

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



in the HCUC

No. 20

For 20 Nov 2016

Dear Friends

There's a vein of sadness flowing through my life. Many of my friends are leaving me—they have died or are nearing that last doorway. It is ajar as if awaiting them. They are aware of it. And I am inspired by their calm courage as they face the reality of their situation. There is no way any of us can avoid or by-pass the final breath.

At 36 years of age Paul Kalanithi was starting his career as a brilliant neurosurgeon when he was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, the next he was a patient struggling to live. In the last year of his life he wrote his book entitled "*When Breath Becomes Air*". It is, as many have commented 'a life-affirming reflection on facing our mortality'.

These are new times. One of the signs of this in our society is the way many who are coping with a fatal illness are sharing their story. They are speaking openly, courageously and calmly about what it means for them. Their willingness to be seen in photo articles, or TV interviews helps us to peep out from behind our curtains of fear. Death is still the great enemy.

It will continue this way until we can grasp a wider and higher vision. A view that comes when we "see" and "know" that the sting of death has been plucked—wrenched out. Why? Because we know with the most profound knowing that Life is never touched, defeated, crushed or destroyed by death. And 'That Life' is our true light, our inner being, and 'That Life' we are—you are. Or as Jesus said 'I AM'.

All things—from plants in our gardens, to cows in the paddocks—from inanimate things like cars to castles—everything, every form, every body crumbles and goes.

Life will change its form but Life itself never diminishes or dies.

Sincerely - Lester

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 21 November:	24:1-6	Rev 14:1-5	Luke 21:1-4
Tuesday 22 November:	63:1-9; 108:1-6	2 Tim 1:8-14	John 8:48-58
Wednesday 23 November:	98	Rev 15:1-4	Luke 21:12-19
Thursday 24 November:	100	Rev 18:1-2,21-23; 19:1-3,9	Luke 21:20-28
Friday 25 November:	84:1-6	Rev 20:1-4,11-21:2	Luke 21:29-33
Saturday 26 November:	95:1-7	Rev 22:1-7	Luke 21:34-36
Sunday 27 November Advent 1 Ps 122; Isa 2:1-5; Rom 13:11-14; Matt 24:36-44			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 28 November:	122	Isa 4:2-end	Matt 8:5-11
Tuesday 29 November:	72:1-4, 18-19	Isa 11:1-10	Luke 10:21-24
Wednesday 30 November:	19:1-6	Isa 52:7-10	Matt 4:18-22
Thursday 1 December:	118:18-27a	Isa 26:1-6	Matt 7:21,24-27
Friday 2 December:	27:1-4,16,17	Isa 29:17-end	Matt 9:27-31
Saturday 3 December:	146:4-9	Isa 30:19-21, 23-26	Matt 9:35 - 10:1,6-8
Sunday 4 December Advent 2 Ps 72:1-7,18-19; Isa 11:1-10; Rom 15:4-13; Matt 3:1-12			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 5 December:	85:7-end	Isa 35	Luke 5:17-26
Tuesday 6 December:	96:1,10-end	Isa 40:1-11	Matt 18:12-14
Wednesday 7 December:	103:8-13	Isa 40:25-end	Matt 11:28-end
Thursday 8 December:	41:13-20	Isa 41:13-20	Matt 11:11-15
Friday 9 December:	1	Isa 48:17-19	Matt 11:16-19
Saturday 10 December:	145	Isa 49:1-13	Matt 17:10-13
Sunday 11 December Advent 3 Ps 146:5-10; Isa 35:1-10; James 5:7-10; Matt 11:2-11			

VIEWS TOWARDS THE END

For some people the prospect of their demise is so scary they avoid anything that reminds them of their death.

- A funeral director at a club function was being introduced to a stranger. When the stranger discovered he was a funeral director he refused to shake his hand. The director said his fear of death suddenly filled his eyes as he moved into the crowd.
- Some hide their concern in humour:
“I don’t mind the thought of dying. I just don’t want to be around when it happens.”
- Others make Bucket Lists:
To visit Rome, to write my story, to sky-dive, to go and see my school friend ...
- Then there is Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, a Swiss doctor who in the 60’s and 70’s moved into the much neglected area of the care of the terminally ill patients, their relatives and their friends. Over the years she sat with literally thousands of dying patients and from this experience became convinced of life after death—which she describes as ‘the spirit butterfly emerging from the cocoon’. She has written several books and in addition to almost single-handedly changing the medical profession’s view of death, taught people how to look death in the eye, talk about dying, and see the process that enables the grieving to cope with the loss of loved ones.
- And to close this page some words from the final page of Paul’s courageous life experience in his book “*When Breath Becomes Air*”
— Inspiring, Heartbreaking, Beautiful—
“Everyone succumbs to finitude. I suspect I am not the only one who reaches this state. Most ambitions are either achieved or abandoned, either way, they belong to the past. The future, instead of the ladder towards the goals of life, flattens out into a perpetual present. Money, status, all the vanities the preacher of Ecclesiastes described hold so little interest:- a chasing after wind, indeed.”

Listen to the Poets

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep
I am a thousand winds that blow
I am the diamond glint on snow
I am the sunlight on the ripened grain
I am the gently falling autumn rain.

When you wake in the morning hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circling flight
I am the soft starlight at night.

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep.
(Regarded as a Hope Poem/Prayer)

Nothing is lost to the heart of God
Nothing is lost forever;
God’s heart is love, and that love will remain,
Holding the world forever.
No impulse of love, no office of care,
No moment of life in its fullness,
No beginning too late, no ending too soon,
But is gathered and known in its goodness.
Colin Gibson (3rd verse)

And now unto him who is able to keep
us from falling and lift us from the
dark valley of despair
To the bright mountain of hope,
From the midnight of desperation
To the daybreak of joy;
To him be power and authority,
Forever and ever.
Martin Luther King Jr.