

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 18

For 1 Nov 2015

Dear Friends

This is about trees. It started when I picked up a magazine and discovered that the city of Melbourne has given email addresses to the trees on their streets so that people can report problems. Officials have assigned the trees ID numbers and email addresses. The result? People did more than report issues like broken branches; they wrote directly to the trees—thousands of emails!

Here's a tiny sample:

- * “My dearest ulmus, as I was leaving St Mary’s College today I was struck not by one of your branches but by your radiant beauty. You must get these messages all the time. You’re such an attractive tree.”
- * “Dear Algerian Oak/Tree ID 1032705. Thank you for giving us oxygen, and for being so beautiful. I don’t know where I’d be without you to extract my carbon dioxide ... Stay strong, stand tall amongst the crowd.”
- * One email came as a message from a tree in the USA: “My name is Quercus alba. I’m about 350 years old and live on a small farm. I’m about 80ft tall with a girth of about 16ft. I don’t travel much (actually haven’t moved since I was an acorn!) Have a good day Oak tree ID 1070546.”

The story sparked all sorts of memories and positive associations, like remembering the trees I climbed as a boy, standing at the base of Tane Mahuta (NZ’s largest living kauri), and constantly revisiting the magnificent pines in the Wellington Botanical Gardens near the herb garden. While I’m reminiscing I add the shock I felt while on a farm near Kawhia years ago when the farmer took his chainsaw to a 200+ years old rimu tree and it hit the ground with a thud in what seemed like 2 minutes.

Next to our animal pets (cats, dogs & birds etc) trees seem to come a close second. We may even begin to give them personal conscious qualities—they calm us, remain present and reassuring, their silence, size, shelter and stability can be like the gifts of a personal friend. In all the vast variety of nature, trees have come to be symbols and signs of much more than just themselves. So there is more to explore.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 2 November:	23	Rom 5:5-11	John 5:19-25
Tuesday 3 November:	131	Rom 12:5-16	Luke 14:15-24
Wednesday 4 November:	112	Rom 13:8-10	Luke 14:25-33
Thursday 5 November:	27:14-end	Rom 14:7-12	Luke 15:1-10
Friday 6 November:	98	Rom 15:14-21	Luke 16:1-8
Saturday 7 November:	145:1-7	Rom 6:3-9,16, 22-end	Luke 16:9-15

Sunday 8 November Pentecost 24

Ps 127; Ruth 3:1-5,4:13-17; Heb 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 9 November:	139:1-9	Titus 1:1-9	Luke 17:1-6
Tuesday 10 November:	34:1-6	Titus 2:1-8,11-14	Luke 17:7-10
Wednesday 11 November:	83	Titus 3:1-7	Luke 17:11-19
Thursday 12 November:	119:89-96	Philemon 7-20	Luke 17:20-25
Friday 13 November:	19:1-4	2 John 4-9	Luke 17:26-end
Saturday 14 November:	112	3 John 5-8	Luke 18:1-8

Sunday 15 November Pentecost 25

Ps 16; 1 Sam 1:4-20; Heb 10:11-14,(15-18),19-25; Mark 13:1-8

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 16 November:	79:1-5	Rev 1:1-4;2:1-5	Luke 18:35-end
Tuesday 17 November:	11	Rev 3:1-6,14-31	Luke 19:1-10
Wednesday 18 November:	150	Rev 4	Luke 19:11-28
Thursday 19 November:	129	Rev 5:1-10	Luke 19:41-44
Friday 20 November:	122	Rev 10:8-11	Luke 19:45-48
Saturday 21 November:	124	Rev 11:4-12	Luke 20:27-40

Sunday 22 November Reign of Christ

Ps 132:1-12,(13-18); 2 Sam 23:1-7; Rev 1:4b-8; Mark 12:38-44

EXPERIENCING THE AWE

“Trees play a two-part role in the movement of carbon through the eco-system. They absorb it from the atmosphere, and they store it in themselves and in the soil. The process by which forests inhale CO₂ and exhale oxygen occurs at a microscopic level. No wonder forests are often called the lungs of the earth!” - so writes Al Gore in *“Our Choice”* (2009).

It seems that every great culture, every world view which aims to understand the one-ness of the universe and every spiritual vision of life on this planet has used the tree as a valid symbol of the wonder, mystery, togetherness, harmony and health of our presence and place in nature. For example: The Bible opens with the creation story of God planting a garden in Eden— in the east the place of the rising sun, the beginning of each new day. And in the garden there grew every tree, beautiful and fruitful. Among them was the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—all the opposites that tie us in knots, put us in opposing groups, races, religions and nations, and eventually tear us, pull us apart and can destroy us.

With great understanding the Hebrews drew the Tree of Life with its roots in the sky—in the infinite, invisible and eternal Source of all forms, all branches of life, all beauty of flower and fruit. All of life is seen as a gift from a source above ourselves.

The Bible ends its long and never-ending story with the assurance that through the “city of God” — the community attempting to express, in and through its daily life, the gifts of peace, harmony and love—a river flows and on both sides of that refreshing water there grows the tree of life. Its leaves are for the healing of nations. Is this the promise of being able to live beyond the tangle and tragedy of the opposites? Is this the end of living on “the wrong side of the railway tracks”? Is the healing not just about healing of a body that will inevitably crumble and die, but the healing of the spirit of division? No, not the end of differences and uniqueness—but finding a healing and wholeness that is already buried inside us because we always have been and always will be, a branch, twig, leaf, flower or fruit of the great awe inspiring Tree of Life.

THE TREE OF LIFE

- ◆ “Poems are made by fools, like me, but only God can make a tree!”
- ◆ The whimsical poet Ogden Nash by name sang-
“I think that I shall never see a billboard lovely as a tree, In fact, unless the billboard fall I’ll see no tree at all!”
- ◆ Annie Dillard in her “Pilgrim at Tinker Creek” was in awe of the elm on the farm which each year produced more than 7 million leaves in spring, and nourished each one and every twig and branch by lifting 100’s of litres of water up through the roots daily to the highest leaves and branches, so not one leaf missed out. It has done this year after year—and yet doesn’t move an inch!

God help us live with holy vigour conscious that we are rooted in your love challenged by your Son and nurtured by your Spirit.

May our lives extend as branches of the Tree of Life.

Enable us to bear the fruits of reconciliation and hope, and be a part of bringing healing to the world.

We offer ourselves to this evolving awareness, through Jesus the Christ Spirit.

Amen!

- source unknown

“I suspect that poetical or mystical experience of the life of nature is still a source of inspiration for many life-scientists.”

- Rupert Sheldrake “The Rebirth of Nature”