

Using the Psalter More This New Year

“[The risen Jesus] said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written... in the Psalms concerning Me.’”
(Luke 24:44, Modern English Version)

If you like salt as I do, you may perk up with interest (though your physician may cringe with disgust) if I recommend that you use the salter more this year – interpreting the word “salter” as another term for a salt shaker. But as we start a new church year on the First Sunday in Advent (which is November 27th this year), I’m not asking you to increase your salt intake throughout this coming church year. But I am encouraging you to consider reading and praying the Psalter every day if this isn’t your current practice.

The Psalter (pronounced like “salter” because the “p” is silent) is the collection of the 150 Old Testament Psalms. And the Psalter has been the prayer book and the song book for Christians throughout past millennia – and it remains so today. In fact, as Jesus Himself teaches us, the Psalms reveal Him. Therefore, in public worship as well as in private devotion, the church has always recognized that the Psalter should have a place of prominence in Christian prayer and piety.

So, as your pastor, I boldly proclaim that the focus this church year at St. John’s and St. Paul’s will be upon making greater use of the Psalter. And this emphasis will begin on the first day of each week. For our *Lutheran Service Book* three-year lectionary series appoints a “Psalm of the Day” for each Sunday throughout the church year. This year I plan on preaching more heavily upon the appointed Psalm of the Day – while of course also incorporating the three appointed Scripture readings each Sunday into the sermons as well. I don’t, though, plan on preaching on the Psalm of the Day every week this church year. For as you likely are aware, some Psalms serve as the Psalm of the Day more than once throughout a given church year. Added to that, on certain Sundays (especially church high festivals) I may find it more preferable to preach on one of the other appointed Scripture texts for the day. And when I need to be gone on a Sunday, of course I won’t demand that a supply preacher must preach on one of the Psalms. Nevertheless, expect more sermons based on the Psalms throughout this church year (I won’t give a number per month, because more often than not, such goals backfire when I make them).

For your information, you may hear me reference certain authors and works during my sermons on the Psalms. Among them could be the late Lutheran theologian the Rev. Dr. Paul Kretzmann who provides wonderful insight upon the Psalms in his *Popular Commentary of the Bible* (by the way, Kretzmann’s four volume commentary series on the whole Bible is available for any members to borrow from the St. Paul’s church library located upstairs on the bookshelf by the elevator). I also likely will be looking at more recent commentary on the Psalms provided in works like the *Concordia Commentary* series, *The Lutheran Study Bible*, and the *Concordia Self-Study Bible* – all published by Concordia Publishing House. From time to time I probably will also quote from the Rev. Patrick Henry Reardon, the recently retired pastor of All Saints Antiochian Orthodox Church in Chicago. I’ve found his book *Christ in the Psalms* to be very helpful over the years. And as you’ve probably already guessed, I also will be depending upon Martin Luther and the *Book of Concord* as well.

At the top of each week I will also include in the Sunday bulletin a daily lectionary of readings from the Psalter for you to use throughout the week. I will also be posting this lectionary in each monthly newsletter (starting this month) so that you'll have access to it should you not be able to attend worship on a given Sunday. The goal of this daily lectionary is to enable the user to read through the entire Psalter twice in one year. I know that meditating upon Scripture's prayer book will be a great blessing for you throughout the coming church year – a church year that begins in much the same way that the former one ended, namely, looking to God's Savior.

So, *“lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory”* (Psalm 24:9-10, KJV). For God kept His promise to send His Son to save the world. For *“the LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness toward the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the deliverance of our God”* (Psalm 98:2-3, Modern English Version). For the Lord says: *“I have installed My king on Zion, My holy hill”* (Psalm 2:6, Modern English Version).

So rejoice throughout the seasons of Advent and Christmas. For God's promised Redeemer has come – entering this life in the womb of a virgin and being born for us that first Christmas. Shy and I wish each of you a hope-filled Advent and a most joyous Christmas.

In Christ our Bethlehem born Lord and Savior,
Pastor

PSALM READINGS

Week of November 27-December 3

SUNDAY - Psalm 120
MONDAY - Psalm 121
TUESDAY - Psalm 122
WEDNESDAY - Psalm 123
THURSDAY - Psalm 124
FRIDAY - Psalm 125
SATURDAY - Psalm 126

Week of December 4-10

SUNDAY - Psalm 127
MONDAY - Psalm 128
TUESDAY - Psalms 129-130
WEDNESDAY - Psalms 131-132
THURSDAY - Psalms 133-134
FRIDAY - Psalm 135
SATURDAY - Psalm 136

Week of December 11-17

SUNDAY - Psalm 137
MONDAY - Psalm 138
TUESDAY - Psalm 139
WEDNESDAY - Psalms 140-141
THURSDAY - Psalm 142
FRIDAY - Psalm 143
SATURDAY - Psalm 144

Week of December 18-24

SUNDAY - Psalm 145
MONDAY - Psalm 146
TUESDAY - Psalm 147
WEDNESDAY - Psalm 148
THURSDAY - Psalm 149
FRIDAY - Psalm 150
SATURDAY - Psalm 1

Week of December 25-31

<u>SUNDAY</u> -	Psalm 2
<u>MONDAY</u> -	Psalm 3
<u>TUESDAY</u> -	Psalm 4
<u>WEDNESDAY</u> -	Psalm 5
<u>THURSDAY</u> -	Psalm 6
<u>FRIDAY</u> -	Psalm 7
<u>SATURDAY</u> -	Psalm 8