Samuel told all these words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him."

Read or sing Psalm 65B Praise Waits for You, O God

Wednesday (11/18) Read and discuss Romans 13:1–7

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (ESV)

John Murray writes:

We know from the New Testament itself that the Jews had questions regarding the rights of the Roman government. We also know that the Jews were disposed to pride themselves on their independence. We read also of seditious movements. There is also the evidence from other sources respecting the restlessness of the Jews under the Roman yoke. We are told that Claudius "had commanded all the Jews to depart from rom." This expulsion must have been occasioned by the belief that Jews were inimical to the imperial interests if not the aftermath of Jewish insurrection. In the mind of the authorities Christianity was associated with Judaism and any seditious temper attributed to Judaism would likewise be charged to Christians. This created a situation in which it was necessary for Christians to avoid all revolutionary aspirations or actions as well as insubordination to magistrates in the rightful exercise of their authority.

Not only was there this danger arising from association with Judaism, there was also within the Christian community the danger of perverted notions of freedom, especially in view of the kingship and lordship of Christ. The fact that Paul on three occasions in his epistles found it necessary to reflect on our duties in reference to magistrates and Peter likewise to the same effect in his first epistle shows that there was a reason for reminding believers of the necessity to be subject to the magisterial authorities.

Furthermore, Christians often suffered at the hands of these authorities and there was greater reason to draw the line between the disobedience which loyalty to Christ demanded and the obedience which the same loyalty required.

Thursday (11/19) Read and discuss Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear though the earth give way,
though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God will help her when morning dawns.
The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

Come, behold the works of the LORD,
how he has brought desolations on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the chariots with fire.
"Be still, and know that I am God.
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!"
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah (ESV)

Tim Keller writes:

> Until recently no one imagined the possibility of the world itself being destroyed, but today our films are filled with ways it could happen. But if you have this God as your God, you can face even such cataclysms without any fear. It doesn't say ere that God will help you if you get into a strong refuge. It says He *is* that refuge. God is a stronghold or city that cannot be bombed or destroyed. Though earthquakes and tidal waves dissolve the solid world and civilizations melt, His rule is unshaken. If God is with you, even the worst thing that happens to you – death – only makes you infinitely happier and greater.
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> Nothing is truly solid, trustworthy, and lasting but God. Nor can anything thwart Him. Even the rage and assaults of others against God and His people and His cause will ultimately be used by Him for redemptive purposes (Acts 4:24-28). No matter how bleak the prospects seem or how overwhelming the opposition, the city of God – the heavenly community and reality – cannot be harmed but can only triumph. Why? Because that reality and community are in God Himself. There is no more proper response to really seeing God as He is – transcendent beyond all imagination – than to be still and adore.

Read or sing Hymn 219 O Worship the King

Friday (11/20) Read and discuss 2 Peter 1:8–11

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (ESV)

Michael Green writes:

> *Make your calling and election sure* is an appeal that goes to the heart of the paradox of election and free will. The New Testament characteristically makes room for both without attempting to resolve the apparent antinomy. So here; election comes from God alone – but man's behavior is the proof or disproof of it. Though 'good works' are possibly only through the appropriation of God's gracious aid, they are absolutely necessary, and fairly and squarely our responsibility. Hence the use of the middle voice, 'make sure for yourself.' Christian calling and Christian living go together. It seems that the false teachers boasted of their diving calling and election, while making that an 'excuse for every kind of license, as though they had permission to sin with impunity because they are predestined to righteousness' (Calvin).
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> Chronologically speaking, of course, *election* precedes *calling*. There is nothing arbitrary or unfair about it. Christ is the Elect One. Election is in Christ. Outside Him is ruin. God calls men to commit themselves to Jesus Christ, and, once they have done so, that call must be [reflected in] holy living. Whether or not it is possible for one so chosen and called to apostatize, Peter does not consider here. …
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> If you confirm your calling with a life agreeable to it, Peter concludes, two results will follow. In the first place, *you will never fall*. Of course, in many ways we all stumble (Jas 3:2). But what Peter means is that the Christian will be spared a disastrous coming to grief. The metaphor is drawn from the surefootedness of a horse. A life of steady progress should characterize the Christian. His radiant life should be the silent proof of God's election.
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> Furthermore, you will reach your heavenly destination, *and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom* … The second result of loving obedience is put before as the goal of a long journey. Words are piled upon one another to excite the weary pilgrim's heart at the splendor of that destination. … If we generously put ourselves out in obedience to God and give Him what we have, He will generously put Himself out, so to speak, and lavishly equip us for life in the everlasting kingdom.

Read or sing Hymn 380 Crown Him with Many Crowns

Saturday (11/21) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 9:1–25

There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us." But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go." Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way." (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer," for today's "prophet" was formerly called a seer.) And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.

As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?" They answered, "He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately." So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me." When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people." Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?" Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?" Saul answered, "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"

Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons. And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.'" So

the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, "See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests."

So Saul ate with Samuel that day. And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to sleep. (ESV)

Andrew Steinmann writes:

> Saul's first reaction to Samuel's words was not positive (9:19). He did not rejoice in God's choice or humbly accept God's will. Instead, he appeared to question and possibly even reject God's Word. Why should he be chosen from among the smallest clan of the smallest tribe of Israel? Like Israel, Saul was looking at kingship from a human perspective, not God's. Saul would continue to work at odds with God's Word to him.
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> The scene quickly switches to the high place without any transition. There in a room Saul was given a thigh from the sacrifice. He supped at table with Samuel and about thirty other men. Sacral buildings at high places were not uncommon. The specific portion given to Saul was a "thigh and what as on it" (9:24). It has been suggested that this was the right hind leg, a portion of the sacrifice for someone especially honored. That Saul was the guest of honor is signaled by his place at the head of the guests, he portion of meat that was reserved for him, and the words "Saul ate with Samuel."
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> Samuel and Saul therefore are fully in communion, sharing fellowship both at the altar and at the table. Their union in faith may be compared to that of the infant church, the baptized believers who devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers as they held everything in common. Such unity in doctrine and practice, expressed in communion together, is God's desire and the goal of the church. Tragically, Samuel will have to break his fellowship with Saul when Saul transgresses God's Word. Disregard for the Scriptures is the root cause of the schisms that rend asunder the fellowship of churches today.

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