



The Good News of Christmas
soak into your heart this Season

This is the last issue of Shalom for 2015. It's been good having such a wide and varied group of people to journey with during the year. Thank you. Hope to see you next year. Special thanks to those who distribute issues in local parishes and elsewhere. Special thanks to Gwyn and Doug for putting my penwork into this readable form.

With this issue you will find an extra coverage of the 2016 lectionary—taking us most of the way to when Shalom will most likely start next year.

SHALOM

in the HCUC

No. 20

For 6 Dec 2015

Dear Friends

Albert Einstein was once asked “What is the most important question you can ask in life?” His answer was “Is the universe a friendly place or not?” In the days when the Gospel stories were being written about Jesus the most important question in the Middle Eastern civilization was “Are the angels friends or foes?” The priest and writer Matthew Fox comments on this:- Angels were understood to be the driving force behind the elements (forces) of the universe. It is clear that like Einstein, the people of that era wanted to know if the universe was a friendly place or not.

I have the feeling that we personally are answering this same question almost on a daily basis depending on changing circumstances and how they affect us. It is easy to think the universe (God?) is out to ‘get us’ when life goes horribly wrong. We hear it expressed in the cry of “what have I done to deserve this?” All this sent me to the Christmas story and the part angels played in it. Let's look at a few familiar examples:

- The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin called Mary. He said “Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.” Instead of feeling pretty reassured and happy by such a visitor and such a greeting, her alarm bells started ringing. The first thing the angel said to her was “Do not be afraid ...”. Put in terms for today this was the equivalent of saying “trust the universe”.
- We can read of the angel visiting Joseph and giving him some reassurance about this relationship with Mary. The angel started by saying “Don't be afraid”. (Matt 1:20)
- Then there are the shepherds out on the hills at night and they had their “socks blown off” when an angel appeared, plus being surrounded by the dazzling brightness of the glory of God (the cosmic energies of enlightenment, truth and beauty) - and they were terrified. The angel's first word to them was “Do not be afraid”.

Christmas comes with the reassurance that the universe is friendly.

Sincerely - Lester

DON'T BE AFRAID

It is often difficult to not be afraid. The things that affect us personally may be in the area of illness, accident, old age and most profoundly the fear of death. These are the really big issues, much more than fears of spiders or of flying. Yet behind these lesser fears we can see that they lead back to fear of the big issues—especially death.

In our world we are experiencing the onslaught of terrorist activity. The terrorists are creating and perfecting their methods to create fear—to attack in unexpected places. You know all this. They aim to bring about division, destruction, death. Are we afraid? Yes and no.

Yes, we are right to be afraid when organized injustice is perpetrated against fellow human beings. It must be resisted. Yes, when we realise that our human behaviour is responsible for such conditions as global warming - islands going under the rising oceans. Have we the will to fix what we have messed up?

No—there is good cause to not be afraid. The universe is friendly. God is not out to 'get us'. Our human oneness with its underlying divine source has a power, an energy within it, that is the life force. A You-tube video after the Paris attacks showed a carriage on the underground train system. It was full of commuters going to work. A young man began dancing in the aisle. Before long 2 or 3 joined him. Soon the whole carriage was rocking (literally) as the people swayed and danced, smiled, made eye-contact and clapped. It was a dance of humanity. A statement of freedom from fear. An expression of Life and Love that can never be crushed and that never dies.

A kind of footnote:

When the Bible says the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Don't be misled. The Hebrew language has dozens of different words, and we have only one word—fear. The Hebrew word in Proverbs 1:7 means reverence—not a cringing frightened attitude but deep respect and fearless trust.

Remember!

God has not
given us a
Spirit of fear,
but a spirit
of power
and love
and a sound mind.
- 2 Tim 1:7

There is no fear
in love,
but perfect love
casts out fear.
- 1 John 4:18

We should desire to
regard our Lord
with wondering reverence
rather than fear,
loving God gently
and trusting
with all we are capable of.
- Julian of Norwich

There are only two feelings.
Love and fear.
There are only two languages.
Love and fear.
There are only two activities.
Love and fear.
There are only two motives,
two procedures,
two frameworks,
two results.
Love and fear.
Love and fear.
- Leunig

Julian of Norwich writes:

"I saw that God never
began to love us.
We have always
been in God's
foreknowledge,
known
and loved
from without
beginning."

*What good is it to me
if the eternal birth of the divine Son
takes place unceasingly
but does not take place within myself?*

- Meister Eckhart

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 8 February:	132:1-9	1 Kgs 8:1-7,9-13	Mark 6:53-end
Tuesday 9 February:	84:1-10	1 Kgs 8:22,23,27-30	Mark 7:1-13
Shrove Tuesday			
Wednesday 10 February:	51:1-17	Isa 58:1-12	Matt 6:1-6, 16-21
Ash Wednesday			
Thursday 11 February:	1	Deut 30:15-end	Luke 9:22-25
Friday 12 February:	51:1-5,17,18	Isa 58:1-9a	Matt 9:14-15
Saturday 13 February:	86:1-7	Isa 58:9b-end	Luke 5:27-32
Sunday 14 February: Lent 1			
Psalm 91:1-2,9-16; Deut 26:1-11; Rom 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 15 February:	19:7-end	Lev 19:1,2,11-18	Matt 25:31-end
Tuesday 16 February:	34:4-6,21,22	Isa 55:10-11	Matt 6:7-15
Wednesday 17 February:	51:1-5,17,18	Jonah 3	Luke 11:29-32
Thursday 18 February:	138	Isa 55:6-9	Matt 7:7-12
Friday 19 February:	130	Ezek 18:21-28	Matt 5:20-26
Saturday 20 February:	119:1-8	Deut 26:16-end	Matt 5:43-end
Sunday 21 February Lent 2			
Psalm 27; Gen 15:1-12,17-18; Phil 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35 or Luke 9:28-36			

	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 Lent 3			
Psalm 63:1-8; Isa 55:1-9; 1 Cor 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9			

Lectionary

Readings for every day You Select!

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 7 December:	85:7-end	Isa 35	Luke 5:17-26
Tuesday 8 December:	96:1,10-end	Isa 40:1-11	Matt 18:12-14
Wednesday 9 December:	103:8-13	Isa 40:25-end	Matt 11:28-end
Thursday 10 December:	145:1,8-13	Isa 41:13-20	Matt 11:11-15
Friday 11 December:	1	Isa 48:17-19	Matt 11:16-19
Saturday 12 December:	80:1-4, 18-19	2 Kgs 2:9-12	Matt 17:10-13
Sunday 13 December Advent 3			
Zeph 3:14-20; Isa 12:2-6; Phil 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 14 December:	25:3-8	Num 24:2-7,15-17	Matt 21:23-27
Tuesday 15 December:	34:1-6, 21-22	Zeph 3:1,2,9-13	Matt 21:28-32
Wednesday 16 December:	85:7-end	Isa 45:6b-8,18, 21b-end	Luke 7:18b-23
Thursday 17 December:	72:1-5,18,19	Gen 49:2,8-10	Matt 1:1-17
Friday 18 December:	72:1,2,12,13, 18-end	Jer 23:5-8	Matt 1:18-24
Saturday 19 December:	71:3-8	Judg 13:2-7,24-end	Luke 1:5-25
Sunday 20 December Advent 4			
Psalm 80:1-7; Mic 5:2-5a; Heb 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 21 December:	33:1-4,11,12	Zeph 3:14-18	Luke 1:39-45
Tuesday 22 December:	113	1 Sam 1:24-end	Luke 1:46-56
Wednesday 23 December:	25:3-9	Malachi 3:1-4;4:5-6	Luke 1:57-66
Thursday 24 December:	89:2,19-27	Acts 13:16-26	Luke 1:67-79
Christmas Day:	98	Isa 52:7-10	John 1:1-14
Saturday 26 December:	119:161-168	Acts 7:51-60	Matt 10:17-22
Sunday 27 December Christmas 1			
Psalm 148; 1 Sam 2:18-20,26; Col 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 28 December:	124	1 Cor 1:26-29	Matt 2:13-18
Tuesday 29 December:	96:1-4	1 John 2:3-11	Luke 2:22-35
Wednesday 30 December:	96:7-10	1 John 2:12-17	Luke 2:36:40
Thursday 31 December:	96:1,11-end	1 John 2:18-21	John 1:1-18
Friday 1 January:	8	Phil 2:5-11	Luke 2:15-21
Saturday 2 January:	98:1-4	1 John 2:22-28	John 1:19-28
Sunday 3 January <u>Christmas 2</u>			
Psalm 147:12-20; Jer 3:1-7; Eph 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 4 January:	98:1,8-end	1 John 3:7-10	John 1:35-42
Tuesday 5 January:	100	1 John 3:11-21	John 1:43-end
Wednesday 6 January:	72:1-7,10-14	Isa 60:1-6	Matt 2:1-12
Epiphany			
Thursday 7 January:	2:7-end	1 John 3:22-4:6	Matt 4:12-17, 23-end
Friday 8 January:	72:1-8	1 John 4:7-10	Mark 6:34-44
Saturday 9 January:	72:1,10-13	1 John 4:11-18	Mark 6:45-52
Sunday 10 January <u>Epiphany 1</u>			
Psalm 29; Isa 43:1-7; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17,21-22			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 11 January:	116:10-15	1 Sam 1:1-8	Mark 1:14-20
Tuesday 12 January:	9	1 Sam 1:9-20	Mark 1:21-28
Wednesday 13 January:	40:1-4,7-10	1 Sam 3:1-10,19,20	Mark 1:29-39
Thursday 14 January:	44:10-15, 24-25	1 Sam 4:1-11	Mark 1:40-end
Friday 15 January:	89:15-18	1 Sam 8:4-7,10-end	Mark 2:1-12
Saturday 16 January:	21:1-6	1 Sam 9:1-4,17-19; 10:1a	Mark 2:13-17
Sunday 17 January <u>Epiphany 2</u>			
Psalm 36:5-10; Isa 62:1-5; 1 Cor 12:1-11; John 2:1-11			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 18 January:	50:8-10, 16-17,24	1 Sam 15:16-23	Mark 2:18-22
Tuesday 19 January:	89:19-27	1 Sam 16:1-13	Mark 2:23-end
Wednesday 20 January:	144:1-2,9,10	1 Sam 17:32-33,37, 40-51	Mark 3:1-6
Thursday 21 January:	56:1,2,8-end	1 Sam 18:6-9;19:1-7	Mark 3:7-12
Friday 22 January:	57:1,2,8-end	1 Sam 24:3-22a	Mark 3:13-19
Saturday 23 January:	80:1-6	1 Sam 1:1-4,11-12, 17-19,23-end	Mark 3:20-21
Sunday 24 January: <u>Epiphany 3</u>			
Psalm 19; Neh 8:1-3,5-6,8-10; 1 Cor 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 25 January:	67	Acts 9:1-22	Matt 19:27-30
Tuesday 26 January:	24:7-end	2 Sam 6:12-15, 17-19	Mark 3:31-end
Wednesday 27 January:	89:19-27	2 Sam 7:4-17	Mark 4:1-20
Thursday 28 January:	132:1-5, 11-15	2 Sam 7:18,19, 24-end	Mark 4:21-25
Friday 29 January:	51:1-6,9	2 Sam 11:1-10,13-17	Mark 4:26-34
Saturday 30 January:	51:11-16	2 Sam 12:1-7,10-17	Mark 4:35-end
Sunday 31 January <u>Epiphany 4</u>			
Psalm 71:1-6; Jer 1:4-10; 1 Cor 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30			

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 1 February:	3	2 Sam 15:13,14,30; 16:5-13	Mark 5:1-20
Tuesday 2 February:	86:1-6	2 Sam 18:9,10,14, 24,25,30-19:3	Mark 5:21-end
Wednesday 3 February:	32:1-8	2 Sam 24:2,9-17	Mark 6:1-6a
Thursday 4 February:	145:1-5	1 Kgs 2:1-4,10-12	Mark 6:7-13
Friday 5 February:	18:31-36, 50-end	2 Cor 4:1-6	Mark 6:14-29
Saturday 6 February:	119:9-16	1 Kgs 3:4-13	Mark 6:30-34
Waitangi Day			
Sunday 7 February <u>Transfiguration</u>			
Psalm 99; Ex 34:29-35; 2 Cor 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36,(37-43)			