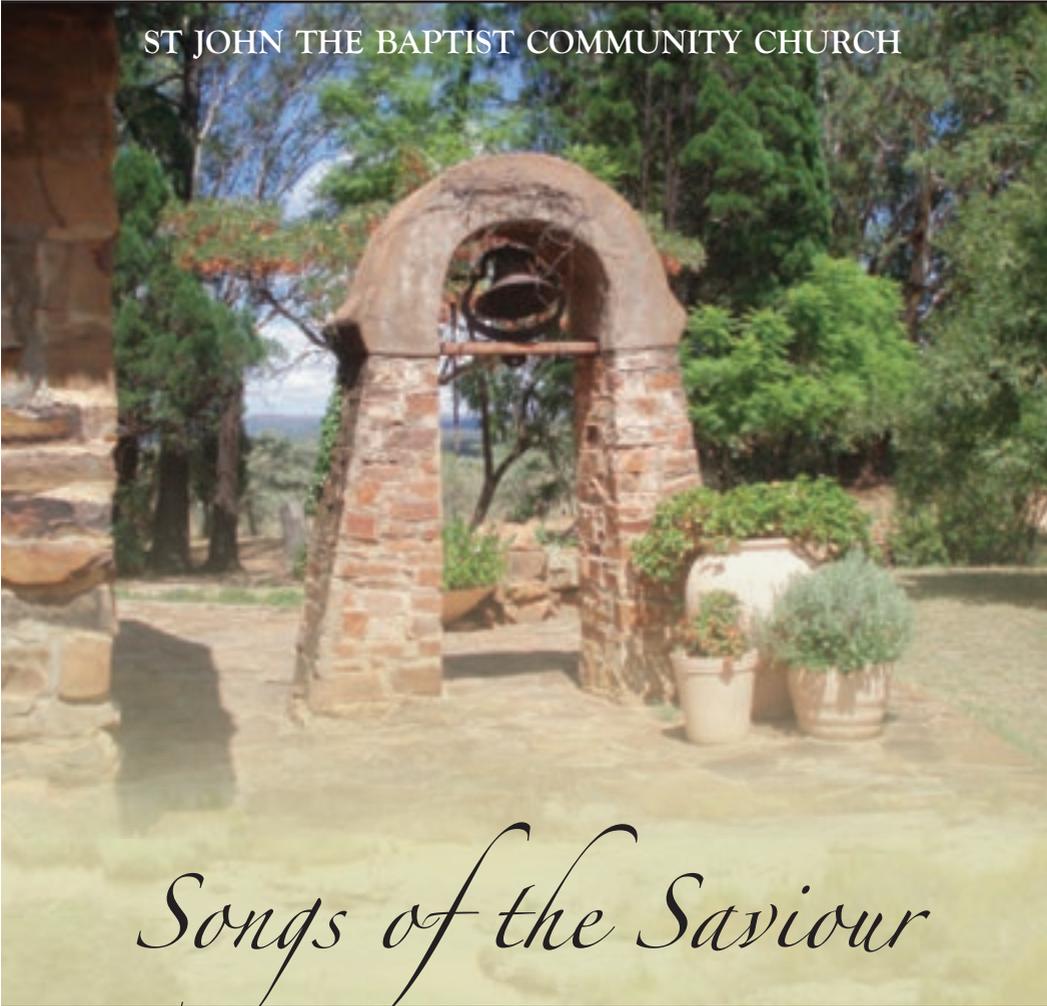


# The Source

EZEKIEL 47:1-12

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST COMMUNITY CHURCH



*Songs of the Saviour*

JULY 2011



# The Lord, My Shepherd – Psalm 23

*Nina Baber*

This wonderfully beautiful Psalm is perhaps the best known and most loved of all the Psalms which David wrote. It describes in a series of word pictures the special relationship between the Lord and those who have given their heart's love, will and allegiance to Jesus, the Saviour.

David, who had cared for his father's flocks as a youngster, uses the imagery of a Shepherd and his sheep to illustrate this relationship.

In Israel, unlike South Africa, the Shepherd walked ahead of the sheep to protect the flock from every danger – of lions or wolves desiring to make a meal of a sheep, and from all other dangers. They would follow the shepherd as he sought for them fresh grazing and clear water.

Is this not a perfect description of the relationship between the Savior and the believer? As the sheep are completely dependent upon their shepherd for provision and guidance and protection, so we human believers become obedient followers of the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) and as we follow Him, discover that we have everything we need. Beauty and love and compassion dominate our thoughts and Jesus brings us “rest in the meadow grass, and leads us beside quiet streams”, a picture of the life of inner peace and joy He prepares for those who are His, a heart attitude of true contentment.

As we follow Jesus, David writes, “He restores our failing health.” He helps us to do what honours Him, and to keep to the right paths.

If we choose to rebel and go our own way, we create circumstances which are against our own best interests. This fact needs to be remembered when we are tempted to stray, as do some of the sheep. But Jesus will seek to find and bring back each “lost sheep”. In the words of the hymn – “Yet on His shoulder gently laid, and home rejoicing brought me.”

David writes that even when the dark shadow



of death falls upon us, the believer need not fear. Jesus is always close beside us, guarding, guiding all the way. What amazingly comforting knowledge this is.

David speaks next of a banquet. In ancient near-Eastern culture, at a banquet it was customary to anoint a person with fragrant oil as a lotion. Hosts were also expected to protect their guests at all costs. God offers the protection of a host even when enemies surround us, as David had himself experienced.

In the final verse of the Psalm, David says “Your goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all of my life, and afterwards I will live with you forever in your home.” So we see that believers, in every age, will eventually dwell with God, the perfect Shepherd and host, who promises to guide and protect us throughout our life, and to bring us into His house forever.

What favour, what grace, what unconditional and beautiful love God bestows on those who put their trust and their whole lives into His beautiful nail-scarred hands.

*Why would anyone turn away from life, love and Jesus our King and Shepherd!*

# The cry of the forsaken – Psalm 22

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*Shane Dowinton*

Scripture is filled with the revelation of God. Like streaks of sunlight through the darkness of a coming storm, each book of the Bible lends us another perspective of His majesty. In the historical narratives we might have to move loose rubble to find the substance of His purpose, and in the prophets we may well meander confused in ancient imagery to see His glory. Yet in the Psalms we find empathy. In this collection of Hebrew poetry and hymns we are suddenly on familiar ground. Whether joyful and exuberant or downcast and thoroughly miserable, we find the human heart exposed to the elements, leaping in gratitude or wallowing in the mire of life. The Psalms reflect the ageless emotions of the human heart crying out to God.

Why is it that when we are at the extremes of emotion do songs and poetry become our preferred method of statement? Why does a line from a hymn or a stanza of poetry cause a welling in the eyes or a sense of excitement? Is it because at this our deepest point, at the centre of our being, we find ourselves closest to the Lord? When the neat brickwork of our rationale has crumbled, when the unexpected blow has stopped us short, when life and people have betrayed our trust, and we have nothing, are nothing, but our cry. Is that when we stand nearest to Him?

Psalm 22 suggests that to me. Jesus would have known the Psalms, He would have grown up singing them, reciting them. He would have had His favourites as we do. I'm sure the highs and lows of His life were punctuated by the personal nature of many of them. When He faces the bleakest moment of His life, the moment He had dreaded, carrying the sin of the world on His shoulders, peering through the blood and the pain at the mockery and rejection of the world, where does He turn His mind? – “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” - the first line of Psalm 22.

But is it just the line that's familiar to Him, like so many tracts of scripture that might come to mind? When we read the psalm in its entirety we realise that its entirety applies. Beyond prophecy, (King David wrote the psalm hundreds of years before this moment after all.) more like applied history. “Scorned by men...” “All who see Me mock me...” “I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint.” “They divide My garments among them, and cast lots for My clothing.” “...they have pierced My hands and feet.” Everything that He is experiencing at that moment becomes relevant.

Yet the psalm rises from affliction to victory. “From you comes the theme of My praise in the great assembly; before those who fear You will I fulfill My vows.”, “dominion belongs to the Lord...” “all who go down to the dust will kneel before Him.” “Future generations will be told about the Lord.” I believe that as His lips began to speak this mighty psalm, His mind would have naturally found itself dwelling in the outcome of this torture, that in moments the victory would be won and the gates of the Kingdom would be flung wide open because of this act.

Did Christ gather Himself on the power of these words? Did they carry Him those last staggering steps giving Him strength to endure the weight of our sin and separation from the Father? I believe He did.

The psalm ends, according to some, with a word in the Hebrew that can be translated, “It is finished.” Ironic don't you think?

# Revealing the heart of God– Psalms

Marilyn Cook

The book of Psalms takes us right into the heart of God. While the Gospels tell the story of Jesus' life and His love and compassion and sometimes anger – it is through the Psalms that we really come to feel our Lord's compassion and love, grace, mercy and forgiveness.

Psalm 51 is David's cry for forgiveness after he had confessed his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah. He cries out:

*“Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness, According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions.*

*Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
And cleanse me from my sin.*

*For I know my transgressions,  
And my sin is ever before me.*

*Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned,  
And done what is evil in Thy sight,  
So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak  
And blameless when Thou dost judge.”*

*vs. 1-4*

*He pleads to be purified:*

*“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
And in sin my mother conceived me.*

*Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the  
innermost being,*

*And in the hidden part Thou wilt make my  
know wisdom.*

*Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*

*Make me to hear joy and gladness,  
Let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice,*

*Hide Thy face from my sins,  
And blot out all my iniquities.”*

*vs. 5-9*

*And, finally, for restoration:*

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from Thy presence,  
And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation.*

*And sustain me with a willing spirit.”  
vs 10-12*

*Then, once restored he will:*

*“Teach transgressors Thy ways,  
And sinners will be converted to Thee.” vs 13*

*David was forgiven through God's great mercy and later God called him ‘a man after My own heart.’ God had thoroughly cleansed and purified him and David knew that God's heart is to forgive and restore His child.*

David later wrote *“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness...”* And , *“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us...”* Psalm 103:8, 11-12 These are the words of a truly forgiven man.

God's words go deep into our spirits and there we learn what He desires even in our innermost parts. He desires that we love and serve Him with pure hearts and that we participate in His salvation!

Have you ever prayed David's prayer of Psalm 51? Let Him search out your heart and restore you to the person He would have you be. If God forgave David, He will certainly forgive anyone who comes to Him in true repentance seeking to be washed and cleansed and given a pure and clean heart.





# Our Everpresent Saviour– Psalm 46

Sharon de Silva

No doubt Psalms is the best loved book in the Old Testament. Someone once called it the solid gold of Christian experience. *‘Slip in wherever you will and you will find a treasure’*. Psalms means book of praise.

Psalm 46 is a song or poem of trust and thanksgiving.

*Theme: God is always there to help, providing refuge, security and peace. God’s power is complete and His ultimate victory is certain. He will not fail to rescue those who love him.*

What an *amazing* statement! No matter what the world may present to us, God is always with us! If we love God, this promise is unconditionally for us. It does not matter who we are or what we have done; just as Jacob was not perfect nor are we, but if we love the Lord He is constantly with us protecting us from all dangers. How awesome is that!

It does not matter if it is an earthquake or a war or a nuclear explosion, just as God created everything in the world He remains in control of it. As long as God is the most important thing in your life and you are fully focused on Him, and He is your priority, He will protect you and see you through any crisis, just as He was with the Israelites. But when they took their eyes and focus off Him they floundered – just as we will do if we try and replace Him with any other thing or god, e.g. sex, money or career.

War and destruction are inevitable, but so is God’s final victory! Just as we will stand quiet on Judgment Day, we should take time every day to be silent and praise and exalt God. This illustrates the need for and the importance of a daily quiet time with our Lord. Each day when I have a quiet time, I feel I can handle anything and everything! But when I have occasionally missed out on it everything seems to go wrong, wrong, wrong!

God is awesome and indescribable! But we can and must share with others what He has done in our lives as well as all we know about Him. So often problems feel insurmountable, but with God’s help anything is possible.

*“Our God is an awesome God  
He reigns over heaven and earth  
In wisdom, power and love  
Our God is an awesome God”*

## Footprints

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to him and one belonging to the Lord.



When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times of his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow You, You'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed You most You would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you!"

Author unknown

Life References: "What the Bible is all about"– Henrietta Mears; Application Bible

*"God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth  
should change,  
And though the mountains slip into the heart  
of the sea;  
Though its waters roar and foam,  
Though the mountains quake at its  
swelling pride."*

Psalm 46:1-3

*My favourite psalm is Psalm 23.*

*It is amazing that God is with me  
always, no matter where I am and what  
I am going through. I never have to  
feel alone. He is the friend that sticks  
closer than a brother. He helps and  
guides me from the day I am born to  
the day I die. All I have to do is ask  
Him into my heart.*

*Antonio Storm De Souza*



# LETHABO

## kid's club

### Lethabo – a Happy Place!



Thank the Lord for providing. The children now have a roof to meet under while they hear Bible stories to warm their hearts and milk and peanut butter and jam sandwiches to fill their tummies.



Kid's Club up and going under a new roof and a new banner!



# Sovereign Saviour and King– Psalm 2

## Why do the nations conspire?

*Philip Calcott*

About twenty years ago I remember listening to a talk by a distinguished practitioner of the law, who startled his listeners by stating that within a few years Christians in the UK would face a choice – between their faith and their comfort. He predicted that practicing simple biblical Christianity would no longer be considered compatible with UK law, and that there would be a string of cases – in almost every area if life – where Christians would face the loss of their jobs, or even their freedom, for standing up for their faith.

Sensational? Scare mongering? Far from it. The cases are now all over the UK newspapers on a regular basis:

**28 February 2011** – High court rules “there is no place for Christianity in UK law” and any couple who disapprove of homosexuality cannot adopt children.

**24 May 2011** – “Christian doctor of 28 years under investigation by GMC for sharing his faith with a patient.”

Who could imagine in “Christian” Britain nurses, doctors and care workers being sacked for offering to pray for a patient, Magistrates forced to resign for their Christian beliefs, and prospective parents only allowed to adopt if they abandoned their Christian faith?

Well, according to the Bible, it should be no surprise. It’s just humans being their usual rebellious selves.

“Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

*The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.” Psalm 2:1, 2*

It’s nothing new. From the dawn of humanity humans have shaken their fist at God, and they will continue to do so until the end.

So what does it mean, and how should we respond to this? Well, the natural reaction is

shock and outrage, perhaps tinged with fear. If this is what Christians all over the UK are experiencing where do we stand here in South Africa? Our law is moving in much the same direction, should we be worried? Psalm 2 gives a very clear answer to this:

*“The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.*

*Then He rebukes them in His wrath, saying, ‘I have installed My King on Zion, My holy hill.’” Psalm 2:4-6*

Jesus is KING. He rules. The eternal God who is from everlasting to everlasting laughs. How could these mere men think that they can change the law of God, or rise up against Him and His anointed ruler and judge? The creator of the universe warns them:

*“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you be destroyed in your way.” Psalm 2:12a*

This ‘conflict’ is actually a no-contest. God verses man has only one possible outcome. There is really only one question for us; whose side are we on? If the answer is God’s, then we can relax:

*“Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.” Psalm 2:12b*

God does not want us to fear. The battle over truth and justice is His, and He will surely wage and win it. No, He wants us to be free of fear, and of anger. The story of the Bible is this: Jesus wins, and Christians win as well because we are in Him. From this position of perfect strength we can be ambassadors of God’s peace – just like Jesus was on earth. We can reach out to those who would persecute us and say as Jesus did, “Father forgive them.”



Anna Dobrenz, visitor from Wyoming brought blankets made by the church where she fellowships. The kids hugged them to themselves – something that was truly theirs!

Exciting things are happening at The Fold.

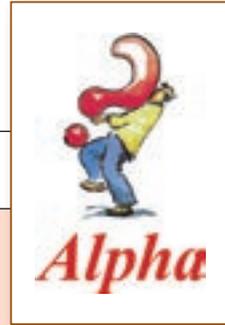
It is indeed wonderful to witness the ongoing transformation in the lives of the children in our care. There is only one thing greater than their immense hunger for learning, sharing, riding bikes, uplifting each other, healthy competition, et cetera and that is their hunger for the scrumptious, nutritional meals that they now have access to on a regular daily basis.

Our sincere thanks to all who have contributed to making this possible.

We are thrilled to be able to share that our second residence is going to be a reality by the end of June. With this comes the challenges of furnishing and equipping it. Carpets, curtains, linen, towels, pots and pans, roasting pans. In fact, all bits and pieces for kitchen and dining room.



If you would like to help in any way, here are our details:  
Nedbank Lephalale  
Current account # 1445126591  
Branch # 144547



*My favourite Psalm is 118*

*I like this psalm because it gives me courage and confidence, knowing that God is with me always, He is my strength and salvation. The wonderful thing is that if He is for me I need not worry about what mere man can do to me. The part I like the most is, "This is the day that the Lord has made, come and rejoice and be glad in it" because it inspires me to appreciate and make the most of each and every day.*

*Sergio Luke De Souza*

Hi guys

A great testimony we received via facebook:

*Angela wrote "This year's Alpha course at Brits prison has now been completed. One prisoner who became a leader on this course after attending the previous one was released from prison the day after the certificate ceremony – after 8 years in jail – some of our church folk attended his welcome home celebration in Rustenburg. Alpha is making a big difference. He is ready to be a pastor!"*

*Love*

*Sheldon*

Sheldon Delpont

(National Director)

Alpha South Africa

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[www.alphasa.co.za](http://www.alphasa.co.za)

[www.facebook.com/AlphaSA](https://www.facebook.com/AlphaSA)

# ST JOHN THE BAPTIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

## **Elders:**

Charles Baber	014 755 4000 or 083 276 0518
Joan Baber	014 755 4087 or 083 397 9277
Peter Farrant	014 755 3661 or 082 569 9147
David Baber	014 755 4430 or 083 273 4525
Philip Calcott	014 755 4425 or 078 207 8570
Alan van Coller	014 755 4549 or 073 179 4313

## **Officers:**

Chairman of Council – Shane Dowinton	014 755 4009 or 083 419 1929
Secretary – Joy Baber	014 755 4087 or 078 251 6022
Treasurer – Simone Baber	014 755 4430 or 083 302 5123

**Banking Details: FNB Modimolle, Branch no 260247,  
Account no 531 746 01684**

## **PLEASE JOIN US:**

***Men's Bush Breakfast*** at 'Exciting Times', Joan Baber's  
Contact: Shane Dowinton, 014 755 4009

***Do you have information for The Source?***

Contact: Marilyn Cook, 014 755 4142 or 084 805 2199

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Published by:



ST JOHNS CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE AT  
9:15 for Praise and Worship, 9:30 Service Begins

Take the Melkrivier Road to the Twenty-Four Rivers sign.  
Turn right and travel 10 km. Turn left and left again into church property.

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*“The Lord is my strength and song,  
And He has become my salvation.”*

*Psalms 118:14*

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**Purpose Statement**

To bring people to Jesus and membership in His family;  
to develop them in Christlike maturity and equip them for their ministry  
in the church and life mission in the world in order to glorify God.