

# SUNDAY WORSHIP

## Sunday • Sept 21, 2025

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**Mission Statement:** As a community of faith, we welcome all who seek understanding. • As a community of hope, we offer friendship and comfort to those in need. • As a community of love, we provide caring support and shared fellowship to all.

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WE ARE A COMMUNITY CHURCH. OUR FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS AND MEMBERS COME FROM MANY PLACES AND MULTIPLE FAITH TRADITIONS. EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO FIND A SPIRITUAL SANCTUARY HERE.

### — ANNOUNCEMENTS —

### — PASSING the PEACE & WELCOME —

#### CENTERING MUSIC

*Sharon Novak*

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

*Includes portions of Psalm 78*

One: The Psalmist says, Yahweh brought the Hebrew people to the border of the holy land, to the hill country promised to them.

*People: Yahweh allotted their lands to them as an inheritance; God settled the tribes of Israel in their homes.*

One: The tribes put God to the test and rebelled against the Most High; they did not keep God's statutes.

*People: They were disloyal and faithless. Doesn't this happen now, too?*

One: Despite their failings, God responded to their cries. Yahweh sent judges to Israel to rescue them from their oppressors. Yet they turned away from God, over and over, until they had no judges, no kings, and no faithful priests.

*People: The Psalmist says God abandoned the ark, the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent Yahweh had set up among humans.*

One: Yahweh sent the ark of God's own might into captivity, and allowed the Holy One's splendor to fall into the hands of the people's enemies.

*People: As the people continued to turn away from God, their lives were shattered and consumed. They did not thrive.*

One: Then the Lord awoke as from sleep ...

*People: Once more, Yahweh beat back their enemies. In time, God's people built a sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that Yahweh established forever.*

One: The Psalmist cannot tell us what happened later. We are taught that the temple in Jerusalem, the sanctuary, the residence of God, was twice destroyed by invading empires. The ark's fate is unknown.

*People: So where now does the Lord reside?*

*All: We believe the Spirit abides among us. Christ came incarnate to earth as One of us. God has chosen to make a home here, in our hearts, which we prepare as a dwelling place for Holy Love's presence.*

#### \*SONG #102

*Guide Me, O Thou  
Great Jehovah*

*Sharon Novak*

### — PRAYING —

#### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

**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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and glory forever. *Amen.*

### — REFLECTING —

#### SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 4-7 (*excerpts*)

#### MESSAGE

OF ARKS & ARMIES

*Rev. Gail Doktor*

\*SONG #95 *Be Still, My Soul* Sharon Novak

— OFFERING —

\*SONG #44 *Doxology* Sharon Novak

PRAYER OF DEDICATION Rev. Gail Doktor

— CLOSING —

\*BENEDICTION Sharon Novak

*May the love of God live in us today, may the love of God live in us today.*

*May the warmth we feel within us show in all we do and say.*

*May the love of God live in us today.*

*May the peace of God be with us today,*

*May the peace of God be with us today.*

*May it guide us and protect us, as we go our separate ways.*

*May the peace of God be with us, May the love of God live in us,*

*May the love of God shine through us today.*

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**PRAYERS:**

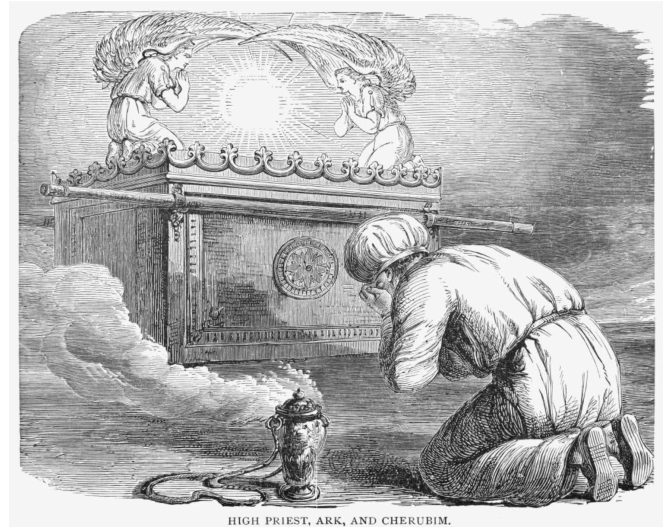
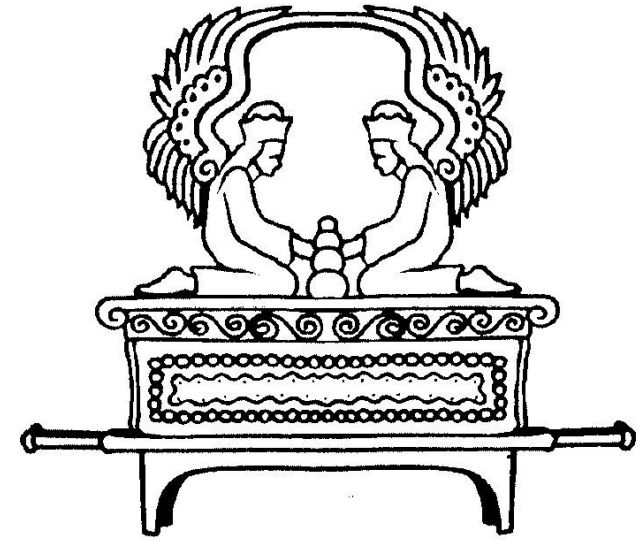
**For PEOPLE — Focus this week:** Ann C., Bert & Cindy, Bob G., Cindi, David, Dave & Beth, Dawson W., Deb L., Irene, Jenn, Jess, Judy, Kailee, Karen, Laurie M., Larry, Linda, Mary, Nancy, Rob, Ruth, Sue C., Steve, Tom, Tyler, Val. For those who grieve.

**Continuing:** Alice, Annie, Arden, Barbara, Bilo, Bob, Bruce, Cal, Cameron, Carl, Corey, Dean, David, Dawson S., Deb W., Don, Ed, Emmie, George, Karen, Kevin, Jan, Jean, Jim H., Joe, Joan, John, John H., Joyce, Jonathan, Judy, Karen, Kim, Kathy, Ian, Laurie, Marcia, Matteo, Maureen, Mary, Meg, Michelle, Parker, Petros, Phaedra, Robert G., Sally, Sam, Sarah, Sascha, Spencer Elizabeth, Tom, Tony, Rob, Robert, Val, Wayne, Lori's niece & nephew.

**For PLACES** — For Chikanga Church in Mutare, Zimbabwe and communities in Honduras. For hurting parts in the world, wounded by natural disasters or human-made causes and conflicts.

SUNDAY WORSHIP  
10:30am • Sept 21, 2025

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HIGH PRIEST, ARK, AND CHERUBIM.

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JACKSON COMMUNITY CHURCH  
JACKSON, NH

**1 Samuel 4 —The Philistines Capture the Ark:** ... In those days the Philistines mustered for war against Israel ... and when the battle was joined, Israel was defeated by the Philistines ... <sup>3</sup>When the troops came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, "... *Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord here from Shiloh, so that he may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies.*"<sup>4</sup> So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

<sup>5</sup>When the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. <sup>6</sup>When the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "*What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?*" When they learned that the ark of the Lord had come to the camp, <sup>7</sup>the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "*Gods have come into the camp.*" They also said, "*Woe to us! ... Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness.*" <sup>9</sup>*Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, in order not to become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight.*"

<sup>10</sup>So the Philistines fought; Israel was defeated, and they fled, everyone to his home. ... <sup>11</sup>The ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

**Death of Eli:** <sup>12</sup>A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day ... <sup>13</sup>When he arrived, Eli was sitting ... by the road watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. When the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out... Then the man came quickly and told Eli... "*I have just come from the battle; I fled from the battle today.*"

He said, "*How did it go, my son?*"

<sup>17</sup>The messenger replied, "*Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great slaughter among the troops; your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured.*" <sup>18</sup>When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell over backward from his seat by the side of the gate, and his neck was broken, and he died, for he was an old man and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

**1 Samuel 5 — The Ark in Ashdod and Ekron:** After the Philistines had captured the ark of God ... <sup>6</sup>The Lord's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation on them and afflicted them with tumors ... So they moved the ark of the God of Israel.

<sup>9</sup>But after they had moved it, the Lord's hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors. <sup>10</sup>So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. ... the people of Ekron cried out, "*They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people.*" <sup>11</sup>So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, "*Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it will kill us and our people.*" For death had filled the city with panic; God's hand was very heavy on it. <sup>12</sup>Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven...

**1 Samuel 6—The Ark Returned to Israel:** When the ark of the Lord had been in Philistine territory seven months,<sup>2</sup> the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, "*What shall we do with the ark of the Lord? Tell us how we should send it back to its place.*"

<sup>3</sup>They answered, "*If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it back to him without a gift; by all means send a guilt offering to him ...*"

<sup>10</sup>So they ... took two such cows and hitched them to the cart and penned up their calves. <sup>11</sup>They placed the ark of the Lord on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold ... <sup>12</sup>Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh, keeping on the road and lowing all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. ... <sup>13</sup>Now the people of Beth Shemesh ... looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight... <sup>19</sup>But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh ... because they looked into the ark of the Lord. ... And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, "*Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?*" ...

**1 Samuel 7**—<sup>1</sup>So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the Lord. They brought it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the Lord. <sup>2</sup>The ark remained at Kiriath Jearim a long time—twenty years in all.