

Lectionary
Readings for every day
You Select!



	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 16 August:	78:1-8	Ezek 24:15-24	Matt 19:16-22
Tuesday 17 August:	107:1-3,40, 43	Ezek 28:1-10	Matt 19:23-30
Wednesday 18 August:	23	Ezek 34:1-11	Matt 20:1-16
Thursday 19 August:	51:7-12	Ezek 36:23-28	Matt 22:1-14
Friday 20 August:	107:1-8	Ezek 37:1-14	Matt 22:34-40
Saturday 21 August:	85:7-end	Ezek 43:1-7	Matt 23:1-12

Sunday 22 August **Pentecost 13**
Ps 71:1-6; Jer 1:4-10; Heb 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 23 August:	39:1-9	2 Thess 1:1-5,11,12	Matt 23:13-22
Tuesday 24 August:	98	2 Thess 2:1-3a,14-17	Matt 23:23-26
Wednesday 25 August:	126	1 Thess 3:6-10,16-18	Matt 23:27-32
Thursday 26 August:	145:1-7	1 Cor 1:1-9	Matt 24:42-end
Friday 27 August:	33:6-12	1 Cor 1:17-25	Matt 25:1-13
Saturday 28 August:	33:12-15, 20-end	1 Cor 1:26-end	Matt 25:14-30

Sunday 29 August **Pentecost 14**
Ps 81:1,10-16; Jer 2:4-13; Heb 13:1-8,15-16; Luke 14:1,7-14

	Psalm	Epistle/OT	Gospel
Monday 30 August:	33:12-21	1 Cor 2:1-5	Luke 4:16-30
Tuesday 31 August:	145:10-17	1 Cor 2:10-end	Luke 4:31-37
Wednesday 1 September:	62	1 Cor 3:1-9	Luke 4:38-end
Thursday 2 September:	24:1-6	1 Cor 3:18-end	Luke 5:1-11
Friday 3 September:	37:3-8	1 Cor 4:1-5	Luke 5:33-end
Saturday 4 September:	145:18-end	1 Cor 4:6-15	Luke 6:1-5

Sunday 5 September **Pentecost 15**
Ps 139:1-6,13-18; Jer 18:1-11; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-33

in the HCUC

No. 13

For 15 August 2010

Dear Friends

From the moment we were born until this moment we have been doing it. Even as you read this sentence it is going on. You've guessed it! We are breathing—inhaling oxygen, exhaling carbon dioxide. That is the simple and most obvious aspect of breathing. There are many more dimensions to this essential very complex process.

- ◆ Breathing usually goes on automatically. We seldom give attention to our own breathing. Yet breathing is the only body function that can be either automatic or controlled. It is sometimes seen as a bridge between our conscious and unconscious activities.
- ◆ Most of us breathe on average 10-15 times a minute. It is well known that long time meditators usually have a slower rate, usually about 8-12 times a minute.
- ◆ Every one of us develops a breathing pattern. Sometimes the pattern is set at birth. For some the pattern is influenced by their experiences, their health, their emotional traumas or their beliefs about what life is like. On the whole our patterns are usually restricting rather than freeing and flexible. This discovery is made by people who begin training to be a singer, athlete, woodwind player, swimmer or public speaker.
- ◆ The value of good breathing patterns has been studied, tested and agreed upon for centuries. It is generally called the science of 'pranayama' - a Sanskrit word which focuses on 'praan' which refers to the different levels of breath. Yes, there are levels reaching from the gross breath to the subtle levels of breath. Some of the names given to the refined and subtle life giving energies are Chi (Chinese), Ki (Japanese), Holy Spirit, Christ consciousness, breath of God, the I AM of every one of us who says "I", divine energy, Source of Life.
- ◆ Attention to and awareness of the breath and breathing patterns can change our mood, alter our energy levels, improve our sense of well-being, eliminate stress and tension, soften rigid mind sets, open us to wider dimensions of peace, love, beauty, truth and compassion. Sounds too simple to be real? It is real. And doesn't involve expensive gym equipment. It requires the recognition of our deep down desire to be more alive, more peaceful, more loving. Then we need to be intentional about honouring this moment by moment mysterious and marvellous gift.

Sincerely - Lester

JUST A COUPLE OF BREATHS

There are two separate passages in the Bible which are very significant and very related. The first is in the Hebrew scripture (Genesis 2:7) “... *then God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living being.*” The second is in John’s gospel (Ch 20:22) and seems to be a deliberate echo of Genesis. “*Jesus stood in their midst and said ‘Peace be with you’. Then he breathed on them and said ‘Receive holy spirit.’*” (Note: The Greek text does not have the holy spirit, which is no doubt deliberate and significant.)

It seems important not to read or understand these passages in a wooden or literal way, although we will each make our own image of these graphic events. They are metaphors for the deep mystery of life and being alive. They raise questions about: who we are, what does it mean to be fully human? What are the potentials of life? It is worth noting that in many cultures the same word is used for wind, spirit, breath and life force.

There are a few things which seem to emerge from the events:

- The life-force, or our Being is a gift—a given. There’s no need to snatch it, hide it or regard it as a dwindling or scarce commodity. It is not even a commodity—not a thing. It is life itself.
- Without this unseen, unlimited, undying, unearned gift of subtle breath, we are just clay—physical form, prone to drying out, cracking and crumbling and then falling apart.
- There are different dimensions of spirit that are far more subtle than the gross breath of oxygen inhaled and carbon dioxide exhaled.
- These subtle dimensions already exist. They only need the deeper awareness of Christ consciousness to spark them alive in our equivalent (same) Christ consciousness. These dimensions are both within and outside us—for in this field there is no inside or outside. It is all one space, one field, one spirit.
- Jesus appeared to his friends on the evening of the resurrection day. He came to them and breathed on them. So this was a great ‘getting up’ occasion. He invited them to share in the raised-up life, the finest awareness, the highest qualities of caring, compassion and community. Without Jesus here to be with us in physical form and breathe on us ...?

Just close your eyes, sit silently, breathe easy and you are in the field or presence of subtle spirit. The action is really no action. It’s called meditation. Enjoy it.

THE INS AND OUTS OF BREATHING

One of the greatest scientists and teachers of meditation is known as Patangali. He begins his writings by telling meditators to observe the breathing experience. He suggests we note:-

- ⇒ When we breathe in.
- ⇒ When we breathe out.
- ⇒ When we stop breathing either between the inhale and exhale, or after the exhale. Be aware of the movement of air and the resting in between.

Sounds simple – and it is, but quite difficult to do it with full awareness, with a balance between inhale and exhale, plus the rest.

Try it for a few minutes:

Count 1, 2 on the inhale

Count 1, 2 for the rest period

Count 1, 2 for the exhale.

If your mind wanders during this short exercise, or you lose count, then start again, attempting to do a series of 10 breaths without interruption.

Have you learned anything from this simple experiment?

There was once a man called Busol who was deeply enlightened as were his wife, his son and his daughter. A man came to him one day and asked him: “Is meditation difficult or not?” Busol replied: “Oh, it is very difficult—it is like taking a stick and trying to hit the moon!”

The man was puzzled and wondered how the rest of the family became such enlightened people. So he went and asked the wife the same question. She said: “Meditation is the easiest thing in the world. It’s just like touching your nose when you wash your face!”

Now the man was quite confused so he asked the son. “Meditation is not difficult and not easy” was his reply. “On the tips of a hundred blades of grass is the meaning.”

Not difficult, and not easy. What is it then?

So the man went to the daughter and asked: “Tell me which answer from your family is right?”

She replied: “If you make it difficult, it is difficult. If you make it easy, it is easy. But if you don’t think then the truth is just as it is. ‘Difficult’ and ‘easy’ are only in the mind. Meditation is just as it is.”