Guide for the Preparation for Worship on 8 November 2026

AM Worship
Call to Worship: Psalm 96:1-3
Opening Psalm: 8B LORD, Our Lord, in All the Earth
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: 25C Lord, I Lift My Soul to Thee
Old Covenant Reading: 1 Samuel 7:2-17
New Covenant Reading: Romans 8:31-39
Sermon Title: *His Mercies are New*
Hymn of Response: 256 God Moves in a Mysterious Way
Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed (p. 852)
Doxology (Hymn 569)
Closing Hymn: 457 Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness

PM Worship
528 Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart
209 O Splendor of God's Glory Bright
525 Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us
Old Covenant Reading: 1 Kings 17:1-16
New Covenant Reading: 2 Peter 1:3-4
Sermon Title: *Divine Provision*

Adult Sunday School: Good News for Anxious Christians

Suggested Preparations

Monday (11/2) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 7:2–17

From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your

heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.

Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you." So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah. Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines." So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us." So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD. (ESV)

Rick Phillips writes:

> Individual sins should be confessed and repented of on an individual basis. But there are national and church sins that should be repented of as a nation and as a church. Moreover, it is proper for congregations, as they seek god's blessing in worship, to confess together the guilt of their sin. So Samuel summoned the people to assemble at Mizpah, a traditional meeting place about five miles north of Jerusalem. "Gather all Israel at Mizpah," Samuel said, "and I will pray to the LORD for you" (1 Sam. 7:5).
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> Once the people had gathered, they responded in a couple of actions designed to express their contrition over sin. First, they "drew water and poured it out before the LORD" (1 Sam 7:6). The meaning of this gesture is not entirely clear. Robert Bergen supposes that they "were denying

> themselves liquids a s symbolic confession that the LORD's favor was more important to them than life-sustaining water." William Blaikie sees it as "a symbol of pouring out before God confessions of sin drawn from the depths of the heart." To this was added public fasting, the purpose of which was to express special humiliation and grief for sin. In these ways, the Israelites came before the LORD declaring their eager readiness to receive His renewing grace. There can be little doubt of the sincerity, fervor, and grief poured out in their words of confession, spoken together as a penitent people, "We have sinned against the LORD" (1 Sam 7:6). Blaikie writes: "They humbled themselves before God in deep conviction of their unworthiness, and being thus emptied of self they were in a better state to receive the gracious visitation of love and mercy."

Read or sing Psalm 8B LORD, Our Lord, in All the Earth

Tuesday (11/3) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 6

The ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us with what we shall send it to its place." They said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty, but by all means return him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why his hand does not turn away from you." And they said, "What is the guilt offering that we shall return to him?" They answered, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines, for the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. So you must make images of your tumors and images of your mice that ravage the land, and give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you and your gods and your land. Why should you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? After he had dealt severely with them, did they not send the people away, and they departed? Now then, take and prepare a new cart and two milk cows on which there has never come a yoke, and yoke the cows to the cart, but take their calves home, away from them. And take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart and put in a box at its side the figures of gold, which you are returning to him as a guilt offering. Then send it off and let it go its way and watch. If it goes up on the way to its own land, to Beth-shemesh, then it is he who has done us this great harm, but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that struck us; it happened to us by coincidence."

The men did so, and took two milk cows and yoked them to the cart and shut up their calves at home. And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart and the box with the golden mice and the images of their tumors. And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went. They turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh. Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. And when they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, they rejoiced to see it. The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there. A great stone was there. And they split up the

wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the box that was beside it, in which were the golden figures, and set them upon the great stone. And the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices on that day to the LORD. And when the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned that day to Ekron.

These are the golden tumors that the Philistines returned as a guilt offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron, and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both fortified cities and unwalled villages. The great stone beside which they set down the ark of the LORD is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh.

And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the LORD. He struck seventy men of them, and the people mourned because the LORD had struck the people with a great blow. Then the men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?" So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to you."

And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill. And they consecrated his son Eleazar to have charge of the ark of the LORD. (ESV)

Rick Phillips writes:

> It is noteworthy that Kiriath-jearim was a Gibeonite city (Josh. 9:17). The Gibeonites were non-Israelites who tricked Joshua into permitting them to live and who were assigned as woodcutters and water-bearers for the tabernacle. Thus God shows that His true people are those who respond to Him in faith. Though they had not been born into the covenant, these Gibeonites trusted God's Word; acting according to Scripture, they were keen to have the ark in their midst. Trusting in God's grace, humbly adhering to God's Word, they had the privilege of housing God's holy ark for a generation, until King David appeared to take the ark and bring it into Jerusalem.
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> Abinadab and his son apparently did everything they could to observe God's commandments for the ark. They also refused to do more than God's word permitted. Kiriath-jearim thus was not advertised as a new national shrine replacing Shiloh, which the Philistines had destroyed. The traditional feasts were not celebrated there and the sacrificial service was not observed there being no proper priesthood. For twenty years "the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim," not itn the center but on the fringe of the nation, faithfully cared for by loyal foreigners who trusted God's Word but inaccessible to the nation, so that "all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD" (1 Sam

7:2). Just as the gospel is, according to Paul, a savor of death to those who do not believe but an aroma of life to those of faith, so also the ark was the savor of death to irreverent Beth-shemesh and the savor of life and joy to the faithful household of Abinadab.

Read or sing Psalm 25C Lord, I Lift My Soul to Thee

Wednesday (11/4) Read and discuss Romans 8:31–39

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

> "For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
> we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In order for anyone to condemn us, they have to argue that who Jesus is and what He has done through His life and death is somehow insufficient to redeem us. Do you hear how outrageously blasphemous it is to say to God the Son: "Yes, you took to yourself a true human nature and lived the perfect life that we should have lived. Yes, you died in our place – not simply enduring the wrath of man – but voluntarily enduring the wrath of Almighty God in the place of Your people – but I don't think that is enough. I am now going to bring a charge against those for whom You died?" To ask that question is to answer it. Furthermore, the risen Christ, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth is given, is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for you. You might imagine that He is pleading with the Father to show you mercy. But that's not it. In Romans 8, Jesus is asking God to give you complete and perfect justice – and, astonishingly, that is good news. It's not as though you haven't committed a disturbingly high number of capital offenses for which you could have been sentenced to enduring the eternal wrath of a perfectly holy God. But if anyone approaches the Judge to name those crimes, Jesus stands and says: "Father, that sin has already been paid for. I paid for it Myself on the cross. Justice demands that it not be paid for again. Furthermore, as You can see, I have given My sister or My brother – My own perfect record of righteousness. There is only one verdict You can justly render. 'Vindicated!' Indeed, you have already rendered that verdict from the moment they first believed." This is such astonishingly good news that sometimes *even we* have difficulty believing it. We look in the mirror and imagine that there are plenty of things that

an accuser could raise against us in the courtroom of Almighty God. I know that for some of you, the person most likely to condemn you is the person looking back at you from the mirror in the morning. Please preach this message from the Apostle John to your own weary soul:

> If our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and [He] knows all things!

Thursday (11/5) Read and discuss 1 Kings 17:1–16

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." And the word of the LORD came to him: "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. And after a while the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

Then the word of the LORD came to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah. (ESV)

Walter Maier writes:

> Elijah says to the widow, "Give me your son." The text does not say that she gave him to the prophet, at least in an active sense. Apparently, she still clung to the boy, and Elijah had to pry him gently "from her bosom." Elijah took him up to his roof chamber, where he could pray to the LORD in privacy, and laid the body on his bed.

> The prophet is led to wrestle with the LORD in prayer, asking God in very bold language, "Yahweh my God, even on the widow with whom I have been sojourning have you brought calamity, to killer her son?" the bitterness of the moment forces Elijah to grasp with fiercer tenacity the encouragements and promises of Scripture: that believers can pour out their hearts to the LORD, approach Him with confidence, bring any petition to Him, and rely fully on God's grace, mercy, and love.
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> Elijah's faith is drawn to such a point, through Scripture, that the prophet asks God to perform a miracle, and a miracle which had never before occurred – to make a dead person alive again. Elijah, with heightened reliance on the LORD, stretches himself on the child three times, no doubt because of his belief in the persons of the Trinity. He trusts that God will use him, Elijah, as His instrument to raise the boy from death. Once more he cries out, "Yahweh my God," again using the covenant name, with all that "Yahweh" signified. The subsequent restoration of life, plus the supernatural supply of food, prepared Elijah for the events of 1 Kings 18.
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> The experience turned out to be for the widow's good. She already had appreciated Yahweh as the One providing food. Now, with the revival of her son, her faith in the God of Israel was made firmer. He was the Lord of death, which could not be claimed for Baal, who periodically, according to pagan theology, had to submit to Mot, the Canaanite god of death and the underworld. Yahweh, she sees in clearer fashion, was the supreme God – in fact, the only God. She is brought to confess to Elijah, "Now this I know: that you are a man of God and the word of Yahweh in your mouth is truth." This Phoenician woman is a true daughter of Abraham.

Read or sing Hymn 256 God Moves in a Mysterious Way

Friday (11/6) Read and discuss 2 Peter 1:3–4

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (ESV)

Tom Schreiner writes:

> Some scholars argue that believers will escape the corruption of the world at death or when the Lord returns. It is more likely, however, that Peter operates with an already-but-not—yet schema. Believers have already escaped the world's corruption in that they belong to God, but the full realization of liberation will be theirs on the day of resurrection. The parallel

> expression 2 Pet 2:20 supports this interpretation. Peter, speaking of the lapse of the false teachers, says, "Fo if, have escaped the world's impurity through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." The participle "escaped" is the same word and the same form as in 1:4. A different word for corruption is used – but the idea is the same. Most important, they have previously escaped the impurity of the world in coming to know Jesus Christ in 2:20. We should interpret 1:4 similarly. Believers have already escaped the corruption of the world, but the completion of that process will occur on the day of the Lord.

Read or sing Hymn 457 Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness

Saturday (11/7) Read and discuss 1 Samuel 7:2–17

From the day that the ark was lodged at Kiriath-jearim, a long time passed, some twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.

Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you." So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah. Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines." So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel. And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us." So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places. Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD. (ESV)

Andrew Steinmann writes:

> The author does not credit Israel with the victory over the Philistines. It was Yahweh who thundered and threw the Philistines into a panic, and so they were defeated. Only then did Israel pursue the fleeing Philistine army to a point below Beth-car. That place where the pursuit ended is probably Ebenezer, "the rock or my helper," where Samuel erected a monument to God's victory. What is not clear is what Samuel means by "thus far Yahweh has helped us." Does he mean thus far in time? Or is he referring to this place far away from Mizpah? The context favors the latter, but the ambiguity of Samuel's words leaves open for the reader the possibility that God's help may or may not follow Israel any farther in time. It propels the reader forward to see whether and how God will continue to help Israel.
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> We are subsequently told of the subduing of Philistine power during Samuel's lifetime. The Philistines did not enter Israelite territory again as long as he was alive. Indeed Saul and his son Jonathan would go on the offensive and attack the Philistines. The Philistines would advance on the border of Judah, but David would kill Goliath there, and the Philistines would be defeated. It would not be until after Samuel's death that the Philistines would advance into Israel's territory and bring about the final defeat of Saul and his army.

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