

THE

BIBLE METHODIST

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BIBLE METHODIST CONNECTION OF CHURCHES

VOLUME 56 | ISSUE 4



REVIVING
THE
PSALMS



FROM THE EDITOR

TRAVIS J. JOHNSON

Throughout the past year, the central theme of this publication has revolved around the Psalms. We have explored the depth and richness of these ancient songs and prayers, examining some of their themes and profound emotional expressions. Each edition has aimed to highlight the significance of the Psalms in our spiritual lives, offering insights into their teachings and their relevance for contemporary believers. Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote, “Whenever the Psalter is abandoned, an incomparable treasure is lost to the Christian church. With its recovery will come unexpected power.”

What makes the Psalms so unique is their rich diversity of themes and emotions. Martin Luther described the Psalms

as a “Little Bible,” explaining that “everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended, and compacted into [it].” The Psalms are united by certain foundational themes that underscore essential truths about God and His care for His people. A primary theme of the Psalms is God’s goodness and unfailing love for His people. In other words, God is always good in ways that are fully compatible with His holiness, and in His goodness, He never fails to love and care for those who belong to Him. This goodness is not a fleeting trait but an essential and unchanging attribute of God. Psalm 136 is a prime example, with its refrain “His steadfast love endures forever,” highlighting that God’s love

and goodness are constant and certain, unaffected by human actions or circumstances.

The Psalms offer a vivid portrait of a good and loving God whose holiness, care, faithfulness, and redemption form the bedrock of a believer’s confidence and hope. Through times of joy and trial alike, the Psalms assure us that God’s goodness and love remain a steadfast reality.

In the final edition of the year, Dr. David Hartkopf explores the timeless significance of the Psalms in both personal and corporate worship. With insights into their theological depth, enduring relevance, and practical application, Dr. Hartkopf invites us to rediscover these ancient songs as a vital part of our worship life today. ■

THE BIBLE METHODIST

REV. TRAVIS J. JOHNSON
Editor
pastortravisj@gmail.com

SHANE MUIR
Graphic Design
shanemuirdesign@gmail.com

COUNTRY PINES, INC.
Printing
countrypinesprinting.com

The Bible Methodist is published four times a year and is the official publication of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. Read online at biblemethodist.org/magazine

REV. BLAKE JONES
Connectional Chairman
Box 5, Cedar Lake, MI 48891
bejones@nethawk.com

DR. R.G. HUTCHISON
Missions Director
124 Harry Stanley Dr, Easley, SC 29640
rghutchison867@gmail.com

REV. DAVID WARD
Great Lakes Regional Conference President
Box V, Cedar Springs, MI 49319
davidward@biblemethodist.org

REV. CHRIS CRAVENS
Heartland Regional Conference President
16346 TR 166, Arlington, OH 45813
chriscravens@biblemethodist.org

REV. DOUG EADS
Southern Regional Conference President
40 Skyview Lane, Pell City, AL 35125
reveads@aol.com

REV. AARON JOHNSON
Southwest Regional Conference President
1851 South Union Blvd, Lakewood, CO 80228
adjmjj2013@gmail.com

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the Psalms in both Judaism and Christianity over many centuries of worship history. As a compiled book of inspired Hebrew poetry, this collection of laments, confessions, petitions, and praises represented a key feature of public and private worship for the people of God. Basil called the Psalms, “a jewel case in which have been collected all the valid teachings in such a way that individuals find remedies just right for their cases...Every Psalm is the voice of the Church” (Basil, Homily 10).¹ Luther stated the book was prized “because it contains such clear prophecies concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, and holds forth such great and gracious promises concerning the kingdom of Christ, the spread of the Gospel, and the state of the whole church. So that you may truly call the Book of Psalms, a little Bible” (Luther, 18).² It is no accident that Psalms is the most frequently quoted book in the New Testament connected to understanding the life and ministry of Jesus (specifically Psalm 2, 22, 45, and 110). Our Lord himself quoted Psalm 22 as he was in anguish on the cross, and at the heart of Peter’s first post-Pentecost sermon about Jesus was an exposition of Psalm 16 and Psalm 110.

But more than beautiful, powerful song lyrics about God and life, Christians affirm that the Psalms are *Scripture*, they are divinely inspired and have important contemporary relevance for the Church. Not only are the Psalms a window into First Testament Israel’s liturgical activity (although they are), they are valuable for “doctrine, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness” to all Christ-followers (II Tim. 3:16). The Psalms, perhaps more than any other part of the Scriptures, connect theology to all seasons and circumstances of life within a post-Fall world. They speak to sorrows and joys common to the human experience, while giving us inspired words to pray and frameworks for thinking aright about God during temptation and trial. In the writing that follows, the theological significance of the Psalms will be briefly examined before considering the use of Psalms in both



REVIVING THE PSALMS

ANCIENT SONGS FOR TODAY’S CHURCH

By Dr. David Hartkopf

personal and public worship settings. Throughout, resources and practices will be recommended that enhance understanding of the Psalms and connect them in practical ways to the worship of the Church.

THEOLOGY IN THE PSALMS

The book of Psalms opens with a picture of the blessed man, one who views God and life with all its components from God's perspective. Rather than take ungodly counsel from the world around him, this blessed man deliberately meditates day and night on the perfect law of Yahweh and allows God's revealed Word to shape his thoughts and actions. Over time (remember, trees and their root systems grow slowly), these patterns of right thinking about God and life produce a deeply rooted, mature person that is fruitful and promised future blessing from God. In this way, Psalm 1 serves as an interpretive entryway for the rest of the Psalms. Life circumstances and those around us must not be allowed to ultimately determine our view of God or reality, it must be the Scriptures. And while the Psalms authentically portray the total range of human emotions, from hope to despair, unbridled joy to deep sorrow, they all call us back to remembrance of who God is during both seasons of gladness and suffering. At all times, we can come before God honestly while also bringing Him an offering of worship.

Although there are a myriad of theological themes to be seen in the Psalms, here is a short list for consideration of those that are especially connected to worship:

1. The importance of covenant. "The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant" (Ps. 25:14). Yahweh is seen throughout the Psalms as a trustworthy, loyal, and close covenant partner with his faithful people.
2. The juxtaposition of Yahweh's transcendence and immanence. While "his

greatness is unsearchable," he is also "near to all who call on him" (Psalm 145: 2, 18). Yahweh's greatness would mean little if he was distant and capricious, or if he was near but lacked power. The LORD is unrivaled in his excellence because he is simultaneously sovereign and yet close to his covenant people. As John Oswalt states, although Yahweh has "absolute power, he is profoundly personal" (Oswalt, 13).³

3. The presence of Christ in the Psalms.⁴ Both in the direct fulfillment of prophecy and in more indirect, typological reading, Jesus is seen throughout the whole of Psalms (Ross, 165-168).⁵ New Testament writers and the Church fathers were quick to connect the Psalms with Christ and the righteous rule of Yahweh over the nations of the world. Indeed, "it is the profound Christian persuasion that Christ walks within the Psalms...Christ is the referential center of the book of Psalms" (Reardon, 16-17).⁶

As we meditate on God and his Word (Ps. 1:2), gaze at his beauty (Ps. 27:4), and consider his enduring, steadfast love (Ps. 107:1 among many other places), we are enabled by the Spirit of God to see past present circumstances and worship our great God. To this end, the Psalms are an invaluable part of both private and public Christian devotion.

PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PSALMS

Church history demonstrates a multitude of ways Christians have used the Psalms during daily times of personal worship. Since we are formed by what we repeatedly do, recovering these everyday rhythms with the Psalms remain an important tool for spiritual formation. The Psalms provide us with inspired language, a "God-given prayerbook full of prayers that we

can pray with Christ" (Bonhoeffer, 15).⁷ Here are a few practical ways to incorporate the Psalms into your daily worship routines:

1. Read in the morning (Ps. 95, 100), midday (Ps. 119:105-112, 121, 124) or at night (Ps. 4, 31:1-6, 91, 124) Psalms from the Daily Office every day on your own or with your family. Start simply, pick one from each category and make it a part of your daily rhythm with God.
2. Pray through a Psalm every day (See Darrell Stetler's article from the previous issue of *The Bible Methodist* for practical ways to pray the Psalms. Also, see Daniel Henderson's book *Praying the Psalms*.)
3. Spend a significant amount of time, at least one month, reading one Psalm several times per day (Ps. 145 is an excellent one to begin with).
4. Read Psalms alongside Wesley's *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, which connects written hymns to individual Psalms.
5. Read through the Psalms slowly with a study resource. Recommendations for study include *Ancient Commentary on Scripture*, Allen P. Ross' *Commentary on the Psalms*, and *The NIV Application Commentary*.

CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PSALMS

The Psalms give the Christian community shared language from the Scriptures originally compiled for use in public worship. Since our services should be saturated with God's Word, here are a few ways to incorporate the Psalms into corporate settings:

1. Begin with a call to worship from the Psalms (Instead of monopolizing the gathering of God's people with chattiness and empty meandering, prepare the people for worship with the very Word of God!). Train readers from the congrega-

tion, read the Psalms responsively, and engage families and children in Scripture presentation, this variety will keep the practice familiar and fresh. Apply the whole of the Psalms for this practice, not just a few favorites that will be quickly worn out from overuse.

2. Use the Psalms to guide times of corporate confession. Pray through a penitential Psalm (Ps. 32 is a good place to start).
3. Sing the Psalms! Seedbed⁸ has the text of every Psalm set to familiar hymn tunes. I would also recommend *Psalms for All Seasons*⁹ for use in public worship.
4. Use different sections of Psalm 119 every week as part of a prayer of illumination before the sermon.

The history of God's covenant people across time is deeply intertwined with the Psalms. For both personal and public worship, "whenever the Psalter is abandoned, an incomparable treasure vanishes from the Christian Church" (Bonhoeffer, 26).¹⁰ As the Church moves forward, a recovery of robust Psalm use during worship should be an important priority. The Church can, in all settings, join saints across time to declare in unified voice that we "will speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever" (Ps. 145:21). ■

1. Basil. "Homily 10." <https://archive.org/details/fathersoft-hechur013929mbp/page/n171/mode/2up>.
2. Luther, Martin trans. Henry Cole. *A Manual on the Book of Psalms*. London, Seeley and Burnside, 1837.
3. Oswalt, John. *Called to be Holy: A Biblical Perspective*. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1999.
4. For a fuller treatment of Christ's connection to the Psalms, see Christopher Ash's *The Psalms: A Christ-Centered Commentary*.
5. Ross, Allen P. *A Commentary on the Psalms*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2011.
6. Reardon, Patrick Henry. *Christ in the Psalms*. Ben Lomand, CA: Conciliar Press, 2000.
7. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1970.
8. <https://psalms.seedbed.com/>
9. *Psalms for All Seasons: A Complete Psalter for Worship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2012.
10. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1970.



WORLD MISSIONS NEWS UPDATE

R.G. HUTCHISON, MISSIONS DIRECTOR

REMEMBERING TWO FINE LEADERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Recently, we bid an earthly farewell to two fine leaders in the Philippines. Pastor David Yucaddi, Sr. went home to be with Jesus after struggling for months with the effects of a debilitating stroke. And, a few short weeks later, Pastor Ronaldo Comilang also passed on to glory after a courageous 8-year battle with multiple myeloma cancer. Both of these men were among my closest friends while serving as a missionary in the Philippines, and the loss is deeply personal. God's grace that was demonstrated in and through their lives has impacted many people both in the Philippines and here in the U.S.



1

The picture above encapsulates the way these two men lived their lives. They preached. They taught. And then they put on their work clothes and led the way, working shoulder-to-shoulder with their people. This is how I will remember them.

Here are some excerpts from a few of the tributes that have been shared in their honor.

—Dr. R.G. Hutchison

TRIBUTES TO PASTOR DAVID YUCADDI, SR. [1-2]

“As I reflect on David’s legacy, I’m reminded of the words of the apostle Paul: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow” (1 Cori. 3:6). David Yucaddi was a faithful planter and tender of seeds, but it was his unwavering trust in the divine Gardener that allowed his ministry to flourish beyond all human expectations. In the end, perhaps David’s greatest gift to us was not the churches he built or the ministers he trained, but the living testament of what can happen when one surrenders fully to God’s calling. He showed us that faith, when lived out with passionate conviction, can indeed move mountains—or in this case, transform an entire mountain range.”

—Dr. Michael Avery



2

“I’m so glad to have known David Yucaddi as a colleague and spiritual sibling, but also as a friend. I will forever treasure the countless hours spent together in fellowship and conversation. I think these were life-shaping times for both of us. I will forever treasure the days

we hiked the mountains together (or flew into Latbang and Uduyau via helicopter because it was faster!), and preached together, taught together, planned together, and prayed together. I treasure the moments of relaxation when we sat like two carabao in the cold river near Bambang, trying to cool off from one of those long hikes. I treasure David’s uninhibited worship, and his joyful laugh. I even treasure the moments we disagreed, and “fought” together like brothers! And I rejoice in the hope that I will see David again. I rejoice that the God of David Yucaddi is my God too, and that I will see David again in the presence of that same God!

—Rev. Tim Keep



3

TRIBUTES TO REV. RONALDO COMILANG [3-4]

“Ronaldo became our partner in ministry and helped us transition into his amazing, loving culture. Through the years, Ronaldo and I spent countless hours traveling together, praying together, discussing theology and life in general, and sometimes we cried together. It could sound trite to say we became family, but that is what happened. Ronaldo was always there to translate. He was talented and anointed. It did not feel as if he translated, but rather that he preached with me. He was also a capable teacher, dedicated pastor in his own right, and an effective and influential leader. He left a legacy of faithful-

ness that will live on through his children and those he mentored, including my children. Ronaldo was kind and consistent, and his life will continue to point people to Jesus and to the Eternity he now enjoys.”

—Rev. David Black



4

Judy and I have been going to the Philippines since 2005. We have gone on medical teams, work teams, preaching teams, or just to be a blessing. In every one of those trips there has been a constant: Ronaldo Comilang was there working and helping. Over the course of the past 19 years, Ronaldo has become my friend. Yes, he was my interpreter when I preached and “boss” when we were pouring concrete or painting, but in those times, he became so much more. We talked. We shared. We laughed. I had found a man that became my brother. I met him before cancer became part of his life. I watched him work when cancer was causing so much pain. I would watch online as he preached, knowing that cancer was wreaking havoc. Yet, I watched him persevere. Giving up is not what he did.

—Rev. Doug Eads

These tributes are excerpts taken from the Fall 2024 issue of *The Missionary*, which is the quarterly mission’s publication of the Southern Conference Missions Society.



GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE NEWS

DAVID WARD, PRESIDENT

FALL RETREATS

Every year, the Great Lakes Conference hosts two events: our Men's Retreat and Family Retreat, both held at Rock Lake Campground.

Men's Retreat is held late in August. This year's retreat was led by (1) Pastors Nathaniel Tucker and Steve Bills along with other members of their committee, pictured here with this year's featured speaker (2) Kent Jeffries. The Men's Retreat is primarily a time for our guys to grow as we share in worship, learning, and prayer together. (3) We thoroughly enjoy our fellowship times as well. This year's activities included (4) target shooting events for

men and (5) their sons, (6) cornhole, disc golf and a chess tournament.

Family Retreat is held in late September. This year's event was planned by Pastor Joe Krohn, his wife Clarissa, and Jonathan and Abigail Langstaff. (7) Rev. Gene Davis and his wife Angie helped the Langstaffs host the sessions and activities. (8) Friday evening's speaker was Rev. Kim Hough. (9) Saturday morning's speaker was Rev. Blake Jones. The theme was "Passing the Baton of Faith: Seeing Future Generations Follow After Jesus."

Family Retreat also features fun activities for families to enjoy together. (10) A new one this year was the Zucchini

Car race. Entries featured creatively decorated Zucchini's with wheels and axles added which were raced to determine a winner. Friday evening showcased a pie baking contest and Saturday afternoon was the Family Olympics. (11)

At the conclusion of the Saturday morning session there was a sweet moment where the Great Lakes family members present surrounded Paul and Esther Troyer and prayed with them and their family before they made their long journey to their new field of labor. (12)

We are proud of our Great Lakes families and how God is working in and through them.





HEARTLAND CONFERENCE NEWS

CHRIS CRAVENS, PRESIDENT

HEARTLAND UPDATE

- 1-2 A good number of men gathered at Beulah Grove for this annual Men of Integrity retreat.
- 3 The new parsonage is nearly complete in West Mecca, OH.
- 4 The congregation in McDonald, OH celebrates the baptism of new believers.
- 5 New sanctuary lights are installed in Findlay, OH.
- 6 The congregation in Zanesville, OH celebrates renovations to the church and parsonage.
- 7 New Life Community Church in Cincinnati, OH welcomes Rev. and Mrs. Mike Mater as their new lead pastor.



HEARTLAND UPDATE (CONT.)

- 8 The church in Franklin, OH celebrates a baptismal service.
- 9 Heartland Elder Dr. Allan Brown is presented a special book in honor of his 80th birthday.
- 10 Our conference president and wife join the church in Frankfort, IN in honoring Heartland elder Dr. David Fry and family on Pastor Appreciation Day.
- 11 The church in York, PA recently completed improvements in their Fellowship Hall.
- 12-13 A special day for the congregation at Port Clinton, OH in dedicating their new church building to the Lord.
- 14 The church in Westfield, IN dedicated their new sign in memory of Mr. Tom Randall.





SOUTHERN CONFERENCE NEWS

DOUG EADS, PRESIDENT

CONFERENCE NEWS

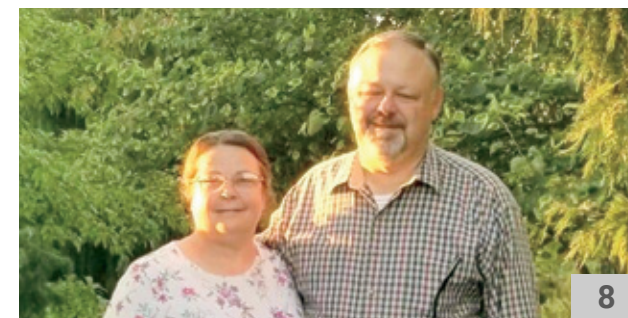
I realize it takes many hands to make light work. It also takes many people for something to be successful. Here in the Southern Conference, we have some ministry folks who have been around, working in our churches consistently for years and years. Yes, we have people that God has called to minister in other places who are a part of the Conference. But the people you see on these pages have been leading in a Southern Confer-

ence church (or churches) for at least 20 years. It definitely takes some grit and determination to accomplish this feat. We are blessed that the Lord has chosen to keep them right where there are for such a long time. God bless each of them for their labor and service to the Southern Conference.

CAPTIONS

- 1 Randall and Jenny Crotts
- 2 Ms. Sara Marchant

- 3 Dana and Debbie Bentz
- 4 Tom and Jane Watkins
- 5 Doug and Judy Eads, Phil and Joy Budensiek
- 6 Bob and Karen Blankenship
- 7 Carson and Linda Scarbrough
- 8 Rob and Carol Cravens
- 9 John and Cathy Parker, Steve and Kay Vernon
- 10 William Snider
- 11 Brian and Marie Consley
- 12 Marcus and Mandy Evans
- 13 Earl and Kresha Fields
- 14 Barry and Pam Shirah





SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE NEWS

AARON JOHNSON, PRESIDENT

SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE UPDATE

- 1-4 Trunk or Treat at Wesleyan Bible Church in Lakewood, CO.
- 5 Chandler and Melissa Witter were installed as Pastor at Whitehouse Bible Methodist Church.
- 6-7 Melodie Sankey spoke at the Ladies' Retreat at Glen Eyrie. Marc and Jordan Sankey joined her as they provided music that evening.
- 8-9 Grants Bible Methodist Church was officially formed with 13 members.
- 10 Lane and Kayley Williams being installed as Pastor at Grants Bible Methodist Church in Grants, NM.
- 11 Youth Group outing from the Living Hope Bible Methodist Church in Salina, Kansas go to the Pumpkin Patch
- 12 Welcoming new member Leslie to the Living Hope Bible Methodist Church
- 13 Living Hope Bible Methodist Church recently baptized five people, including Jesiree, who has been attending the Youth Group for about a year. She shared her testimony of salvation, saying she first truly experienced God at this year's Youth Challenge West!



1



3



2



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13

PRAYER FOCUS **20 25**

21 DAYS OF PRAYER

January 6-26, 2025

FIND DAILY DEVOTIONALS
ON FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE



SEARCH
**BIBLE METHODIST
CONNECTION OF
CHURCHES**

PRAY AROUND THE WORLD

January 26, 6 PM (EST)

USA AND MEXICO

January 27, 7 AM

PHILIPPINES



BibleMethodist
CONNECTION OF CHURCHES