

ANABAPTISH

Worshiping God

We value heartfelt worship that is God-honoring, Spirit-directed, and life-changing.

John Dixon | Sunday, September 27, 2026 | Crest Community Church

For the Nightstand

THE TEACHING

There's a myth in our culture. Religious people go to church on the weekend and sing to their imaginary God. Reasonable people have brunch, watch sports, and walk the dog. It's a false distinction. Everybody worships. Worship just means ascribing worth to something. And here's why it matters. You become what you behold.

Amos was a shepherd and a fig farmer. God sent him to Bethel, a city with a big temple, where the festivals were packed and the music was loud and the poor were being ignored. And God said, I hate it. Away with the noise of your songs. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream. Most riverbeds in Israel are wadis. Dry ditches most of the year, then a flash flood, then dry again. Amos is talking about a stream that never dries up. Still running in August.

So don't give God a flash flood on Sunday and a dry ditch Monday through Saturday. Worship is recalibration. All week the culture yanks the needle away from true north, and worship turns the heart back. You can do it anywhere. We do it together, singing for the person who can't sing it today. It spills into every part of our lives. And one day we'll do it forever. God isn't waiting to grade the music. The Father seeks worshipers.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Amos 5:21–24

A river, not a flash flood.

2 Chron. 5:13–14

They became one, and the glory came.

Romans 12:1–2

Your whole life, offered as true worship.

John 4:20–23

The Father is looking for worshipers.

A PRAYER

Living God, we come to recalibrate. Turn our hearts back to true north, to Christ on his throne. Help us show up and sing, even when we don't feel it, for the person next to us. Holy Spirit, move in us. Make us a river, not a flash flood. In Jesus' name, amen.

PART TWO

For Your Home Church

Gather together. About 60 minutes, after your meal or around it.

FOR LEADERS

This is shared language, not a script. Everyone in the room can see these notes, so feel free to read them out loud. The times add up to an hour. Hold them loosely. If a conversation is alive, stay with it and trim somewhere else.

Check In

5 min

Start by hearing how last week actually went.

LEADER NOTE

Go around the room. **How did last week's practice go?** Three were offered: starting in the gospel of Luke, one chapter a day with the two prayers around it, naming one fence (a rule you were handed that God never actually gave), or bringing the passage you find hardest to square with Jesus to somebody in the room.

Some people will not have done it. That is fine, and it is worth saying out loud so nobody performs. Ask them instead what the week was like. No fixing and no follow-up questions. Just receive it.

Take Communion

5 min

Taste and see that the Lord is good, together.

LEADER NOTE

Share the bread and the cup, before, during, or after your meal. If your group doesn't have its own words yet, have someone read this psalm out loud first.

PSALM 34:1–3, 8

- ¹ I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
- ² I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
- ³ Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.
- ⁸ Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Read This Overview

5 min

LEADER NOTE

Ask someone to read this out loud.

There's a myth in our culture. Religious people go to church on the weekend and give their attention and affection to God. Reasonable people don't worry about that stuff anymore. They have brunch, watch the game, and take the dog for a walk.

It's a false distinction. Everybody worships. The only question is what.

Worship literally means ascribing worth to something. And the Bible's own words for it have nothing to do with musical style. The most common Hebrew word means to bow down. Face to the floor. The main Greek word in the New Testament means to kiss toward. Surrender and affection. That's worship.

Picture walking through a dense forest with a compass, while invisible magnetic fields pull the needle in every direction. Money. Approval. Ambition. Anxiety. That's the human heart. Worship is the deliberate act of stepping out of that noise and recalibrating the heart to true north.

Our own Brethren in Christ story has both kinds. Around 1900, in a tiny congregation in Wainfleet, Ontario, revival meetings ran afternoon and evening, some for a month straight. Neighbors packed in night after night. A man named Lafayette Shoalts only came because his mother needed a ride. Years later, alone in his barn, he gave God everything. The next night, he said, "at my family altar the fire came."

Hundreds of people, together. And one man, alone. Both. That's who we are.

Lafayette grew old singing louder than everybody. He knew he wasn't a good singer. He sang anyway.

Worshipping God

We value heartfelt worship that is God-honoring, Spirit-directed, and life-changing.

God isn't waiting to grade the music. The Father is **looking** for worshipers.

Go Deeper in the Scripture

20 min

Hear God tell a packed, noisy house of worship that he wants a river, not a flash flood.

LEADER NOTE

Have someone read the passage out loud. It's short, so read it twice. Use the background notes as you need them. You won't get to every question. If time is short, start with the three marked **START HERE**

AMOS 5:21–24

²¹ “I hate, I despise your religious festivals;
your assemblies are a stench to me.

²² Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them.

Though you bring choice fellowship offerings,
I will have no regard for them.

²³ Away with the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.

²⁴ But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream!

BACKGROUND NOTES

Who Amos was. Not a professional prophet. A shepherd who also took care of fig trees. He came from Tekoa, a small town in the southern kingdom of Judah, and God sent him north to preach in Israel. An outsider, preaching in somebody else's country.

Bethel. The name means “house of God” (*beth* is house, *El* is God). It was a major worship center in the north, with a large temple. That's where Amos brings this message.

The king. Israel was ruled by Jeroboam II. In the eyes of the world he was a success. He won battles and made the nation rich. In the eyes of the prophets he was one of the worst kings ever. The wealth led to apathy, worship of lesser gods, and neglect of the poor.

Festivals, offerings, songs. Everything God rejects in verses 21 to 23 is something his people were supposed to do. God isn't rejecting worship. He's rejecting worship that has come loose from how people treat each other.

Righteousness and justice. Two of Amos's favorite words. **Righteousness** is right relationships between people, no matter their social differences. **Justice** is the concrete action you take to correct what's wrong and make relationships right. Love in action.

"A never-failing stream." Most riverbeds in Israel are wadis: dry, dusty ditches most of the year. A storm hits the hills, a flash flood roars down, and a couple of days later it's dry again. The Hebrew here means a wadi that never dries up. A stream still running in August.

"Noise." Paul says something close in 1 Corinthians 13:1. Without love, "I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." Organ, guitars, or a cappella, it doesn't matter. Without justice, it's noise.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. List everything God refuses in verses 21 to 23. Then read verse 24. What does he want instead? **START HERE**
2. Verse 24 uses a picture of water. Read the note on wadis. What's the difference between a never-failing stream and a flash flood?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. In what ways does our worship not honor God? How can we recalibrate our hearts to God? (*Compelling Convictions*, ch. 3) **START HERE**
4. In what ways is our worship centered on the individual? How could we focus it more on the community of faith? (ch. 3)
5. Is everyone invited to participate and contribute when we gather? Who might be on the sidelines? (ch. 3)

WHAT DOES IT ASK OF US?

6. Everybody worships. What's been pulling your compass needle this month?
7. Amos wanted a river, not a flash flood. Where is your worship running dry between Sundays? Where could justice or right relationship "roll on" this week?

START HERE

Practice for the Night: Recalibrate Together

20 min

Step out of the noise, turn back to true north, and carry each other for a few minutes.

LEADER NOTE

The first five minutes are quiet. Don't fill them. Have paper and pens on hand. If question 6 already came up, this is the private, honest version of it.

Reading out loud together feels awkward the first time. That's fine. Go slow so everyone lands on the same words. When pairs share, nobody fixes anybody, and passing is always fine.

1 Needle check · 5 min

In silence, write down what has been pulling your needle this week. Money, approval, fear, ambition, the news, a person. Be honest. No one else will read it. Then pray silently: **Lord, turn me back to true north.**

2 One voice · 3 min

Everyone reads Psalm 100 (below) out loud together, slowly, at the same pace. In the temple, the glory came when the singers became one sound.

3 Carry the other corner · 10 min

Pair up. Tell your partner one thing from your list, only what you're willing to share. Then pray for each other, short and simple, that God would turn the needle back. Some nights you're the one on the mat. Some nights you're carrying it.

4 Close as one · 2 min

Come back together and read Revelation 7:12 out loud as one voice: **"Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!"**

PSALM 100

¹Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

²Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.

³Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

⁴Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.

⁵For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Practice for the Week Ahead

3 min

Choose one small, honest step. Start where you are, not where you think you should be.

Worship happens anywhere, together, and everywhere. This week, pick one:

IF WORSHIP STILL FEELS NEW

Worship anywhere. Once a day, stop for one minute. On a walk, in the car, while you're vacuuming the rug. Remember who God is and what he's done. That's it. That's recalibration.

IF YOU'VE FOLLOWED JESUS A WHILE

Find the dry ditch. Name one relationship where things have quietly gone wrong, or someone you've written off. Take one concrete step toward making it right. Let it still be running on Wednesday afternoon.

IF YOU'RE READY FOR MORE

Be somebody's other corner of the mat. At the gathering this Sunday, sit near someone whose name you don't know yet. Sing, even if you don't feel it, for them. Then learn their name.

Next week, we'll start by checking in on how it went.

Close in Prayer

2 min

LEADER NOTE

Gather everyone and close your time in prayer, however the Spirit leads.

COMING UP · SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

Core Value 4: Following Jesus

We value wholehearted obedience to Christ Jesus through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

WANT TO GO FURTHER?

Compelling Convictions, the companion book to this series, is free to borrow from the church library. The chapter behind this week's value, chapter 3, is written by Crest's own Alan Claassen Thrush. Just ask John.

Share Your Story

Has God been at work in your home church? A moment of grace, a conversation that turned, a meal that became more than a meal? We'd love to hear it. Email Kymbri at admin@crestcommunitychurch.org.



Open this guide on your phone.
Scan the code with your camera.