



THAT YOU MAY TELL THE NEXT GENERATION THAT THIS IS GOD,  
OUR GOD FOREVER AND EVER.

PSALM 48:13-14



at Grace Church Worship Centre  
2087 McMillan Road, Abbotsford, BC V2S 4Y3  
Phone: 604.853.6746  
[www.stmatthewsanglicanchurch.com](http://www.stmatthewsanglicanchurch.com)  
email: [office@stmatthewsanglicanchurch.com](mailto:office@stmatthewsanglicanchurch.com)  
Sunday morning worship: 8:45 am, Wednesday: 10:00 am

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*Our mission is to glorify Jesus Christ by joyfully  
proclaiming 'ancient faith for today's world'.*

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## *Psalm for the Summer*



Welcome to **'Psalm for the Summer'**! It is my hope that this booklet serves as a way in which you are able to draw near to God during the long hot days of summer and experience times of refreshing and renewal in His presence. It has been a happy addition to our Sunday morning worship to include the appointed Psalm and such an encouragement to be given a portion of the Psalm on a bookmark as we leave the Sanctuary each week. **'Psalm for the Summer'** continues to build on the importance of the Psalms for our life and worship today; **'Ancient faith for today's world'**.

The Psalms have had a regular place in the daily prayer of Christians from earliest times. They constitute the nearest thing to a Jewish 'hymn book' that exists and phrases of the Psalms were on the lips of Jesus. This has given them a particular place in the unbroken tradition of Christian prayer which stems from Jesus Himself. In the Psalms we have the voice of a people in all moments of life: moments of aspiration and degradation, despair and hope, pain and healing, sadness and joy, despair and peace, grief and comfort, fear and freedom, praise and lamentation. It's all there! I once heard a Trappist monk who recites the Psalms seven times a day say, 'the Psalms always keep up with you. All of life is mirrored there'. In the Psalms we find our own voice to express ourselves to God with all that we are going through. As we read the Psalms corporately and in solitude we can be conscious of the host of voices that accompany us, stretched across two and a half millennia and more.

**'Psalm for the Summer'** contains 9 Psalms, reflections and prayers for the weeks of July and August. The Psalm used is the appointed Psalm that will be used in our Sunday morning service to begin the week.

My special thanks go to Norma Kobald and Carolyn Pera for putting this wonderful resource together and I pray that we all have a glorious summer as we sit with the Psalms. 'The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore' (Psalm 121. 8).

With my ongoing affection and prayers,

Mike Stewart+  
Rector.

notes

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for the week of July 5th:

## Psalm 48



*A Song. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.*

**1** Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain,

**2** beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.

**3** Within her citadels God has made himself known as a fortress.

**4** For behold, the kings assembled; they came on together.

**5** As soon as they saw it, they were astounded; they were in panic; they took to flight.

**6** Trembling took hold of them there, anguish as of a woman in labor.

**7** By the east wind you shattered the ships of Tarshish.

**8** As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God, which God will establish forever. Selah

**9** We have thought on your steadfast love, O God, in the midst of your temple.

**10** As your name, O God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth. Your right hand is filled with righteousness.

**11** Let Mount Zion be glad! Let the daughters of Judah rejoice because of your judgments!

**12** Walk about Zion, go around her, number her towers,

**13** consider well her ramparts, go through her citadels, that you may tell the next generation

**14** that this is God, our God forever and ever. He will guide us forever.

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

### DWELLING

Become aware of God's loving presence and read again ... what in God's Word has caught your heart's attention? Is there a command to be obeyed, a comfort to be savoured? Talk to God about the Scripture you've just read ... yield yourself to God and enjoy his presence.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS (Ken Castor)

*Throughout verses 1-8, which of the glamorous comments that the poet uses surprises you the most? Which one is most awkward? Which one do you believe is most accurate? Which one do you believe is the most exaggerated? Which is honoring to God? Which might be dishonoring?*

*Would God be pleased about the situation in verse 9? What revelation does this verse give you about the practice of faith in Israel at the time of this wedding occurred? Why do you think this psalm is still included in the Book of Psalms?*

### APPLICATION CHALLENGE (InterVarsity)

*We are Christ's bride. What promises do you see for yourself in this passage?*

*What kind of a response does seeing the majesty of Christ cause in your own life?*

## Prayer

*Gracious God, your love unites heaven and earth in a new festival of gladness. Lift our spirits to learn the way of joy that leads us to your banquet hall, where all is golden with praise. We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.*

for the week of August 30th:

## Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9



*To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah; a love song.*

- 1 My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;  
I address my verses to the king;  
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.
- 2 You are the most handsome of the sons of men;  
grace is poured upon your lips;  
therefore God has blessed you forever.
- 6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.  
The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness;
- 7 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness  
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you  
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;
- 8 Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.  
From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad;
- 9 Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor;  
at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

### DWELLING

Leisurely read again ... is there a word or idea that stirred within you? Linger over it and give it your attention ... is there something about the reading you'd like to ask God about? Pray your life to God ... take a moment to rest in God's presence.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS (Ken Castor<sup>1</sup>)

Look at verse 1 and honestly consider the following questions:

How great is the Lord?

How worthy of our praise is the Lord?

Scan through each of the verses of this psalm and consider the following questions:

In what ways is Zion, the City of our Lord, an symbol of God's greatness?

What specific things about the city bring people to praise? During what activities are people reminded to praise the Lord?

### APPLICATION CHALLENGE

In terms of being reminded to praise the Lord, what difference do our surroundings make? What could you do in your home, car, church, youth room, Etc, to help remind you and your community to praise the Lord?

## Prayer

*Gracious God, you have made us fellow citizens with the saints in the city of your eternal light. In the time of storm, when the foundations shake, teach us to wait in silence on your steadfast and transforming love, made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

<sup>1</sup> <http://kencastor.com/>

for the week of July 12th:

## Psalm 24



*A Psalm of David.*

- 1 The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,  
the world and those who dwell therein,
- 2 for he has founded it upon the seas  
and established it upon the rivers.
- 3 Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?
- 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not lift up his soul to what is false  
and does not swear deceitfully.
- 5 He will receive blessing from the Lord  
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 6 Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. *Selah*
- 7 Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.
- 8 Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord, strong and mighty,  
the Lord, mighty in battle!
- 9 Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And lift them up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.
- 10 Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts,  
he is the King of glory! *Selah*

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as  
it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.*

### DWELLING

Become aware of God's loving presence and read again ...  
what in God's Word has caught your heart's attention? Is  
there a command to be obeyed, a comfort to be savoured?  
Talk to God about the Scripture you've just read ... yield you-  
self to God and enjoy his presence.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS

*What is the psalmist yearning for (vv. 2-3, 10)?*

*What names and metaphors for God can you find in this  
psalm?*

*The "Valley of Baca" (v. 6) was an arid stretch of desert that  
brought tears of adversity to pilgrims who had to traverse it  
en route to Jerusalem. What does that valley symbolize his-  
torically and spiritually?*

*What are the benefits or blessings of trusting God as this  
psalmist does (vv. 4-5, 11-12)?*

### APPLICATION CHALLENGE

*Look at verse 5. Would you consider yourself "strong in the  
Lord"? Why or why not?*

*Read verse 8 and then take a moment to ask this same re-  
quest of the Lord. As you do this, consider what it is you  
would like the Lord to hear from you today.*

*Is verse 10 true in your own experience? Is there anywhere  
else you'd rather be? Explain your reaction to these ques-  
tions.*

## Prayer

*God of pilgrims, teach us to recognize your dwelling-place in  
the love, generosity, and support of those with whom we  
share our journey, and help us to worship you in our response  
to those who need our care; for all the world is your temple  
and every human heart is a sign of your presence, made  
known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

for the week of August 23th:

## Psalm 84



*To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.*

- 1** How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
- 2** My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and 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** Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise! Selah
- 5** Blessed 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; each one appears before God in Zion.
- 8** O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah
- 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 dwell in the tents of wickedness.
- 11** For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.
- 12** O Lord of hosts, *blessed is the one who trusts in you!*

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

## DWELLING

Leisurely read again ... is there a word or idea that stirred within you? Linger over it and give it your attention ... is there something about the reading you'd like to ask God about? Pray your life to God ... take a moment to rest in God's presence.

## FURTHER QUESTIONS (Ken Castor)

Why would David talk to gates and doors?

If the "King of glory" is not already inside the gates, then where has He been and what has He been doing?

We can think of verses 7-10 as an anthemic chorus in a popular song. How does this chorus inform our understanding of each line of the first 6 verses?

If you could sum up this entire psalm in one sentence, what would that be?

## APPLICATION CHALLENGE

Do you consider yourself as your own or as the possession of God?

Do you think you can "ascend the hill of the Lord?" What is the path to dwelling in God's Holy place?

Do you think there is a link between the brokenness we experience in this world and the brokenness in your own heart? In what ways acting as your own King led your heart and experience into chaos?

How do you deal with the exalted view of God's holiness we see in this passage in light of your continuing struggles? What will truly restore order to our hearts?

## Prayer

*Creator and ruler of all, open our hearts that the King of glory may enter, and bring us rejoicing to your holy mountain, where you live and reign, now and for ever.*



for the week of July 19th:

## Psalm 89:19-37



**19** Of old you spoke in a vision to your godly one, and said: “I have granted help to one who is mighty; I have exalted one chosen from the people.

**20** I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him,

**21** so that my hand shall be established with him; my arm also shall strengthen him.

**22** The enemy shall not outwit him; the wicked shall not humble him.

**23** I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.

**24** My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

**25** I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.

**26** He shall cry to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation.’

**27** And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.

**28** My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him.

**29** I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens.

**30** If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my rules,

**31** if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments,

**32** then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes,

**33** but I will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness.

**34** I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.

**35** Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David.

**36** His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS *(Ken Castor)*

*Read all of verse 1. Does this reflect how you normally act or feel when you are with other people who follow God? Why or why not?*

*What qualities of “godly people” would make the writer of this psalm be thankful in verse 1?*

*Read verses 2-3. Do you delight in God? What does someone who delights in God do? How does your life reflect these two verses?*

*How might taking time to do this help you accomplish the attitude of verse 1 in your life?*

*Go through verses 5-9 and make a list of the wonders that God performs:*

### APPLICATION CHALLENGE

*Go back to verse 1 again. Choose to use this verse as the filter for your life in the next 24 hours. What sorts of things could you do to show thankfulness for other followers of God?*

*Go back to verses 2-3 again. Take some time to delight in the Lord by pondering what God has done (in your life and in the world around you).*

*This psalm ends with an emphatic unending challenge. This moment right now in your life is a part of “forever”... so, remembering God’s wonders, take this snapshot of forever to specifically follow this command.*

## Prayer

*Generous and bountiful God, give us grace always to thank you and share your gifts with others, that the world may be filled with the joy of our Saviour Jesus Christ.*



for the week of August 16th:

## Psalm 111



### 1 Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

2 Great are the works of the Lord,  
studied by all who delight in them.

3 Full of splendor and majesty is his work,  
and his righteousness endures forever.

4 He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;  
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

5 He provides food for those who fear him;  
he remembers his covenant forever.

6 He has shown his people the power of his works,  
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.

7 The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy;

8 they are established forever and ever,  
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

9 He sent redemption to his people;  
he has commanded his covenant forever.  
Holy and awesome is his name!

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good understanding.  
His praise endures forever!

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as  
it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.*

### DWELLING

Leisurely read again ... is there a word or idea that stirred within you? Linger over it and give it your attention ... is there something about the reading you'd like to ask God about? Pray your life to God ... take a moment to rest in God's presence.

37 Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies." Selah

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as  
it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.*

### DWELLING

Read again, perhaps out loud ... how has God's Word moved you? Ponder and meditate what has connected with your heart or mind ... pray to God what it is that has moved you today .... turn your thoughts to God and quietly enjoy being with him.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS (Ken Castor)

How does verse 27 relate to Psalm 2:7?

In verses 27-29, what does God say he will do for David?

In verses 30-32, what does God say he will do for David's sons if they fail to walk in God's ways?

With this in mind, how do verses 33-36 work? How does God's discipline support his covenant with David?

### APPLICATION CHALLENGE

Do you identify more with David in verses 27-29 or David's sons in verses 30-32? Take some time to pray about your response.

## Prayer

*Remember us, gracious God, when we cannot see your way and purpose, and renew in us the joy of your kingdom of light and life. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.*

for the week of July 26th:

## Psalm 14



*To the choirmaster. Of David.*

- 1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."  
They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds,  
there is none who does good.
- 2 The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man,  
to see if there are any who understand,  
who seek after God.
- 3 They have all turned aside; together they have become  
corrupt;  
there is none who does good,  
not even one.
- 4 Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers  
who eat up my people as they eat bread  
and do not call upon the Lord?
- 5 There they are in great terror,  
for God is with the generation of the righteous.
- 6 You would shame the plans of the poor,  
but the Lord is his refuge.
- 7 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!  
When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people,  
let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as  
it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.*

### DWELLING

Remind yourself that you are in God's presence and read again ... notice how God might be speaking to you through his Word - dwell on a word or phrase that jumps out at you ... let your heart respond to God in prayer ... take refreshment in God's presence.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS *(InterVarsity Press)*

The psalm begins with a cry to the Lord from "out of the depths" (v. 1). What pictures come to mind as you read this phrase?

The psalmist's distress seems to be related to a struggle with guilt. How can guilt lead to hopelessness?

Verses 3 and 4 tell us that God forgives. How does the promise of forgiveness contribute to hope?

Verse 5 says, "I wait, . . . my soul waits." What is the relationship between waiting and hope?

The psalmist then uses the metaphor of watchmen (v. 6) to describe the experience of hope. What does he convey with this image?

What reasons does the psalmist give for hoping in the Lord (vv. 7-8)?

### APPLICATION CHALLENGE

How would you describe the experience of hope? How would you describe the experience of hopelessness?

## Prayer

*Rescue us, O God for whom we wait, from the depths of depression and despair. May we trust in your mercy, know the fullness of your redemption, and share in the glory of your kingdom; through our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

for the week of August 9th:

## Psalm 130



*A Song of Ascents.*

**1** Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!

**2** O Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

**3** If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,  
O Lord, who could stand?

**4** But with you there is forgiveness,  
that you may be feared.

**5** I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;

**6** my soul waits for the Lord  
more than watchmen for the morning,  
more than watchmen for the morning.

**7** O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,  
and with him is plentiful redemption.

**8** And he will redeem Israel  
from all his iniquities.

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as  
it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.*

### DWELLING

Read again slowly ... find a word or phrase that catches your eye or moves your heart ... slowly repeat it ... pray your thoughts, desires, needs and feelings from your meditation ... enjoy the presence of God.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS (Ken Castor)

Psalm 53 is nearly identical to this one. Take a moment to try to spot the slight differences.

For what reason do you think this psalm would have been included nearly word for word twice in the Book of Psalms? Might each psalm serve a different purpose in any way?

Explain the sobering and the encouraging truths of verses 4-6.

“Jacob” and “Israel” are often interchangeable names (for all of Israel comes through Jacob). Considering the heavy and depressive outlook of much of this psalm, how would it be possible for an Israelite to ever rejoice and be glad, as indicated in verse 7?

### APPLICATION CHALLENGE

In terms of being reminded to praise the Lord, what difference do our surroundings make? What could you do in your home, car, church, youth room, Etc, to help remind you and your community to praise the Lord?

## Prayer

*God of wisdom and love, without you neither truth nor holiness can survive. Show your mighty presence among us, and make us glad in proclaiming your deliverance in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

for the week of August 2nd:

## Psalm 51:1-12



*To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.*

**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.

**4** Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

**5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

**6** Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

**7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

**8** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

**9** Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

**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.

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

### DWELLING

Remind yourself that you are in God's presence and read again ... notice how God might be speaking to you through his Word - dwell on a word or phrase that jumps out at you ... let your heart respond to God in prayer ... take refreshment in God's presence.

### FURTHER QUESTIONS (Ken Castor)

Why are the words of verses 1-2 important first words for David?

Is David delusional to think that he could be made clean again? Why would David ask such a thing?

Look at verse 3. What does it feel like to be "haunted" by your sin?

Describe how verses 4-5 reveal David's remorse over his sin?

Why are the words of verse 6 important for David to speak to God?

What does verse 10 teach us about God?

How are the two lines of verse 12 related to one another?

### APPLICATION CHALLENGE

First, find an aspect of these verses that you could apply to your own life. With which part do you most identify? Then, using these verses as a guide, spend some time praying about this.

## 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;*