

The Benefice of  
EAST CLEVEDON - LENT COURSE 2022  
*Diocese of Bath and Wells*

**LENT COURSE 2022**

**PSALM 117** (*Common Worship Daily Prayer*)

- 1 O praise the Lord, all you nations;  
praise him, all you peoples.
- 2 For great is his steadfast love towards us,  
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever.  
Alleluia

**PRAYER**

Gracious God,  
we praise you for your faithfulness  
and pray that every nation may find your blessing  
in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**BACKGROUND**

The 150 Psalms that make up the Book of Psalms are prayers. They praise God, and they ask God to intercede in the sufferings and pains of his people. When praising, the Psalms not only thank God for his goodness, but affirm who God is and who his people are in the light of this. God is the Good Shepherd and his people are his sheep. When crying out to God to intercede in moments of anguish, the Psalms affirm God's goodness and provision in spite of the people's suffering.

Whatever their circumstances, whether joyful or painful, the Psalms are filled with the sense that God is present with his people.

**REFLECTION**

For me, Psalm 117, though it is the shortest Psalm by far, encapsulates this idea that through the words of the Psalms God is present with his people.

Because we are God's people, we can confidently use this psalm as a prayer for ourselves. In doing so, we affirm who we are within God's creation remind ourselves of the truth of God's love for us. Whoever we are, wherever we are, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, we can be assured that God is with us and present in our lives. Through understanding this Psalm for ourselves we are encouraged to pray in the knowledge that we are praying with Christians throughout the world. We are not only affirming who we are in God, but who we are as a precious part of the community of Christians in all places.

In one of the earliest Monastic Rules, written by St. Benedict (c480 - c547 AD) it is prescribed that Monastic Communities say or sing the Book of 150 Psalms in its entirety each week, every week! In Psalm 117's simplicity and shortness, I find it representative of this cycle. Within the Anglican Church we too follow a rhythm; the seasons and festivals of our yearly liturgical cycle, and the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer. We pray not only within a cycle of prayer that involves the whole Christian Community, but in a cycle of prayer that surrounds us individually in the presence of God.

Tomorrow, 17th March, the Church commemorates St. Patrick, "the Apostle to the Irish" (c385 - c461), and I find the essence of Psalm 117 present in part of one of his prayers:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.

Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

When we surround ourselves in prayer with surround ourselves with the presence of God.

*Joshua Fowler.*

## A MEDITATION ON PSALM 117

from "**DAVID'S CROWN - Sounding the Psalms!**"

by Malcolm Guite

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His love is steadfast and His will is true;  
His mercy and His kindness will endure  
for evermore. I praise my Saviour who

descended and became one of the poor,  
came down with us to death that He might raise  
us up. 'His kindness is for evermore'

the psalmist says, who wrote this in the days  
before the Resurrection. I will make  
this little psalm the springboard of my praise

who have more cause to praise Him. I will take  
these words and find The Word Himself in them;  
the promise of the day when we awake

from darkness into light, and look on Him  
who found us deep in death, and drew us out  
that we might shine amidst the Seraphim.

## LENT 2022 PROGRAMME

9th March	Noël Hector on Psalm 42
16th March	Joshua Fowler on Psalm 117
23rd March	Caroline Sackley on Psalm 63
30th March	Nicholas Maddock on Psalm 22
6th April	Tim Daplyn on Psalm 95

*Copies of the notes on all of these Psalms are available  
at the back of each church or from the Church Office*