



**Worship Service:
God Our Provider**

Helpful Elements:
Green tablecloth (Ordinary Time)

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time. Today we are looking at the nature of God as our provider, from a famous Hebrew name for God in the Old Testament: Jehovah Jireh, which means "the Lord provides" and "the Lord sees."

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask your Holy Spirit to bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence today joyfully and reverently, and let us depart with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace that passes all understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23, "The Lord is My Shepherd," together:

¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymns:

**Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee**

First reading: Genesis 22:1-14, the story of Abraham and his son Isaac.

[At one time] God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham! ... Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and ... offer him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, ... and went to the place that God had told him. ... ⁶ And Abraham [and Isaac] went, both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, ... “Behold, [we have] the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” ⁸ Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”

[And just as Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, the Lord stopped him and provided a ram for the burnt offering.] ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovah Jireh*, “The Lord will provide [and the Lord sees].”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

**Holy, Holy, Holy
Jesus Loves Me**

Second reading: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. In this passage, the apostle Paul (St. Paul) tells the Corinthian church how he learned to trust God even in hardship.

⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh ... to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But the Lord said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, because my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, and in difficulties. Because when I am weak, then I am strong.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

His Eye is on the Sparrow

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Interactive Homily: Let's think more God as our provider and as the one who sees what we need.

- In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he talks about having a "thorn in his flesh," something that keeps him totally dependent on God. There are all sorts of things that are hard to bear in life. What kinds of hardships can happen during life?
 - Physical hardships: illness, handicaps (deafness, blindness, parts that don't work as well as they used to), slow wearing down (like arthritis, balance)
 - How about in your heart – what can be an emotional hardship?
 - Insults, harsh words, people who are impatient or not gentle with you
 - What about in your spirit? What kinds of feelings can be hard at times?
 - Sadness, anxiety and worry, fear, anger
- Did Paul just ignore his hardship?
 - No! Paul says he pleaded with the Lord three times to take it away.
 - Paul is honest with God about what he wants!
- But how does God answer this particular request of Paul's?
 - God tells Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
- God wants Paul to depend on God's grace and power. Let's think about what that might mean. When someone is gracious with you, what is that like?
 - A gracious person cares and stays with you through thick and thin → God promises his gracious and merciful presence with us at all times.
- What can a powerful person do?
 - A powerful person can act! → God is not thwarted by our problems ... and God will always help, *even if the help doesn't look like the help we asked for.*
- Does that mean hardships magically go away?

- No. God did not tell Paul, “Oh, right! I’ll take away that thorn! Thanks for pointing it out to me!”
- Instead, God told Paul that God’s own presence and power would make Paul strong.
- The Hebrew term Abraham used for God, “Jehovah Jireh,” has a combined meaning of *providing* and *seeing*. The Lord sees you – and will provide what you need.
- What has God provided for you over the course of your life? Name as many as possible.
 - Food, clothing, jobs, companionship, caregivers, church, answered prayers...
- And God promises so much more. When we are in a place of hardship, as we trust God, he will give us whatever we need to meet what is required. *[start these phrases and let people fill in the final word]*
 - When we feel weak, God will give us ... *strength*
 - When we feel impatient, God will give us ... *patience*
 - When we feel anxious and worried, God will give us ... *peace*
 - When we’re angry with someone, God will give us ... *mercy*
 - When we’re sad and grieving, God will give us ... *comfort*
 - And when this earthly life is done, God has *provided* eternal life through Jesus—an everlasting union with God’s grace, power, and beauty.

Let’s pray silently for a moment. Be honest with God about what you need today and know that God sees you and will provide for you.

(Silent Prayer) ... Now let us pray the Lord’s prayer together:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymns:

Great Is Thy Faithfulness
Be Still My Soul

Third Reading: A True Story of God's Provision (edited)¹

If any of you have ever been to a true English tea, you'll know that it's much more than tea! The hosts provide tea, cakes, sandwiches, the works. One day in Scotland, missionary Brother Andrew and his friends felt prompted to invite some people to a tea party, despite the fact that they had no money and none of the materials people would expect for a proper English tea (cake, bread, butter, cups...even the tea itself).

Without being asked, the people they invited volunteered to bring almost all of the ingredients, including the tea, cups, and plates. But Brother Andrew and the other missionaries still didn't have cake, an absolute requirement for a tea party in Scotland.

"That night," recounts Brother Andrew, "in our evening prayer time, we put the matter before God. 'Lord, we've got ourselves into a spot. From somewhere we've got to get a cake. Will you help us?'"

Morning arrived. The group half expected a heavenly messenger to come to the door bearing a cake. But no one came. The morning mail arrived. They ripped open the two letters, hoping for money to buy a cake. There was none. ...

The tea had been announced for four o'clock that afternoon. At three forty-five, the doorbell rang. It was the postman, and in his hand was a large box.

"Hello, lads," said the postman. "I've got something for you that feels like a food package." Brother Andrew took the package and carefully unwrapped it. ... Inside, there was no note — only a large white box. [As Brother Andrew opened the lid], there, in perfect condition, to be admired by five sets of wondering eyes, was an enormous, glistening, moist, chocolate cake.

Hymns:

**I Know That My Redeemer Lives
How Great Thou Art**

¹ From *God's Smuggler* by Brother Andrew: <https://www.amazon.com/Gods-Smuggler-Brother-Andrew/dp/0800796853> and <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/about-us/history/brother-andrews-story/>

Fourth Reading: Quotes on God's Provision

When God sends no answer and “the cloud remain[s],” we must wait. Yet we can do so with the full assurance of God's provision of manna [from heaven], water from the rock, shelter, and protection. – American author Lettie B. Cowman

Whenever we participate in and enjoy God's provision, we have a vision. We see God and He sees us. – Chinese preacher Witness Lee

I will willingly abandon this body to hunger and suffering, provided that my soul may have its ordinary nourishment. – Native American Catholic saint Kateri Tekakwitha (pronounced *gaderi dega'gwita* in Mohawk)

My focus is not on the flood that surrounds me. Rather, my focus is on the God who surrounds the flood. — American author and counselor Craig D. Lounsborough

Hymns:**Amazing Grace****When the Saints Go Marching In****Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)**

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his to face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology, Reprise