

❁ PSALMS VISUALIZED ❁

KREG YINGST'S BLOCK PRINTS



A SOLO EXHIBITION

September 22, 2022 - October 20, 2022
Saint Michael's Episcopal Church
Arlington, VA

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CURATORIAL STATEMENT



For me, the Psalms as difficult as they were to read and interpret became a devotional, my artwork a prayer.

~ Kreg Yingst, *Psalms in 150 Block Prints*

The 150 Psalms in the Bible provide rich material for visual artists. Their sometimes complex but always meaningful imagery, comprising a host of symbols, settings, characters, actions, objects, and emotions, yields to visual expression that, in the words of painter Bernard C. Winter, “springs from the desire to make the inner life visible” rather than to illustrate specific text.

Similarly, printmaker Kreg Yingst, whose illuminating color woodcuts are the subject of St. Michael’s Fall 2022 exhibition, turns for artistic inspiration to the poetry inherent in the psalms’ similes and metaphors. Through deep and intimate engagement with language, he produces an entire psalter with which he develops a personal spiritual practice of daily reading, meditating, praying, and contemplating; eventually, this practice leads him to “find aspects of these songs that [speak] to me in the here and now.”

Uniquely, concentrating on only a sentence or two, rather than on the text of an entire Psalm, Yingst interprets and translates word and image, leaving it to the imagination of viewers of his small-format visual meditations—each a mere 6”x4”—to find meaning and enlightenment in his compositions. His more narrow approach, he explains to us in his Artist Statement, is known as *Melete* (in classical mythology, the “Muse of Meditation”), and dates to well before St. Benedict’s time (c. 480-547 CE). Yingst’s intentional adoption of a verse or short phrase allows him time throughout a day to continually meditate on what is fundamental about the particular text of a Psalm, while his visual rendition serves as an *aide-memoire*.

* * *

This exhibition can be seen in person and online. The in-person exhibit is limited to 10 framed artworks hanging in the Parish Hall, where

visitors also will find an Exhibition Notebook containing exhibition-related information.

The online presentation includes images of each of the framed artworks as well as images of 10 additional works from Yingst's series of 150 Psalms in wood blocks. Within this selection are the well-known and "popular" Psalm 23, Psalm 46, Psalm 62, and Psalm 117.

Traditionally, the Psalms are organized into categories (for example, Praise and Exaltation, Remembrance, Confidence, Thanksgiving, Ascent and Kingship, Lament, Wisdom) or themes (such as the emotions of Sadness, Anger, or Joy). Some of the Psalms offer perspectives on Creation and the pastoral; others, on doing justice; still others, on death. All help shape a vision for both individual and community, and for how God is present among us.

For purposes of this exhibition, both in-person and virtually, the artworks are organized simply—by number of Psalm.

Some other components of the online exhibition are Yingst's short devotions and commentaries that are included in a downloadable and printable pdf that also includes the artwork and full text of each Psalm in the show; a Psalms playlist or soundtrack that incorporates various musical styles (chant, classical, pop, gospel, choral, and world music), and a list of selected resources for those who wish to learn more about the Psalms.

In going from work to work, viewers are urged to take note of Yingst's distinctive artistic style, the snippets of text used for emphasis or instruction, and the visual metaphors and symbols that stand in combination with text or alone as illustration. Viewers also are encouraged to consider Yingst's use of color, and how it informs what each Psalm expresses, describes, or suggests.

Maureen Doallas
Curator
Arts & Faith Ministry

ARTIST STATEMENT



IN THE BEGINNING

Over the years I've become familiar with many beautifully hand-painted Psalters from the Middle Ages, as well as woodcuts used to illustrate books of the Psalms. However, in all of my research I have failed to turn up one entire Book of Psalms illuminated entirely by woodcuts. This is somewhat surprising since printmaking, especially in the 15th and 16th century, was often used for thematic cycles, most notably *The Passion of Christ* and *The Dance of Death* (*Ars Moriendi*; *Art of Dying*).

This intrigue was the impetus for me undertaking such a project and so I began my series of the *Psalms in 150 Block Prints* in January of 2008 with the intention of finishing it by year's end. It was a side project to my other duties—that of making a commercially viable art so as to feed my family and pay the bills. The Psalms proved much more difficult than expected, predominantly because they weren't narrative in nature like the parables, a series I had completed a few years earlier. However, the Psalms did offer poetic similes, metaphors and visual language that allowed my imagination to wander. Needless to say, the year came and went, then another, and then another. My discipline on the project waned, but not my desire.

For me, the Psalms as difficult as they were to read and interpret became a devotional, my artwork a prayer. And so I trudged ahead, the project becoming more than the finished end, the journey more important than the destination.

THE MONK WITHIN

During the early Monastic movement, a time when few could read, monks would gather together around the abbot during the reading of scriptures. There was an emphasis placed on memorization, as well as spiritual transformation. Not just engaging the Word for knowledge, but for a life change. As a result, the monks would listen carefully and allow a passage of scripture to speak to them. Saint Benedict incorporated this practice into his Rule for Monks, a prayer method which would come to be known as *Lectio Divina* (Divine Reading). The process required four stages: reading, meditating, praying and contemplating. My approach to the Psalms was very similar to *Lectio Divina*.

HONEY FROM THE COMB

I felt I was unable to do the entire Psalm justice pictorially, especially since I was using such a small format (the actual images are 6"x4"), so I

took a smaller bite. This would sometimes be just a sentence or two to use as inspiration for an image. This little sound bite, so to speak, also had a name and was used by Christians well before St. Benedict's time. It was known as Meletē.

In his book, *Desert Banquet*, author David Keller writes: “[Meletē] is the practice of repeating a verse or short phrase throughout the day, usually aloud. The desert elders used meletē for “continual awareness of God” in the midst of distractions caused by “every kind of thought” and “all bodily cares and concerns.” This simple practice, done silently or aloud at different times, can help us remain centered on God's presence in the midst of distractions and responsibilities that consume our attention. The “formula” reminds us to always seek God's help and reminds us that we are never without God's presence. This simple practice destroys the myth that there is not enough time in the day for meditation. It enables us to pause several times each day to become mindful of what is most fundamental in life.”

Spiritual director Margaret Self writes about this type of prayerful reading as taking a “piece of chocolate” with you through the day to chew, taste, and savor. It was with this idea that I would often begin my day. Although I knew as I “chewed” on a line from the Psalms it would be much more nourishing than an empty calorie of chocolate.

My intention was not just to illustrate the psalms in historic imagery, but rather, to find aspects of these songs that spoke to me in the here and now. My love of reading took me through many commentaries, as well as books on Christian signs and symbols. As a result, you will see symbols that have been used in Christian art for centuries, alongside my own visual language. For example, the “eye of God,” which is a part of early Medieval and Renaissance Christian art, is depicted throughout this book, and in fact becomes a staple suggesting the omnipresence and sovereignty of God. The ever-present gaze of God is stated through the psalmist's observation, “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry.”

A VISUAL LANGUAGE

The psalmist is very descriptive of God, giving him eyes and eye-lids, ears, nostrils, mouth, feet, hands, arms and wings, among other things. He holds a rod and staff, and shoots His weapon of war, the bow and arrow. The psalmist goes on to describe Him like a mountain, a rock, a shield, a hiding place, a father, a shepherd, a warrior and even a drunkard rising from a slumber!

I take advantage of this language, using visual metaphors too often mirror the writer's poetry. For example, Psalm 17 depicts a one-eyed bird with the words, “Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.” To think that God is a one-eyed bird is rather silly and naïve, and so the viewer must deduce that this visual metaphor stands for certain *attributes* of God—in this case, that of a caretaker and protector.

Another example—the monk, who prays the Psalms seven

times a day through what is called the daily office or canonical hours, is depicted as a spiritual seeker of truth and a practicing disciple.

THE MESSIAH

It was Patrick Henry Reardon's book *Christ in the Psalms* that awakened me to how prophetic the psalms really are; Jesus didn't merely pray the Psalter, he lived it! Christ's statement in the gospel of Luke, "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the... Psalms" forced me to rethink and reexamine every aspect of this text. We are given insight into events that would eventually occur, and even deeper visual elements that don't appear in the Gospels themselves.

PHYSICAL TO SPIRITUAL

The psalms were written during a different culture and time. There is a ferocious intensity when it comes to hating one's enemies. And although these are very real and raw emotions that continue with us today, the direction has shifted. Jesus rebukes his disciples who wish to call down fire from heaven on their enemies. He challenges them to an even greater amount of love when he gives them a new commandment; to love one's neighbor as he has loved them! This would call them to serve, love and even die for their enemies.

In St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians he writes, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." If this is true, then the warrior psalmist's cry, "Happy is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks (Ps 137:9)" forces me to confront those sinful attitudes, hurtful words, and other aspects in my life that begin to creep in that are contrary to the love of Christ.

Even though this military terminology is now spiritual, I depict it visually as if it were still physical.

VISIO DIVINA

Both music and pictures help me to recall and memorize. The longer I have lived with these images, the easier it has become to identify certain psalms. Basically, the *Psalms in Block Prints* is my own contemporary Psalter or prayer book. I hope you enjoy these and find meaning and enlightenment observing and meditating on them. Blessings to you as you continue on your own journey onward and upward.

For the accompanying Psalms Spotify Soundtrack, type in *Psalms Visualized* in the Spotify search box.

PSALM 19



*The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world...*

In the silence of the woods, you will not be alone.

~Chief Seattle

To see a world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wild flower.

~William Blake

Psalm 19 is a beautiful unfolding of the Spirit's handiwork creating the material world: it's God's speech, God's voice, a *visual voice*. St. Paul will reiterate this sentiment in his letter to the Roman Church—

“since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen...”

King Solomon writes before him, “Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built!” It's here, in nature, God's first cathedral, that many find a closeness with God. The naturalist John Muir writes—

*Come to the woods, for here is rest.
There is no repose like that of the
green deep woods.
Here grow the wallflower and the violet.
The squirrel will come and sit upon your knee,
the logcock will wake you in the morning.
Sleep in forgetfulness of all ill.
Of all the upness accessible to mortals,
there is no upness comparable to the mountains.*



PSALM 23

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

~Luke 14:12-24

Psalm 23 has become a favorite psalm of many for receiving God's comfort and protection. Sandwiched in between these lines, "The Lord is my shepherd" and "I will dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life," is this curious statement about God preparing a meal—a sign of fellowship—among his enemies.

Jesus encourages his followers not to just share with friends and family, but also with strangers, outcasts, and even our enemies—if we are to do unto others as we would have them do to us. This simple statement shows us where blessings and provisions come from; it's a *vertical* receiving. Now that the table has been properly prepared, a bountiful sharing from that table creates friends out of enemies. We exercise a *horizontal* giving. This painted block print reveals the table setting of bread and wine, the Eucharistic Body of Christ, which is a peace offering from God to humanity—freely received, now we freely give.

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

*He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside the still waters.*

*He restores my soul;
he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life;

and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



PSALM 27

*The LORD is my light and the one who saves me.
So why should I fear anyone?
The LORD protects my life.
So why should I be afraid?
Evil people may try to destroy my body.
My enemies and those who hate me attack me,
but they are overwhelmed and defeated.
If an army surrounds me,
I will not be afraid.
If war breaks out,
I will trust the LORD.
I ask only one thing from the Lord.
This is what I want:
let me live in the LORD's house all my life.
Let me see the LORD's beauty...*

*I no longer fear God, but I love Him. For perfect love casts out fear.
~Abba Anthony*

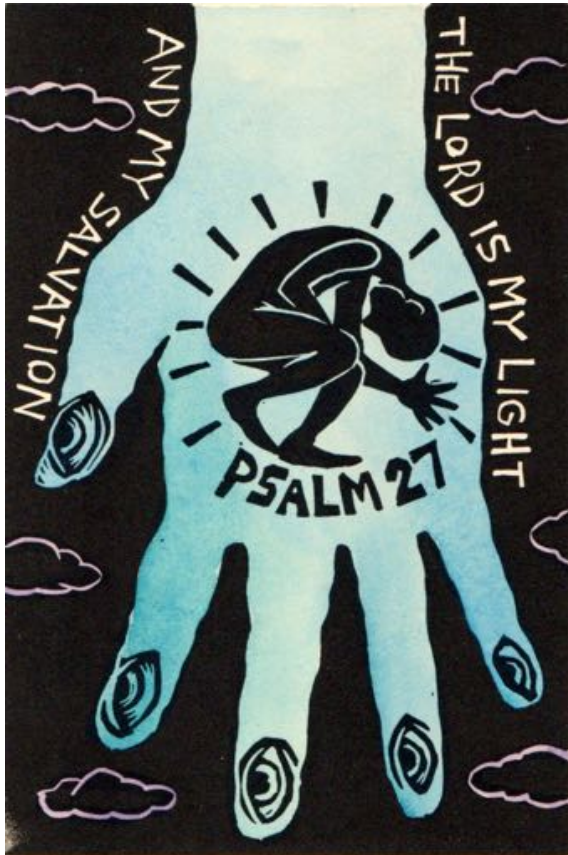
Jesus admonishes his followers not to fear anyone, except God. The term “Fear God” has been analyzed ad nauseam, but basically, to be wrapped up in a God of Love is a safe place. In that safe place all fear ceases. People can kill the body, but they can’t kill your soul. And it’s here where the psalmist wishes to dwell all his life—in that house of beauty! On the spiritual front, our enemies might be insecurity, hatred, unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, etc. Again, this war is to be won through a trusting in the One who created and accepts us—God’s ultimate love for our well being.

*God be in my going out,
God be in my coming in,
God be with me in my doubt,
God protecting me from sin.*

*Christ be with my ebbing,
Christ be with my flowing,
Christ be with me entering,
Christ in love bestowing.*

*Spirit with me every hour,
Spirit at the journey’s end,
Spirit be my every power,
Spirit dove on me descend.*

~David Adam



PSALM 28



*To you, O LORD, I call;
my rock, be not deaf to me,
lest, if you be silent to me,
I become like those who go down to the pit.
Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy...*

God's first language is silence.

~John of the Cross

When we're in pain or desperation, time is of the essence. Relief is needed. Answers are demanded. But when those needs are met with God's silence, our world can come undone.

The mystery of the unknown is what's disconcerting. On one hand, we know God is love. We see the proof in the pudding as it were by the life and teachings of Jesus. On the other hand, our experiences and those of others might belie this truth.

We plead with the psalmist, "Be not deaf to me." And then we learn to wait, and wait, and wait. Sometimes our situation is remedied—our soul is touched, an answer comes, a connection is made—at other times, we learn to live with the mystery of not having the answer, solution, healing, etc., and we might never have it. These dark nights of the soul can certainly shift one's faith in many ways. But through this cloud of unknowing, we rely on our given measure of faith in knowing that the silent One is walking beside us.

*Silent, surrendered, leaving all
open to you for yourself alone,
into the seething mass within,
pour your calm and still our being.*

~R. Simpson



PSALM 45



Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made you glad.

*Now I've heard there was a secret chord
that David played, and it pleased the Lord...*

~Leonard Cohen, *Hallelujah*

The psalms are ultimately the prayerbook of the Jewish people, and subsequently, a worship book passed down to the followers of Christ—what Warren W. Wiersbe calls, “The irreplaceable devotional guide and hymnal of the people of God.” Music was a way of ruminating on and internalizing its content. While we aren’t privy to the melody and orchestration of the music, we do know the lyrics. These songs were used in celebrations and feasts, and sung as laments during trials and tribulations. In fact, the psalms pretty much cover all of the human emotions. If incorporated into one’s own prayer life, these words can help us to express our own joys and sorrows as we commune with God.

Howard R. Macy in his book, *Rhythms of the Inner Life*, gives us a larger picture still of the psalms when he writes, “As we enter into these songs, they teach us and give us words to pray. They teach us about the world we live in with all its glory and brokenness. They teach us about the human condition, sometimes by mirroring our own condition, sometimes by sharing the prayers of others as we sing with them or even on their behalf.”



PSALM 46



Be still and know that I am God...

It is with the smallest brushes that the artist paints the most exquisitely beautiful pictures.

~André Bessette

One sunny day I was spending an afternoon in the park watching my children play. At one point I glanced down at a bush that I was standing next to and observed a bright red ladybug in the center of a leaf. I didn't give it much thought and continued to watch the frolicking in front of me. When there was a lull in the activity, my gaze came back to the bush. As I continued to observe it more closely I was amazed to find a ladybug on each leaf of what seemed to be the entire bush—only one bug in the exact center. It was as if God took the tip of his paint brush and placed each one there.

Red is the complementary color of green. They stand in strongest contrast to each other. It's a color combination that says notice me! So here was a small dot, and on the backs of the ladybugs smaller dots still—detail, upon detail, upon detail.

The ladybugs remained still enough for me to observe the handiwork of God that day, and I in turn remained still enough to observe it; and certainly marvel at the Maker's hand!

*Still is the earth;
make still my body.
Still is the night;
make still my mind.
Still are the spheres;
make still my soul.*

~Ray Simpson



PSALM 55



O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.

It is such a folly to pass one's time fretting, instead of resting quietly on the heart of Jesus.

~Therese of Lisieux

Life can weigh heavy at times. The responsibilities we carry and the dynamics of finances, relationships, and just day-to-day living can add to our stress and anxieties. In times like these we can relate with the psalmist and long for escape. Jesus opens his arms wide and offers this place of oasis when he states, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

It's important to set aside time for one's spiritual nourishment—not only by taking a moment daily, but weekly, monthly, and yearly. Sabbath is built into us. It's part of our DNA. It's important to connect with God on a deeper level to receive refreshment, and to be reenergized. Take out your calendar and set aside that time to just sit with God. Consider taking a retreat, maybe at a park or botanic gardens. No agenda is necessary, just a time of quiet and rest as you walk hand in hand.

*The Creator who brought order out of chaos,
give you peace.
The Savior who stilled the raging storm,
give you peace.
The Spirit who broods on the deeps,
give peace to you.*

~David Adam



o that I had wings like
a dove,
I would fly away and
be
nested
and
be
seen

PSALM 62



*My soul waits in silence for God only;
from him is my salvation.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.*

What we need most in order to make progress is to be silent before this great God with our appetite and with our tongue, for the language he best hears is silent love.

~John of the Cross

Silence, stillness, and waiting are concepts found throughout the psalms. To hear the Spirit's still, small voice, one has to unplug. And once that voice comes for the psalmist, it's a reassurance of God's reliability. Paschal Botz suggests that this psalm "has the power to give our entire lives a serene happiness," and instructs us to detach from the ways of the world. Abandoning ourselves to God—our rock, salvation, and stronghold—becomes our place of quiet, an ever permanent reprieve.

*In the silence, we become aware of you, O God.
In the silence, we adore you.
In the silence, our sins stand out and are washed away.
In the silence, our problems fall into their rightful place.
In the silence, we become grateful people.
In the silence, O Lord, we become one with you
and we catch the whispers of your heart.*

~Ray Simpson, Complete Celtic Prayers



PSALM 67



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

This psalm offers us an abbreviated version of the Aaronic blessing found in Numbers 6:23-27.

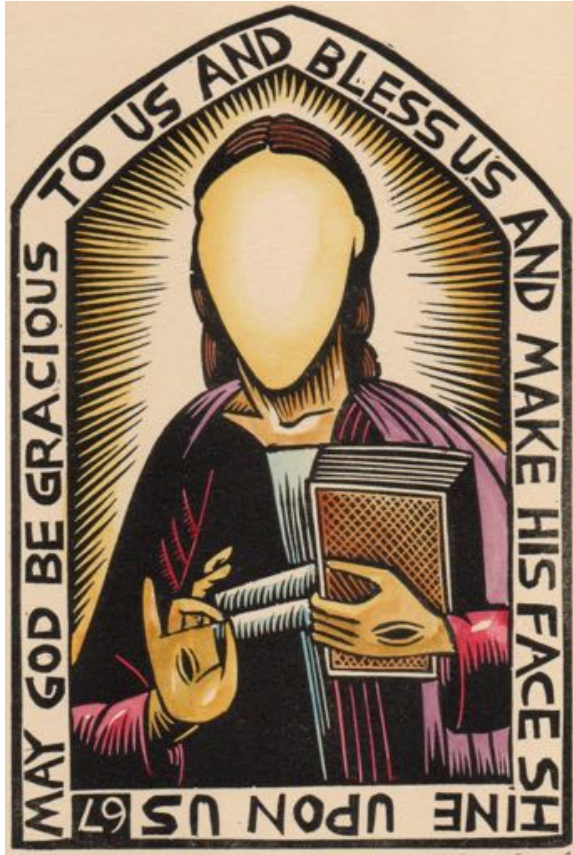
*The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.*

It's a blessing still used today in many Catholic and Protestant churches. It's a wonderful blessing, initiated by God, emphasizing that it's the Lord who blesses the people and does for them what they can't do for themselves. The only subtle shift between the two passages is Aaron's third verse, "The Lord...give you peace," which is to some degree answered at the end of Psalm 67 which states, "our God, has blessed us. May God continue to bless us."

*God, bless to me this day,
God, bless to me this night;
Bless, O bless, Thou God of Grace,
each day and hour of my life;
Bless, O bless, Though God of Grace,
each day and hour of my life.*

*God, bless the pathway on which I go,
God, bless the earth that is beneath my sole;
Bless, O God, and give to me Thy love,
O God of gods,
bless my rest and my response;
Bless, O God, and give to me Thy love,
And bless, O God of gods, my repose.*

~Carmina Gaelic



PSALM 81



*Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob!
Raise a song; sound the tambourine,
the sweet lyre with the harp.
Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our feast day.*

*The gift of language combined with the gift of song was given to man
that he should proclaim the Word of God through music.*

~Martin Luther

The trumpet blast in this psalm, in reality a shofar, sounds the call for the Jewish people to worship. Most scholars believe this psalm was sung with the autumnal year, or Tabernacles festival on the new full moon.

Psalm 81 outlines a typical service today—worship, God’s voice (reading), then interpretation of that reading. It also ends abruptly, giving the people something to meditate on. And as a messianic psalm, it gives us an ending to ponder as well;

I would feed you with the finest of wheat (bread of life, Eucharist)

And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you (and that rock was Christ).

*Come, Lord, in the dawning,
Come in the newness of the morning,
Come, make yourself known at the break of dawn
and in the breaking of the bread.*

~David Adam



PSALM 117



*All you nations, praise the LORD.
All you people, praise him
because the LORD loves us very much,
and his truth is everlasting.*

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.

~St Augustine

This short psalm is only two verses long, but important enough for St. Paul to quote in his letter to the Romans. It follows the traditional outline for the Hebrew hymn—a call to worship, then a reason.

Notice the first three words—all you nations. God is creator of all, not just Israel, or the United States, or Italy, but all nations and peoples. His is the very Kingdom of God. It has no walls or borders. The Lord loves us very much the psalmist says—loves us all.

The Gospel of John passage that we're all familiar with, "For God so loved *the world...*," can be so overused that it becomes trite. And yet it's the heartbeat of God. We should never tire of hearing it.

There's an interesting statement buried in the final chapter of the book of Amos in the Old Testament. It reads, "Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites?" declares the Lord. "Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?" Imagine that. The God of Israel had all along been also concerned with Israel's sworn enemy the Philistines, as well as the Arameans who they battled with. God helped them along as a people group in his tender loving care—whether they knew it or not!

*All you nations, praise the LORD.
All you people, praise him
because the LORD loves us very much...*



PSALM 118



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

*The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes...*

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

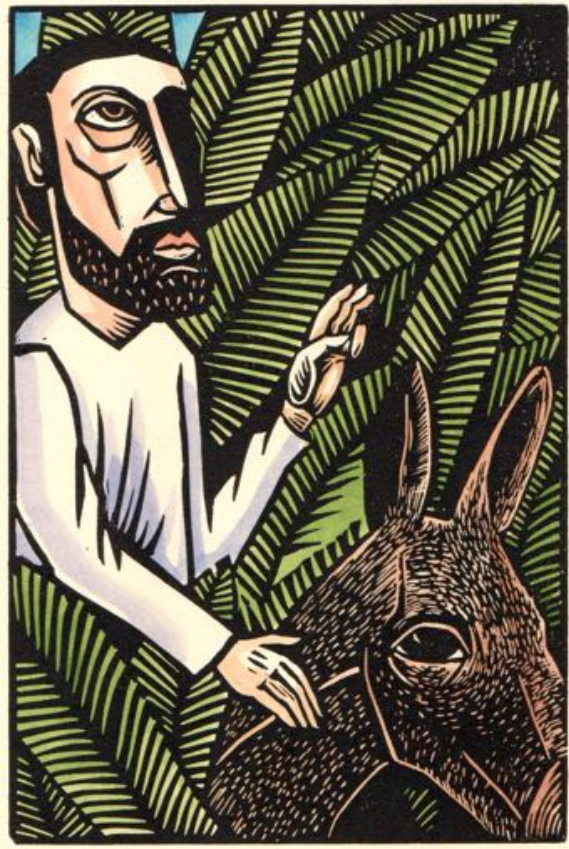
[Psalm 118] is a thanksgiving, a kind of 'Eucharist,' for it begins and ends in thankfulness for the love of God that is forever faithful.

~John Eaton

This messianic psalm is quoted by Jesus himself in Matthew 21:42. He has just told the parable of the vineyard where the owner's servants come back to collect his fruit only to be killed off. Eventually he sends his son believing they'll listen to him and he's met with the same fate. Jesus then points to himself as the "cornerstone" of this "building" that's been rejected. The son who indeed will eventually be killed.

This psalm also has a clear reference to what we now refer to as Palm Sunday. Just prior to Jesus telling this parable, he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to the shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" But within just a short time this sentiment would shift.

Psalm 118 certainly packs quite a punch! And there, in black and white, is Jesus's exclamation point—"I will not die but live." A permanent death could not keep him in the tomb as he passed from life to life, and Jesus proclaims to us "what the Lord has done" for him.



PSALM 121



*I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.*

Lay all your cares about the future trustingly in God's hands, and let yourself be guided by the Lord just like a little child.

~Edith Stein

Do not fear what may happen tomorrow. The same loving Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering, or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.

~Francis de Sales

Taking our eyes off of our problem, or even our solution to the problem, can be difficult at times. In this text the psalmist is referring to the temple in Jerusalem on the hill where God was known to dwell. But we can understand it also as a metaphor for a vision of vertical ascent—moving from our inability to handle an issue towards confidence in the One who holds the universe.

And when the question of why would the God who created heaven and earth even give a second thought to my problems, we can cling to the words of Jesus: “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”



PSALM 122



I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD”...Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

[Be] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

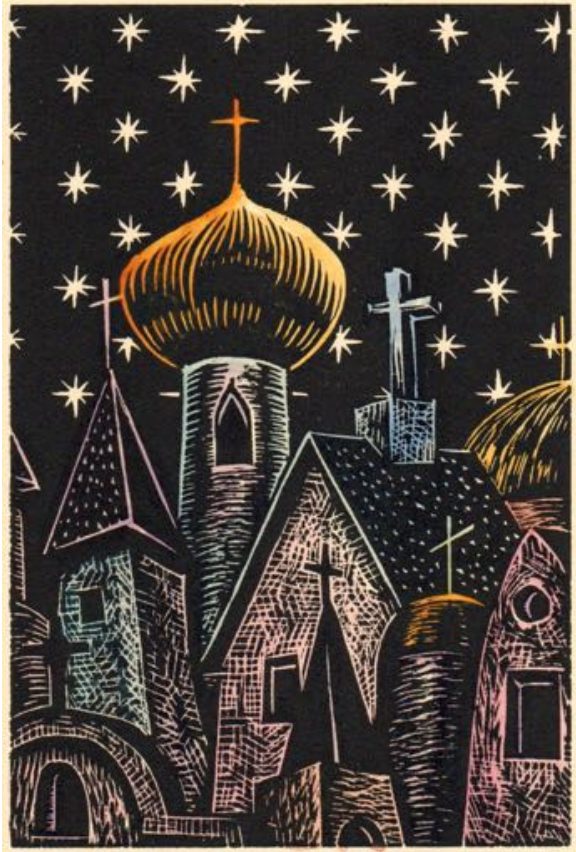
~St. Paul

The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

~Jesus Christ

There’s a spiritual shift from the pre-Christ Israel to the post-Christ Kingdom life on earth—new wineskins are now required for new wine. The physical temple, once the “house of the Lord,” is now the Holy Spirit living through all believers. While the city of Jerusalem now becomes the church! This shift, stated throughout the New Testament by Saint Paul and the other writers, is a good reminder to read the psalms in a spiritual manner, and not as they once were.

Pray then for the church’s peace—the new Jerusalem. May she indeed be the answer to Jesus’ prayer for unity he asks so passionately for in John:17.



PSALM 126



*Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.*

Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

~Teresa of Avila

Psalm 126 has always been associated with salvation in Christian circles. And for good reason. Shavuot, also called Pentecost, was the second of the three Pilgrim Festivals of the Jewish religious calendar. It was originally an agricultural festival marking the beginning of the wheat harvest. And it was the day the Holy Spirit arrived, filling 5,000+ with the spirit and starting the trajectory of “The Way,” eventually known as Christianity. But it’s also an important spiritual lesson.

To accomplish God’s desires on earth, a union is required. It’s not all God, and it’s certainly not dependent on us. Our part is tilling the soil and planting in our given realms of influence; we’re capable of doing this if God has given us knowledge and physical traits to do so. God’s part is providing the richness of soil, the sun, and the rain. This is a spiritual principle in all aspects of life that becomes a dance. We do our part, God does his.



PSALM 128



*You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.
Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots around your table.*

Every creature is a glittering, glistening mirror of divinity.

~Hildegard von Bingen

The psalmist offers us a beautiful visual metaphor of green and growth. This psalm is a blessing of abundance. It's the desire most of us all long for—a meaningful job that provides; healthy and happy relationships within family.

Psalm 128 comes with a prerequisite however; that we revere and respect the Lord (fear the Lord)—that we relinquish our lives to God's authority. Of course we're repulsed by this type of language in the 21st century—an age of individualism and personal rights. "I'm my own authority; the captain of my own ship," we might cry shaking our fists at the heavens.

And yet, with all of the broken lives, family rifts, and empty vocations that are so prevalent these day, perhaps we've missed the point. God's not so much wanting to usurp our freedom, but rather desires to walk alongside and guide us with our gifting and talents. God's certainly interested in the dynamics of relationship; caring for the people who are near and dear to us.

It's our view of God, our understanding of who God is, or what love is, that can put this psalm into a different light. When we come to understand the loving kindness of God, then it becomes a little easier to relinquish our stubbornness and receive our blessing.



PSALM 131



I have calmed and quieted my soul.

A brother came to Scetis to visit Abba Moses and asked him for a word. The old man said to him, 'Go sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you all things.'

~Abba Moses

The root of all prayer is silence. Contemplative prayer is an experience of God's presence as the ground in which our being is rooted, the Source from whom our life emerges at every moment. Through grace we open our awareness to God whom we know by faith is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing, closer than consciousness itself.

~Father Thomas Keating

In recent years the ancient practice of “centering prayer” has come back into vogue. While it certainly never went away, it's been the focus of many books. In a world of increasing stress and anxiety, centering prayer is certainly an important aspect of one's spiritual life. The psalmist has also brought his soul to this place of inward rest and communion with God. His spirit is now in a position to receive renewal and God's healing touch.

The prophet Isaiah writes, “In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.” It's in silence and stillness where our thoughts can eventually connect with God. The still small whisper guides us, but even the whisper's not needed when we're holding God's hand. Saint Gregory calls this depth of contemplation “resting in God.” And once tasted, it becomes a place that's desired more the “honey from the comb.”



PSALM 134



*May the LORD,
Maker of heaven and earth,
bless you from Zion.*

When we lose one blessing, another is often most unexpectedly given in its place.

~C.S. Lewis

Benedict of Nursia compiled a Rule of Life for monastics in the 6th century. This rule, which is still in use today, consisted of 73 short chapters designed to help a group of believers live in spiritual community. Instructions on praying the psalms fills a few of these chapters, such as which psalms to pray and when. The entire psalter is then prayed throughout the week, seven times a day, in what is known as the canonical hours, also known as the daily office or divine office.

Compline, the final “hour of prayer” before retiring, has traditionally included Psalm 4, Psalm 91, and Psalm 134. This group of psalms allows for deep meditation on God’s protection, as well as committing one’s total trust to his care. As we *lie down and sleep in peace* (4) and *dwell in safety* (4), we find *rest in the shadow of the Almighty* (91), and before closing our eyes, receive God’s blessing (134).

This image was inspired by the Christ Pantocrator icon, the oldest known portrayal painted in the 6th century. It was preserved in St. Catherine’s Monastery in the remote parts of the Sinai desert and is venerated in the Eastern Orthodox Church.



PSALM 138



*On the day I called, you answered me;
my strength of soul you increased.*

*Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see
what you believe.*

~Saint Augustine

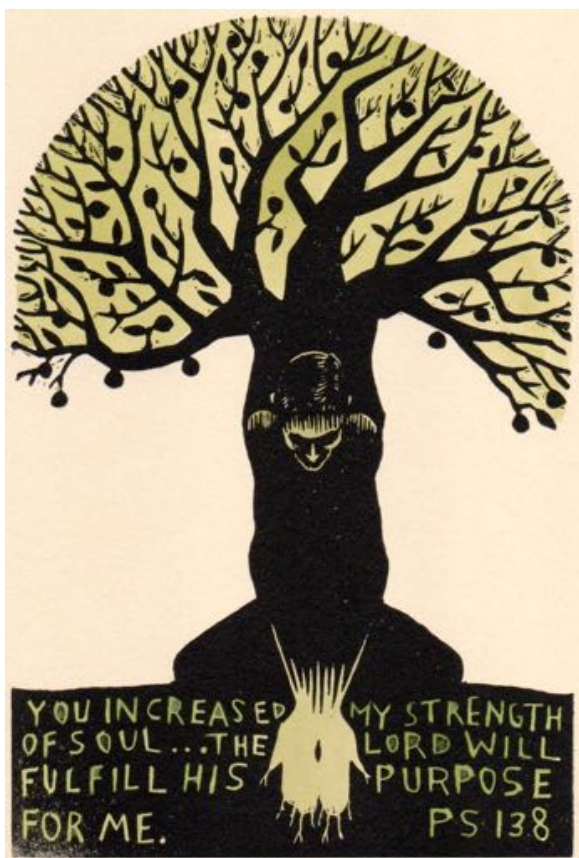
*The most beautiful act of faith is the one made in darkness, in sacrifice,
and with extreme effort.*

~St. Padre Pio

We are rooted in a rich soil that initially began as a mustard seed. It was a small prayer, spoken into the cosmos, and answered. With that answer there was hope. And with that hope, continual requests. Our faith and strength of soul increased.

We all, to various degrees, walk around with a tree of faith which is determined by our experiences. George Muller, director of the 19th century Ashley Down orphanage in Bristol, England, never asked for money or supplies from people, but always directed his requests to God. He was never disappointed. Miraculously, the orphanage's needs were met, oftentimes at the last minute, but never to the surprise of Muller. He learned to trust, and his faith grew and grew.

On the other hand, we're all familiar with prayers that go unanswered—and not frivolous requests like Janis Joplin's "Lord, give me a Mercedes Benz." Despite prayers of ineffectiveness, Charles Ringma gives us some reasons why we still press on. In his book, *A Fragile Hope*, he writes, "I pray despite its seeming futility and mystery because I believe that this is one way of relating to God—even the God who seems so distant. I also know that prayer is somehow good for me, but it is more difficult to identify that goodness...Most basically, I feel the need to live under the mercy of God."



PSALM 150



*Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!*

The great thing, and the only thing, is to adore and praise God.

~Thomas Merton

While among many other things, Psalm 150 is a beautiful metaphor representational of the Body of Christ. It describes a full orchestra with the sole intention of praising and glorifying God. Jesus, of course, is the conductor, directing each person's individuality to help add to the unified whole. While each individual brings their own effort and God-given talent that will add to the beauty of the melody.

One can almost hear St. Paul saying, "If all of you play cymbals, where will the melody of the strings be? And if all of you play strings, who will provide the power of the horn section? Therefore, each individual has a special talent and gifting meant to support the entire body of Christ."



PSALMS



Psalm 19

The heavens are telling the glory of God
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declare knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;
yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them;
and nothing is hid from its heat.

The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the decrees of the LORD are sure,
making wise the simple;
the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is clear,
enlightening the eyes;
the fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are true
and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.
Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
But who can detect their errors?
Clear me from hidden faults.
Keep back your servant also from the insolent,

don't let them have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. **NRSV**



PSALM 23

THE LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul;
he leads me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life;
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever. **NKJV**



PSALM 27

THE LORD is my light and the one who saves me.
So why should I fear anyone?
The LORD protects my life.
So why should I be afraid?
Evil people may try to destroy my body.

My enemies and those who hate me attack me,
but they are overwhelmed and defeated.
If an army surrounds me,
I will not be afraid.
If war breaks out,
I will trust the LORD.

I ask only one thing from the Lord.
This is what I want:
let me live in the LORD's house
all my life.
Let me see the LORD's beauty
and look with my own eyes at his Temple.
During danger he will keep me safe in his shelter.
He will hide me in his Holy Tent,
or he will keep me safe on a high mountain.
My head is higher than my enemies around me.
I will offer joyful sacrifices in his Holy Tent.
I will sing and praise the LORD.

LORD, hear me when I call;
have mercy and answer me.
My heart said of you, "Go, worship him."
So I come to worship you, LORD.
Do not turn away from me.
Do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have helped me.
Do not push me away or leave me alone,
God, my Savior.
If my father and mother leave me, the LORD will take me in.
LORD, teach me your ways,
and guide me to do what is right
because I have enemies.
Do not hand me over to my enemies,
because they tell lies about me
and say they will hurt me.
I truly believe
I will live to see the LORD's goodness.
Wait for the LORD's help.
Be strong and brave,
and wait for the LORD's help. **NCV**



PSALM 28

TO YOU, LORD, I call;
you are my rock, do not turn a deaf ear to me.
For if you remain silent,
I will be like those who go down to the pit.
Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help,
as I lift up my hands
toward your most Holy place.

Do not drag me away with the wicked,
with those who do evil,
who speak cordially with their neighbors
but harbor malice in their hearts.
Repay them for their deeds
and for their evil work;
repay them for what their hands have done
and bring back on them what they deserve.

Because they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD
and what his hands have done,
he will tear them down
and never build them up again.

Praise be to the LORD,
for he has heard my cry for mercy.
The LORD is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
My heart leaps for joy,
and with my song I praise him.

The LORD is the strength of his people,
a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.
Save your people and bless your inheritance;
be their shepherd and carry them forever. **NIV**



PSALM 45

MY HEART overflows with a good theme;
I address my verses to the King;
My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.
You are fairer than the sons of men;
Grace is poured upon Your lips;
Therefore God has blessed you forever.

Gird your sword on your thigh, O Mighty One,
In your splendor and your majesty!
And in your majesty ride on victoriously,
For the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness;
Let Your right hand teach You awesome things.
Your arrows are sharp;
The peoples fall under You;
Your arrows are in the heart of the King's enemies.

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of joy above Your fellows.
All Your garments are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia;
Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made You glad.
Kings' daughters are among our noble ladies;
At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear:
Forget your people and your father's house;
then the King will desire your beauty.
Because he is your LORD, bow down to Him.
The daughter of Tyre will come with a gift;
The rich among the people will seek your favor.

The King's daughter is all glorious within;
Her clothing is interwoven with gold.
She will be led to the King in embroidered work;
The virgins, her companions who follow her,
Will be brought to You.
They will be led forth with gladness and rejoicing;
They will enter into the King's palace.

In place of your fathers will be your sons;
You shall make them princes in all the earth.
I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
Therefore the peoples will give You thanks forever and ever. NASB



PSALM 46

GOD IS our refuge and strength,
An ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth;
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear,
he burns the shields with fire.
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress. NIV



PSALM 55

GIVE EAR to my prayer, O God;
do not hide yourself from my supplication.
Attend to me, and answer me;
I am troubled in my complaint.
I am distraught by the noise of the enemy,
because of the clamor of the wicked.
For they bring trouble upon me,
and in anger they cherish enmity against me.

My heart is in anguish within me,
the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Fear and trembling come upon me,
and horror overwhelms me.
And I say, "O that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest;
truly, I would flee far away;
I would lodge in the wilderness;
I would hurry to find a shelter for myself
from the raging wind and tempest."

Confuse, O LORD, confound their speech;
for I see violence and strife in the city.
Day and night they go around it
on its walls,
and iniquity and trouble are within it;
ruin is in its midst;
oppression and fraud
do not depart from its marketplace.

It is not enemies who taunt me –
I could bear that;
it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me –
I could hide from them. But it is you, my equal,
my companion, my familiar friend,
with whom I kept pleasant company;

we walked in the house of God with the throng.
Let death come upon them;
let them go down alive to Sheol;
for evil is in their homes and in their hearts.

But I call upon God,
and the LORD will save me.
Evening and morning and at noon
I utter my complaint and moan,
and he will hear my voice.
He will redeem me unharmed from the battle that I wage,
for many are arrayed against me.

God, who is enthroned from of old,
will hear, and will humble them –
because they do not change,
and do not fear God.

My companion laid hands on a friend,
and violated a covenant with me
with speech smoother than butter,
but with a heart set on war;
with words that were softer than oil,
but in fact were drawn swords.

Cast your burden on the LORD,
and he will sustain you;
he will never permit
the righteous to be moved.

But you, O God, will cast them down
into the lowest pit;
the bloodthirsty and treacherous
shall not live out half their days.
But I will trust in you. **NRSV**



PSALM 62

MY SOUL waits in silence for God only;
from Him is my salvation.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.

How long will you assail a man,
that you may murder him, all of you,
Like a leaning wall, like a tottering fence?

They have counseled only to thrust him down from his high position;
they delight in falsehood;
they bless with their mouth,
but inwardly they curse. *Selah*.

My soul, wait in silence for God only,
For my hope is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.
On God my salvation and my glory rest;
The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.
Trust in him at all times, O people;
Pour out your heart before him;
God is a refuge for us. *Selah*.

Men of low degree are only vanity and men of rank are a lie;
in the balances they go up;
They are together lighter than breath.
Do not trust in oppression
And do not vainly hope in robbery;
If riches increase, do not set your heart upon them.

Once God has spoken;
Twice I have heard this:
That power belongs to God;
And lovingkindness is Yours, O LORD,
For you recompense a man according to his work. **NASB**



PSALM 67

MAY GOD be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
Selah

that your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.

Selah

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us.
May God continue to bless us;
let all the ends of the earth revere him. NRSV



PSALM 81

SING ALOUD to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob!
Raise a song; sound the tambourine,
the sweet lyre with the harp.
Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our feast day.

For it is a statute for Israel,
a rule of the God of Jacob.
He made it a decree in Joseph
when he went out over the land of Egypt.
I hear a language I had not known:
“I relieved your shoulder of the burden;
your hands were freed from the basket.
In distress you called, and I delivered you;
I answered you in the secret place of thunder;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah. *Selah*
Hear, O my people, while I admonish you!
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!
There shall be no strange god among you;
you shall not bow down to a foreign god.
I am the LORD your God,
who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.
“But my people did not listen to my voice;
Israel would not submit to me.
So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts,
to follow their own counsels.
Oh, that my people would listen to me,
that Israel would walk in my ways!

I would soon subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes.
Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him,
and their fate would last forever.

But he would feed you with the finest of the wheat,
and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you. **ESV**



PSALM 117

ALL YOU NATIONS, praise the LORD.
All you people, praise him
because the LORD loves us very much,
and his truth is everlasting. **NCV**



PSALM 118

GIVE THANKS to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Let Israel say:
“His love endures forever.”
Let the house of Aaron say:
“His love endures forever.”
Let those who fear the Lord say:
“His love endures forever.”

When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord;
he brought me into a spacious place.
The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?
The Lord is with me; he is my helper.
I look in triumph on my enemies.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in humans.

It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.

All the nations surrounded me,
but in the name of the Lord I cut them down.

They surrounded me on every side,
but in the name of the Lord I cut them down.

They swarmed around me like bees,
but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns;
in the name of the Lord I cut them down.

I was pushed back and about to fall,
but the Lord helped me.

The Lord is my strength and my defense;
he has become my salvation.

Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:
"The Lord's right hand has done mighty things!
The Lord's right hand is lifted high;
the Lord's right hand has done mighty things!"
I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the Lord has done.
The Lord has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.
Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.
This is the gate of the Lord
through which the righteous may enter.
I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.

The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
The Lord has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.

Lord, save us!
Lord, grant us success!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
From the house of the Lord we bless you.
The Lord is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.

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

You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.

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



PSALM 121

I LIFT UP MY EYES to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.

The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore. **ESV**



PSALM 122

I REJOICED with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”
Our feet are standing
within your gates, Jerusalem—

Jerusalem, built as a city should be,
solidly joined together,
where the tribes, Yahweh's tribes, go up
to give thanks to the name of Yahweh.

(This is an ordinance for Israel.)

There, thrones for judgment are placed,
thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

“May those who love you prosper;
may there be peace within your walls,
prosperity within your fortresses.”

Because of my brothers and friends,
I will say, “Peace be with you.”

Because of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good. **HCSB**



PSALM 126

WHEN THE LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.

Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.

Then it was said among the nations,

“The LORD has done great things for them.”

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

Restore our fortunes, LORD,
like streams in the Negev.

Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,

will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them. **NIV**



PSALM 128

BLESSED IS EVERYONE who fears the LORD,
who walks in his ways!
You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots
around your table.
Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
who fears the LORD.

The LORD bless you from Zion!
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life!
May you see your children's children!
Peace be upon Israel! **ESV**



PSALM 131

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.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.

O Israel, hope in the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore. **ESV**



PSALM 134

NOW PRAISE the LORD,
all you servants of the LORD
who stand in the LORD's house at night!
Lift up your hands in the holy place
and praise the LORD!

May the LORD,
Maker of heaven and earth,
bless you from Zion. **HCSB**



PSALM 138

I GIVE YOU THANKS, O LORD, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
I bow down toward your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your
faithfulness,
for you have exalted above all things
your name and your word.
On the day I called, you answered me;
my strength of soul you increased.

All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD,
for they have heard the words of your mouth,
and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
for great is the glory of the LORD.
For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly,
but the haughty he knows from afar.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life;
you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies,
and your right hand delivers me.

The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands. **ESV**



PSALM 150

PRAISE THE LORD!

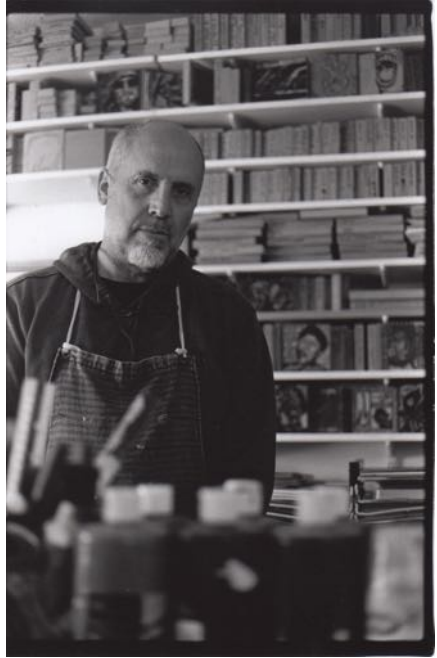
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD! **ESV**

PROCESS

My compositions are typically conceived and fully worked out in my mind before making their way to the woodblock. There's a slow, meditative process in printmaking—from idea to carving to printing—which generally appeals to my temperament and makes it a nice fit. Some of my current interests—the mystics, poets, and saints; those who have left behind some resemblance of story—allows me the opportunity to explore various aspects of idea and spirituality through both image and typography.

My process is simply to sketch out my ideas, transfer them backwards to a block of wood or other material, carve away the negative space, ink the surface, and then after choosing a paper, hand-pull both through a 1930s antique proof press. The various colors are applied using multiple carved blocks, or by a “reduction block” method where the same block is carved and printed multiple times, or lastly, through “hand tinting” with transparent watercolor pigments over oil-based inks—of which are the majority of works presented in this exhibition.



BIO

Kreg Yingst received his Bachelor's Degree in Studio Art from Trinity University in San Antonio in 1983, and while teaching art, finished his Masters in painting from Eastern Illinois University in 1996. Eventually he transitioned into making a living solely from the sales of his work. Both a painter and self-taught printmaker, his art can be found in numerous private and public collections including Purdue University; The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston, South Carolina; The College of Lake County, Grayslake, IL; Janus Corporation, Denver, CO, and Pensacola State College in Florida.