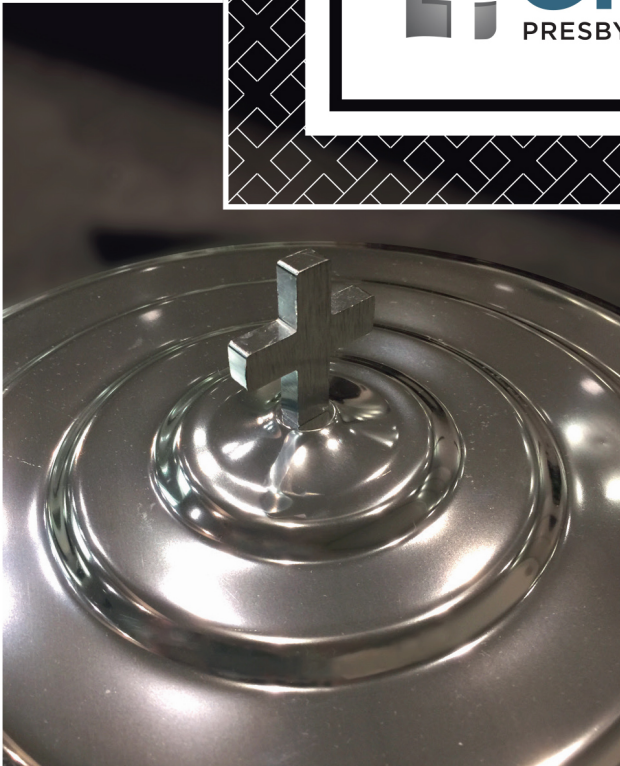




 **GRACE**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, August 16, 2026

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

Psalm 63:2-3

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

ENTERING INTO WORSHIP

Greeting and Blessing*

Responsive Reading*

Psalm 23 (p. 791 in the *Trinity Hymnal*)

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

**He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he restores my soul.**

He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

**You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.**

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

* *Congregation is requested to stand, if able.*

The pastor will read the plain text; the congregation will read the bold text.

O Father, You Are Sovereign

O Father, you are sovereign in all the worlds you made;
Your mighty word was spoken and light and life obeyed.
Your voice commands the seasons and bounds the ocean's shore,
Sets stars within their courses and stills the tempest's roar.

O Father, you are sovereign in all affairs of man;
No pow'rs of death or darkness can thwart your perfect plan.
All chance and change transcending, supreme in time and space,
You hold your trusting children secure in your embrace.

O Father, you are sovereign, the Lord of human pain,
Transmuting earthly sorrows to gold of heav'nly gain.
All evil over-ruling, as none but Conqu'ror could,
Your love pursues its purpose—our souls' eternal good.

O Father, you are sovereign! We see you dimly now,
But soon before your triumph earth's every knee shall bow.
With this glad hope before us our faith springs up anew:
Our sovereign Lord and Savior, we trust and worship you! Amen.

Congregational Confession of Sin

Leader: Gracious God, we delight in your Law, which is holy, righteous, and good. It is firmly fixed in the heavens forever. The Ninth Commandment of your Law is, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

All: We confess that we have broken this commandment by lying, gossiping, boasting, slandering, and concealing the truth. We have not earnestly sought to protect the good reputations of our neighbors as well as our own. Forgive us and enable us to always reject what is false and to rejoice in the truth. We ask all this through the merit and mediation of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.

Private Confession of Our Sins

Assurance of Forgiveness

Romans 8:1-4

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

ADORATION AND PRAISE

First Reading*

2 Chronicles 36:15-23

Congregational Response (Hymn of the Month)

Hymn 580

Lead On, O King Eternal

Lead on, O King eternal,
The day of march has come;
Henceforth in fields of conquest
Thy tents shall be our home:
Through days of preparation
Thy grace has made us strong,
And now, O King eternal,
We lift our battle song.

Lead on, O King eternal,
Till sin's fierce war shall cease,
And holiness shall whisper
The sweet amen of peace;
For not with swords loud clashing,
Nor roll of stirring drums,
But deeds of love and mercy,
The heav'nly Kingdom comes.

Lead on, O King eternal:
We follow, not with fears;
For gladness breaks like morning
Where'er thy face appears;
Thy cross is lifted o'er us;
We journey in its light:
The crown awaits the conquest;
Lead on, O God of might. Amen.

Confession of Faith

The Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 24. *How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?*

A. Christ executes the office of a prophet in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

Q. 25. *How does Christ execute the office of a priest?*

A. Christ executes the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

Q. 26. *How does Christ execute the office of a king?*

A. Christ executes the office of a king in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Stewardship ❖

Doxology*

Hymn 732

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Lord's Prayer*

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

❖ *Tithes and offerings may be placed in the box at the entrance to the sanctuary or given online through our church's website.*

THE WORD AND SACRAMENT

Second Reading*

Esther 1

Congregational Response (Psalm of the Month: Psalm 22:27-30)

Hymn 368

The Ends of All the Earth Shall Hear

The ends of all the earth shall hear
And turn unto the Lord in fear;
All kindreds of the earth shall own
And worship him as God alone.
*All earth to him her homage brings,
The Lord of lords, the King of kings.*

For his the kingdom, his of right,
He rules the nations by his might;
All earth to him her homage brings,
The Lord of lords, the King of kings.
*All earth to him her homage brings,
The Lord of lords, the King of kings.*

Both rich and poor, both bond and free,
Shall worship him on bended knee,
And children's children shall proclaim
The glorious honor of his name.
*All earth to him her homage brings,
The Lord of lords, the King of kings. Amen.*

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon

Pastor Ben Muresan

“We Have a Better King and a Better Kingdom”
Esther 1

Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

GOD’S BLESSING ON HIS PEOPLE

Hymn of Thanksgiving*

Hymn 676

Day by Day and with Each Passing Moment

Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father’s wise bestowment,
I’ve no cause for worry or for fear.
He whose heart is kind beyond all measure
Gives unto each day what he deems best—
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Every day the Lord himself is near me
With a special mercy for each hour;
All my cares he fain would bear, and cheer me,
He whose name is Counselor and Pow’r.
The protection of his child and treasure
Is a charge that on himself he laid;
“As your days, your strength shall be in measure,”
This the pledge to me he made.

Help me then in every tribulation
So to trust your promises, O Lord,
That I lose not faith’s sweet consolation
Offered me within your holy Word.
Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting,
E’er to take, as from a father’s hand,
One by one, the days, the moments fleeting,
Till I reach the promised land. Amen.

Benediction*

Congregational Benediction Response*

(Sung to TRINITY)

To the great One in Three
Eternal praises be, hence evermore.
His sovereign majesty may we in glory see,
And to eternity love and adore. Amen.

SERMON NOTES

“We Have a Better King and a Better Kingdom”
Esther 1

1. Recognize the vanity of this fallen world.
Mark 8:36
2. Trust in God's sovereign providence.
Romans 8:28-30
3. Rejoice in King Jesus and his eternal Kingdom.
Revelation 11:15

HOME WORSHIP GUIDE

The daily reading schedule follows the One Year Bible Reading Plan.

Monday, August 17

Scripture: Nehemiah 12:27 - 13:31; 1 Cor. 11:1-16; Psalm 35:1-16; Prov. 21:17-18

Catechism: The Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter 33

Pray for: Our federal, state, and local government leaders.

Tuesday, August 18

Scripture: Esther 1:1 - 3:15; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34; Psalm 35:17-28; Prov. 21:19-20

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 26

Pray for: Our military, police, fire, and medical personnel.

Wednesday, August 19

Scripture: Esther 4:1 - 7:10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-26; Psalm 36:1-12; Proverbs 21:21-22

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 27

Pray for: Our covenant children and Christian military chaplains.

The churches in Dominica and persecuted Christians.

Thursday, August 20

Scripture: Esther 8:1 - 10:3; 1 Cor. 12:27 - 13:13; Psalm 37:1-11; Prov. 21:23-24

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 28

Pray for: Our Elders, Deacons, Women's Ministry, & the PCA.

Friday, August 21

Scripture: Job 1:1 - 3:26; 1 Corinthians 14:1-17; Psalm 37:12-29; Proverbs 21:25-26

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 29

Pray for: Our members who have ongoing health care needs.

The Shepherd's Church Plant in Riverside and the Manrique Family.

Saturday, August 22

Scripture: Job 4:1 - 7:21; 1 Corinthians 14:18-40; Psalm 37:30-40; Proverbs 21:27

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 30

Pray for: The preaching and for our Sunday School teachers.

Sunday, August 23

Scripture: Job 8:1 - 11:20; 1 Corinthians 15:1-28; Psalm 38:1-22; Proverbs 21:28-29

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 31

Pray for: Our worship this morning.

MISSIONS CORNER

Pray for our missionaries. Their prayer requests are sent out through the Prayer Chain and their newsletters are published in Grace Notes as they become available.

Ray & Michele Call in the Dominican Republic

Dave Eby in Uganda

Christ Bible Institute in Japan

The Shepherd's Church in Riverside

LORD'S DAY DEVOTION AND QUESTIONS

The book of Esther records how God cared for his Old Covenant people as they lived in exile. The beauty of the book of Esther is that it displays God's ordinary providence. While books like Exodus are full of miracles and extraordinary events, God's work in Esther is subtle and yet always sovereign. Wallace Benn in his commentary on Esther writes:

I think the book of Esther is the greatest book in the Bible to teach the most underused word in modern Christian vocabulary. That word is *providence*, often neglected by modern Christians but not by evangelical Christians in previous generations. Among them, providence would have been highly valued and was common in their vocabulary. To grasp that God rules and overrules in the circumstances of our lives for the good of his people whom he has redeemed, to bring glory to his name, brings sanity in the Christian life.

God works out his purposes in our world through all the mess, and he saves his people. No power on earth can hinder God's rule or keep his ultimate purpose from being fulfilled. We can trust God to work out his purposes for the good of the Church. As Paul put it at the end of Ephesians, "God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church" (1:22, NIV). Jesus Christ is Lord and exercises his rule for the benefit of the Church.

Instead of answering questions, read the book of Esther and try to do it in one sitting. As you read, note the ways in which God's providence is displayed and how understanding God's providence should comfort and encourage you in your life.



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