



HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | AN ESTHER DEVOTIONAL

Introduction

It often feels like we are stumbling toward formation. Amidst the madness and noise of our world, we long for something transcendent, something lasting. We maintain our best intentions to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, but, too often, we misplace our desires, pining for the gods that ultimately fail us.

Thankfully, God, in his kindness and patience, gives us the assurance of new mercy today. He forms us today. He awakens our souls today. He reorders our desires today. Jesus's invitation to "come all you who are weary and I will give you rest" is for you...today.

The next 30 days will guide you through the book of Esther and other places throughout Scripture. In Esther, we find failure, persecution, temptation, lamentation, and deliverance. We find God's people moving from compromise to conviction, as God quietly orchestrates their redemption. Mike Cospers writes in *Faith Among the Faithless*: "Our world looks more like Esther: a path of awakening, risk, vulnerability, and ultimately, hope."

May the next 30 days present a path for us -- one of stillness, of reawakening, of holy rhythm, of hope.

God is faithful. He is with us.

Each day will be structured the same way but feel free to add to it:

- **Call to Prayer:** A starting point. A written prayer to reorient you.
- **Silence:** Spend some time being still and quiet. No music. No talking. There is nothing to do here but stop. Listen.
- **Psalm Reading**
- **Esther/Old Testament Reading**
- **New Testament/Gospel Reading**
- **Prayer of Response:** A prayer based on the day's readings. Also, there may be other things that strike you about a passage, so pray those as well!
- **Reflection:** A couple questions to consider throughout the day.

Sidenote: we encourage you to read through the entire book of Esther in one sitting before starting this devotional.

Day 1

Call to Prayer *From Canyon Road: A Book of Prayer, by Kari Kristina Reeves*

Organize my days, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my midst. Organize my thoughts, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my mind. Organize my emotions, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my inmost heart. Organize my desires, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my will. Organize my relationships, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my labor, home, and leisure. Illuminate this life, God, illuminate me.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 145

Old Testament Reading

Esther 1:1-9

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:1-12

Prayer of Response *From Matthew 6:9-13*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kingdom and the power and glory forever. Amen.

Reflection

What do you desire?

What does it look like to submit your desires to God?

Day 2

Call to Prayer

God, you are the Good Shepherd, who is always drawing me in. Help me to surrender. To listen. To know You. Set my affections on Christ. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 37

Old Testament Reading

Esther 1:10-22

Gospel Reading

John 7:37-39

Prayer of Response

Lord, give us your words to speak. When we are afraid, give us boldness. When we are restless, give us rest in you. Your Spirit dwells within us and will help us when we don't know what to do. Give us expectation and joy as we proclaim Christ. Amen.

Reflection

Why does Vashti refuse the king?

What stands out to you about the King's response?

What desire is shaping *him* and his response?

Day 3

Call to Prayer

God, I am slow to pray, and yet you call me to come boldly to your throne of grace. Though I often stumble, you receive my prayers, not because of eloquent words, but because of Christ. Help me now. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 73

Old Testament Reading

Esther 2:1-18

Gospel Reading

John 6:22-51

Prayer of Response

God. Reorder our hearts unto obedience, that we would not seek the approval of man but you. We live in the reality of Christ's resurrection, and the Holy Spirit is moving in and around us. When we feel overthrown, restore to us the joy of who you are — that you are God! Even when we suffer, let us rejoice and continue to proclaim the good news. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Reflection

Mordecai and Esther are both living with a *Persian identity*, though they are Jews. Why are they “hiding”?

What are ways that you hide or change your identity within our secular culture?

Mike Cospers writes, “*Assimilation is a failure of nerve, and isolation is a failure of heart. Assimilation fails to resist; isolation fails to love.*” Where do you often find yourself -- assimilating or isolating?

Day 4

Call to Prayer *From Canyon Road: A Book of Prayer, by Kari Kristina Reeves*

God,
Help me to wait on you.

Give me patience,
Give me grace.

I want to hear your voice,
I want to know your will.

Speak, Lord, your servant listens.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 19

Old Testament Reading

Esther 2:19-23

New Testament Reading

Colossians 3:1-17

Prayer of Response

God, remind us now that your Spirit is in us, and that we are full of grace and power. When we are mocked, your favor remains. When falsely accused, our justification is sure. Christ is our confidence and hope. Today, because of him, we can go into the world. We can speak. We can know that our security rests, not in the work of our hands or in our fame but in the reality that we are your children. Grant us grace today, O God. Amen.

Reflection

What convicts you from the Colossians passage? Ask God to help you in that area.

Day 5

Call to Prayer

Lord, I am distracted. Help me to listen.

Lord, I am in a hurry. Slow me down.

Lord, I don't know what to pray. Give me the words.

In Christ's name, Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 40

Old Testament Reading

Esther 3

Gospel Reading

Matthew 4:1-11

Prayer of Response

God, help us to place our confidence in Christ. When we want to despair, help us to rejoice. When we want to run from you, lead us to repentance. When we want to hide, establish our feet in the Lordship of Christ. Restore to us the certainty of Christ, crucified, raised, and seated with you in heaven. Amen.

Reflection

What is so troubling about Haman's idolatry of power?

What is significant about Mordecai's refusal to bow down?

What can we learn from Mordecai embracing weakness and vulnerability?

Day 6

Call to Prayer *From the Book of Common Prayer*

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 44

Old Testament Reading

Esther 4

New Testament Reading

Romans 8:18-30

Prayer of Response

God, we are prone to hopelessness. To unbelief. To cynicism. We too often want to hide our identity in You because of what others might say. Gracious Father, help us to *remember* You -- what you have done and are doing and will do -- and remember who we are. Have mercy on us, granting us confidence and hope anew. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Reflection

Do you intend to hide or express your grief? How does healthy lamentation point us to Jesus?

Esther responds with an act of faith, a queen coming to the king as Hadassah, a Jew. Why is this significant?

Day 7

Call to Prayer *From Canyon Road: A Book of Prayer, by Kari Kristina Reeves*

Organize my days, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my midst. Organize my thoughts, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my mind. Organize my emotions, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my inmost heart. Organize my desires, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my will. Organize my relationships, I pray, by the working of your Spirit in my labor, home, and leisure. Illuminate this life, God, illuminate me.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 23

Old Testament Reading

Esther 5:1-8

New Testament Reading

Hebrews 4:14-16

Prayer of Response

God, send your Spirit to refresh, convict, and renew. Do extraordinary things. Heal the sick. Rescue the lost. Bring repentance. Put to death our cynicism, pride, and arrogance, and clothe us in courage and humility. Work mightily in our midst! Amen.

Reflection

Esther doesn't come in radiance but in brokenness/weakness. Cospser even writes that "the way of Esther is the way of the Cross." What does he mean?

What would it look like for you to embrace a posture of weakness?

Day 8

Call to Prayer

God, in your kindness and patience, draw me close. Teach me to pray. Help me to listen. I come boldly in the name of Jesus, amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 5

Old Testament Reading

Esther 5:9-14

New Testament Reading

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Prayer of Response

Gracious Father. In our weakness, we come to you, trusting that your grace is sufficient. Set us free from the idol of power and from the need to pretend. In your kindness, lead us to repentance. Move us from compromise to conviction. From fear to faith. Have mercy on us, O God, have mercy! Amen.

Reflection

What stands out to you about the growing contrast between Mordecai and Haman?

We are seeing Esther and Mordecai grow in their understanding of *belonging*. How do you understand belonging and community?

Day 9

Call to Prayer *From Seeking God's Face, by Baker Publishing*

Breathe on us, breath of God; infuse our everyday lives with a majesty and glory that only comes from your Holy Spirit dwelling in us. Fill our lives with a boldness that isn't bluster but simply the overflow of your eternal like in us.

(Based on the Belgic Confession, 2)

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 150

Old Testament Reading

Esther 6:1-13

New Testament Reading

Philippians 2:1-11

Prayer of Response *From Job 33:17, 1 Peter 5:5; 3:4-5*

Lord, conceal pride from us, and clothe us with humility; and put upon us the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in your sight is very precious.

Reflection

Haman's hunger for glory is insatiable. In what ways are you tempted to rob God of his glory? Be specific.

How does Jesus's humility free us from pride and selfishness in these areas?

Day 10

Call to Prayer *From Origen:*

Jesus, my feet are dirty. Come even as a slave to me, pour water into your bowl, come and wash my feet. In asking such a thing I know I am overbold, but I dread what was threatened when you said to me, "If I do not wash your feet I have no fellowship with you." Wash my feet then, because I long for your companionship.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 7

Old Testament Reading

Esther 6:14-7:10

Gospel Reading

Luke 4:16-21

Prayer of Response *From Psalm 28:9; 29:11; 5:12*

Save your people, O Lord, and bless your heritage; be their shepherd and carry them forever. Give strength to your people, and bless your people with peace; cover them with favor as with a shield.

Reflection

Is there an area of life that feels completely void of hope, resigned to be "destroyed, killed, and annihilated"?

How does Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah 61 give you hope? Be specific.

Day 11

Call to Prayer *From 1 Corinthians 7:35 and Isaiah 29:13*

Let us now attend to the Lord with undivided devotion, and let not our hearts be far from him when we draw near to him with our mouths and honor him with our lips.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 35

Old Testament Reading

Esther 8

Gospel Reading

John 15:18-27

Prayer of Response *From The Book of Common Prayer, 1979*

O God, the Father of all, whose Son commanded us to love our enemies: Lead them and us from prejudice to truth: deliver them and us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge; and in your good time enable us all to stand reconciled before you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

In Psalm 35 and Esther 8 there's a presence of both persecution and joy and gladness. How does this tension play out in your life?

How does the gospel enable us to suffer joyfully?

Day 12

Call to Prayer *From The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions, edited by Arthur Bennett*

Thou art preparing joy for me and me for joy;
I pray for joy, wait for joy, long for joy;
give me more than I can hold, desire, or think of.
Measure out to me my times and degrees of joy,
at my work, business, duties.
If I weep at night, give me joy in the morning.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 30

Old Testament Reading

Esther 9:1-19

Gospel Reading

John 2:1-11

Prayer of Response *From The Book of Common Prayer, 1979*

O heavenly Father, who hast filled the world with beauty:
Open our eyes to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works;
that, rejoicing in thy whole creation, we may learn to serve
thee with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all
things were made, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

In what ways can feasting reflect the state of your spiritual life?

How does Jesus being the master of the feast give hope to your feasting?

Day 13

Call to Prayer *From The Book of Common Worship, by John Knox Press*

Grant unto us, O God, the fullness of your promises,
Where we have been weak, grant us your strength;
where we have been confused,
grant us your guidance;
where we have been distraught,
grant us your comfort;
where we have been dead, grant us your life.
Apart from you, O Lord, we are nothing,
in and with you we can do all things. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 77

Old Testament Reading

Esther 9:20-32

Gospel Reading

Luke 22:14-20

Prayer of Response *From The Songs of Jesus, by Timothy Keller*

Lord, I praise you that the greatest displays of your power in history have been in showing mercy and saving love. So now open my eyes and stir up my heart to trust every one of your promises, so that I can live in the peace you have for all who know you. Amen.

Reflection

What part of God's story do you struggle to remember? How does it affect your "joy and gladness" when you don't?

How does Jesus speak to this in the Lord's Supper?

Day 14

Call to Prayer *From Seeking God's Face, by Baker Publishing*

Listening God, you invite us to pray, to call on you and change our world. How bored you must be with our sometimes safe and harmless prayers. Saturate our lives with the Holy Spirit so that we know what to pray, who to pray for, and how best to pray. Holy Spirit, shake up the ways we pray, quickening our hearts and expanding our expectations so that we may live our faith more boldly.

(Based on Westminster Larger Catechism, 182)

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 122

Old Testament Reading

Esther 10

Gospel Reading

Luke 22:24-30

Prayer of Response *From The Book of Common Prayer, 1979*

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Reflection

Into what areas (relationships, work, neighborhood) are you saying, "Peace be within you"?

How does Jesus' economy of greatness free you to seek the welfare of these areas?

Day 15

Call to Prayer *From the Book of Common Prayer*

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 51

Old Testament Reading

Jeremiah 29:4-14

New Testament Reading

1 Peter 2:1-12

Prayer of Response

Lord, as we wait on you, renew our hearts. Renew in us an expectation of Your Holy Spirit in our lives and in our community, that we would see a transformation rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Put to death our cynicism and give us courage to pray boldly for Your Spirit to move. Amen.

Reflection

What is unique, even ordinary, about God's command in Jeremiah 29?

What would it look like for you to be faithfully present in your neighborhood and workplace -- *to seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare?*

Day 16

Call to Prayer *Adapted from Philippians 4*

God. I am prone to worry. But, you call me, in everything by prayer and supplication with THANKSGIVING to let my requests be made known to you. O God of peace, guard my heart and mind today in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 49

Old Testament Reading

Daniel 7:9-14

Gospel Reading

Matthew 16:24-28

Prayer of Response

God. I want to follow You, to depend on you for abundant life. Let me not seek profit in earthly things but in the way of the Cross, where my soul finds fulfillment. Lead me as I learn to walk by faith. In Christ's name. Amen.

Reflection

What does it mean to deny yourself? Ask God to show you the ways you resist his call to follow Him.

Day 17

Call to Prayer *From the hymn "I Need Thee Every Hour"*

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord;
no tender voice like thine can peace afford.

*I need thee, O I need thee;
every hour I need thee!
O bless me now, my Savior, I come to thee.*

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 63

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 44:21-28

New Testament Reading

2 Timothy 2:8-13

Prayer of Response

God. Throughout Scripture, you call your people to be a “remembering people,” who remember what you have done and who order their lives according to your faithfulness and presence. God, reorient our hearts today, that we would remember what you have done and will do. We need you. Every hour we need you. Amen.

Reflection

How can you incorporate “remembering” into your daily life?

Take a few minutes to meditate on what God has done in your life recently. Give thanks!

Day 18

Call to Prayer *From The Songs of Jesus, by Timothy Keller*

Lord, I praise you that the greatest displays of your power in history have been in showing mercy and saving love. So now open my eyes and stir up my heart to trust every one of your promises, so that I can live in the peace you have for all who know you. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 143

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 40:27-31

New Testament Reading

Romans 8:31-39

Prayer of Response

Gracious Father. It is often hard to see your reality -- that you are working. We look around us and see violence, pain, and sickness, and ask "Are You with us?" Give us eyes to see and an unconquerable faith. Help us, O God. Amen.

Reflection

How does God strengthen us?

How does God remind and show us that He is with us?

Day 19

Call to Prayer *From Augustine*

O Lord my God, most merciful, most secret, most present,
most constant, yet changing all things,
never new, and never old, always in action, yet always quiet,
creating, upholding, and perfecting all,
who has anything but what you have given?
or what can any man say when he speaks about you?
Yet have mercy on us, O Lord,
that we may speak to you, and praise your Name.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 1

Old Testament Reading

Exodus 19:1-6

Gospel Reading

John 17

Prayer of Response

God. Give me courage to lean into you. Faith to proclaim your reality. Comfort when I weary. Hope when I stumble into hopelessness. For the sake of Jesus, Amen.

Reflection

In John 17, Jesus prays, *"I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one."* How does this connect to the tendency toward assimilation or isolation we see in Esther?

What comfort do you receive from Jesus's prayer in John 17?

Day 20

Call to Prayer *From the song, "Come Tear Down the Walls" by Jenny Wahlström, Mark Alan Schoolmeesters*

Come and tear down the walls I've built up
Every wall I've built up, every wall I've built up
'Cause you deserve every piece of my heart
Every piece of my heart, every piece of my heart

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 32

Old Testament Reading

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Gospel Reading

John 15:1-17

Prayer of Response *From Duguid and Houk's "Prone to Wander"*

Holy Spirit, help us to believe in Christ. Help us to believe that in his death we died, and that in his resurrection we are raised to new life. Give us the joy and peace that should flow from that reality, as we continue to face the broken world in which we live, especially as we face the last enemy, death itself. Help us to live in the light of our full forgiveness, and to die with great confidence in the sufficiency of your grace to us in Jesus Christ. In his name, we pray, amen.

Reflection

If the command of Deuteronomy 6 is our starting point, how does that change the way we live, work, and relate?

In Matthew 22, this command is echoed but also says to love our neighbor. Pray for your neighbors and consider how you could love them well.

Day 21

Call to Prayer

Father,
I don't know what to say. Give me the words.
I am distracted by worry. Give me rest.
I feel like a failure. Give me Jesus.
He is sufficient, and even now,
Is seated with you, interceding on my behalf.
Give me ears to hear. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 67

Old Testament Reading

2 Kings 7:3-9

Gospel Reading

John 1:35-42

Prayer of Response *From Duguid and Houk's "Prone to Wander"*

Father, all the peoples will praise you. Your glory will fill the whole earth. And you've invited us to declare the good news of your Kingdom. Grant us a faithful presence. To trust in Jesus' words rather than our gifts, our talents, our methods. Let us come with our spots, our deficiencies, our doubts and simply bring others to him. Amen.

Reflection

According to 2 Kings 7:9 what is the right response to good news?

How does Andrew respond to the good news of the Messiah (See v. 42). Does this encourage you? Who are you bringing before Jesus?

Day 22

Call to Prayer

Gracious God, you have opened your mouth to us:
Speak, your servant hears.
You have opened your ear to us:
Listen, we come begging your grace.
Even now, we ask that you would meet us
In our weakness, with your tenderness
In our doubt, with your assurance
In our failure, with your delight. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 8

Old Testament Reading

2 Kings 5:1-14

Gospel Reading

John 9:1-7

Prayer of Response *From Duguid and Houk's "Prone to Wander"*

O God of All Glory, you so often bewilder us by the ways you choose to work. Your majestic name praised by insignificant mouths. Your heavenly glory bestowed on the heads of men. Your work of dominion shared with our frail hands. Let us not forget that your kingdom is upside down; you use the weak to shame the strong.

Reflection

God often seems "hidden" to us, working in and through the ordinary circumstances of our lives. Reflect on how God has used seemingly insignificant things to guide your life.

How can you cultivate a greater awareness of and appreciation for the mundane means God uses to shape you?

Day 23

Call to Prayer

Father of Life, we come with the very breath you give. Still us with your presence. Strengthen us with your promises. Fill us with your Spirit. Conform us to your Son. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 104

Old Testament Reading

Job 1:6-22

Gospel Reading

John 11:17-27

Prayer of Response *From Thomas Becon*

Work in us, through your Holy Spirit, a mind content with that which is sufficient, seeing that no man's life stands in the abundance of the things which he possesses; seeing also that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world, and have here no continuing city, but seek one to come; again, seeing we brought nothing into the world, neither shall we carry anything out of it. For naked came we out of our mother's womb, and naked shall we turn to the earth again. Take away from us all superfluous worldly cares, and teach us to be content with food and clothing. Amen.

Reflection

What have been some of the big moments of the last year? Things God has "created" in your life? Things he's put to death?

Reflect on Jesus' words. How does his being the "resurrection and the life" give hope to each of these?

Day 24

Call to Prayer

O God, Revealer of Truth, situate us before you rightly. Prepare our hearts to mourn, to lament. Show us what is vile, what is broken, what is blind. But show us Jesus. How he heals our vileness, restores our brokenness, and gives sight to our eyes. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 13

Old Testament Reading

Lamentations 5

Gospel Reading

John 16:16-20

Prayer of Response

God of All Mercy, help us cry out when we would rather be silent. Help us rend our hearts when we would rather hide. Help us find words to express the depth of our sin and despair. But help us also hope in our lament. Restore us to yourself, in Christ. Let your Spirit groan. Amen.

Reflection

What strikes you about the Psalmist's language? And the Lamentations passage? Does the way they speak to God make you uncomfortable?

Why does Jesus tell his disciples to lament rather than rejoice? What could the Lord do in your lamentation?

Day 25

Call to Prayer

O God, we come now exhausted from looking. Looking to ourselves. Looking to our desires. Looking to golden calves. Holy Spirit, direct our gaze to Jesus. Let us look now to him. To his life. To his cross. To the empty tomb. Fix our eyes on him. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 119:25-32

Old Testament Reading

Joshua 4:19-24

New Testament Reading

Hebrews 12:1-6

Prayer of Response

Faithful Father, we are so prone to wander. Our feet to evil. Our minds to doubt. Our hearts to selfishness. We need your grace and your mercy to draw us back to yourself. To set our feet on the Rock. To fix our minds on Christ. To incline our hearts to your promises. Amen.

Reflection

Why was it so important that the Israelites set up stones where they'd crossed the Jordan?

What "stones" can you set up that will help you look to Jesus? (Think: means of grace, community, etc.)

Day 26

Call to Prayer *Prayer to God the Father, St Ambrose of Milan (337-397 AD)*

O Lord, who has mercy upon all, take away from me my sins,
and mercifully kindle in me the fire of Your Holy Spirit.
Take away from me the heart of stone,
and give me a heart of flesh, a heart to love and adore You,
a heart to delight in You, to follow and to enjoy You,
for Christ's sake. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 130

Old Testament Reading

Ezra 3:8-13

New Testament Reading

1 Peter 4:1-11

Prayer of Response

God. Help me to love earnestly. To offer hospitality without grumbling. To serve joyfully. By your strength, may all we do lift up the name of Jesus. Amen.

Reflection

What would it look like to create more time and space in your life for hospitality?

Day 27

Call to Prayer *From The Paraclete Psalter*

Eternal Lord our God, the beginning and end of our lives,
Give us grace to serve you with joy,
That we might know that our full and lasting happiness
Is a life of constant service to you and our neighbor.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 131

Old Testament Reading

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Gospel Reading

Mark 13:3-13

Prayer of Response *From the hymn, "Be Thou My Vision"*

High king of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O ruler of all

Reflection

What comfort and assurance do we have when we are hated?

Why is it often difficult for us to endure?

Day 28

Call to Prayer

God, you are the Good Shepherd, who is always drawing me in. Help me to surrender. To listen. To know You. Set my affections on Christ. Amen.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 121

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 60

New Testament Reading

Ephesians 5:1-20

Prayer of Response

God. Lift up my eyes to see You -- that you are my help, my defender, my hope. Set in my heart an expectation toward the coming Christ and remind me that its reality changes the way I live my life today. Set on my lips the name of Jesus. Amen!

Reflection

Why does Paul call us “children of light”?

Day 29

Call to Prayer *From Ephesians 1*

To the Father who has given us every spiritual blessing in Christ.

We give praise and glory!

To the Son through whom we have redemption,
forgiveness, and the riches of God's grace.

We give praise and glory!

To the Spirit that seals us in His promise,
the guarantee of our inheritance until we possess it.

We give praise and glory!

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 29

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 61

New Testament Reading

1 Thessalonians 5

Prayer of Response *From the song "Psalm 126," by Isaac Wardell*

Although we are weeping, Lord, help us keep sowing

The seeds of your kingdom, for the day you will reap them!

Your sheaves we will carry; Lord, please do not tarry!

All those who sow weeping will go out with songs of joy!

Reflection

What comforts/gives you hope in the Isaiah 61 passage?

How does Christ fulfill these truths in Isaiah 61?

Day 30

Call to Prayer *From Canyon Road: A Book of Prayer, by Kari Kristina Reeves*

Jesus, you are the Son of God: protect me from the powers of darkness that threaten to steal, kill, and destroy. Father Almighty, you are the Eternal One: protect me from the threats of an invisible foe. Holy Spirit, my Comforter: silence the mocking shouts that deafen your voice. God, surround me with the protection of holy angels, and teach me how to stand in faith. My enemies knock me down, and run over my back. Their lies feel too powerful to rebuke. You alone can teach me how to fight, God, since you alone conquered death. I'm asking you to teach me now. Stand for me, stand in me, stand through me. At your name every knee must bow, in heaven and on earth, and so I bow my knees before you, Jesus: take this as a sign of my obedience. My bent knees are my prayer.

Silence

Psalm Reading

Psalm 132

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 62

New Testament Reading

Revelation 21

Prayer of Response *From Matthew 6:9-13*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kingdom and the power and glory forever. Amen.

Reflection

Take some time to reflect on the last month and consider what God has shown and taught you.

Ask the God would continue to apply these truths to your heart and life

