

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 1

For 21 Feb 2016

Dear Friends

* Each year when I sit down to start a new series of “Shalom” I have a head full of questions—like Why do I do this? What do I have to say? Who do I think I am? And who is it for?

My responses to these niggling questions have changed over the years. They are usually only partial answers. I am still trying to get to a deeper level of discovering who “I am”. And I can declare with a fair bit of certainty that I do Shalom for my Self. I leave you to consider (if you want to!) what that might mean.

* The other thing that grabs me is the word Shalom. It is like a little hinge that enables a huge door to open so we can see a vast varied landscape. Mainly an inner landscape. William Blake the poet expresses it well:

*“If the doors of perception were cleansed
we would see everything as it is—eternal.”*

* Shalom is about wholeness and healing. It points to peace which includes oneness and takes us into a realm which is beyond the ability of our mind to understand. It is a word that prods us into a healthy hatred of all injustice, and can release a flow of justice that is like a mighty river.

* I don’t know how it is for you, but I am “seeing” that I know less and less, and much of what I call knowledge is just information. It helps to remember that true knowledge/wisdom begins in awe and wonder.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 22 February:	79:8,9,12,14	Dan 9:4-10	Luke 6:36-38
Tuesday 23 February:	50:8,16-end	Isa 1:10,16-20	Matt 23:1-12
Wednesday 24 February:	31:4,5,14-18	Jer 18:18-20	Matt 20:17-28
Thursday 25 February:	1	Jer 17:5-10	Luke 16:19-end
Friday 26 February:	105:16-22	Gen 37:3,4,12,13, 17-28	Matt 21:33-43, 45-46
Saturday 27 February:	103:1-4,9-12	Micah 7:14,15, 18-20	Luke 15:1-3, 11-end
Sunday 28 February <u>Lent 3</u>			
Ps 63:1-8; Isa 55:1-9; 1 cor 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 29 February:	42:1-2; 43:1-4	2 Kings 5:1-15	Luke 4:24-30
Tuesday 1 March:	25:3-10	Dan 2:20-23	Matt 18:21-end
Wednesday 2 March:	147:13-end	Deut 4:1,5-9	Matt 5:17-19
Thursday 3 March:	95:1,2,6-end	Jer 7:23-28	Luke 11:14-23
Friday 4 March:	81:6-10, 13,16	Hosea 14	Mark 12:28-34
Saturday 5 March:	75:1-2, 17-end	Hosea 5:15-6:6	Luke 18:9-14
Sunday 6 March <u>Lent 4</u>			
Ps 32; Josh 5:9-12; 2 Cor 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3,11b-32			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 7 March:	30:1-5,8, 11-end	Isa 65:17-21	John 4:43-end
Tuesday 8 March:	46:1-8	Ezek 47:1-9,12	John 5:1-3,5-16
Wednesday 9 March:	145:8-18	Isa 49:8-15	John 5:17-30
Thursday 10 March:	106:19-23	Exod 32:7-14	John 5:31-end
Friday 11 March:	34:15-end	Jer 26:8-11	John 7:1-2,10, 25-30
Saturday 12 March:	7:1,2,8-10	Jer 11:18-20	John 7:40-52
Sunday 13 March <u>Lent 5</u>			
Ps 126; Isa 43:16-21; Phil 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8			

A BIT ABOUT OUR FEARS

As a starting point we need to recognize how much of our daily life is riddled with fears. They sap our energy and keep us awake at night. They can be tiny fears—afraid of missing a bus/train, afraid of burning the meal, or that our favourite team will not win. They can be much more troubling—involving our health, or the outcome of some diagnosis, treatment or operation. Then as we get older new fears can begin confronting us at an alarming rate. There are the fears about coping with living alone, being lonely, having to move house, being afraid of being unable to survive financially. The list is endless.

In a way most fears grow out of feeling things that help us feel safe and secure and settled suddenly begin to shake and may tumble. The greatest of these ‘ending’ fears is the fear of death.

For centuries keen observers of our human condition have agreed that much (too much) of our life is driven by our fears and desires. If we begin to really consider this finding we can see that the fears we face, the fears we imagine, and the fears we can’t define, bring us great anxiety and drain our strength and confidence.

TWO THINGS:

- ⇒ Very often our fears are fear of the unknown. When we learn to face our fears we can discover a great mystery; they shrink, fade and may evaporate. It’s good if we can name the fear. It’s even better if we can look the fear in the eye and see if it is real or imagined. (See the wee story opposite.)
- ⇒ Experiencing an earthquake gives us clues about other experiences in life. In the quake we look for a place to be safe—a place to stand that is unlikely to fall or shift. For all our inner fears we need a stable unchanging place within ourselves. The old symbol of the wheel of life (often called the Wheel of Fortune”) reminds us that if we are attached to the rim we will be either going up or going down to the bottom. But if we can be at the hub we are in the same place all the time. We are centered. It is the still point and we can observe the rim of the wheel dropping into the ruts of the road, hitting sticks and stones and being jarred by all the roughness of the road. Finding that centre in ourselves means we can watch instead of suffering the constant joltings of life. It does work.

FEARS THAT FADE

Jesus is the master of fear as we see him encountering all sorts of people.

Again and again he says with a ring of confidence:-

"Don't be afraid."

Or as we often have it translated:

"Fear not ..."

Often he names the fear—for the lepers who were put outside the walls of home or village, friends and loved ones.

For the father who was fearful his daughter would die.

For the woman who touched him in the crowd.

For the timid and puzzled group of disciples when he said:

"Fear not little flock it is the Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom."

For those who thought they are their body he shifted their focus and said:

"Do not fear those who can kill your body ..."

He shows us that we can stand at the still point in an ever-turning world.

Be still and know.

There was once a little boy who grew up in a village by a mountain. Some of the older boys told him that an ugly monster lived on the mountain. Late each day as it gets dark, they said, the monster comes down and looks for kids that are afraid of it.

Then they added that as the monster gets closer to them it gets bigger. If you get afraid and try to run away it roars and gets even bigger and chases you. You can't escape.

The little boy was really, really afraid.

One day he told his father and said he was so afraid each day as the evening became dark.

So one evening his father took him up the road towards the mountain.

When the monster appeared the little boy turned and ran, and his father had to run to catch him.

The father took his hand and said let's go back and meet the monster.

The boy trembled.

As they walked towards the monster and mountain the monster began to get smaller and smaller.

The more they went towards it the smaller it became and the bolder the boy became until the monster faded away and was no more.

They went home happy.