

**Singing the Psalms at St. Augustine's  
Season of Pentecost, Year A  
September 10 – November 5, 2023**

At St. Augustine's we have a tradition of using a variety of settings for the Psalms. The translation of the Psalm texts we have been using since 2020 is from the Episcopal Church's Order of St. Helena. This translation emphasizes gender neutrality and inclusive language to help everyone to participate fully in the message inherent in each Psalm. A link to more information about the Order of St. Helena is [here](#), and how they approach psalmody is [here](#).

During the summer months we usually say the Psalms together or responsively, but for the rest of the year we use different musical settings of the Psalms, and the settings change with the liturgical season. We typically use settings in which the congregation sings an Antiphon or refrain in response to the verses which are sung by the choir. This method allows the congregation to fully participate in each psalm without adding the complication of learning different (and sometime lengthy) psalm music each Sunday on-the-fly.

For the remainder of the Season of Pentecost, Year A, from September 10<sup>th</sup> through All Saints Sunday on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023, we are using simple refrains that I have written or arranged and paired those with Anglican chant psalm tunes that the choir sings in 4-part harmony. Anglican chant is a way of singing unmetrical texts that was developed during the time of the Reformation as has been a traditional part of Anglican worship ever since. More about Anglican chant can be found [here](#).

A sample recording of a psalm sung to Anglican chant can be found [here](#). (This is a 5-hour-long collection of historic recordings of the Guildford Cathedral Choir from the U.K., so you might want to bookmark it for future listening. Just hearing the first few seconds gives you a wonderful example!)

One difference in the way we use Anglican chant at St. A's is with the use of the congregational Antiphons. When the choir alone sings the psalms, the congregation can become a bit removed from the psalm text and view the psalm as more of a "performance," rather than something that includes active participation. Incorporating the antiphons is intended to help worshippers to engage with the psalm text, even if they are not singing every word. The one exception to this will be on Sunday, October 22, when the congregation and choir will join in singing an Anglican chant setting of Psalm 99. The music for that psalm is based on the hymn tune "Ein feste Burg," which is well-known as the hymn "A mighty fortress is our God."

The psalm antiphons for this fall will be featured in a weekly music note in the Parish Life Connections, so watch for those in the coming weeks.