



SUMMER *in* PSALMS

Devotional Guide

Westhampton United Methodist Church
Richmond, Virginia
Summer Series 2025

SUMMER *in* PSALMS

with Reflections by
Rev. Aaron D. Miller

Introduction

This summer, we embark on a journey through the book of Psalms. The Psalms are ancient songs, prayers, hymns, and poems that have inspired the worship and prayer life of God's people for thousands of years.

The emotional range of the Psalms is especially striking. Some are altogether uplifting and hopeful in tone; others are confessional, seeking mercy and forgiveness; still others express lament—even anger. Taken together, the Psalms remind us that God invites us to pray openly and honestly, to pour out the truth of who we are and how we feel—the good, the bad, and the ugly—confident in God's faithful love, boundless grace, and redemptive power.

The Psalms declare emphatically that God hears our prayers, especially those that come from the deepest places in our heart.

Our *Summer in Psalms* series begins Sunday, June 22, and continues through August 31. As there are 150 Psalms (!), we will only read and reflect upon a prayerfully curated selection.

This little booklet is intended to serve as a devotional companion throughout the series. Acknowledging that many in our congregation will be away on some Sundays this summer, our hope is that this Devotional Guide will help bind us together—even when we are out of town, vacationing, or otherwise unable to attend worship in person.

Each week, this guide includes a primary Psalm to read and meditate upon, along with a brief reflection to encourage your own devotional thoughts and prayers.

These reflections are by no means exhaustive or intended to be academic commentary. Rather, they are meant to kindle your own reflections and, perhaps, discussion with family and friends. The prayer that concludes each reading and reflection will be prayed together in Sunday worship. You'll also find space to write your own reflections, prayers, and notes at the end of each section.

It is my prayer that this *Summer in Psalms* series will enrich your personal prayer and devotional life, as well as the worshipping life of our church.

Holy peace,

Rev. Aaron D. Miller

Westhampton United Methodist Church

Richmond, Virginia

June 2025

⚙ There is also a *Summer in Psalms* Coloring Book for the children and young at heart in our congregation. Copies will be available throughout the series in our Narthex. If you would like a printable digital copy, please email aaron@westhamptonumc.org.

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2025

Psalm 1 (*New International Version*)

¹ Blessed is the one

who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,

² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.

³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither —
whatever they do prospers.

⁴ Not so the wicked!

They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

Reflection

This first Psalm reflects the “two ways” theme that permeates much of the Psalms and the Biblical canon—i.e., the clear demarcation between good and evil, holiness and sinfulness, love and hate, etc. The Law of the Lord—the way of righteousness, goodness, and integrity—is contrasted with the way of wickedness and sin.

In his book, *The Gulag Archipelago*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn makes a sobering observation: “The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained.”

The Psalmist suggests that those who delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on God’s law day and night will prosper. Yet we have all known those who are faithful in the lives they lead who nonetheless face hardship, injustice, and struggle. The cross of Christ and the empty tomb suggest that, though it does not always seem so, those who choose the way of faithfulness, goodness, and love will ultimately triumph and prosper: “For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous” (Ps. 1:6a).

Prayer

Lord our God, giver of blessing and judgment, because of your Son Jesus, we can know you, love you, and delight in you. Keep us watered by your grace and rooted in your Spirit, that we might bear good fruit, giving glory to you alone. Amen.

(from *Psalms for All Seasons*, adapted)



SUNDAY, JUNE 29, 2025

Psalm 23 (*King James Version*)

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

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

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

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

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

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Reflection

This image of God as our Shepherd is a more complex portrait of the Divine than it may first appear. A truly good and faithful shepherd nurtures and loves the flock, watching over their wellbeing. Yet in that love, the shepherd must also discipline, train the obstinate, and defend the flock from predators. Psalm 23 highlights the provisional goodness of God, as a shepherd who leads the flock beside still waters and into green pastures.

But the psalmist also suggests that they find peace in the shepherd rod and staff, instruments of protection, guidance, and discipline.

We find peace in the flock of God our Shepherd when we gratefully receive every blessing the Lord gives, trust in the Lord's protection, and accept with teachable spirits the discipline and guidance the Lord provides.

Are we willing to receive both the blessing and disciplining of our Good Shepherd? Are we bold enough to say, as the psalmist does, "Your rod and your staff, they comfort me"?

Prayer

Lord, give us hearts never to forget your love;

but to dwell therein whatever we do,
whether we sleep or wake, live or die,
or rise again to the life that is to come.

For your love is eternal life and everlasting rest;
for this is life eternal, to know you and your infinite goodness.

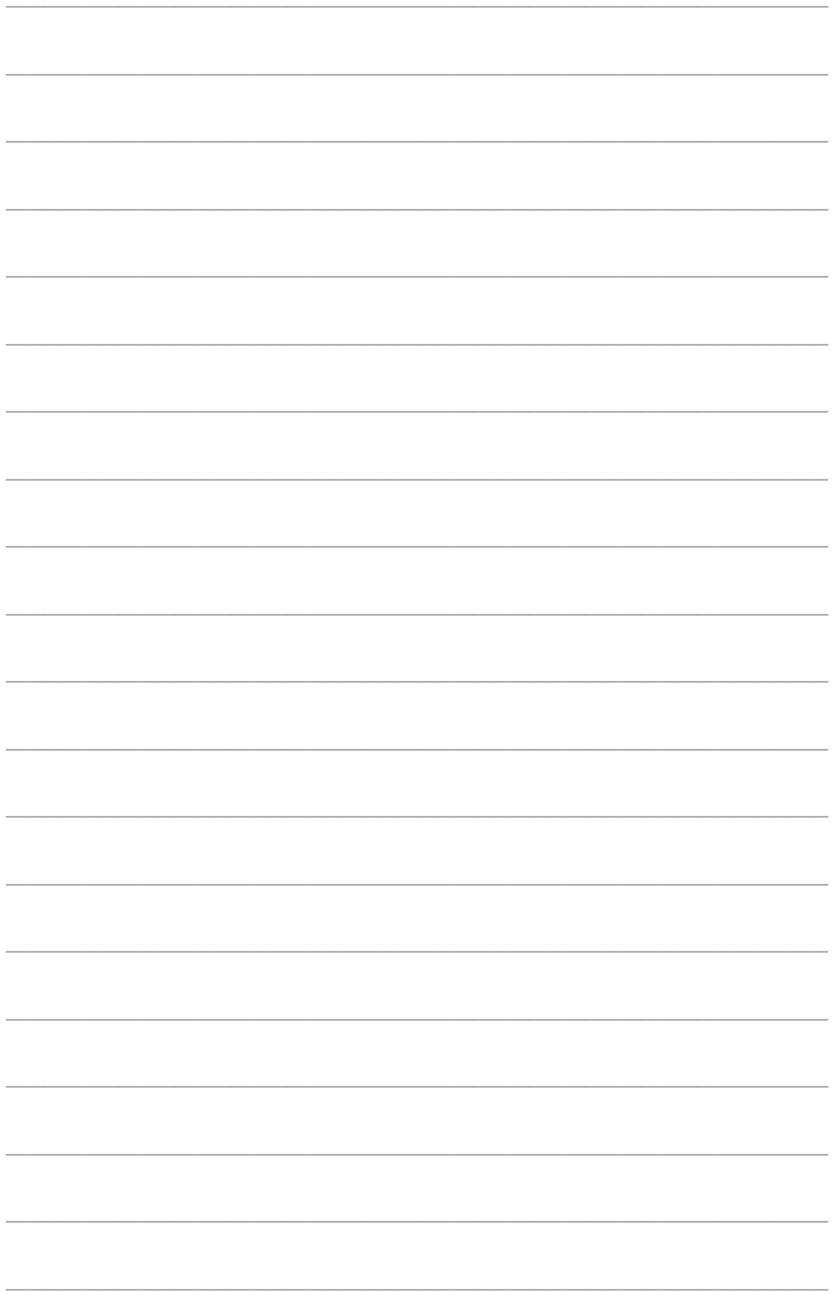
O let its flame never be quenched in our hearts;
let it grow and brighten, till our whole souls are glowing
and shining with its light and warmth.

O Lord, be our Joy and Hope, our Strength and Life,
our Shield and Shepherd, our Portion forever.

For happy are we if we continue in the love with which you
have loved us; holy are we when we love you steadfastly.

Therefore, O God, whose name and essence is Love,
enkindle our hearts, enlighten our understandings,
sanctify our wills, and fill all the thoughts of our hearts,
for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Johann Arndt (1555–1621), adapted



SUNDAY, JULY 6, 2025

Psalm 32 (NIV)

¹ Blessed is the one

whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

² Blessed is the one

whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

³ When I kept silent,

my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.

⁴ For day and night

your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.

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.

⁶ Therefore let all the faithful pray to you

while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters
will not reach them.

⁷ You are my hiding place;

you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

⁸ *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.*

⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.

¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.

¹¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

+ + +

Excerpts from Psalm 51 (*English Standard Version*)

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

¹⁵ O LORD, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

*17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Excerpts from Psalm 103 (ESV)

- ² Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy . . .
⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
⁹ He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.
¹⁴ For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.

Reflection

Confession, repentance, and redemption are central to the Psalms and the Christian life. Yet we forfeit the peace and deliverance God freely offers by avoiding the spiritual practice of humble confession. In neglecting this practice, we reject God's healing gifts of grace and reconciliation.

The following Self-Examination prompt—written by Scottish minister John Baillie—offers a helpful guide for confessional reflection.

Self-Examination

O merciful God, who looks down upon the frailty of your children more in pity than in anger, and more in love than in pity, let me now in your holy presence inquire into the secrets of my heart:

Have I today done anything to fulfill the purpose for which you caused me to be born?

Have I accepted such opportunities of service as you in your wisdom have set before me?

Have I performed without omission the plain duties of the day?

Give me grace to answer honestly, O God.

Have I today done anything to tarnish my ideal of Christian virtue?

Have I been lazy in body or languid in spirit?

Have I wrongfully indulged my bodily appetites?

Have I kept my imagination pure and healthy?

Have I been honorable in all my dealings?

Have I been transparently sincere in all I have professed to be, to feel, or to do?

Give me grace to answer honestly, O God.

Have I tried today to see myself as others see me?

Have I made more excuses for myself than I have been willing to make for others?

Have I, in my own home, been a peace-maker or have I stirred up strife?

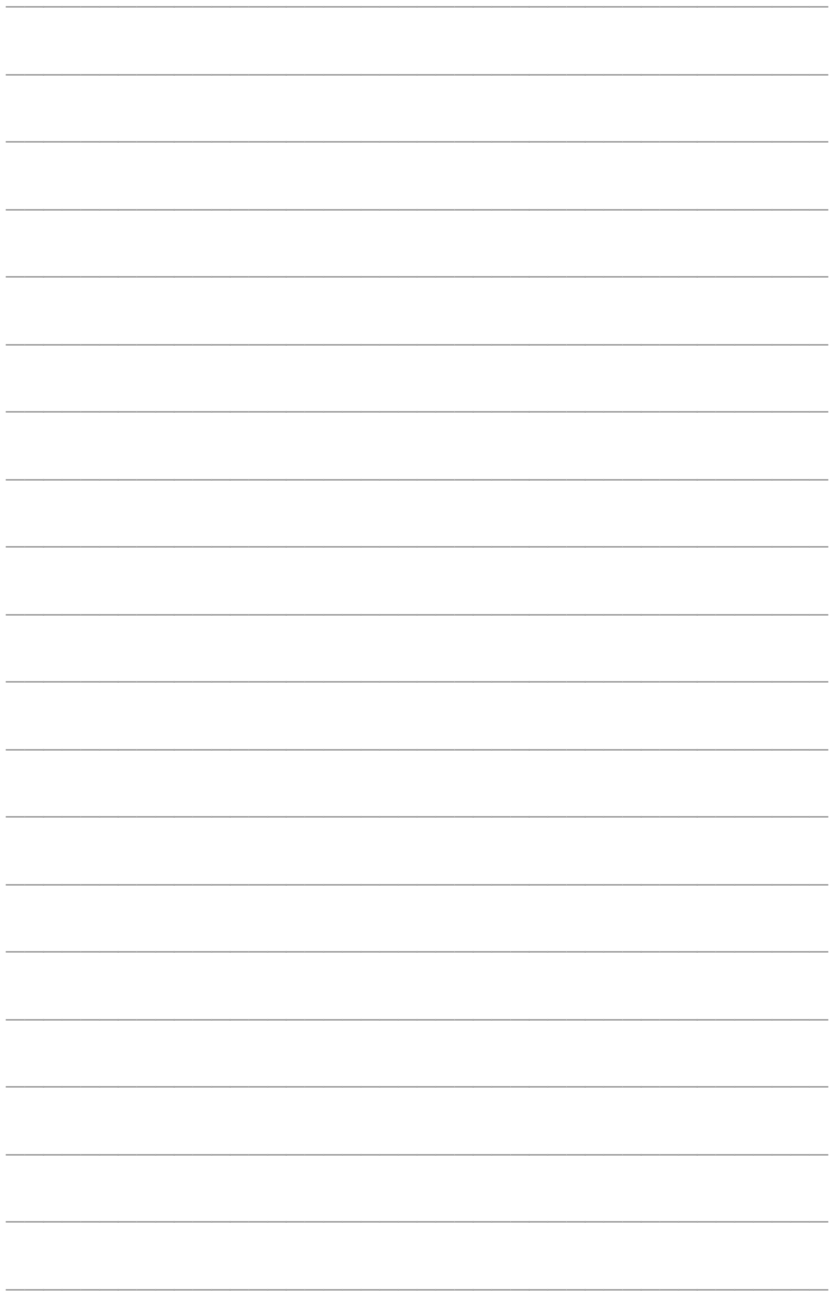
Have I, while professing noble sentiments for great causes and distant objects, failed even in common charity and courtesy

Give me grace to answer honestly, O God.

Prayer

(from *Psalms for All Seasons*)

[illegible]



SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2025

Psalm 84 (NRSV)

¹ How lovely is your dwelling place,

O LORD of hosts!

² My soul longs, indeed it faints,

for the courts of the Lord;

my heart and my flesh sing for joy

to the living God.

³ Even the sparrow finds a home

and the swallow a nest for herself,

where she may lay her young,

at your altars, O Lord of hosts,

my King and my God.

⁴ Happy are those who live in your house,

ever singing your praise.

⁵ Happy are those whose strength is in you,

in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

⁶ As they go through the valley of Baca,

they make it a place of springs;

the early rain also covers it with pools.

⁷ They go from strength to strength;

the God of gods will be seen in Zion.

⁸ O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;

give ear, O God of Jacob!

⁹ Behold our shield, O God;

look on the face of your anointed.

¹⁰ For a day in your courts is better

than a thousand elsewhere.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God

than live in the tents of wickedness.

¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
he bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does the LORD withhold
from those who walk uprightly.

¹² O LORD of hosts,
happy is everyone who trusts in you.

Reflection

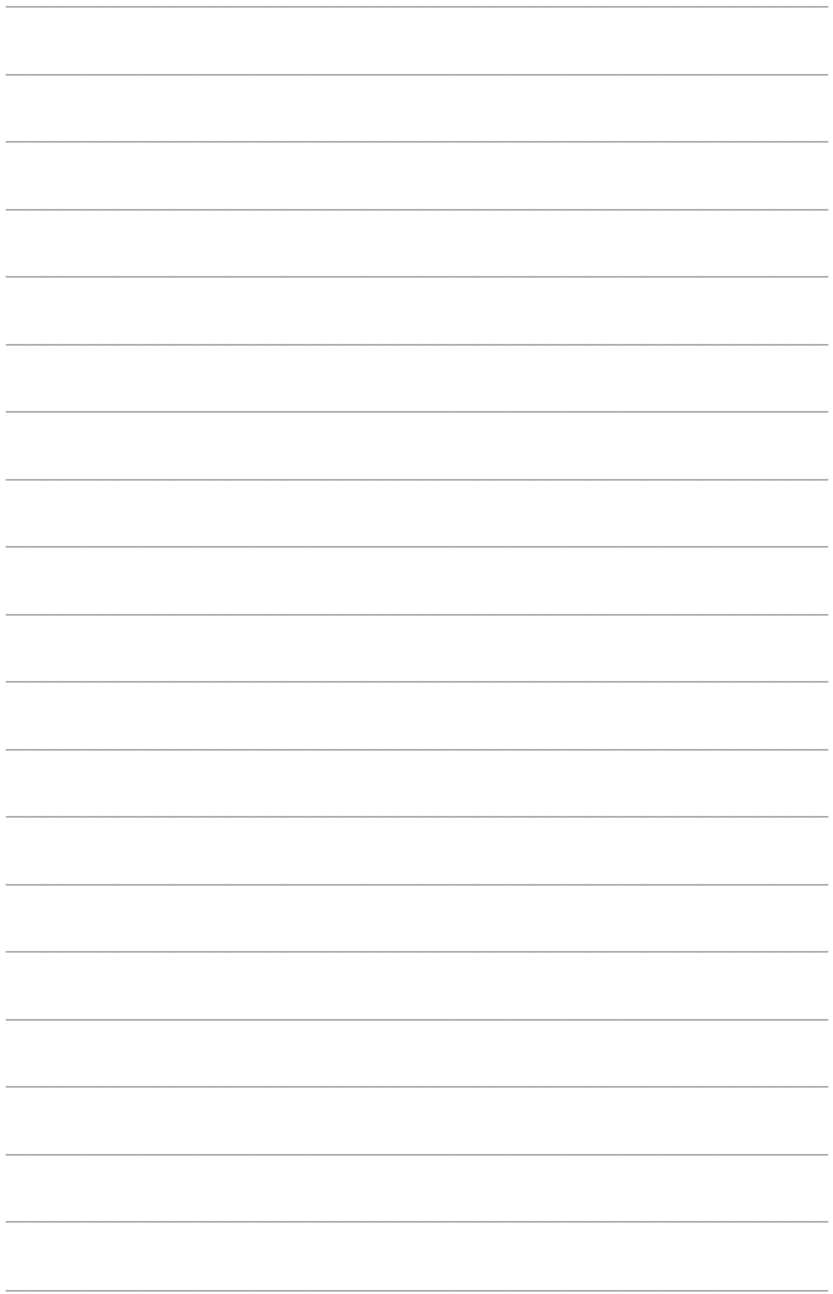
The psalmist proclaims with profound humility the joy of gathering for worship in the house of God. There is an urgency in the first two verses: *“How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, indeed it faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.”* This longing intensifies in verse 10: *“For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. Oh, to be a doorkeeper in the house of my God!”* The psalmist desires nothing more than to be in God’s house, even in the modest role of a doorkeeper, for the joy found there is unparalleled. *Oh, that our church would be filled with such a joy as this!*

*“In your presence, O God, there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:11)*

Prayer

God, most ancient and most new,
you are inexhaustible in your love and infinite in your glory.
You are the source of all goodness and fountain of all life.
Draw near to us and bless us with the glory of your presence,
that we may worship you in spirit and in truth;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

John Henry Newman (1801–90)



SUNDAY, JULY 20, 2025

Psalms 100 (NRSV)

- ¹ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.
² Serve the Lord with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.
³ Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him; bless his name.
⁵ For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever
and his faithfulness to all generations.

+ + +

A Psalm. A Song. For the Sabbath Day.

Psalms 92:1-5 (NIV)

- ¹ It is good to praise the Lord
and make music to your name, O Most High,
² proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,
³ to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.
⁴ For you make me glad by your deeds, Lord;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.
⁵ How great are your works, Lord,
how profound your thoughts!

Reflection

These Psalms of praise and thanksgiving model the posture of heart that we should bring to worship and should overflow into our lives—a basic disposition of **gratitude, hope, joy, and wonder**. The gospel vision of God’s infinite goodness, faithful love, boundless grace, and resurrection power—a power that triumphs over evil, hatred, sin, and even death itself in the end—prevents us from falling into unhealthy, spiritually depleted patterns of thanklessness and entitlement, despair and resignation, cynicism and bitterness, disinterest and numbness—ingratitude for the wonderful gift of life itself.

Is your basic disposition one of gratitude or ingratitude, hope or despair, joy or angst, vitality or numbness? I suspect most of us fluctuate a bit, day by day, hour by hour. And yet, Psalm 100 beckons us to come before God’s presence with a grateful heart, to make a joyful noise to the Lord, to stubbornly proclaim God’s goodness and steadfast love in every season.

“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. *Do not quench the Spirit.*”

(1 Thessalonians 5:18–19, NIV)

Prayer

We thank you and we praise you, faithful God. By your power at work within us, may we cheerfully proclaim your goodness, selflessly show your love, and joyfully come into your presence. You are our God. We are your people, now and always. Hallelujah! Amen.

(from Psalms for All Seasons)

SUNDAY, JULY 27, 2025

Psalm 104:1-34 (NRSV)

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
² wrapped in light as with a garment.

You stretch out the heavens like a tent;

³ you set the beams of your chambers on the waters;
you make the clouds your chariot;

you ride on the wings of the wind;

⁴ you make the winds your messengers,
fire and flame your ministers.

⁵ You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken.

⁶ You cover it with the deep as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.

⁷ At your rebuke they flee;
at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.

⁸ They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys,
to the place that you appointed for them.

⁹ You set a boundary that they may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.

¹⁰ You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,

¹¹ giving drink to every wild animal;
the wild asses quench their thirst.

¹² By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.

¹³ From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

- 14 You cause the grass to grow for the cattle and plants
for people to cultivate, to bring forth food from the earth
- 15 and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face
shine and bread to strengthen the human heart.
- 16 The trees of the field are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
- 17 In them the birds build their nests;
the stork has its home in the fir trees.
- 18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the coneys.
- 19 You have made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows its time for setting.
- 20 You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.
- 21 The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
- 22 When the sun rises, they withdraw
and lie down in their dens.
- 23 People go out to their work
and to their labor until the evening.
- 24 O LORD, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
- 25 There is the sea, great and wide;
creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.
- 26 There go the ships and Leviathan
that you formed to sport in it.
- 27 These all look to you to give them their food in due season;
28 when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
- 29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you

take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

³⁰ When you send forth your spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

³¹ May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works—

³² who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.

³³ I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

³⁴ May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the LORD.

Reflection

Psalms 104 celebrates the majesty of God as Creator and Animator of all. The psalmist's sense of awe is palpable, as he reflects with reverent wonder on God's abundant provision and creative power.

After illustrating the creative power of God, the psalmist assumes that God is a relational being, intimately aware of even the meditations of his creatures: "May my meditation be pleasing to him [God], for I rejoice in the Lord" (v. 34).

This is a recurring theme throughout the Psalms and indeed the entire Biblical canon: the one true God, who is the creator of all things great and small—*far flung galaxies, the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, mountains and lakes, fruit-bearing trees and human beings, and all matter and all space and time*—this Creator God, knows each one of us intimately and cares for us. What a staggering revelation. What an anchor of hope for our restless souls.

Prayer

Eternal God, Creator of all,
you formed us in your image
and filled us with life-giving breath.
We bless you: even your name is holy.

Christ our Lord, Redeemer of all,
you have ransomed and healed us,
restored and forgiven us.
We remember your blessings with thankful praise.

Holy Spirit, Sustainer of all,
tune the very fiber of our being
to resonate with the songs of angels.

We join the hymn of all creation, praising you,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—one God forever. Amen.

(from *Psalms for All Seasons*, alt.)



SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 2025

Psalm 126 (NRSV)

- ¹ When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
- ² Then our mouth was filled with laughter
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
- ³ The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
- ⁴ Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
- ⁵ May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.
- ⁶ Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

Reflection

This Psalm speaks of the promise of a joyful harvest to those who are faithful and diligent in their labor and stewardship, even through tears.

Every healthy garden thrives because of the care and attention of a skilled gardener: one who had a vision for a particular plot of land, who sowed good seed in good soil, who keeps weeds, pests, and disease at bay so that fruit-bearing plants can flourish and reach their full potential.

Seasoned gardeners have much to teach us about stewardship, spiritual discipline, and faithfulness. Gardening demands vision and foresight. It requires the humility to get your hands and knees dirty. Above all, it requires faithfulness. ***Faithfulness.***

What does it mean for *you* to be faithful? In this season of your life, how is God calling you to show up—day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment—in faithfulness? How can you more faithfully steward the garden God has entrusted to your care?

Prayer

Lord, your harvest is the harvest of love sown in the hearts of people; love that spreads out like the branches of a great tree covering all who seek its shelter; love that inspires and recreates; love that is planted in the weak and the weary, the sick and the dying. The harvest of your love is the life that reaches through the weeds of sin and death to the sunlight of resurrection.

Lord, nurture my days with your love, water my soul with the dew of forgiveness, that the harvest of my life might be your joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Frank Topping, *Lord of Time*



SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2025

Psalm 131:1–2 (ESV)

¹ O LORD, my heart is not lifted up;

my eyes are not raised too high;

I do not occupy myself with things

too great and too marvelous for me.

² But I have calmed and quieted my soul,

like a weaned child with its mother;

like a weaned child is my soul within me.

Reflection

In the quiet of Sabbath rest, God invites us to let go—to stop striving to fix everything or make sense of it all. Psalm 131 offers a picture of peace: like a small child at resting on its mother’s breast, we can find calm and safety in God’s presence. We don’t need to understand everything. It is enough to know that God’s love is constant, grace is sufficient, and we are held in a care that never fails.

For thus said the LORD GOD, the Holy One of Israel,

“In returning and rest you shall be saved;

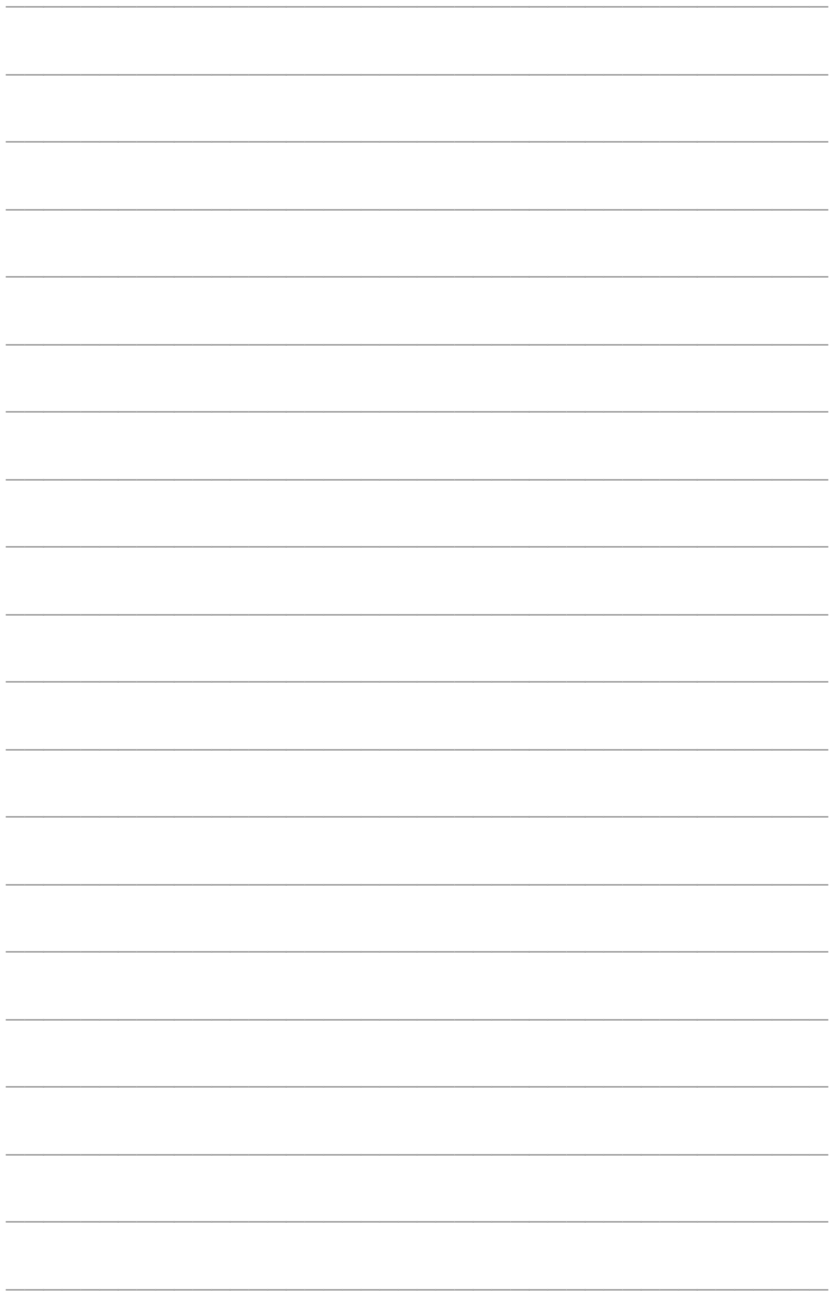
in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.”

(Isaiah 30:15a)

Prayer

O Lord, whose way is perfect, help us always to trust in your goodness, to walk in the way of faith, and to follow in the path of simplicity. Teach us to cast our cares on your providence, that we may possess a quiet mind and a contented spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christina Rossetti (1830–94)



SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2025

Psalm 139 (ESV)

- ¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
³ You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.
⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.
⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.
⁷ Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.
¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"
¹² even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you.
¹³ For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
¹⁴ I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;

my soul knows it very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,

when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed substance;

in your book were written, every one of them,

the days that were formed for me,

when as yet there was none of them.

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ If I would count them, they are more than the sand.

I awake, and I am still with you.

Reflection

Psalm 139, like Genesis 1, is a poem of creation. Genesis 1 speaks of the origin of all things, the creation of the universe, while Psalm 139 speaks of the creation of you... *You*. And me. And every human soul that has ever graced the earth.

Genesis 1 portrays God the Creator as eternal and transcendent. Infinite in power. Breathing and speaking all of creation into being — the sun and moon; billions of stars; untold galaxies light years away. The tiniest wildflowers; the most majestic oak trees; and every fruit bearing vine... Mountains and valleys; rivers and oceans; fire and ice; birds of every color that grace the air; every wild creature great and small all find their source in the one transcendent, infinitely creative God of Genesis 1.

And then Psalm 139 portrays this very same God as inescapably present and personal in nature. Psalm 139 declares that God knit you together in your mother's womb and declares that you are fearfully and wonderfully made.

When paired together, Genesis 1 and Psalm 139 poetically express the most astonishing claim of the Hebrew Bible: that there is one, transcendent, universal God and creator of all, and this God is also a personal, relational, and loving God that is inescapably present in our lives — who cares deeply for us and knows each one of us intimately.

That is the revolutionary insight and paradigm-shattering revelation that the Israelites, the Hebrew people gifted to us all and fully blossomed in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

“The Collect for Purity” from *The Book of Common Prayer*

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24, 2025

Psalm 146 (NIV)

¹ Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD, my soul.

² I will praise the LORD all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

³ Do not put your trust in princes,

in human beings, who cannot save.

⁴ When their spirit departs,

they return to the ground;

on that very day their plans come to nothing.

⁵ Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the LORD their God.

⁶ He is the Maker of heaven and earth,

the sea, and everything in them —

he remains faithful forever.

⁷ He upholds the cause of the oppressed

and gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets prisoners free,

⁸ the LORD gives sight to the blind,

the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,

the LORD loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD watches over the foreigner

and sustains the fatherless and the widow,

but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

¹⁰ The LORD reigns forever,

your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the LORD!

Reflection

Throughout Scripture we read of a God who has a special love and affection for the poor, the hungry, the brokenhearted, the orphaned, the widowed, the oppressed, and—*perhaps most especially*—those who are humble in heart:

“The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down” (v.8)

“Walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8b)

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.” (Matthew 5:9)

“Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10)

What does this reveal about the character and nature of God? How does this vision of God shape your way of life, your identity and self-understanding as one made in God’s image?

Prayer

O Lord, we pray to you,
the help of the helpless,
the hope of those past hope,
the savior of the tempest-tossed,
the harbor of the voyager,
the physician of the sick.
You know each of us and our need,
each house and its need,
and receive us all into your kingdom,
making us children of light.
Bestow on us, O Lord our God,
your peace and love.

Clement of Rome (1st century)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 2025

Psalm 148 (NRSV)

¹ Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!

² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!

³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.

⁶ He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,

⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!

¹⁰ Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!

¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

¹² Young men and women alike,
old and young together!

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.
¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the LORD!

+ + +

Psalm 150 (*NRSV*)

¹ Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
³ Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
⁵ Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
⁶ Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Reflection

These final Psalms are enthusiastic outpourings of praise, which is most fitting to conclude the book of Psalms, which is finally a book of worship. As Charles Wesley envisions in his hymn “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling,” the ultimate destiny of every soul is to be “lost in wonder, love, and praise.”

Prayers

Lord our God, you dwell in unapproachable light,
pure Essence and Perfection of being!
Self-existent, Necessary, Infinite, and Eternal!
You comprehend within yourself all nature, all wisdom,
all justice, all goodness, all truth, and all holiness.
Out of the abundance of my reason I adore you
and out of the love of my heart I magnify and praise you,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
one God forever and ever.

Susanna Wesley (1669–1742)

Let our mouths be filled with your praise, O Lord;
our songs with the theme of your glory, and may our lives
proclaim the beauty of your holiness, for you live and reign
forever and ever. Amen.

Liturgy of John Chrysostom (c. 347–407)





Resources & Bibliography

Prayer Books and Psalter.

The historic prayers referenced in this guide are cataloged in *Daily Prayer*, ed. **Frank Topping (Oxford University Press)**. I cannot recommend this volume enough. It has been a faithful companion to me in my own prayer life and has enriched many services of worship.

I discovered John Baillie's "Self-Examination" in *A Guide to Prayer for All God's People*, by **Norman Shawchuck & Rueben Job (Upper Room Books)**. This series of prayer books is most practical for establishing a daily prayer and devotional practice. Westhampton's Tuesday Night Prayer Group is currently journeying through *A Guide to Prayer for All Who Seek God*, a favorite volume in this series.

Psalms for All Seasons: A Complete Psalter for Worship (Brazos Press). This is an excellent volume, that sets all 150 psalms to music and includes prayers inspired by each psalm.

The Holy Bible. Several translations of the Bible have been referenced in this volume, including:

The English Standard Version (ESV)

The King James Version (KJV)

The New International Version (NIV)

The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

These are all strong and faithful translations of the Bible, and I recommend all of them. Reading the same passage in multiple translations often sheds greater light on the text. I selected what I believed to be the most poetic and faithful translations of each psalm and scripture reading included in this volume.

*"Let the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD,
my strength and my redeemer."*

Psalm 19:14

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10



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