

CROSSWAYS

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ST PAUL'S AND WHITWORTH

In praise of the Psalms

By Revd Canon Matt Tarling

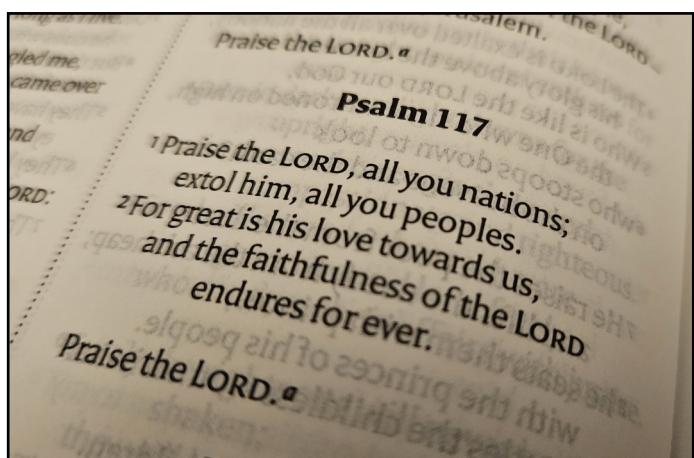
SAINT PAUL wrote to both the Ephesian and Colossian Christians about encouraging and teaching one another so that they would continue well in the Christian life. To the Ephesians he said, *...be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Ephesians 5:18-20)

And to the Colossians he said, *Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with*

gratitude in your hearts.
(Colossians 3:16)

You might notice some similar themes and ideas. Both demonstrate the value, for example, of singing to God. Not only does our singing together praise God but it encourages us as we sing and fosters a sense of thankfulness. Whenever we sing, whether that's hymns, songs or psalms, it does us good!

An interesting feature of these two directions from Paul is the inclusion of 'Psalms'. He's referring to the set of poems and songs that we find in the middle of our Old Testament. For Paul and his first readers, they were centuries old Jewish worship texts. Nowadays they are thousands of years old! They're also still used in Jewish



worship. However, notice that here as Paul writes to Christians in first century Ephesus and Colossae (in what is now called Turkey) he points to them as part of Christian worship and for Christian teaching and encouragement.

If you grew up using the Book of Common Prayer Morning and/or Evening Prayer (Matins or Evensong), then you may be used to saying or singing psalms. Similarly, you may have experienced them read during morning prayer or in our Sunday services. Occasionally we

sing psalms and some of our hymns are based on them. Psalms have been highly valued by the Christian church.

During January and February on Sunday mornings we will be thinking about some of the Psalms and seeing how they can encourage us in the faith. As Paul said, they are good for us, we can speak and sing them to one another for our encouragement and they can foster thanksgiving. The psalms are great, and I commend them to you.

continued on page 2

PARISH

CHURCH

SERVICES

ST PAUL'S CHURCH

Sundays: 10.30am Holy Communion ('All Together' non-communion on first Sunday)
(*live-streamed at www.facebook.com/stpaulsspennymoor*)

Wednesdays: 9.30am Holy Communion

Fridays: 10am Play Church (term-time only)

WHITWORTH CHURCH

Sundays: 9am Holy Communion

CLERGY**VICAR**

Revd Canon Matthew Tarling
01388 327603
vicar@stpaulsspennymoor.co.uk

CURATE

Revd Lee Trevorrow-Earl
lee@stpaulsspennymoor.co.uk

CHURCHWARDENS**St Paul's Church**

Christopher Luke : 07796 137901
Samuel Thumaty : 07388 591093

Whitworth Church

Wayne Rhodes: 01388 816643
Kath Hall: 07762 354967

CROSSWAYS EDITOR**Christopher Luke**

christopher@stpaulsspennymoor.co.uk
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Newsletter Secretary:

Pauline Storey 816153

St Paul's Centre Bookings : 813404

In praise of the Psalms

continued from front page

There are 150 in total which means you could read two a day to get to know them better. As you read or hear the psalms you discover that they cover how life feels in all sorts of circumstances. They cover the good days when we want to praise and thank God. And they cover the bad days when we need to lament how things are. They reveal God to us by showing us what he is like, helping us to ad-

dress God the Father, introducing us to God the Son, king Jesus who suffered for us, and leading us to encounter God the Spirit as he works in and through normal daily life. They help us to put into word how we experience life and how we feel. They are the words of worship and faith of God's people. So enjoy the Psalms on Sundays and why not get stuck in with them day to day?

Pastoral team

OUR churches' pastoral team exists to support the care we give to one another in our churches. When we're together for services you can spot the team members by their lanyard badges containing their name and photo. If you would like to speak to someone about any matter, be prayed with or have a visit at home, please speak to one of the team. If you have a concern about a congregation member who you think could need some support, feel free to speak to the pastoral team. Members of the team are safely recruited and safeguarding trained. They take your care and confidentiality seriously and work in collaboration with the clergy. To get in touch via email you can contact:

pastoralteam@stpaulsspennymoor.co.uk or call the vicarage on 01388 327603.

Christmas thank you!

ON page three there are just a few photographs to showcase our Christmas outreach at the end of last year. You can see more on the St Paul's Facebook page including videos as we celebrated with our communities the good news of Christ's birth.

Across all of the services at Whitworth and St Paul's churches we welcomed around 700 people which is incredibly encouraging knowing that people came to church to hear the Christmas story and the good news this offers us, not just at Christmas-time, but always.

A huge amount of work went on behind the scenes and during the services themselves, so to our clergy, musical director and many volunteers, THANK YOU! Thank you for all your service and be encouraged and thankful to God for all he is doing in our communities.



Holiday Club to return in 2026!

WE'RE planning to run the Holiday Club again for three days from Monday 27th to Wednesday 29th July! We hope that you're still feeling invested in this work we're doing with the children, young people and families of our town and that you are keen to be involved again. It can't run without you, so we would very much love you to put the dates in your diary now!

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Celebrating Christmas in the parishes



Photo: Revd Canon Matt Tarling

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:

- Whitworth Church welcomed 100 people at their carol service as The Witness Choir led the singing.
- More than 400 people attended two Christmas Eve Christingle services at St Paul's.
- A team of volunteers made more than 250 Christingles!
- Churches Acting Together Carol Singing at ASDA.



Photo: Revd Canon Matt Tarling

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FOR YOUR PRAYERS

For the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally as she prepares to be enthroned as the next Archbishop of Canterbury this spring.



For the Rt Revd Sarah Clark, Bishop of Jarrow and acting Bishop of Durham during the Diocesan vacancy.

For peace and stability in our world, particularly in Venezuela, Iran following the recent tensions in those countries,

For those who volunteer and run our local foodbanks,

For opportunities to build on the connections and conversations we had with people from our communities over Christmas.

For our NHS during the winter pressures.

PRAYER FOR JANUARY

Let us worship the Saviour with joy and make our prayer to our heavenly Father. The magi came from the east to worship your Son: Father grant to Christians everywhere the spirit of adoration.

Lord of Glory, hear our prayer. Amen.

Source: The Church of England

NEWS IN BRIEF

ST PAUL'S PCC members are reminded that the next committee meeting will take place on Wednesday 21st January, 7:30pm in church.

PRAYER for Growth takes place on the third Sunday of every month at St Paul's at 4pm. There's an opportunity to sing, reflect on scripture and pray together.

AN advance notice that there will be a special service at St Paul's on Saturday 28th February, 11:30am to mark the 35th anniversary of the end of the Gulf War. All are welcome to join this service.

Parish Registers

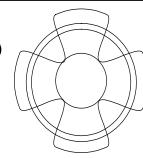
CHRISTIAN FUNERALS

Durham Crematorium

3rd December Kenneth Towning

St Paul's

17th December Charles Berriman



Christingle services raise hundreds of pounds for The Children's Society



AS we mentioned on page three, St Paul's welcomed more than 400 people across the two Christingle services on Christmas Eve. These popular services are filled with light as we celebrate the light of Christ coming into the world. We also collect donations which are given to The Children's Society supporting projects with young people across the UK. We're delighted to say that people's generosity at the services raised an incredible £443!

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