**Worship in Psalms Year 1**

*Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs…* *Ephesians 5:19*

***Introduction***

In most free-church settings the preaching ministry usually reads the text for Sunday sermons. Thus, congregations may find one way to utilize readers is to obey Paul’s instruction to “speak to one another in Psalms” adopting this nearly three-year plan using the ancient practice of continuous reading. Using the Psalms has been a challenge for less-liturgical traditions because we have often lost any melody to many Psalms. No doubt churches will wish to affirm the importance of contemporary hymn writing and the rich inheritance of classic hymns written largely in the last 500 years. But we should not regularly use these to the exclusion of the ***canonical prayers God explicitly gives for our transformation***. We cannot follow Jesus to the cross in primitive simplicity without noticing that the Lord died there with multiple psalms on his lips.

This congregational resource was put together as a response to several requests that we 1) encourage people to participate more fully and responsively in prayer, 2) memorize the scriptures, 3) mark the beginning of worship with greater reverence, and 4) revive the primitive practice of actually singing psalms when possible.

Unless otherwise specified it is assumed that the entire psalm for the week will be read in full by the usual reader each Sunday. The congregation is encouraged only to ***read or recite the selected memory portion of the Psalm along with the reader***. Thus, for instance, on the first Sunday the congregation will rise and recite with the reader Psalm 1:1-2, and then the reader will continue with the remainder of the Psalm. This book may work as well as a pew bible during such readings.

This book, however, will be essential on Sundays when there are responsive or dramatic readings, special songs being sung, or only selected parts of lengthy psalms being read in the service. In those cases, that section of the service is carefully orchestrated. ***Congregants, worship leaders and readers are encouraged to reference this book to see what is envisioned in advance.***  Most of the more elaborate settings of the Psalms are attempts to faithfully shorten long texts for our cultural setting. Others attempt to explain the Psalm when there is a change of voice in the text. For instance on Sunday 2 there are two readers along with the congregation-- all representing different voices within the psalm.

Memory verses for the week are not intended to be burdensome. Commit as much or as little of each week’s psalm to memory as you feel led. Have fun and talk to God with the ancient words.

Occasionally included is a musical selection from our hymnal, *Songs of Faith and Praise*, from *Taize: Songs for Prayer* or from *Timeless: Ancient Psalms for the Church Today*, edited by Mark Shipp and published by ACU. The Psalm for the week may be sung by a special group or by the congregation in conjunction with the reading. It is hoped that this will help us begin to recover the practice of singing together with Psalms as well as with other hymns and spiritual songs.

Grace and Peace!

Kent Ellett

December 2014

**Sunday 1**

Congregational hymn***: I Shall Not Be Moved*** #976 Songs of Faith and Praise

Ps 1:1-2

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked*

*or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.*

*2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,*

*and on his law he meditates day and night.*

**(all citations herein from NIV 1984)**

**Sunday 2**

Preparation: Special singing group sings ***He Has Set His King in Zion*** by Marva Hughes

A Dramatic Reading

Congregation 2:1-3, Reader 1) The Voice of God 2:4-6 Reader 2) The Voice of the Messiah 2:7-9 Congregation: 2:10-12

Ps 2:12

*Kiss the Son, lest he be angry*

*and you be destroyed in your way,*

*for his wrath can flare up in a moment.*

*Blessed are all who take refuge in him*.

Congregational Singing on Power-point: ***He Has Set His King in Zion***, by Marva Hughes

**Sunday 3**

In response to the reading of Psalm 3 in its entirety the congregation recites the following and remains in a period of silence.

Ps 3:5-6

*I lie down and sleep;*

*I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.*

*6 I will not fear the tens of thousands*

*drawn up against me on every side.*

**Sunday 4**

Ps 4:6-8

*Many are asking, "Who can show us any good?"*

*Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord.*

*7 You have filled my heart with greater joy*

*than when their grain and new wine abound.*

*8 I will lie down and sleep in peace,*

*for you alone, O Lord,*

*make me dwell in safety*.

**Sunday 5**

Special Singing: ***Hear my Cry*** verses 1-2 by Marva Hughes

A Responsive Reading

Reader: 5:1-10 Congregation rises and reads 5:11 Reader giving blessing: 5:12

Ps 5:11

*But let all who take refuge in you be glad;*

*let them ever sing for joy.*

*Spread your protection over them,*

*that those who love your name may rejoice in you*.

Congregational Singing: ***Hear My Cry*** verses 3-4 by Marva Hughes

**Sunday 6**

A Responsive Reading

Congregation recites this memory verse:

Ps 6:1-4

*O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger*

*or discipline me in your wrath.*

*2 Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint;*

*O Lord, heal me, for my bones are in agony.*

*3 My soul is in anguish.*

*How long, O Lord, how long?*

*4 Turn, O Lord, and deliver me;*

*save me because of your unfailing love.*

Reader: 6:5-7

Congregation Rises

**Reader:** *Away from me, all you who do evil, for the Lord has heard my weeping*.

**Congregation**: *For the Lord has heard my weeping*

**Reader:** *The Lord has heard my cry for mercy*

**Congregation:** *The Lord accepts my prayer*

**Reader:**  *All my enemies will be ashamed and dismayed;*

*they will turn back in sudden disgrace.*

**Sunday 7**

For a young or two young Readers

Ps 7:14-15

*He who is pregnant with evil*

*and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment.*

*15 He who digs a hole and scoops it out*

*falls into the pit he has made.*

**Sunday 8**

Ps 8:1-2

*O Lord, our Lord,*

*how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory*

*above the heavens.*

*2 From the lips of children and infants*

*you have ordained praise*

*because of your enemies,*

*to silence the foe and the avenger.*

**Sunday 9**

Special Singing Group: ***Arise and Remember*** by Mark Ship

A Responsive Reading

Reader reads 9:1-10 and 9:13-18

Congregation responds in two places. Either or both responses below may be committed to memory.

Ps 9:11-12

*Sing praises to the Lord, enthroned in Zion;*

*proclaim among the nations what he has done.*

*12 For he who avenges blood remembers;*

*he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted.*

Ps 9:19-20

*Arise, O Lord, let not man triumph;*

*let the nations be judged in your presence.*

*20 Strike them with terror, O Lord;*

*let the nations know they are but men*.

**Sunday 10**

Congregation completes the Reading of the Psalm by saying:

Ps 10:17-18

*You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted;*

*you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,*

*18 defending the fatherless and the oppressed,*

*in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more*.

**Sunday 11**

**Reader:** *Ps 11:3 When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*

**Congregation:** *Ps 11:4 The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them.*

Congregational Song: ***The Lord is in his Holy Temple***, #108 *Songs of Faith and Praise*

**Sunday 12**

Ps 12:7-8

*O Lord, you will keep us safe*

*and protect us from such people forever.*

*8 The wicked freely strut about*

*when what is vile is honored among men.*

Special Singing Group leads congregation in ***I will Arise*** by Gary Pendergrass

**Sunday 13**

The Service begins with the readers lament 13:1-4 and the congregation finishes the reading with:

Ps 13:5-6

*But I trust in your unfailing love;*

*my heart rejoices in your salvation.*

*6 I will sing to the Lord,*

*for he has been good to me*.

**Sunday 14**

Here the congregation recites with the reader 14:3 and 14:7 Either or both may be memorized.

Ps 14:3

*All have turned aside,*

*they have together become corrupt;*

*there is no one who does good,*

*not even one.*

Ps 14:7

*Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!*

*When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people,*

*let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad*!

Special Singing Group leads congregation in ***Come Salvation out of Zion*** by Marva Hughes

**Sunday 15**

Optional Opening Song: Hear Oh Israel, #446 in Songs of Faith and Praise

Ps 15:1, 5

**Congregation:** *Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary?*

*Who may live on your holy hill?*

**Reader:** *He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous…*

*He who does these things will never be shaken.*

Special Group leads congregation in ***Unshakable and Standing*** Firm by Ben Witherington

**Sunday 16**

**Congregation**: *Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take Refuge*.

**Reader**: David says, read vv2-8

Special Singing Group leads Congregation in ***Keep Me Oh God***, by Jack Boyd

**Reader**: all those in David now say…

**Congregation:** Ps 16:9-11

*Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;*

*my body also will rest secure,*

*10 because you will not abandon me to the grave,*

*nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*

*11 You have made known to me the path of life;*

*you will fill me with joy in your presence,*

*with eternal pleasures at your right hand*.

**Sunday 17**

Congregation concludes the reading:

Ps 17:14b-15

*You still the hunger of those you cherish;*

*their sons have plenty,*

*and they store up wealth for their children.*

*15 And I — in righteousness I will see your face;*

*when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness*.

**Sunday 18**

Ps 18:2

*The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;*

*my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.*

*He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold*.

Suggested Number: ***I Will Call Upon the Lord*** #63 *Songs of Faith and Praise*

**Sunday 19**

Only two sections of the Psalm will be read. But it is recommended that the latter be used for memorization and congregational recitation.

**Reader:**

Ps 19:1-3

*The heavens declare the glory of God;*

*the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

*2 Day after day they pour forth speech;*

*night after night they display knowledge.*

*3 There is no speech or language*

*where their voice is not heard*….

**Congregation:**

Ps 19:14-20:1

4 *May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart*

*be pleasing in your sight,*

*O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer*.

**Sunday 20**

Ps 20:6-8

*I know that the Lord saves his anointed;*

*he answers him from his holy heaven*

*with the saving power of his right hand.*

*7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses,*

*but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*

*8 They are brought to their knees and fall,*

*but we rise up and stand firm.*

**Sunday 21**

A Responsive Reading

**Reader**:

21:1 *The Messiah King rejoices in your strength.*

*How great is his joy in the victories you give!*

*2 You have granted him the desire of his heart*

*and have not withheld the request of his lips*.

**Congregation**:

Ps 21:13 *Be exalted O Lord in your strength;*

*We will sing and praise your might.*

Special Singing Group leads congregation singing ***In Your Strength Jehovah***, by Marva Hughes

**Sunday 22**

A Dramatic Reading:

It is recommended that we develop a deep familiarity with this Psalm. The second congregational response (verses 3-4) make a good memory exercise.

**Reader as Messiah who Shares Our Lament**:

Ps 22:1-2 *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

*Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?*

*2 O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent*.

**Congregation Affirming Faith**:

Ps 22:3-5 *Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;*

*you are the praise of Israel. 4 In you our fathers put their trust;*

*they trusted and you delivered them. 5 They cried to you and were saved;*

*in you they trusted and were not disappointed.*

**Reader as Messiah who Shares Our Lament:**

Ps 22:16-18*Dogs have surrounded me;**a band of evil men has encircled me,*

*they have pierced my hands and my feet.*

*17 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me.*

*18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.*

**Congregation Affirming Faith:**

*Ps 22:19-22 9 But you, O Lord, be not far off;*

*O my Strength, come quickly to help me.*

*20 Deliver my life from the sword,*

*my precious life from the power of the dogs.*

*21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;*

*save me from the horns of the wild oxen.*

*22 I will declare your name to my brothers;*

*in the congregation I will praise you.*

**Reader as Messiah Exhorting Us in Assembly:**

Ps 22:27-28 *All the ends of the earth*

*will remember and turn to the Lord,*

*and all the families of the nations*

*will bow down before him,*

*28 for dominion belongs to the Lord*

*and he rules over the nations.*

**Congregation Affirming Hope:**

Ps 22:30-31 *Posterity will serve him;*

*future generations will be told about the Lord.*

*31 They will proclaim his righteousness*

*to a people yet unborn —*

*for he has done it.*

**Sunday 23**

Today we will only collectively recite only the memory portion below before singing

#134 in Songs of Faith and Praise.

Ps 23:1-3

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

*2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,*

*he leads me beside quiet waters,*

*3 he restores my soul.*

**Sunday 24**

Today the congregation responds when the reader arrives at the end of verse three asking,

**Reader:** *Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?*

*Who may stand in his holy place?*

Ps 24:4-6

**Congregation:** *4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,*

*who does not lift up his soul to an idol*

*or swear by what is false.*

*5 He will receive blessing from the Lord*

*and vindication from God his Savior.*

*6 Such is the generation of those who seek him,*

*who seek your face, O God of Jacob.*

**Sunday 25**

Ps 25:16-18

*Turn to me and be gracious to me,*

*for I am lonely and afflicted.*

*17 The troubles of my heart have multiplied;*

*free me from my anguish.*

*18 Look upon my affliction and my distress*

*and take away all my sins*.

**Sunday 26**

Special Singing Group leads congregation in #420 in Songs of Faith and Praise

Ps 26:1-3

*Vindicate me, O Lord,*

*for I have led a blameless life;*

*I have trusted in the Lord*

*without wavering.*

*2 Test me, O Lord, and try me,*

*examine my heart and my mind;*

*3 for your love is ever before me*…

Special Singing Group leads congregation in ***Sing Hosana Praise*** by Chris Stivers

**Sunday 27**

Begin service with piped in music of Psalms IV’s version of Psalm 27

Ps 27:4-5

*One thing I ask of the Lord,*

*this is what I seek:*

*that I may dwell in the house of the Lord*

*all the days of my life,*

*to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord*

*and to seek him in his temple.*

*5 For in the day of trouble*

*he will keep me safe in his dwelling;*

*he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle*

*and set me high upon a rock*.

**Sunday 28**

Ps 28:6-9

6 *Praise be to the Lord,*

*for he has heard my cry for mercy.*

*7 The Lord is my strength and my shield;*

*my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.*

*My heart leaps for joy*

*and I will give thanks to him in song.*

*8 The Lord is the strength of his people,*

*a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.*

*9 Save your people and bless your inheritance;*

*be their shepherd and carry them forever*.

**Sunday 29**

Congregational Reading Memory Verse:

Ps 29:1-2

*Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones,*

*ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.*

*2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;*

*worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness*.

Group Singing leads the Congregation in #439 in *Songs of Faith and Praise*.

Ps 29:10-11

10 *The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;*

*the Lord is enthroned as King forever.*

*11 The Lord gives strength to his people;*

*the Lord blesses his people with peace*.

Group Singing Leads the Congregation in #438 in *Songs of Faith and Praise*

**Sunday 30**

Special Singing Group introduces ***Joy in the Morning***, by Marva Hughes

Congregational Reading 30:1-3, Reader only 30:4-10 Congregational Memory Verse 30:11-12

Ps 30:11-12

11 *You turned my wailing into dancing;*

*you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,*

*12 that my heart may sing to you and not be silent.*

*O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever*.

Special Singing Group leads Congregation in ***Joy in the Morning***, by Marva Hughes

**Sunday 31**

Special Group Music Only: ***My Life is Filled with Deep Distress***, by Linda Gregorsen

Responsive Reading

**Reader: 31-:1-13**

**Congregation:**

Ps 31:14-16

*But I trust in you, O Lord;*

*I say, "You are my God."*

*15 My times are in your hands;*

*deliver me from my enemies*

*and from those who pursue me.*

*16 Let your face shine on your servant;*

*save me in your unfailing love*.

**Reader: 31:23-24**

**Sunday 32**

Special Group introduces verse 1-2 of ***How Blessed Are Those***, by Gina Ship

A Responsive Reading. Either Congregational Part may be memorized.

**Congregation**:

Ps 32:1-2

*Blessed is he*

*whose transgressions are forgiven,*

*whose sins are covered.*

*2 Blessed is the man*

*whose sin the Lord does not count against him*

*and in whose spirit is no deceit*.

**Reader:**

Ps32:3-4

**Congregation:**

*Ps32:5*

*Then I acknowledged my sin to you*

*and did not cover up my iniquity.*

*I said, "I will confess*

*my transgressions to the Lord" —*

*and you forgave*

*the guilt of my sin.*

Special Group leads congregation in verse 3-5 of ***How Blessed Are Those***, by Gina Ship

**Sunday 33**

A responsive Reading. Reader reads 33:16-19 Congregation Responds with the following:

Ps 33:20-22

*We wait in hope for the Lord;*

*he is our help and our shield.*

*21 In him our hearts rejoice,*

*for we trust in his holy name.*

*22 May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord,*

*even as we put our hope in you*.

**Sunday 34**

This Psalm will not be completely read. Only the memory Verse will be recited collectively after the singing of the congregational song below.

***Glorify the Lord with Me*** #440 in *Songs of Faith and Praise*

Ps 34:18-22

*18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted*

*and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

*19 A righteous man may have many troubles,*

*but the Lord delivers him from them all;*

*20 he protects all his bones,*

*not one of them will be broken.*

*21 Evil will slay the wicked;*

*the foes of the righteous will be condemned.*

*22 The Lord redeems his servants;*

*no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him*.

**Sunday 35**

A Dramatic reading. Except for what appears in italics this prayer is only an adaptation. The memory verses are verses 9-10.

**Reader of David:**

Contend Oh, Lord with forces who contend with your cause.

**Congregation:**

Oh, Lord, say to my soul, “I am your Salvation.”

**Reader of David/Jesus:**

May the enemies of our flourishing be like chaff in the wind.

**Congregation**:

Ps 35:9-10

*Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord*

*and delight in his salvation.*

*10 My whole being will exclaim,*

*"Who is like you, O Lord?*

*You rescue the poor from those too strong for them*,

**Reader of David/Jesus:**

Ps 35:27-28

*May those who delight in my vindication*

*shout for joy and gladness;*

*may they always say, "The Lord be exalted,*

*who delights in the well-being of his servant."*

**Congregation:** *My tongue will speak of your righteousness*

*and of your praises all day long*.

**Sunday 36**

A responsive reading. The verses below are for memorization. Only they will be read.

Ps 36:5-9

**Reader:** *Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,*

**Congregation:** *your faithfulness to the skies.*

**Reader:** *Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,*

**Congregation***: your justice like the great deep.*

**Reader:** *O Lord, you preserve both man and beast.*

**Congregation:** *How priceless is your unfailing love!*

**Reader***: Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. 8 They*

*feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of*

*delights.*

**Congregation:** *9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.*

**Sunday 37**

A responsive reading. Memory verse for this week (37:10-11) is not printed. It is hoped that this adaptation of the Psalm will help us digest the entirety of this lengthy reading in a concentrated moment.

**Reader:**

*Do not be envious of those who do wrong, for like grass they will soon wither.*

**Congregation:**

*Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

**Reader:**

*Be still before the Lord and do not fret when the wicked succeed. In a little while they will be no more*.

**Congregation:**

*But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.*

**Reader:**

*The Lord laughs at the wicked for he knows their day is coming*

**Congregation:**

*The days of the blameless are known to the Lord and their inheritance will endure forever.*

**Reader:**

*The wicked borrow but do not repay, but the righteous give generously and lend freely*

**Congregation:**

*Those those the Lord blesses will inherit the land and dwell in it forever.*

**Reader:**

*The wicked lie and wait for the righteous, but the Lord will not leave us in their power*

**Congregation:**

*Wait for the Lord and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land. When the wicked are cut off, you will see it.*

**Sunday 38**

Ps 38:17-22

*I am about to fall,*

*and my pain is ever with me.*

*18 I confess my iniquity;*

*I am troubled by my sin.*

*19 Many are those who are my vigorous enemies;*

*those who hate me without reason are numerous.*

*20 Those who repay my good with evil*

*slander me when I pursue what is good.*

*21 O Lord, do not forsake me;*

*be not far from me, O my God.*

*22 Come quickly to help me,*

*O Lord my Savior.*

Special Group leads Congregation in ***Do Not Abandon Me*** by Jack Reese

**Sunday 39**

Ps 39:4-5

*Show me, O Lord, my life's end*

*and the number of my days;*

*let me know how fleeting is my life.*

*5 You have made my days a mere handbreadth;*

*the span of my years is as nothing before you.*

*Each man's life is but a breath.*

**Sunday 40**

Special Group Music Only***: How Many are Your Wonders, Lord?*** By Mark and Jerry Shipp

The following ten verses are intended to be the extent of the reading this day. The congregation recites two parts of the text below (40:1-3; 40:9-10) either or both ma

y be memorized.

**Congregation:**

Ps 40:1-10

*I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.*

*2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire;*

*he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.*

*3 He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.*

*Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.*

**Reader:**

*4 Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust,*

*who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.*

*5 Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done.*

*The things you planned for us no one can recount to you;*

*were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.*

*Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced ;*

*burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.*

*7 Then I said, "Here I am, I have come —*

*it is written about me in the scroll.*

*8 I desire to do your will, O my God;*

*your law is within my heart."*

**Congregation:**

*9 I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly;*

*I do not seal my lips, as you know, O Lord.*

*10 I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;*

*I speak of your faithfulness and salvation.*

*I do not conceal your love and your truth*

*from the great assembly.*

**Sunday 41**

This week’s memory verse, Ps 41:13, is used as the response for an adaptation of this Psalm.

**Reader:**

When David was aging he pronounced a blessing on those who have a regard for the sick.

**Congregation**:

*Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.*

**Reader:**

When he was ill he was confident in God’s healing even as he confessed his sins.

**Congregation:**

*Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen*.

**Reader:**

When a close friend betrayed David He said, “He who shared my bread has lifted up his heel against me.” But God in his mercy upheld his Anointed and has set him in his presence forever.

**Congregation:**

*Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen*.

**Sunday 42**

Ps 42:11

*Why are you downcast, O my soul?*

*Why so disturbed within me?*

*Put your hope in God,*

*for I will yet praise him,*

*my Savior and my God*.

**Sunday 43**

This week the same refrain learned last week will be used in a prayer adapted from Psalm 43. There is a longer memory verse for next week in Psalm 44. You may want to get a head start on it. Also, it may be good to remember that familiarity with the text of Psalm 43 will help you enter more deeply into the following prayer:

**Reader:**

As leaders in Ancient Israel sought vindication when their culture turned away from godly leadership, today, Oh Lord, we confess bewilderment at the pace of destructive social change.

**Congregation:**

*Why are you downcast, O my soul?*

*Why so disturbed within me?*

*Put your hope in God,*

*for I will yet praise him,*

*my Savior and my God*.

**Reader:**

We confess that we have become stuck in our mourning and have refused to grieve well. We have been overwhelmed by disappointments, unrealized dreams, deaths, and mistreatment.

**Congregation:**

*Why are you downcast, O my soul?*

*Why so disturbed within me?*

*Put your hope in God,*

*for I will yet praise him*,

*my Savior and my God*.

**Reader:**

Israel prayed that from Zion’s Holy Mountain you would send forth your light and truth to guide them to the place where you dwell. But now, in the heavenly Jerusalem our lives are hidden with Christ in God.

**Congregation:**

*Why are you downcast, O my soul?*

*Why so disturbed within me?*

*Put your hope in God,*

*for I will yet praise him,*

*my Savior and my God*.

**Sunday 44**

*Ps 44:20-26*

*If we had forgotten the name of our God-- or spread out our hands to a foreign god--*

*would not God have discovered it, since he knows the secrets of the heart?*

*22 Yet for your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.*

*23 Awake, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever.*

*24 Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?*

*25 We are brought down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground.*

*26 Rise up and help us; redeem us because of your unfailing love.*

**Sunday 45**

Dramatic Reading. The reader speaks as if to the King in celebration of his wedding. This Psalm will not be read in its entirety, but only from verses 1-8. The Church will recite verses 7-8 which according to Jesus and the early church have strong messianic overtones.

Ps 45:7-8

*You love righteousness and hate wickedness;*

*therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions*

*by anointing you with the oil of joy.*

*8 All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia;*

*from palaces adorned with ivory*

*the music of the strings makes you glad*.

**Sunday 46**

A responsive reading of the text. Either or both of the congregational recitations may be committed to memory. Reader #2 represents the re-creative voice of the Lord emerging from his temple.

Ps 46:1-7

**Congregation:**

*God is our refuge and strength,*

*an ever-present help in trouble.*

*2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way*

*and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*

*3 though its waters roar and foam*

*and the mountains quake with their surging.*

*Selah Singing of God is my Fortress and My Strength*

**Reader**

*4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,*

*the holy place where the Most High dwells.*

*5 God is within her, she will not fall;*

*God will help her at break of day.*

*6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;*

*he lifts his voice, the earth melts.*

**Congregation:**

*7 The Lord Almighty is with us;*

*the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

**Reader:**

*Come and see the works of the Lord,*

*the desolations he has brought on the earth.*

*9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth;*

*he breaks the bow and shatters the spear,*

*he burns the shields with fire.*

**Reader #2:**

*10 "Be still, and know that I am God;*

*I will be exalted among the nations,*

*I will be exalted in the earth."*

**Congregation:**

*11 The Lord Almighty is with us;*

*the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

**Sunday 47**

Ps 47:9

*The nobles of the nations assemble*

*as the people of the God of Abraham,*

*for the kings of the earth belong to God;*

*he is greatly exalted.*

**Sunday 48**

Ps 48:12-14

*Walk about Zion, go around her,*

*count her towers,*

*13 consider well her ramparts,*

*view her citadels,*

*that you may tell of them to the next generation.*

*14 For this God is our God for ever and ever;*

*he will be our guide even to the end*.

**Sunday 49**

The Psalm reading this day will be highly focused on only three verses we will recite together.

Ps 49:13-15

*This is the fate of those who trust in themselves,*

*and of their followers, who approve their sayings:*

*14 Like sheep they are destined for the grave,*

*and death will feed on them.*

*The upright will rule over them in the morning;*

*their forms will decay in the grave,*

*far from their princely mansions.*

*15 But God will redeem my life from the grave;*

*he will surely take me to himself*.

**Sunday 50**

This Sunday the Congregation will introduce Psalm 50 by reciting verses 1-2. Then the special singing group will lead the congregation in ***Shine Jesus Shine***, 3290 in *Songs of Faith and Praise*. A reader will then read the oracle between verses 7 and 15 only.

Ps 50:1-2

*The Mighty One, God, the Lord,*

*speaks and summons the earth*

*from the rising of the sun to the place where it sets.*

*2 From Zion, perfect in beauty,*

*God shines forth*.

**Worship in Psalms Year 2**

**A Pastoral Note on Imprecations**

Imprecations are prayers where the psalmists pray for God to restrain or judge those who threaten the life and well-being of Israel. The language is graphic and troubling. Most of the time churches avoid such Psalms, for they rightfully fear that people will use them to vent hatred. For those habituated to the call for forgiveness, to hear biblical writers calling for the death of their enemies creates anxiety and dissonance. This is as it should be. Jesus taught us to bless and not curse; he taught us to love and pray for our enemies. And so a pastoral word about the over-arching context of all these prayers and how these psalms may be responsibly prayed today is in order.

First, contextually, the imprecations, like all Psalms, are in some sense national prayers. They are prayers about protecting the nation from enemies like Osama Ben Laden. In our own time we are easily relieved to know that mass murderers are not free to go on killing. It should be noted that the Israelite Kings and psalmists place their enemies in the hands of God. Holy war in Israel was conducted in a way that made it clear that the judgments executed on battlefields were judgments executed by God and not merely out of human vindictiveness or hatred. When we are told not to take judgmental matters into our own hands, but to “save room for God’s wrath,” this is in some ways what the Psalmists are doing. They are asking God to do for them what they, often, even as heads of state, do not feel they should do on their own.

Second, it’s important to encounter raw emotion in prayer. Too often we pray as though what is in us is what we think *should* be in us. Because we want to be at peace, we are often tempted to pretend that we are at peace when there are actually roots of bitterness buried deep in our soil. It is permissible to tell God that we are angry when we are angry. It is only then that we can give our anger to God. This is critical for our spiritual health.

Third, it’s important to say that only comfortable and powerful people tend to get upset about prayers that appeal to God to restrain evil forces. How is a powerless parent of a small daughter, who has been kidnapped, supposed to pray when nobody seems able to restrain rapists and lawless hoards? Does this not awaken us to the evils of human trafficking even right here in Indianapolis? Does this not awaken us to the pain of parents who are losing sons in the inner city to murderous drug lords every week, right here? While we should be afraid of praying the Psalmist’s judgments selfishly and cruelly, there is at least an equal danger of not sharing the rage of the people who are suffering with no recourse save their appeal to heaven for help. It is not a virtue not to feel their legitimate rage.

Last, I ask us to imagine the feelings of victims of violence and abuse. If such people are not to die in bitterness, it will be precisely because they are confident that in God no such crimes will forever go overlooked. God will judge the wicked far better than we ever could. God has our back, and he will make certain that the little kidnapped daughters of the world are vindicated--if not now, then in the age to come. Things will be set right for all those who long for Christ’s appearing. It is in this knowledge that we can release our rage to God, and entrust all our hopes to him who judges justly.

Kent Ellett

December 13, 2015

**Sunday 51**

Here the congregation recites verses 1-2. Reader continues in verses 3-9. The Congregation sings with the Special Singing group “***Create in Me a Clean Heart O God***,” and the Reader then reads verses 13-19. We acknowledge that all scripture quotations here and throughout are from the NIV 1984.

Ps 51:1-2

*Have mercy on me, O God,*

*according to your unfailing love;*

*according to your great compassion*

*blot out my transgressions.*

*2 Wash away all my iniquity*

*and cleanse me from my sin.*

**Sunday 52**

The memory verse is verse 8 only. The special song group will lead us before and after the psalm in singing 198 in Songs of Faith and Praise.

Ps 52:8-9

*8 But I am like an olive tree*

*flourishing in the house of God;*

*I trust in God's unfailing love*

*for ever and ever.*

*9 I will praise you forever for what you have done;*

*in your name I will hope, for your name is good.*

*I will praise you in the presence of your saints.*

**Sunday 53**

The reader is asked to provide this pre-reading explanation: *“In this Psalm all nations of people (sons of men) are declared to be broken. The desire of the Psalmist is that rescuing power would come out of the Temple from Zion so that the nation of Israel would be saved from those who devour others, foolishly thinking that God will not enforce justice*.” An alternate memory verse besides the recitation below is verse 1a.

Ps 53:6

*Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!*

*When God restores the fortunes of his people,*

*let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!*

**Sunday 54**

The memory verse is verse 1.

**Congregation**:

Ps 54:1 *Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might.*

**Reader:**

Ps 54:2-3 *Hear my prayer, O God; listen to the words of my mouth. Strangers are attacking me; ruthless men seek my life — men without regard for God*.

**Congregation:**

Ps 54:4 *Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me*.

**Reader:**

Ps 54:5-7 *Let evil recoil on those who slander me; in your faithfulness destroy them.*

*I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, O Lord,for it is good.*

*7 For he has delivered me from all my troubles, and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes*.

**Sunday 55**

With this Psalm the congregation will collectively pray verse 1-2 which serve as our memory verses. Then the whole congregation will be led by the special singing group in ***O, Lord Hear My Prayer*** from ***Taize.*** The reader will read verses 4-8 while the congregation hums softly and then verse 16-18 after another refrain is collectively sung. The words to the Taize song are: “O Lord hear my prayer x2. When I call answer me. O Lord hear my prayer x2. Come and listen to me.”

Ps 55:1-2

5 *Listen to my prayer, O God,*

*do not ignore my plea;*

*2 hear me and answer me.*

*My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught.*

**Sunday 56**

A responsive reading. Verse 4 for memory.

**Reader :**

Ps 56:1-2 *Be merciful to me, O God, for men hotly pursue me;*

*all day long they press their attack*.

2 *My slanderers pursue me all day long;*

*many are attacking me in their pride*.

**Congregation:**

Ps 56:3 *When I am afraid, I will trust in you.*

**Reader:**

Ps 56:4-7 *In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;*

*I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?*

*All day long they twist my words; they are always plotting to harm me.*

*6 They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, eager to take my life.*

*7 On no account let them escape; in your anger, O God, bring down the nations.*

**Congregation:**

Ps 56:8 *Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll — are they not in your record?*

**Reader:**

*Ps 56:9-10 Then my enemies will turn back*

*when I call for help.*

*By this I will know that God is for me.*

*10 In God, whose word I praise,*

*in the Lord, whose word I praise —*

**Congregation:**

Ps 56:11 *in God I trust; I will not be afraid.*

*What can man do to me*?

**Reader:**

Ps 56:*12 I am under vows to you, O God;*

*I will present my thank offerings to you.*

**Congregation:**

Ps 56:13 *For you have delivered me from death*

*and my feet from stumbling,*

*that I may walk before God*

*in the light of life*.

**Sunday 57**

A responsive reading. Memory verse is verse 5.

**Reader:**

Ps 57:1-4 *Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge.*

*I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.*

*2 I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills [his purpose] for me.*

*3 He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me*;

**Congregation:**

*God sends his love and his faithfulness*.

**Reader:**

4 *I am in the midst of lions; I lie among ravenous beasts —*

*men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords*.

**Congregation:**

Ps 57:5 *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;*

*let your glory be over all the earth*.

**Reader:**

Ps 57:6-10 *They spread a net for my feet — I was bowed down in distress.*

*They dug a pit in my path — but they have fallen into it themselves.* Selah …

*7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;*

*I will sing and make music. 8 Awake, my soul!*

*Awake, harp and lyre!I will awaken the dawn.*

*9 I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations;*

*I will sing of you among the peoples.*

*10 For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;*

*your faithfulness reaches to the skies*.

**Congregation:**

Ps 57:11 *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;*

*let your glory be over all the earth*.

The special group will lead us in **#89 in Songs of Faith and Praise.**

**Sunday 58**

Please observe the pastoral note on the blue sheet about imprecations at the beginning of year 2.

Ps 58:6

*Break the teeth in their mouths, O God;*

*tear out, O Lord, the fangs of the lions!*

**Psalm 59**

Memory verse is verse 17.

Ps 59:1-2

*Deliver me from my enemies, O God;*

*protect me from those who rise up against me.*

*2 Deliver me from evildoers*

*and save me from bloodthirsty men*.

Ps 59:14-17

*They return at evening, snarling like dogs, and prowl about the city.*

*15 They wander about for food and howl if not satisfied.*

*16 But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love;*

*for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble.*

*17 O my Strength, I sing praise to you; you, O God, are my fortress, my loving God*.

**Psalm 60**

Here we read only the printed verses below. Again, we are referred to the blue pastoral note about imprecations before Psalm 51 in this book. Memory verse is verse 11.

**Reader:**

*You have rejected us, O God, and burst forth upon us;*

**Congregation:**

*you have been angry — now restore us!*

**Reader:**

*You have shaken the land and torn it open;*

**Congregation:**

*mend its fractures, for it is quaking*.

**Reader:**

*You have shown your people desperate times;*

**Congregation:**

*you have given us wine that makes us stagger.*

**Reader:**

*4 But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner*

*to be unfurled against the bow.*

**Congregation:**

*11 Give us aid against the enemy,*

*for the help of man is worthless.*

*12 With God we will gain the victory,*

*and he will trample down our enemies*.

**Sunday 61**

The prayers of the King and his people. The memory verse this week is not recited. Memory verses are verses 1 and 2.

**Reader-King:**

*Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.*

*2 From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint;*

*lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

**Interlude: The singing group may here lead the congregation in 974 of Songs of Faith and Praise**

*3 For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe.*

*4 I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings…*

*5 For you have heard my vows, O God;*

*you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.*

**Congregation:**

*6 Increase the days of the king's life, his years for many generations.*

*7 May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.*

**Reader-King:**

*8 Then will I ever sing praise to your name and fulfill my vows day after day.*

**Sunday 62**

Only these verses will be read by the congregation collectively. Any or all of these verses for memory.

Psalm 62:5-8

*5 Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.*

*6 He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.*

*7 My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.*

*8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him,*

*for God is our refuge*.

**Sunday 63**

Only Ps 63:1-5 will be read. Verse 1 for memory. Afterward the special group will attempt to sing

***Better than Life.***

**Reader:**

*O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you;*

*my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you,*

*in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

**Congregation:**

*2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.*

*3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.*

*4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.*

*5 My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.*

**Sunday 64**

Ps 64:9-10

*9 All mankind will fear; they will proclaim the works of God*

*and ponder what he has done. 10 Let the righteous rejoice in the Lord*

*and take refuge in him; let all the upright in heart praise him!*

**Sunday 65**

A responsive reading of Ps 65:1-4 only. Verse 1 as the memory verse.

**Congregation:**

*Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled.*

**Reader:**

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

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

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

**Congregation:**

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

**Sunday 66**

The reader reads all of the Psalm following this orchestration of the first four verses. The first two of which will serve as our memory exercise.

**Reader:**

*66 Shout with joy to God, all the earth! 2 Sing the glory of his name;*

*make his praise glorious! 3 Say to God:*

**Congregation:**

*"How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power*

*that your enemies cringe before you. 4 All the earth bows down to you;*

*they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name."*

**Sunday 67**

A responsive reading. Memory verses 1-2.

**Congregation:**

*May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine upon us,*

*2 that your ways may be known on earth,*

*your salvation among all nations.*

**Reader:**

*3 May the peoples praise you, O God;*

**Congregation:**

*may all the peoples praise you.*

**Reader**

*4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy,*

**Congregation:**

*for you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.*

*5 May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.*

*6 Then the land will yield its harvest, and God, our God, will bless us.*

*7 God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him.*

**Sunday 68**

Reader: 68:1-3. Congregation reads 16-18. The reader: 32-35. Memory verse 68:18.

Ps 68:16-18

16 *Why gaze in envy, O rugged mountains,*

*at the mountain where God chooses to reign,*

*where the Lord himself will dwell forever?*

*17 The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands;*

*the Lord [has come] from Sinai into his sanctuary.*

*18 When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train;*

*you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious —*

*that you, O Lord God, might dwell there*.

**Sunday 69**

Verse 33 for memory. Reader: 69:1-21 and the Congregation ends with the following:

**Congregation:**

*29 I am in pain and distress; may your salvation, O God, protect me.*

*30 I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving…*

*32 The poor will see and be glad — you who seek God, may your hearts live!*

*33 The Lord hears the needy and does not despise his captive people.*

*34 Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and all that move in them,*

*35 for God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah.*

*Then people will settle there and possess it; 36 the children of his servants will inherit it,*

*and those who love his name will dwell there*.

**Sunday 70**

A responsive reading. Memory verse is verse 4 below.

**Reader:**

*Hasten, O God, to save me*;

**Congregation:**

*O Lord, come quickly to help me.*

**Reader:**

*2 May those who seek my life be put to shame and confusion*;

**Congregation:**

*may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace*.

**Reader:**

*3 May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" turn back because of* ***their*** *shame*.

**Congregation:**

*4 But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation always say, "Let God be exalted!"*

**Reader:**

*5 Yet I am poor and needy; come quickly to me, O God.*

**Congregation:**

*You are my help and my deliverer; O Lord, do not delay.*

**Sunday 71**

The congregation enters the reading at two places, either of which may be used as a memory verse.

Ps 71:14-15

*But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.*

*15 My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long,*

*though I know not its measure*.

Psalm 71:18

8 *Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God,*

*till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come*.

**Sunday 72**

Ps 72:18-19

*18 Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds.*

*19 Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory.*

*Amen and Amen.*

**Sunday 73**

Ps 73:15-17

*15 If I had said, "I will speak thus," I would have betrayed your children.*

*16 When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me*

*17 till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.*

**Sunday 74**

The reader reads verses 1-9 and then the congregation prays the following:

Ps 74:22-23

*22 Rise up, O God, and defend your cause;*

*remember how fools mock you all day long.*

*23 Do not ignore the clamor of your adversaries,*

*the uproar of your enemies, which rises continually.*

**Sunday 75**

A responsive reading. A conversation between God and his people. Memorize verse 1.

**Congregation:**

*We give thanks to you, O God,*

*we give thanks, for your Name is near;*

*men tell of your wonderful deeds.*

**Reader:**

*2 You say, "I choose the appointed time; it is I who judge uprightly.*

*3 When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.*

Selah

*4 To the arrogant I say, 'Boast no more,' and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horns.*

*5 Do not lift your horns against heaven; do not speak with outstretched neck.'"*

*6 No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man.*

*7 But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.*

*8 In the hand of the Lord is a cup full of foaming wine mixed with spices;*

*he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth drink it down to its very dregs.*

**Congregation:**

*9 As for me, I will declare this forever; I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.*

**Reader:**

*10 I will cut off the horns of all the wicked, but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.*

**Sunday 76**

A responsive reading. Memory 76:11

**Congregation:**

*In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel.*

*2 His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion.*

*3 There he broke the flashing arrows,*

*the shields and the swords, the weapons of war.*

**Reader to the Congregation:**

*11 Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them;*

*let all the neighboring lands bring gifts to the One to be feared.*

*12 He breaks the spirit of rulers; he is feared by the kings of the earth.*

**Sunday 77**

A Dramatic Reading. The reader here offers a painful testimony about how hard he prays without a lot of satisfaction from 77:1-12a. We close with the following responsive reading. Memory verse: 68:12

**Reader:** 12 *I will meditate on all your works*

**Congregation:** *and consider all your mighty deeds.*

**Reader:** 13 *Your ways, O God, are holy.*

**Congregation**: *What god is so great as our God?*

**Reader:** 14 *You are the God who performs miracles*;

**Congregation:** *you display your power among the peoples*.

**Reader:** 15 *With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,*

*the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.*

16 *The waters saw you, O God*,

**Congregation:** *the waters saw you and writhed*;

**Reader:** *the very depths were convulsed*.

**Congregation:** 17 *The clouds poured down water*,

**Reader**: *the skies resounded with thunder*;

**Congregation:** *your arrows flashed back and forth*.

**Reader:**

*18 Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world;*

*the earth trembled and quaked. 19 Your path led through the sea,*

*your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen.*

**Congregation:**

*20 You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

**Sunday 78**

No recitation today. The reader reads the first 7 verses. Verses 3 and 4 for memory.

**Sunday 79**

Focus on verse 9 for the memory verse.

Ps 79:5-8

5 *How long, O Lord? Will you be angry forever? How long will your jealousy burn like fire?*

*6 Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you,*

*on the kingdoms that do not call on your name;*

*7 for they have devoured Jacob and destroyed his homeland.*

*8 Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers;*

*may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need*.

*9 Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your name;*

*deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake.*

**Sunday 80**

The congregation enters the reading with the following memory refrain three times.

Note the address to God grows. “O God,” “O God Almighty,” “O LORD, God Almighty.”

Ps 80:3,7,19

***3 Restore us, O God****; (v7--O God Almighty; v19 O LORD God Almighty)*

***make your face shine upon us,***

***that we may be saved.***

**Sunday 81**

This verse prepares us to hear this oracle from God. Following this congregational opening the reader dramatically reads verses 8-16 as the voice of God to the congregation.

Ps 81:1-2

*Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob!*

*2 Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre.*

**Sunday 82**

An interpretive word is necessary. A prayer for many nations is in order in conjunction with this Psalm. This Psalm opens as a heavenly court scene where God takes the judgment seat amidst other nation’s “gods,” whom God has appointed to rule other societies. Since these powers and their ruling classes have neglected the weak in the name of “god”, God will bring them to an end. The congregation ends with this memory verse:

Ps 82:8

*8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth,*

*for all the nations are your inheritance.*

**Sunday 83**

The congregation recites these verses only. V 18 is the memory verse.

Ps 83:1-4

*83 O God, do not keep silent;*

*be not quiet, O God, be not still.*

*2 See how your enemies are astir,*

*how your foes rear their heads.*

*3 With cunning they conspire against your people;*

*they plot against those you cherish.*

*4 "Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation,*

*that the name of Israel be remembered no more."*

*18 Let them know that you, whose name is the Lord —*

*that you alone are the Most High over all the earth*.

**Psalm 84**

The liturgical work of the congregation is found in verses 8-9 and 12. But the memory verses are 84:1-2! The reader reads the entire psalm as usual.

Ps 84:8-9

8 *Hear my prayer, O Lord God Almighty, listen to me, O God of Jacob…*

*9 Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.*

Ps 84:12

*12 O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.*

**Psalm 85**

A dramatic reading with two readers and congregation. Memory verses 4-6.

**Reader 1 as Priestly Leader**

85 *You showed favor to your land, O Lord; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.*

*2 You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins…*

*3 You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger.*

**Congregation**

*4 Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.*

*5 Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger through all generations?*

*6 Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?*

*7 Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.*

**Reader 1 as Priestly Leader**

*8 I will listen to what God the Lord will say;*

*he promises peace to his people, his saints —*

*but let them not return to folly.*

*9 Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,*

*that his glory may dwell in our land.*

**Reader 2 in the Voice of God:**

*10 Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.*

*11 Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.*

**Congregation:**

*12 The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.*

*13 Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps.*

**Sunday 86**

Reader begins with verse 6 and the reading ends with verse 13. Verse 11 for memory.

Ps 86:11-13

*11 Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth;*

*give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.*

*12 I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.*

*13 For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave.*

**Sunday 87**

A responsive reading of the below verses only. Memory verses: 87:5-7

**Congregation:**

*He has set his foundation on the holy mountain; 2 the Lord loves the gates of Zion*

*more than all the dwellings of Jacob. 3 Glorious things are said of you,*

**Reader as voice of God**

*O city of God*:

*4 "I will record Rahab and Babylon among those who acknowledge me —*

*Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush — and will say, 'This one was born in Zion.'"*

*5 Indeed, of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her,*

*and the Most High himself will establish her."*

*6 The Lord will write in the register of the peoples: "This one was born in Zion."*

*7 As they make music they will sing, "All my fountains are in you.*"

Congregation sings #**909 in Songs of Faith and Praise**.

**Sunday 88**

This week’s psalm asks if there is any good in the grave or if God’s righteousness can be manifest in our destruction. The Psalmist’s complaint with God is that he thinks not. We know that Jesus has plumbed the depth of the grave and goes there with us and with those we love. But that is not something we always can feel. We take our agonizing grief to God today. We simply offer our hurt. The Reader and Congregation pray this lament only. The grieving may want to memorize 16-18.

Ps 88:13-18

*13 But I cry to you for help, O Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you.*

*14 Why, O Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me?*

*15 From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death;*

*I have suffered your terrors and am in despair.*

*16 Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have destroyed me.*

*17 All day long they surround me like a flood; they have completely engulfed me.*

*18 You have taken my companions and loved ones from me; the darkness is my closest friend.*

**Sunday 89**

Readers attempt to read in character. A dramatic reading of these texts only.Memory verses: 89:1-2

**Explanation:** It did not seem like God had kept his promise of establishing the line of David forever when many of his heirs were deposed and killed, and the nation was taken captive. Yet, in this Psalm we are invited to praise God’s faithfulness in the middle of what seems like broken promises and violated expectations. Here are the words for doing just that.

**Congregation:**

Ps 89:1-2

*I will sing of the Lord's great love forever;*

*with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.*

*2 I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself*.

**Reader 1 in Lament**

*You said:*

**Reader 2 as Oracle of God**

Ps 89:3-4

*I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant,*

*4 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations*.'"

**Congregation:**

Ps 89:18

*8 Indeed, our shield belongs to the Lord, our king to the Holy One of Israel.*

**Reader 1 in lament:**

Ps 89:19

*Once you spoke in a vision, to your faithful people you said:*

**Reader 2 as Oracle of God**

Ps 89:20

*20 I have found David my servant; with my sacred oil I have anointed him…*

*21 My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him.*

*22 No enemy will subject him to tribute; no wicked man will oppress him…*

*25 I will set his hand over the sea, his right hand over the rivers.*

*26 He will call out to me, 'You are my Father, my God, the Rock my Savior.'*

*27 I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth.*

*28 I will maintain my love to him forever, and my covenant with him will never fail.*

*29 I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure.*

*30 "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes,*

*31 if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands,*

*32 I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging;*

*33 but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.*

**Reader 1 in Lament**

Ps 89:38-41

*38 But you have rejected, you have spurned, you have been very angry with your anointed one!*

*39 You have renounced the covenant with your servant and have defiled his crown in the dust!*

*40 You have broken through all his walls and reduced his strongholds to ruins!*

*41 All who pass by have plundered him; he has become the scorn of his neighbors…*

*46 How long, O Lord? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire?*

*47 Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men!*

*48 What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave?...(pause)*

*49 O Lord, where is your former great love, which in your faithfulness you swore to David?*

Interlude: The singing group will here lead **#58 *Wait for the Lord* from Taize’: Songs for Prayer**

**Congregation:**

Romans 7:25, Ps 89:52

*Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 52 Praise be to the Lord forever!*

*Amen and Amen.*

**Sunday 90**

Reader attempts to read in character. The congregation should attempt to own Israel’s words.

A responsive reading of only these verses. Memory 90:1-2

**Congregation:**

Ps 90:1-2

*1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place*

*throughout all generations.*

*2 Before the mountains were born*

*or you brought forth the earth and the world,*

*from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

**Reader in Lament**

Ps 90:7-10

*7 We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation.*

*8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.*

*9 All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.*

*10 The length of our days is seventy years — or eighty, if we have the strength;*

*yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away…*

*13 Relent, O Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants.*

*14 Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.*

*15 Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.*

**Congregation:**

Ps 90:17

*17 May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us —*

*yes, establish the work of our hands*.

**Sunday 91**

Ps 91:1-2

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High*

*will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*

*2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge*

*and my fortress,*

*my God, in whom I trust*."

**Sunday 92**

Ps 92:12-15

*12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;*

*13 planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God.*

*14 They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,*

*15 proclaiming, "The Lord is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him*."

The special group will lead the congregation in **#35 of Songs of Faith and Praise**

**Sunday 93**

Ps 93:5

5 *Your statutes stand firm; holiness adorns your house*

*for endless days, O Lord*.

**Sunday 94**

Ps 94:1-3

*O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth.*

*2 Rise up, O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve.*

*3 How long will the wicked, O Lord, how long will the wicked be jubilant?*

NIV

Ps 94:17-22

*17 Unless the Lord had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death.*

*18 When I said, "My foot is slipping," your love, O Lord, supported me.*

*19 When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.*

*20 Can a corrupt throne be allied with you — one that brings on misery by its decrees?*

*21 They band together against the righteous and condemn the innocent to death.*

*22 But the Lord has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge.*

**Sunday 95**

Today we sing Kent’s rendition of the first verses of this Psalm. The reader reads verses 8-11 while the congregation softly hums an interlude. The memory verses are 1-2. But if we learn the song a larger stretch of this Psalm is possible. After the reading we will sing #153 in **Songs of Faith and Praise**.

**Sunday 96**

Any or all of the following may be memorized. The reader reads the whole psalm up to verse 10 when we conclude with this responsive reading.

Ps 96:10-13

**Congregation:** *"The Lord reigns."*

**Reader:** *The world is firmly established,*

**Congregation:** *it cannot be moved;*

**Reader:** *he will judge the peoples with equity.*

**Congregation:** *Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;*

**Reader:** *let the sea resound, and all that is in it;*

**Congregation:** *12 let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.*

**Reader:** *Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;*

**Congregation:** *13 they will sing before the Lord, for he comes,*

**Reader:** *he comes to judge the earth.*

**Congregation:** *He will judge the world in righteousness*

*and the peoples in his truth.*

**Sunday 97**

Ps 97:8-9

*8 Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad*

*because of your judgments, O Lord.*

*9 For you, O Lord, are the Most High over all the earth;*

*you are exalted far above all gods.*

**Sunday 98**

The reader does read the entire psalm after we begin with this responsive reading. Memory verse 98:3

Ps 98:1-3

**Reader:**

*Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things;*

*his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him*.

**Congregation:**

*2 The Lord has made his salvation known*

*and revealed his righteousness to the nations.*

**Reader:**

*3 He has remembered his love*

*and his faithfulness to the house of Israel;*

**Congregation:**

*all the ends of the earth have seen*

*the salvation of our God.*

**Sunday 99**

Ps 99:8-9

*8 O Lord our God, you answered them;*

*you were to Israel a forgiving God, though you punished their misdeeds.*

*9 Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy mountain,*

*for the Lord our God is holy.*

**Sunday 100**

Today there is no recitation. The reader exhorts us as he reads the psalm. Memory verse 5.

**Worship in Psalms Year 3**

Do not be discouraged. Spiritual growth, grieving, developing new passions, loving God more deeply is a long process with stops and starts. I confess that there are weeks that I do not get to our congregational psalm before church. Yet, if I arrive to services a few minutes early, I find that looking at our prayer for 2-3 minutes before services begin is still a good idea. If, you do not get to a psalm one week, please don’t let that discourage you. Just pick it up where we left off the next week.

If you will give this discipline effort over time you will start to sense how the psalms build on one another…and how they start to prepare you for life. Usually you will be able to find a prayerful truth which speaks into your life situation. If it doesn’t, again, don’t let this discourage you. Just know that you are building spiritual foundations as your life-experience changes. In the last parts of the Psalter we sense our distance from a Jerusalem Temple that was destroyed and so our hearts soar to the Zion which is above.

Over time, you will realize that we are praying these prayers together, and as such we are praying for and with others who need to connect to God. When you don’t sense anything happening within you, do not be discouraged—your prayerful participation may be the thing that is sustaining someone else in our midst. The biggest obstacle to growth in prayer is not the presence of discouragements, but our letting those discouragements stop us from continuing the journey. Jesus understands all the difficulties in a life of prayer. He told stories and taught us in so many ways to “always pray and never give up.”

Kent Ellett, January 2018

**Sunday 101**

Memory verse: Ps 101:2a *“I will be careful to lead a blameless life”*

In the history of Israel this Psalm involves the promise of the Royal administration to the people. David and his heirs promise to rid the administration of corruption so as to respond to the needs of those who suffer the injustice of government officials. In Jesus Christ, the King has made similar promises, and he has honored us with places in his administration—built into his household. As such we may not only receive, but also make similar promises about the purity of our mission to the world, realizing the fearful accountability that comes from such a privilege. May the Spirit guide us as we make promises to God and to the world about our witness…

**Congregation:**

I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O Lord, I will sing praise.

I will be careful to lead a blameless life — when will you come to me?

I will walk in my house with blameless heart.

I will set before my eyes no vile thing.

Leader speaking for God:

The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me.

Men of perverse heart shall be far from me;

I will have nothing to do with evil.

Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I put to silence;

whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure.

My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me;

he whose walk is blameless will minister to me.

No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house;

no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.

Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land;

I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the Lord.

**Sunday 102**

Memory verses: Psalm 102: 18-20

**Read these sections only.**

**Congregation:** 102:1-5

*Hear my prayer, O Lord;*

*let my cry for help come to you. Do not hide your face from me*

*when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly.*

*For my days vanish like smoke; my bones burn like glowing embers.*

*My heart is blighted and withered like grass;*

*I forget to eat my food. Because of my loud groaning*

*I am reduced to skin and bones…*

**Congregation:** *Ps 102:12-13*

*But you, O Lord, sit enthroned forever;*

*your renown endures through all generations.*

*You will arise and have compassion on Zion,*

*for it is time to show favor to her;*

*the appointed time has come.*

**Reader:** Ps 102:18-20

*Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord:*

*"The Lord looked down from his sanctuary on high--from heaven he viewed the earth,*

*to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death."*

**Sunday 103**

Memory Verse: Psalm 103:11 A Responsive Reading with Song.

Congregational Song: #81 Songs of Faith and Praise (Refrain Only)

**Reader:**

Reflexively (to himself and to God): 103:2-5

*Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits —*

*who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,*

*who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,*

*who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

**Congregation:** Ps 103:8-12

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;

he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Congregational Song: #81 Songs of Faith and Praise (Refrain Only)

**Reader:** 103: 14-22

Prophetically (to the congregation and the heavens)

*for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*

*As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field;*

*the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.*

*But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him,*

*and his righteousness with their children's children —*

*with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.*

*The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.*

*Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.*

*Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.*

*Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion.*

Congregational Song: #81 Songs of Faith and Praise (Whole Song)

**Sunday 104**

Memory Verse: Psalm 104:33

**Unless otherwise specified it is assumed that the entire psalm for the week will be read in full by the usual reader each Sunday. The congregation is encouraged only to read or recite the selected portion (by memory if possible) of the Psalm along with the reader.**

Congregation: 104: 31-34

*May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works —*

*he who looks at the earth, and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke.*

*I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.*

*May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord.*

**Sunday 105**

Memory Verse: Psalm 105: 4-5

A very selective reading of this Psalm as follows:

**Reader:**

*Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.*

*Remember the wonders he has done…*

*He remembers his covenant forever,*

*the word he commanded, for a thousand generations,*

*the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac.*

*He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant*

*He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food;*

*and he sent a man before them — Joseph, sold as a slave.*

*They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons,*

*till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the Lord proved him true.*

*The Lord made his people very fruitful; he made them too numerous for their foes*

*He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no one faltered.*

*Egypt was glad when they left, because dread of Israel had fallen on them.*

*He spread out a cloud as a covering, and a fire to give light at night.*

*They asked, and he brought them quail and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.*

*He opened the rock, and water gushed out; like a river it flowed in the desert.*

*For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham.*

**Sunday 106**

Why two readers? As you read this Psalm you will realize that it is a conversation where, on the one hand a part of us recognizes that our lives and our ancestral tradition has had many serious failings. (Reader 1) It is an admission of guilt and shame. Yet, another voice does not let us wallow in this shame. (Reader 2) We realize that is was precisely in our sin that God intervened to rescue and change the world for the better. The truth about ourselves can only be grasped by listening to both voices. The voice of our sin in the past has always been overcome by the voice of God’s grace. This becomes the hope for the future, and all voices are in the end subsumed in praise.

Memory verse: Psalm 106:1

This historical Psalm is our story in Israel and in Jesus Christ. For two readers and the congregation.

**Congregation:**

Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

**Reader 1:**

We have sinned, even as our fathers did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly.

7 When our fathers were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles;

they did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea,

the Red Sea.

**Reader 2:**

Yet he saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty power known.

**Reader 1:**

But they soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his counsel.

In the desert they gave in to their craving; in the wasteland they put God to the test.

**Reader 2:**

So he said he would destroy them — had not Moses, his chosen one,

stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.

**Reader 1:**

Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise.

They grumbled… they provoked the Lord to anger by their wicked deeds,

and a plague broke out among them.

**Reader 2:**

But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was checked.

This was credited to him as righteousness for endless generations to come.

**Reader 1:**

They did not destroy the peoples as the Lord had commanded them,

but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs.

**Reader 2:**

Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion

and they wasted away in their sin.

But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry;

for their sake he remembered his covenant

**Congregation:**

Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from the nations,

that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

**Reader 2:**

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.

Let all the people say,

**Congregation:**

"Amen!" Praise the Lord.

**Sunday 107**

Memory Verse: 107: 8,15,21, 31

This is an adapted prayer—not a reading. As the reader pauses at each stanza the congregation replies with the scriptural refrain, our memory verse:

**Leader of Prayer:**

*God, when Israelites wandered in the wilderness of exile*

*You led them into your city where they could settle.*

**Congregation:**

*Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love*

*and his wonderful deeds for men.*

**Leader of Prayer**

*Lord, you satisfied the prisoners’ thirst and broke their chains.*

*Leading them out of deepest gloom,*

*You sent forth your word and rescued them from the grave*

**Congregation:**

*Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love*

*and his wonderful deeds for men.*

**Leader of Prayer:**

*By Your Spirit you stilled the storm to a whisper*

*Brought fountains to the desert and*

*Lifted the needy out of their affliction*

**Congregation:**

*Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love*

*and his wonderful deeds for men.*

**Leader of Prayer:**

(directly exhorting the congregation)

*V 43 whoever is wise, let him heed these things*

*and consider the great love of the Lord.*

**Sunday 108**

The congregation recites its memory verse only; the prayerful work of the Psalm is carried by the song which follows our short recitation.

Ps 108:1

*My heart is steadfast, O God;*

*I will sing and make music with all my soul.*

Congregational Song: #61 Songs of Faith and Praise

**Sunday 109**

**A Dramatic Reading.** The memory verse is not recited by the congregation.

Psalm 109 is a courtroom scene where a poor and needy person seeks justice for a group of oppressors, and particularly, in verses 6-19, the needy person seeks justice against the oppressive ringleader. The accused has an office (or a place of leadership) and we may imagine that he has a government role in which he has in some fashion been greedy. It is in this sense that the early church found this prayer to be appropriate in the case of Judas, the betrayer and the dishonest keeper of the kingdom moneybag.

**Stage Directions:** The reader should direct the congregation’s attention to this paragraph and pause before beginning to let the congregation read and for the throne to be set on stage. This is a dramatic reading with three characters but only one speaker, the petitioner. The reader (petitioner), a poor person, perhaps with a tattered shirt over his clothes, will read the entire psalm to a silent God-King sitting on his throne, facing but to the right of the petitioner. The petitioner stands to the King’s left front. The accused person, with visible signs of wealth, also stands silently on the other side of the throne. The King dramatically rises to his feet and stands just to the right of the petitioner as the King reads verse 31.

Memory Verses:

Psalm 109:1-2

*O God, whom I praise, do not remain silent,*

*for wicked and deceitful men have opened their mouths*

**Sunday 110**

A Dramatic Reading of Psalm 110

**Reader 1 is to direct the congregation**: “take a look at these paragraphs at Psalm 110 and then prepare to hear the word of the Lord.” The throne chair is set up on stage and readers take their positions. The pause will be 30 seconds or more. Reader 1 then begins reading the Psalm in its entirety except for the two divine oracles. (verses 1b, 4b) This is an enthronement or coronation scene at Jerusalem temple. The Davidic King would be appointed at a coronation ceremony. It was believed that this appointment was ratified by God in the real heavenly temple. In Heaven, God accepts the King’s rule by speaking two oracles.

**Stage Directions:** For two speaking parts and three participants: reader 1, the priestly narrator. A Davidic King on the throne, and reader 2, who stands behind and to the right of the King who speaks God’s oracles to David and his successors (including Jesus), “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.” This plays on the practice in the Near East of the King’s throne sitting upon a wide platform which was engraved with scenes of his victories over the King’s enemies. Second, God says to David, “You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizadek.” These are the two lines of Reader 2 confirming the appointment to Priest-King, and the lines are to be read as if to the King seated on the throne. Reader 1 should be aware that his audience changes at verse 6. In the first five verses he speaks to the King on the throne. In verse 6 the King is spoken of in third person, and the reader speaks words of assurance to the congregation in verses 6-7.

Memory Verse:

Ps 110:1

*The Lord says to my Lord:*

*"Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*

**Sunday 111**

A Responsive Reading. Only the verses below are to be read.

Memory Verse: Psalm 111:2 below.

**Reader:**

*Praise the Lord…*

*2 Great are the works of the Lord;*

*they are pondered by all who delight in them.*

**Congregation:**

*9 He provided redemption for his people;*

*he ordained his covenant forever —*

*holy and awesome is his name.*

**Reader:**

*10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;*

*all who follow his precepts have good understanding.*

*To him belongs eternal praise.*

**Sunday 112**

Psalm 112:6

*Surely he will never be shaken;*

*a righteous man will be remembered forever.*

**Sunday 113**

Memory Verses: Psalm 113:7-9 (not recited by congregation)

**Congregation:**

*Praise the Lord*

**Reader:**

reads 1b-9a

**Congregation:**

*Praise the Lord.*

**Sunday 114**

Psalm 114:7-8

*Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,*

*at the presence of the God of Jacob,*

*who turned the rock into a pool,*

*the hard rock into springs of water.*

**Sunday 115**

Ps 115:1, 18b

*Not to us, O Lord, not to us*

*but to your name be the glory,*

*because of your love and faithfulness.*

*Praise the Lord.*

**Sunday 116**

Ps 116:5-6

*The Lord is gracious and righteous;*

*our God is full of compassion.*

*6 The Lord protects the simplehearted;*

*when I was in great need, he saved me.*

**Sunday 117**

Congregational Song: #282 Songs of Faith and Praise

Memory Verse: The entirety of Psalm 117

**Sunday 118**

A Responsive Reading of these verses only. Memory Verse: Ps 118:22-24

**Leader:**

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;*

**Congregation:**

*his love endures forever.*

**Leader:**

*7 I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done.*

*18 The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death.*

*19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.*

*20 This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter.*

*21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.*

*22 The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone;*

*23 the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.*

*24 This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

*25 O Lord, save us;*

**Congregation:**

*O Lord, grant us success.*

**Leader:**

*26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

*From the house of the Lord we bless you.*

*27 The Lord is God, and he has made his light shine upon us.*

*With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession up to the horns of the altar.*

*28 You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you.*

**Congregation:**

*29 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;*

*his love endures forever.*

**Sunday 119**

Ps 119:138, 140

*The statutes you have laid down are righteous; they are fully trustworthy…*

*Your promises have been thoroughly tested, and your servant loves them.*

The Reader reads 119:43-48, 137-142, 172-176 while the Congregation “hums” the chorus in between each of the articulated verses of Congregational Song: *Ancient Words* Lyrics by Lynn Deshazo

**Sunday 120**

Ps 120:1

*I call on the Lord in my distress, and he answers me.*

**Sunday 121**

A Responsive Reading. Memory Verses: Ps 121:1-2

**Reader:**

*I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from?*

**Congregation**

*2 My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.*

**Reader:**

*3 He will not let your foot slip — he who watches over you will not slumber;*

**Congregation:**

*4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

**Reader:**

*5 The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand;*

*6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.*

*7 The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life;*

*8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*

Sunday 122

A Responsive Reading. (optional pictures of contemporary Jerusalem) Memory verse is verse 1.

Reader as a fellow pilgrim:

I rejoiced with those who said to me,

Congregation:

"Let us go to the house of the Lord."

Reader:

2 Our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem.

3 Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together.

4 That is where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,

to praise the name of the Lord according to the statute given to Israel.

5 There the thrones for judgment stand, the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

Congregation:

"May those who love you be secure.

7 May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels."

Reader:

8 For the sake of my brothers and friends, I will say, "Peace be within you."

9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your prosperity.

Sunday 123

Ps 123:3-4

3 Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for we have endured much contempt.

4 We have endured much ridicule from the proud, much contempt from the arrogant.

**Sunday 124**

A Responsive Reading. Memory Verse is verse 8.

**Reader as Pilgrimage leader:**

*If the Lord had not been on our side — let Israel say —*

**Congregation:**

*2 if the Lord had not been on our side when men attacked us,*

*3 when their anger flared against us, they would have swallowed us alive;*

*4 the flood would have engulfed us, the torrent would have swept over us,*

*5 the raging waters would have swept us away.*

**Reader:**

*6 Praise be to the Lord, who has not let us be torn by their teeth.*

*7 We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler's snare;*

*the snare has been broken, and we have escaped.*

**Congregation:**

*8 Our help is in the name of the Lord,*

*the Maker of heaven and earth.*

**Sunday 125**

Ps 125:1

*Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion,*

*which cannot be shaken but endures forever.*

**Sunday 126**

Ps 126:3

*The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.*

**Sunday 127**

Ps 127:1

*Unless the Lord builds the house,*

*its builders labor in vain.*

**Sunday 128**

Ps 128:1

*Blessed are all who fear the Lord,*

*who walk in his ways.*

**Sunday 129**

A Responsive Reading. Memory verse: Psalm 129:2

**Pilgrimage Leader:**

*They have greatly oppressed me from my youth —*

*let Israel say —*

**Congregation:**

*2 they have greatly oppressed me from my youth,*

*but they have not gained the victory over me.*

**Pilgrimage Leader:**

*3 Plowmen have plowed my back*

*and made their furrows long.*

**Congregation:**

*4 But the Lord is righteous;*

*he has cut me free from the cords of the wicked.*

**Pilgrimage Leader:**

*5 May all who hate Zion*

*be turned back in shame.*

**Sunday 130**

Psalm 130:6

*My soul waits for the Lord*

*More than watchmen wait for the morning…*

**Sunday 131**

Psalm 131:2

But I have stilled and quieted my soul;

Like a weaned child with its mother

**Sunday 132**

Congregational Song: #869 in Songs of Faith and Praise.

Congregation “ooh’s” after the first, second and third verses. Reader reads Psalm 132:1-5, 6-12, 13-18 during these musical interludes. Memory Verse 132:7 (not recited)

**Sunday 133**

Congregational Song: #720 in Songs of Faith and Praise

Congregation “ooh’s” between first and second verses. The reader reads the psalm during this musical interlude between verses. Memory verse is Psalm 133:1. (not recited)

**Sunday 134**

Special Song Group leads the church in #724 Songs of Faith and Praise

Reader reads the Psalm during the hummed interlude between repetitions of #724. No memory verse.

**Sunday 135**

A Responsive Reading of these verses only. Memory verse is 135:13

**Congregation**

*3 Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.*

*4 For the Lord has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession.*

**Leader:**

*5 I know that the Lord is great,*

*that our Lord is greater than all gods…*

*13 Your name, O Lord, endures forever,*

*your renown, O Lord, through all generations.*

*14 For the Lord will vindicate his people*

*and have compassion on his*

*servants.*

*15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.*

**Congregation:**

*16 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see;*

*17 they have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths.*

*18 Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.*

**Leader:**

*19 O house of Israel, praise the Lord…*

*Praise be to the Lord from Zion,*

*to him who dwells in Jerusalem.*

**Congregation:**

*Praise the Lord.*

**Sunday 136**

Memory verse: Psalm 136:1. Today the text of the Psalm is sufficient to suggest the exact form of responsive reading intended by the author. The Congregation responds to the reader of the whole Psalm with the refrain:

*“His Love Endures Forever.”*

**Sunday 137**

Psalm 137:1

*By the Rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion*.

The regular reading of the Psalm will be followed by

Congregational Song: #444 Psalm 137 in Songs of Faith and Praise

**Sunday 138**

There are two verses for memory this week, to be congregationally recited during the reading of the whole Psalm.

Ps 138:3

*3 When I called, you answered me; you made me bold and stouthearted.*

Ps 138:8

*…your love, O Lord, endures forever — do not abandon the works of your hands.*

**Sunday 139**

Psalm 139:23-24

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

**Sunday 140**

There are two options for memory verses this week. We will pray Psalm 140:1 and 140: 9-11. We will also collectively recite Romans 12:20 as one way to appropriate these prayers. The leaders have made the theological and pastoral judgment that imprecations –prayers for protective judgments against the enemy— are in the canon for appropriate and faithful reasons. We remind everyone, however, to read the explanation which precedes Sunday 51 in this book.

Ps 140:1

*Rescue me, O Lord, from evil men; protect me from men of violence,*

Ps 140:9-11

*9 Let the heads of those who surround me be covered with the trouble their lips have caused.*

*10 Let burning coals fall upon them; may they be thrown into the fire, into miry pits, never to rise.*

*11 Let slanderers not be established in the land; may disaster hunt down men of violence.*

Romans 12:20

*"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.*

*In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

**Sunday 141**

Ps 141:5

*Let a righteous man strike me — it is a kindness;*

*let him rebuke me — it is oil on my head.*

*My head will not refuse it.*

Special Song: I lift my Heart by Darin Martin and Jon Joveneaux

**Sunday 142**

Ps 142:7

*Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name.*

*Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.*

**Sunday 143**

Today the reader will read only the first nine verses of this Psalm. We will sing Lord Hear my Prayer from Taize in the place of the Selah after verse 6. The congregation joins the reading in the two places provided below. The memory verse is verse Psalm 143: 6

Ps 143:6

*6 I spread out my hands to you;*

*my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.*

Ps 143:8-9

*8 Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love,*

*for I have put my trust in you.*

*Show me the way I should go,*

*for to you I lift up my soul.*

*9 Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord,*

*for I hide myself in you.*

**Sunday 144**

An adaptation, rather than a reading. Memory verse Psalm 144:15

**Leader:**

Praise be to the LORD, my rock, my fortress, stronghold, shield and deliverer in whom I take refuge.

**Congregation:**

*Part your heavens, O Lord, and come down. Scatter our enemies, delivering us from mighty waters and from the deceit that often surrounds us. Fill our barns and cleanse our streets so our children can grow beautiful in safety and strength.*

**Leader:**

*Blessed are the people of whom this is true. Blessed are the people whose God is the LORD.*

**Sunday 145**

There are two possible memory verses, the places where the congregation joins the reading below.

Ps 145:8-9

*The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.*

*The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.*

Ps 145:13

*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,*

*and your dominion endures through all generations.*

*The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.*

**Sunday 146**

Congregational Song: #56 in Songs of Faith and Praise. Congregation continues to sing using “Hallelujah” as the reader reads us the Psalm. Memory verse Psalm 146:9, not recited.

**Sunday 147**

Memory verse: 147:3 (not recited) The reader reads 147:1-3, 4-11, and 12-20. In between each of these three readings the congregation sings a Congregational Song: #198 Here We Are in Songs of Faith and Praise. After the final reading the congregation sings the song again.

**Sunday 148**

No memory verse. At the conclusion of the reading there is a Congregational Song: #3 in Songs of Faith and Praise.

**Sunday 149**

Memory verse is verse 4.

**Everyone:** “Praise the Lord.”

**Reader** reads 149:1-2.

The Congregation sings the first verse of a new song: From the 1912 Psalter, Psalm 149 by Alan Gray and William Croft.

**Reader:** overses 3-4.

The congregation sings verse 2 of the song.

**Reader:** verse 5-9.

The Congregation sings verse 3 of the song.

**Reader** reads Psalm 143:6-9.

**Everyone:** *Praise the Lord*

The Congregation sings verse 4 of the Song.

**Sunday 150**

Ps 150:6

*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.*

*Praise the Lord.*