Monday, January 22nd – Psalm 117
We have reviewed our Journey through the Bible and are back in Psalms. These Psalms are considered to have been written during or around the time of Hezekiah’s reign. They may have been written during that time or were found around then, when they were cleaning the Temple and purifying it for use. Our psalm today is 2 verses long. Let’s start by just reading the 2 verses. Who is called to praise the Lord (vs. 1)? Why? Israel is included in the “people”, who else is included in this call to praise? Is it all the people of the earth – believers and those who do not believe. What is the reason the psalmist gives as the reason for praise (verse 2)? How have you experienced these things of God? What does this reveal to you about God? What does this reveal to you about humanity? Consider that everyone is called to praise. This indicates everyone can do it, but why would some not choose to praise? How does this point to Jesus? Consider verse 2 and how this love, power and faithfulness is demonstrated in and through Jesus. How does it point to “endures forever”?

Tuesday, January 23rd – Psalm 118
Today we turn to Psalm 118. It also is a song of praise for what God has done. What is the call to the people and to which people is it going out (vss. 1-4)? Note what is different from Psalm 117:1. As we move to verse 5, it gets personal. What has happened and what is the psalmist’s response and advice (vss. 5-9)? What additional information do verses 10-13 give you regarding the psalmist’s experience? Did you notice that the psalmist did nothing in his own power, but God used him and intervened on his behalf. Because of what God has done, how does the psalmist praise him (vss. 14-16)? What words are repeated? What do they mean? In verse 17-18 we learn a bit more about the situation and the reason for it. What does the psalmist say (vss. 17-18)? As we move forward, read verses 19-21. Now that God has acted and redeemed the psalmist, what does the psalmist ask? Some believe that this was sung as a processional to the Temple after a victory, but we do not know which one. But verses 22-24 point to a victory of some sorts as well. The stone in verse 22 is believed to be Israel whom the gentle princes rejected and thought weak, but God made Israel the cornerstone. Because of this, what are the Israelites called to do (vs. 24)? Now read verses 25-28. These words should be familiar in that they are part of the Holy Communion liturgy and part of the Palm Sunday readings. This paints the picture of a processional to the Temple to make the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for what he has done and will do. The psalm closes with the same call as verse 1. This is referred to as a “bookend,” in that it starts and finishes the psalm. What does this psalm reveal to you about God? What does it reveal to you about humanity? Where have you experienced God’s salvation, even when the punishment due was legitimate? How does this psalm point to Jesus? Consider verses 22, 26-27. How is Jesus the festal sacrifice that saves us?

Wednesday, January 24th – Psalm 120
Today we begin what is called “The Psalms of Ascent.” These are Psalms that would be sung by the pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for Passover and other festivals. Songs of Ascent vary in tone. Some are laments, others thanksgiving and praise. Some general, some personal. Today’s psalm is a personal lament of someone living away from Israel, as noted in verse 5. Why is the psalmist lamenting? What is the problem that he is encountering (vss. 1-2)? What does he believe God will do to rescue him (vss. 3-4)? As mentioned already, the psalmist is not living within Israel’s borders. Where is he and what is the problem with his being there (vss. 5-7)? What does this reveal to you about God? What does this reveal to you about humanity? Consider how this could apply to us when we are not connected to the church. How does this point to Jesus? Consider how Jesus was the peace mentioned in the angels’ song at Christmas Eve and the name given by Isaiah in his prophecy. How is Jesus the fulfillment of peace?

Thursday, January 25th – Psalm 121
Today’s Song of Ascents is a psalm of confidence leading to worship upon the arrival at the Temple. To help us understand the opening of this psalm, we need to know that the Temple was built up on the mountain. That is why we have the term “temple mount.” With this knowledge, now read verses 1-4. How does this describe the ascent to the Temple? What do verses 3-4 reveal to you about the time you might be arriving? Does your timing matter when it comes to God? How does God protect the pilgrim (vss. 5-8)? What does this psalm reveal to you about God? What does it reveal about humanity? How does this psalm apply to you personally? How does it point to or reveal Jesus?

Friday, January 26th – Psalm 123
We close this week with Psalm 123, another “Song of Ascent.” We already covered Psalm 122 as it was written by King David. Psalm 123 is a community lament. Let’s read and discover what this lament is regarding. What are the pilgrims seeking from God (vss. 1-2)? It is a good thing to look to God for His mercy. What is happening that they are looking for God’s mercy (vss. 3-4)? It is believed that unfaithful Israelites and gentiles encountered on the pilgrimage to the Temple were ridiculing and harassing the pilgrims. Therefore, they fixed their eyes on God for mercy on them until they arrived. What kind of mercy do you think they were seeking? What does this reveal about God? What does it reveal to you about humanity? How does this apply to you? Are you the scoffer or the pilgrim being harassed, or both? How does this point to Jesus? Consider Jesus’ pilgrimage to the Temple.

Saturday, January 27th – To prepare for tomorrow’s worship, please read Psalm 119:25-32.