

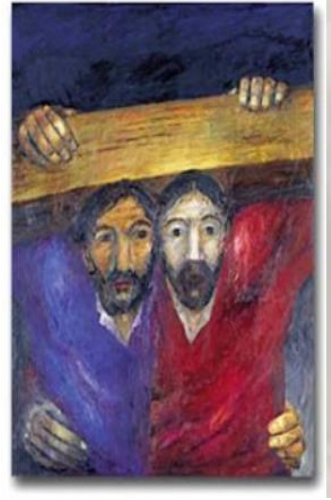
Lent 2023.

The Psalms contain lines that inspire and comfort us when we need them most.

When we pray the Psalms, we participate in an unbroken chain of daily prayer that stretches back thousands of years in song, praise, lament, thanks, and mourning. This is not to say praying the Psalms is easy. They take us on a rollercoaster of emotion from joy to anguish, from praise to fury, from deep calm to utter torment.

The Psalms encourage us to pray not only on our own behalf but also on behalf of those around us in our communities echoing their emotional responses as well as our own.

Summary of the introduction to 'Journalling the Psalms' by Paula Gooder.



Our Lent talks link us to the Psalms which Christ himself prayed.

We use them to help us follow the way of Christ in Lent and through our whole lives. This leaflet contains Psalms (NRSV Bible) and suggestions for prayer. You will notice artwork by the German priest, Sieger Koder, who so wonderfully encapsulates the images of our God. In our final week of Lent, we will pray the stations of the Cross, using images in a separate booklet. With every blessing. Revd Becky

Tips and Ideas!

Set aside time to pray each week. You may like a notebook at hand to write or draw! Use the Psalms to deepen your own awareness of God's presence, and to aid your conversation with and listening to God who loves you tenderly. Read and reread the Psalm slowly praying for the community and world in which we live.

Trust God's Spirit is with you as you read the Psalm aloud slowly at the beginning of the week.

READ Reading aloud slowly can help us to pay attention and notice details. Reading the Psalm more than once is good!

REFLECT What does the Psalm mean to you? Notice which words/ phrases you are drawn to or 'withdraw' from. Let the images in the Psalm speak to you. Remember God is with you in what is comforting and even uncomfortable. Jot or journal or draw your thoughts. Ask God to speak to you through them.

RESPOND Remember you are in the loving presence of God. Talk to God about what you are thinking. Is God communicating with you - perhaps giving encouragement or challenge or calling you to a deeper awareness of that deep love each of us is promised? Are there any actions you can take as a result of your prayer?

REST Be with God. Rest in God's love.

Think about the title of the Psalm. What do you think the intention of the Psalm writer is? As you slowly read the Psalm, do you notice any changes in the intentions of the Psalm writer? Why would this be?

Who in the world would be seeking this intention at this moment in time. Pray for them. What actions could you take personally as a result of your prayer?

Psalms are a way to express all the different emotions in human life to God.

What do you seek from God? Tell God what you are seeking. (Your intention).

See if God responds in any words of the Psalm you read.

Do any resonate with your intention?

What do you think God is saying to you?

Pray with the Pictures.

LOOK Remember God's Spirit is with you as you read the image slowly, looking carefully from left to right, top to bottom. Let the image move 'into your being'.

REFLECT Take time to reflect on what part of the image / which image has spoken to you – do you know why? Does it bring a situation / feeling to the forefront? as a comfort? a challenge? You may like to reflect by writing, drawing, singing or even dancing your response! Pray as the Spirit moves you.

RESPOND Now talk to God about what you have been thinking and have noticed. What is God saying to you?

REST Take time to rest quietly in the love God has for you. Do not worry about doing nothing, let the image move from your head to your heart to dwell there.

Week 1 Refuge Psalm 46.

God's Defence of City and People

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
- ³ though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
- ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- ⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
- ⁶ The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- ⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.
- ⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
- ⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
- ¹⁰ 'Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.'
- ¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.



Week 2 Forsakenness Psalm 22. A Plea for Deliverance from Suffering and Hostility

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my
groaning?

² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night but find no rest.

³ Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

⁴ In you our ancestors trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.

⁵ To you they cried, and were saved;
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

⁶ But I am a worm, and not human;
scorned by others, and despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me mock at me;
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;

⁸ 'Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!'

⁹ Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

¹⁰ On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.

¹¹ Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

¹² Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
¹³ they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;

¹⁵ my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shrivelled;

¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me;
¹⁸ they divide my clothes among themselves and for my clothing they cast lots.

¹⁹ But you, O LORD, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!

²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!

²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion!
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.

²² I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

²³ You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you
offspring of Israel!

²⁴ For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him.

²⁵ From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

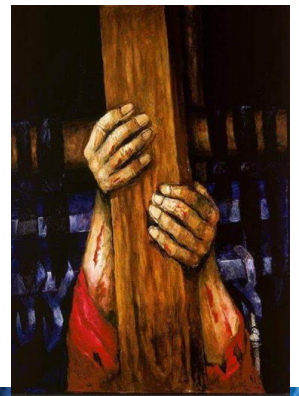
²⁶ The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise
the LORD.
May your hearts live for ever!

²⁷ All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;
and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

²⁸ For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

²⁹ To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

³⁰ Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,



³¹ and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done it.

Week 3 Surrender and dependence Psalm 31

Prayer and Praise for Deliverance from Enemies

¹ In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame;

in your righteousness deliver me.

² Incline your ear to me: rescue me speedily.

Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

³ You are indeed my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me,

⁴ take me out of the net that is hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.

⁵ Into your hand I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

⁶ You hate those who pay regard to worthless idols,
but I trust in the LORD.

⁷ I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love,
because you have seen my affliction;
you have taken heed of my adversities,

⁸ and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy;
you have set my feet in a broad place.

⁹ Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;
my eye wastes away from grief,
my soul and body also.

¹⁰ For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away.

¹¹ I am the scorn of all my adversaries,
a horror to my neighbours,

an object of dread to my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee from me.

¹² I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.

¹³ For I hear the whispering of many— terror all around!—
as they scheme together against me, as they plot to take my life.

¹⁴ But I trust in you, O LORD;
I say, 'You are my God.'

¹⁵ My times are in your hand;
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

¹⁶ Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.

¹⁷ Do not let me be put to shame, O LORD for I call on you; let
the wicked be put to shame; let them go dumbfounded to Sheol.

¹⁸ Let the lying lips be stilled that speak insolently against the
righteous with pride and contempt.

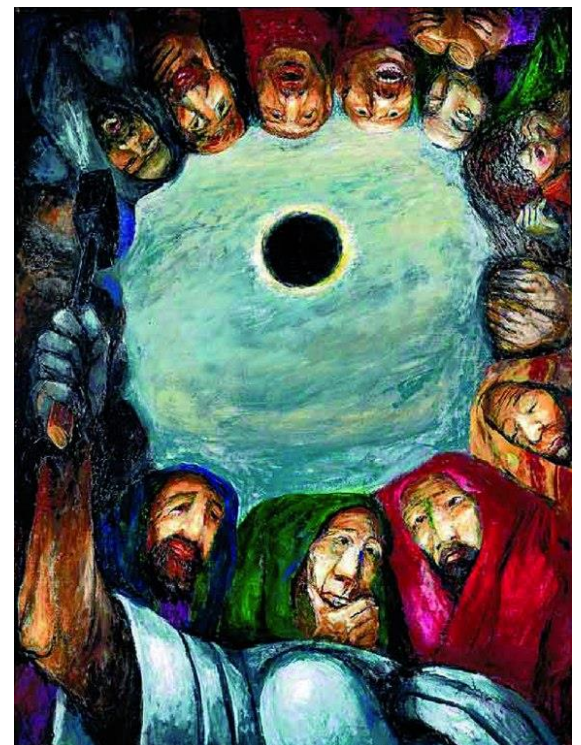
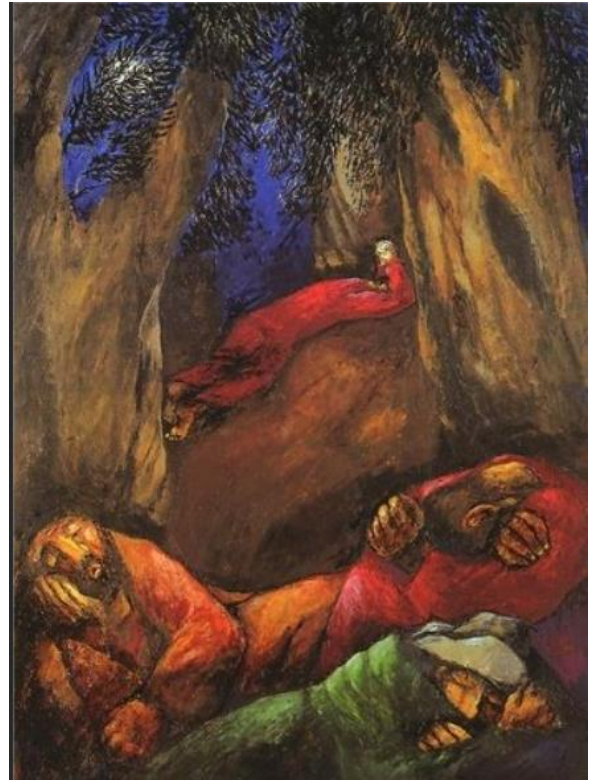
¹⁹ O how abundant is your goodness that you have laid up for
those who fear you, and accomplished for those who take
refuge in you, in the sight of everyone!

²⁰ In the shelter of your presence you hide them
from human plots; you hold them safe under your shelter
from contentious tongues.

²¹ Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me
when I was beset as a city under siege.

²² I had said in my alarm, 'I am driven far from your sight.'
But you heard my supplications when I cried out to you for help.

²³ Love the LORD, all you his saints. The LORD preserves the faithful,
but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily.



²⁴ Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the LORD.

Week 4 Resurrection and Play Psalm 16

Song of Trust and Security in God

- ¹ Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
² I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you.'
³ As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble,
in whom is all my delight.
⁴ Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows;
their drink-offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names upon my lips.
⁵ The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.
⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
I have a goodly heritage.
⁷ I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.
⁸ I keep the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.
¹⁰ For you do not give me up to Sheol,
or let your faithful one see the Pit.
¹¹ You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

