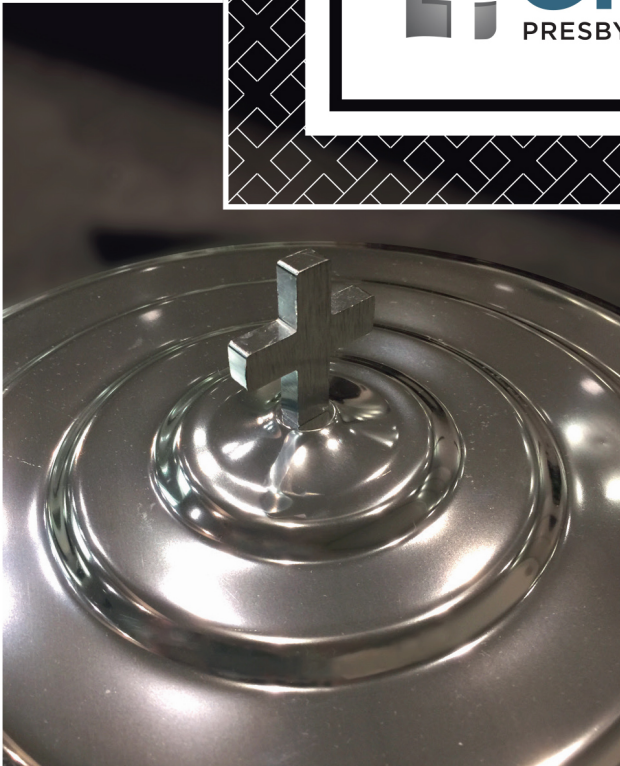




 **GRACE**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, August 23, 2026

The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD;
he is their stronghold in the time of trouble.

Psalms 37:39

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

ENTERING INTO WORSHIP

Greeting and Blessing*

Responsive Reading*

Psalms 65 (p. 807 in the *Trinity Hymnal*)

Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion;

to you our vows will be fulfilled.

O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come.

When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions.

Blessed are those you choose and bring near to live in your courts!

We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.

You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior,
the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas,

who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength,

who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations.

Those living far away fear your wonders;

where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of joy.

You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly.

**The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.**

You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops.

You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance.

The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness.

**The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.**

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

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

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! In his temple God be praised;
In the high and heav'nly places be the sounding anthem raised.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah for his mighty acts of fame;
Excellent his might and greatness, fitting praises then proclaim.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah with the trumpet's joyful sound;
Praise with harp and praise with organ, let his glorious praise abound.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! All that breathe, Jehovah praise;
Let the voices God has given joyful anthems to him raise.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen. Amen.

Congregational Confession of Sin

Leader: Father, we believe that your Word is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Nothing and no one can hide from you. The Tenth Commandment you reveal in your Word is, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

All: We confess that we have broken this commandment. We have been discontent with what you have wisely and lovingly provided, and we have envied the possessions and circumstances of our neighbors. Forgive us and renew in us a true sense of thanksgiving and gratitude for all you have graciously provided, especially for the spiritual blessings we have in our Lord 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 5:6-9

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

ADORATION AND PRAISE

First Reading*

Daniel 6:10-28

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. 27. *What was Christ's humiliation?*

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Q. 28. *What is Christ's exaltation?*

A. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the Last Day.

Q. 29. *How do we take part in the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. We take part in the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Stewardship ❖

Gloria Patri*

Hymn 735

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, 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 2:1-18

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

“God Is the Hero in the Bible”
Esther 2:1-18

GOD’S BLESSING ON HIS PEOPLE

Hymn of Thanksgiving*

Hymn 253

There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood

There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains:
Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he, washed all my sins away:
Washed all my sins away, washed all my sins away;
And there have I, as vile as he, washed all my sins away.

E’er since by faith I saw the stream your flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die:
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.

Then in a nobler, sweeter song I’ll sing your pow’r to save,
When this poor lisping, stamm’ring tongue lies silent in the grave:
Lies silent in the grave, lies silent in the grave;
When this poor lisping, stamm’ring tongue lies silent in the grave.

Dear dying Lamb, your precious blood shall never lose its pow’r,
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more:
Be saved to sin no more, be saved to sin no more;
Till all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more. Amen.

Benediction*

Congregational Benediction Response*

(Hymn 115, verse 5)

Let all things their Creator bless, and worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, alleluia! Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,
And praise the Spirit, three in One, O praise him, O praise him,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Amen.

SERMON NOTES

“God Is the Hero in the Bible”

Esther 2:1-18

1. The sinfulness of this fallen world.
Romans 3:10-12

2. The sinfulness of God's people.
Titus 3:3-7

3. The overruling providence of God.
Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23-24

HOME WORSHIP GUIDE

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

Monday, August 24

Scripture: Job 12:1 - 15:35; 1 Corinthians 15:29-58; Psalm 39:1-13; Proverbs 21:30-31

Catechism: The Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter 1

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

Tuesday, August 25

Scripture: Job 16:1 - 19:29; 1 Corinthians 16:1-24; Psalm 40:1-10; Proverbs 22:1

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 32

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

Wednesday, August 26

Scripture: Job 20:1 - 22:30; 2 Corinthians 1:1-11; Psalm 40:11-17; Proverbs 22:2-4

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 33

Pray for: Our covenant children and Christian military chaplains.

The churches in the Dominican Republic and persecuted Christians.

Thursday, August 27

Scripture: Job 23:1 - 27:23; 2 Corinthians 1:12 - 2:11; Psalm 41:1-13; Proverbs 22:5-6

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 34

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

Friday, August 28

Scripture: Job 28:1 - 30:31; 2 Corinthians 2:12-17; Psalm 42:1-11; Proverbs 22:7

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 35

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

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

Saturday, August 29

Scripture: Job 31:1 - 33:33; 2 Corinthians 3:1-18; Psalm 43:1-5; Proverbs 22:8-9

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 36

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

Sunday, August 30

Scripture: Job 34:1 - 36:33; 2 Corinthians 4:1-12; Psalm 44:1-8; Proverbs 22:10-12

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 37

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

A surface reading of the book of Esther makes it seem like a happy, romantic tale. However, once we understand the historical details and read it carefully, the story quickly turns dark and sad. Esther was not a girl who fell in love with a charming king, but one who compromised her faith in order to secure her and her family's personal comfort. It is a reminder that we live in a fallen world and as Christians we are often tempted to compromise. It is amazing to see how despite the sinfulness of his people, God accomplishes his will for our good and his glory. God uses even the sinful acts and intentions of others to fulfill his plan. This is God's overruling providence that is often hidden and unseen. Wallace Benn in his commentary on Esther explains the mystery of God's providence:

The name of God might not be mentioned in the book of Esther, but the activity of God behind the scenes is written on every page. It has rightly been said, "A coincidence is a miracle in which God prefers to remain anonymous." The book of Esther is full of happy coincidences!

One of the great lessons, which we will see in more detail later in the book of Esther, is this: it isn't only when God spectacularly answers prayer—we see a friend healed, or we know God's healing in our own life—and it isn't only when God does something dramatic or miraculous that he is at work. God is wonderfully at work in the little coincidences of our lives, often behind the scenes in an inscrutable way that only time will reveal.

1. Review Esther 1. How does this chapter point out the vanity of living only for the things of this world? How does it motivate you to live for God's eternal kingdom?
2. Read Esther 2:1-11. What do these verses teach about the sinfulness of this fallen world, especially with regard to sexual immorality?
3. Read Esther 2:12-18. What do these verses reveal about the sinfulness of God's people? Compare Esther and Mordecai's actions to Joseph, Daniel, Moses, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. What does this teach you about your own need for grace as explained in Titus 3:3-7?
4. How do these verses show the overruling providence of God? How might meditating regularly on the doctrine of God's providence comfort you, especially in times of stress and anxiety?



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