

# KIRKRIDGE

## Readings and Intentions 1982



WEEK-BASE DAILY LECTIONS

*for individual and group meditation and prayer  
(The 20th year of this practice)*

For our 20th year of this guide for attending, centering, and intending, we have asked Willis Elliott to be the designer, as he had been a number of the past years, and to bear in mind Kirkridge's emphasis on peace .... To the Sunday ecumenical lections (which some may want to use every day of the week, others use one lection for each of the week's first three days) he has added "a peace lectionary" of biblical readings (in biblical order) selected by him. **Criteria** for creating a devotional lectionary: (1) Be honest-to-Scripture. It's so easy to skew toward what you want to say! (2) Keep the lection short, but make it long enough to be self-explanatory. (3) Observe the Bible's sense of relation and proportion in dealing with the lectionary's subject. (4) In your choosing of passages, be yourself in that spirit of devotion which you pray for those who are to use the lectionary .... These were the guidelines for creating this "peace lectionary." Those using one scripture each day will use the first peace-lection Wednesdays, the second on Thursdays, the third on Fridays, and the fourth on Saturdays .... The paragraph meditations, one for each week, are from his writings, and have not been used in previous editions of *Readings and Intentions* .... **SUGGESTIONS:** (1) Make your daily time with this guide a conscious self-offering to God, who yearns to give you Shalom-Peace, and to give Shalom-Peace through you. (2) Read everything aloud twice, more slowly the second time. (3) When you have finished with a reading, mark it off so it will be easier to find your place next time. (4) Read with a critical mind, but even more with a hungry heart and a willing spirit.

### JANUARY

**3--Isaiah 60.1-5; Revelation 21.22-22.2; Luke 2.21-24; Genesis 1.1-4, 26-31; 6.5-13; 8.14-22 & 9.6-13; 11.1-9** .... What's going to happen this new year? If I only knew. But I do know! The old humanity will be bad news to the good earth and worse news to itself. The new humanity will struggle to be born. And Jesus will again be crucified in our fearing and anguish and be raised in our caring and joy.

**10--Isaiah 61.1-4; Acts 11.4-18; Mark 1.4-11; Genesis 12.1-9; 13.5-12; 18.14-24; 26.12-22** .... The world and we are defective and damaged; but we are divinely designed for wholeness, and we are called together to reach out toward that wholeness through our defects and damages. One word in the Bible covers this whole range and depth of meaning. It is "shalom," and it is usually translated "peace." "Shalom," then, is what we Jews and Christians mean when we say "peace."

**17--1 Samuel 3.1-10; 1 Corinthians 6.12-20; John 1.35-42; Genesis 50.15-21; Exodus 15.1-17; 20.18-24; Leviticus 26.1-13** .... "Shalom" means all this: God's finishing the creation in making the defective complete; in restoring the damaged to wholeness; in healing the diseased; in replacing poverty with prosperity and anxiety with security and ill-being with well-being, woe with weal in soul and society; in giving victory to the defeated and success to losers; in providing joyful work and play and rest; and in "causing wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." In all this action, what pieces are mine right now?

**24--Jonah 3.1-5, 10; 1 Corinthians 7.29-31; Mark 1.14-22; Numbers 6.22-27; Deuteronomy 2.13-19; 20.1-18; 27.1-10** .... For the old humanity, peace is one-way: some say "I control," the rest say "I submit." For the new humanity, peace is two-way: God says "My peace I give you," we say "With Your peace we bless You, and one another, and the world."

**31--Deuteronomy 18.15-22; 1 Corinthians 7.32-35; Mark 1.21-28; Joshua 5.9-15; 8.30-35; 9.3-20; 11.18-23** .... "I can't do everything at once," we say. But "all things are possible with God," whose kingdom our Lord teaches us to pray for daily--whose kingdom is shalom. "Now is the day of salvation" (another Bible word for shalom) -- to "be reconciled to God," to restore our communion with and care for the good earth and our fellow-creatures, to repent of our side of ruptured relationships with our fellow-humans, to secure the public tranquility with justice, and to press for an international order with teeth. Idealism? Yes, and realism.

### FEBRUARY

**7--Job 7.1-7; 1 Corinthians 9.16-19, 22-23; Mark 1.29-39; Joshua 20.1-6; 21.41-45; 22.21-29, 33-34; Judges 2.11-23** .... In both Testaments, "Peace" is a title for God. The world has given me, us, titles: are any of them worthy of comparison with "Peace"?

**14--Leviticus 13.1-2, 44-46; 1 Corinthians 10.31-11.1; Mark 1.40-45; Judges 4.1-9; 5.1-5, 20-21, 31; 6.11-24; 8.23-28** .... Shalom is the second element in all of the Bible's antinomies: chaos/creation, wilderness/providence, betrayal/forgiveness, sin/atonement, alienation/reconciliation, wandering/return, war/peace, property/community, force/persuasion, ruin/restoration, despair/hope. Shalom has the last word: shalom is the last word.

**21--Isaiah 43.18-25; 2 Corinthians 1.18-22; Mark 2.1-12; Ruth 1.1-17; 4.13-17; 1 Samuel 2.1-10; 7.12-17** .... Prayer is the gate to shalom. For in prayer, I who am daily tempted to overpossess am myself possessed along with the rest of creation. In communion with God, I come into community with the rest of creation. As I practice the Presence, I become more gently present to my sister and brother and less gentle with all that cripples and corrupts. Prayer is the gate to the new creation.

**28--Genesis 9.8-15; 1 Peter 3.18-22; Mark 1.12-15; 1 Samuel 10.17-24; 12.1-14; 16.1-13; 25.32-39** .... "Shalom" is a greeting when we meet: the will to meet is shalom. All life is meeting: the will not to meet is death. All meeting is life: the will to life is shalom.

### MARCH

**7--Genesis 22.1-1, 9-13; Romans 8.31-39; Mark 9.1-9; 2 Samuel 1.17-27; 5.1-12; 6.15-21; 12.1-15** .... Shalom is the meeting and cohesion of "all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth" -- the uni-verse -- in God in Christ. Root and sky, sky and street. The ancients and the children's children. Heritage and hope. Heart and mind. Solitude and society. What's left out? Only what doesn't fit in.

**14--Exodus 20.1-3, 7-8, 12-27; 1 Corinthians 1.22-25; John 2.13-25; 2 Samuel 22.1-20, 47-51; 23.1-7; 1 Kings 3.5-15; 4.21-25** .... Sorrow and suffering and sighing flee away when the cup of shalom becomes full, and creation ceases its groaning toward the showing forth of the sons and daughters of light. In the biblical imagery of God's final victory, there is more than heartlift: there is soulfood.

**21--2 Chronicles 36.14-21; Ephesians 2.1-10; John 3.14-21; 1 Kings 5.1-12; 8.22-30; 8.38-43; 8.54-61** .... "The just" are those who "do justice," that is, obey God's will as they understand it through revelation and conscience. As this is what it means to be in "right" relationship with God and oneself and the rest of creation, these folk are known also as "the righteous." As those who live in restored harmony intend total shalom, these are known also as "the peace-makers." How many kinks are taken out of the three expressions when we realize that in the Bible they are synonyms!

28--Jeremiah 31.31-34; Hebrews 5.7-10; John 12.20-23; 1 Kings 21.17-20, 27-29; 2 Kings 19.14-20; 1 Chronicles 16.1-2, 8-36; 22.7-13, 17-19 .... God calls all of us, throughout our lives, into new being. The pains of saying yes to the call always prove of less weight than the gains. But the pains are real and perpetual; and it helps us to endure them when we remember that our cry to God is the **echo** of God's cry to us, God's participation in our suffering unto joy. For God not only means well: God means shalom.

#### APRIL

4--Zechariah 9.9-12; Hebrews 12.1-6; Mark 11.1-11; 2 Chronicles 6.13-21, 32-33; 15.1-17; Ezra 1.1-8; 8.21-23, 31-32 .... The New Testament exhausts the then-available explanations of why Jesus died. "In him was life, and that life was our light!": why did the light go out, even temporarily? A rabbi friend of mine said Jesus said this to God: "I know not what You are doing, but I know You are doing it." How much better than to know what's going on, but not who's in charge!

11--Isaiah 25.6-9; 1 Peter 1.3-9; Mark 16.1-8; Job 21.1-16; Psalm 4.1, 6-8; 11; 29 .... Root and sky, you and I: God wants to give us shalom, the kingdom of **root** (rootedness in nature-history-memory), **sky** (transcendence, the "more than" and "beyond"), **you** (relatedness), and **I** (identity). This is "heaven": "hell" is all obstacles to any of these needs, and "Satan" is the enemy of their convergence in shalom. That convergence, in the decisive defeat of Satan, is "Easter."

18--Acts 4.32-35; 1 John 5.1-6; Matthew 28.11-20; Psalm 33; 34.8-14; 37.1-11, 37-40; 46; 55 .. "Come, let us return to the Lord, for he has wounded and he will heal us." The Easter Event gathers and heals all wounds -- our wounding of God and of ourselves and of each other and of the good earth, and God's necessary wounding of us. The Story is God's reply to the cries of all the wounded and wretched of the earth; and to live this Story is to do shalom.

25--Acts 3.13-15, 17-19; 1 John 2.1-6; Luke 24.36-49; Psalm 68.24-35; 72.1-7; 73.1-9, 21-28; 76 .... Caesar's supreme victory over God (the Cross) becomes God's supreme victory over Caesar (the Resurrection): the state is essentially alien to the kingdom of God, and at its best only a preliminary social ordering. So this is how it is for us Christians: Because God's kingdom is here and now we are to be **good citizens**, but because God's kingdom is not full-come we must sometimes operate as **enemy aliens**.

#### MAY

2--Acts 4.8-12; 1 John 3.1-3; John 10.11-18; Psalm 85.8-13; 86.6-13; 119.161-162; 120 .... The only competition the New Testament promotes is **competition in shalom**. The international parallel would be a **peace race**, each nation trying to outdo the others in disseminating hope, trust, proffered process and structures of economic-cultural-political-technological interdependence, models of moral courage and self-sacrifice for the good of the whole of humanity, inspiration for self-dignity through global participation, transnational legal-and-management institutions, paradigms of earth-responsible production of humanity's physical necessities, examples of education for world-citizenship, and a religious vision both plural-particular and global-ecumenical. Impressions from the media to the contrary, this race is now being run.

9--Acts 9.26-31; 1 John 3.18-24; John 15.1-8; Psalm 122; 127.1-2; Proverbs 1.8-19; 3.13-26 .... Faith in the resurrection of Jesus is an instance of **unbelief**. We who believe that our Lord didn't stay dead have surrendered the universal human belief in death. We have permanently abandoned the doctrine that human life has no final meaning. We have blasphemed the state by denying that the power of death is the final power and therefore the ultimate sanction. And we have violated the tabu that located security in the violence potential of one nation against another. Accordingly, we refuse cynicism and rebuke those who would manipulate and control us through fear. Jesus got killed for similar unbeliefs, so the crucifixion and the resurrection fit each other. Do I fit?

16--Acts 10.34-48; 1 John 4.1-7; John 15.9-17; Ecclesiastes 3.1-8; 9.11-18; Isaiah 2.1-4; 9.2-7 Love, the fountain of all joy, is also the source of all sorrow. Because a funeral invites us to act out our sorrow, it invites us also to return to joy, to life. Easter is for those who took Good Friday seriously: shalom is for those who have known suffering and have not turned away from the **community of the afflicted**.

23--Acts 1.15-17, 21-26; 1 John 4.11-16; John 17.11-19; Isaiah 11.1-9; 26.1-6, 12; 31.1-3 & 32.17-18; 45.1-8 .... When you feel **God-forsaken**, and need someone who has known and understands the feeling, you don't have to look far. Jesus qualifies. And "He is our peace."

30--Joel 2.28-32; Acts 2.1-13; John 16.5-15; Isaiah 52.7-15; 53.1-9; 55; 57.14-21; 59.1-8 .... The will to shalom warms the heart, sharpens the mind, enlivens the imagination, and leads to the joyful discovery of fellow-pilgrims on the way of peace.

#### JUNE

6--Isaiah 6.1-8; Romans 8.12-17; John 3.1-8; Isaiah 60.17-22; 61.1-3, 10-11; 65.17-25; Jeremiah 4.14-22 .... Lord, the wise ones of this world tell us that we can build peace by building bombs and that we should at the same time pray for peace and pay for weapons. Even **revolutionary nonviolent love** seems less insane. So much complexity, ambiguity, confusion --yet I must do something. In the last judgment, what will I have to report to those who were sick, hungry, naked, imprisoned, tortured, executed not for crimes against humanity but for opinions their governments found offensive? Kindly Light, guide us through this thick darkness, and save us from subterfuge and arrogance.

13--Deuteronomy 5.12-15; 2 Corinthians 4.6-11; Mark 2.23-3.6; Jeremiah 6.8-14; 8.8-12; 23.16-24; 29.1-13 .... Tossed by life's disorienting forces, and in the dialectic of pain and joy, faith sees the calm Center of the storm and tells a Story -- a Story full of disorienting forces, and of pain, and of joy -- a **Story of hope through love**. This Story is my Story because I own it; may it be said of me that it was mine because I lived it.

20--Genesis 3.9-15; 2 Corinthians 4.13-5.1; Mark 3.20-35; Jeremiah 30.1-10; 30.18-22; Lamentations 3.1-2, 17-38; Ezekiel 7.23-27 .... Lord, put some **great saying** in my way so I bump into it, and help me know that it is a great saying and that it is for me to lick as an all-day sucker for my soul. Tomorrow, another one!

27--Ezekiel 17.22-24; 2 Corinthians 5.6-10; Mark 4.26-34; Ezekiel 13.1-16; 34.20-28; 37.21-28; 43.1-11 .... Everywhere and at all times, we humans face the **same** challenges, ask the **same** questions, and live in awe of the **same** forces with fear and faith, fainting and hope. The other truth, the truth of our differences, has been overplayed to the point of threatening all higher life on earth. Who, now, speaks for humanity above party, for principle above "interests," and for the human future instead of only the national future or the racial future or the creedal future? "Has not one God made us all?" Can we speak for the one God without living the one humanity?

#### JULY

4--Job 38.1-11, 16-18; 2 Corinthians 5.14-17; Mark 4.35-41; Ezekiel 45.9-17; Daniel 6.16-30; Hosea 1.1-10; 2.14-23 .... A day of small things need not be a small day. If today is the day a child learns to walk, today the world is **walking**. Your kingdom, O Lord, has come! "When Ephraim was a child, I taught him to walk." Are we in humanity's childhood?

11--Lamentations 3.22-23; 2 Corinthians 8.1-9, 13-15; Mark 1.21-43; Amos 3.1-11; 5.14-24; Micah 3.5-12; 4.1-5 .... **Fatal syllogism**: (1) More than half of the world's scientists are involved with armaments; (2) "In a nuclear war, nobody wins"; (3) Therefore, more than half of the world's scientists are already losers, and we with them. In former times, it was schizophrenics and religious freaks who were called the crazies. Now, who isn't? "Lord, that we may be whole!"

18--Ezekiel 2.1-5; 2 Corinthians 12.7-10; Mark 6.1-6; Micah 5.1-5; 6.6-15; Nahum 1.9-13, 15; 3.1-7 .... Hawkers of pop-Hinduism say, "Happiness is only a syllable away": OM. Biblical religion says happiness is only **two** syllables away: SHALOM. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." If later, why not now? "Thy kingdom come! Maran-atha!"

25--Amos 7.10-15; Ephesians 1.3-14; Mark 6.7-13; Haggai 2.1-9; Zechariah 3.6-10; 4.1-6; 8.14-19 .... The Cross can be reshaped into a swastika, a hammer-and-sickle, even an eagle -- all toward arrogance and war. All such shaping is in the reverse direction: the Cross is meant to shape us all -- toward peace.

## AUGUST

1--Jeremiah 23.1-6; Ephesians 2.13-22; Mark 6.30-44; Zechariah 9.8-10; Malachi 2.1-6; Matthew 5.9, 21-26; 5.38-48 .... When we aim no higher than survival, we cannot call upon sufficient strength to fight off our fears. We are made to do **more than survive**, or die. "To such as believe in Him, he gives the power to become the children of God." "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." How, now, should God's daughters and sons live, love, work, play, pray, witness?

8--2 Kings 4.42-44; Ephesians 4.1-6, 11-16; John 6.1-15; Matthew 10.16-22; 10.24-39; 26.47-53; Mark 4.35-41 .... In devotional literature, "**stirrings**" refers to something done to us, our heart made to flutter in rhythm with the Spirit's wings. But the word is also used by cooks, about mixing things and keeping them hot without burning. Often the passive and active meanings converge in a spiritual experience: the Spirit inspires us when we are cooking something up, meditating for meaning and guidance.

15--Exodus 16.2-15; Ephesians 4.17-25; John 4.24-35; Mark 5.1-15; 5.25-34; 8.27-38; 9.38-50 .... The peacemaker is on a four-way journey: **inward** in prayer, meditation, reflection contemplation; **outward** in compassionate-intelligent action; **backward** into history, especially in search of wisdom and courage and encouragement in Scripture; and **forward**, working with the forces of fantasy and mind, nerve and muscle, association and institution -- the forces that are now shaping the future.

22--1 Kings 19.4-8; Ephesians 4.30-5.2; John 6.41-52; Mark 13.1-13; Luke 1.46-55; 1.67-79; 2.8-14 .... Joy calls the eye through color and form and the ear through sound and rhythm. Joy calls the soul and society to freedom (color) and discipline (form), to meaning (sound) and feeling (rhythm). Joy, as a holophrase for God, calls the world to shalom, the plenitude and convergence of all God's good gifts, visible and invisible.

29--Proverbs 9.1-6; Ephesians 5.15-20; John 6.51-59; Luke 6.27-37; 12.4-5, 49-53; 19.37-48; 22.31-38 .... America (says James Reston) is hooked on **drink, sex, and credit** -- three grasping forms of unrestraint. Commercial interests exploit all three, fearing we may fall into freedom. Facing such obsessive compulsions, "freedom" is another name for shalom. Our "free world" is self-enslaved by the tyrannies of lust and greed; it is alien to joy and a stranger to peace. All economic/political remedies "heal the wound of My people lightly," superficially. Peacemakers, now, must form themselves into a parade of penitents. How? To do what?

## SEPTEMBER

5--Joshua 24.1-2a, 14-18; Ephesians 5.21-33; John 6.60-69; John 14.1-3, 12-18, 25-27; 16.25-33; 18.1-14; Acts 7.20-34 .... In the heart and in the long run, we understand "the things that make for peace." That is our **confidence**. But no human being can know, here and now, the things that prevent war. That is our **perplexity**, which should open us to God's gifts of humility, good listening, good will, and good judgment.

12--Deuteronomy 4.1-8; James 1.17-22, 26-27; Mark 7.1-8, 14-15, 21-23; Acts 10.34-45; Romans 3.1-17; 5.1-11; 7.14-25 .... God sees us through in spite of seeing through us. That is a tonic note in Scripture. It derives not from something God decides, but from what God is: steady love, "leal love," "lovingkindness," love that will neither betray us nor let us go. This is the quality enjoined on us by the commandment "Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." It is at the heart of nature and history (Exodus/Resurrection), and so also at the heart of hope for shalom.

19--Isaiah 35.4-7a; James 2.1-5; Mark 7.31-37; Romans 8.6-21, 35-39; 12.9-21; 14.13-19; 15.7-13, 30-33 .... When peace seems a lost cause, action toward peace sustains the conviction that peace is not a lost cause but a **cause not yet won**. O God of might and mercy, illumine our sight with insight and our observations with vision, that we may behold at our head Christ Victor, whose name is "Peace."

26--Isaiah 50.4-10; James 2.14-18; Mark 8.27-38; 1 Corinthians 13.4-13; 14.26-33, 40; 15.20-28; 16.1-14 .... Violence, war, destruction, death -- these are not the **final solution**, they are only penultimate problems. The final solution is this: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death."

## OCTOBER

3--Jeremiah 11.18-20; James 3.13-4.3; Mark 9.30-37; 1 Corinthians 10; 13.5-14; 2 Corinthians 1.1-12; 5.17-21 .... Yes, there is abroad, at loose, a spirit that makes for **strife**: Lord, grant me wisdom to discern it and courage to withstand it. And there is over and in and among us a Spirit that makes for **harmony and wholeness**, for peace with justice, for freedom and the means to exercise freedom with responsibility: Lord, make me an instrument of the Spirit of shalom.

10--Numbers 11.24-30; James 5.1-6; Mark 9.38-50; Galatians 1.1-10; 1.11-24; 3.23-29 .... "My soul, why art thou **disquieted** within thee?" Because somebody offended your ego? Because you failed to get something you doubt you should have or even know you shouldn't have? Because "life just isn't fair," and you've been done wrong? Because you passed up a chance to act for justice and peace? Because God has put a fire in your bones, and you have failed to witness forth the word you believe you have been given? Offer your disquiets to the Lord, or they will poison you and pollute the world with sadness and violence.

17--Genesis 2.18-24; Habbakuk 2.9-13; Mark 10.2-16; Galatians 5.16-26; 6; Ephesians 1.1-3, 15-23; 2.11-22 .... All of earth's humane traditions teach that **motives and means color "ends"** (in both senses: purpose and results). The long deep lessons of the heart and of history: sword-takers "perish by the sword," and the meek "inherit the earth." But the demons of the heart and the dark forces of history deny this intimate-ultimate truth, and till kingdom come we live with "wars and rumors of wars." Some progressions for meditation: betrayal/expulsion/repentance; rejection/crucifixion/resurrection; oppression/liberation; suppression/revolution; terrorism/chaos/tyranny; win/lose/vengeance; nonviolent win/win; sacrificial lose/win.

24--Proverbs 3.13-20; Hebrews 3.1-6; Mark 10.17-30; Ephesians 4.1-6; 4.11-16; 4.22-32; 6.10-18, 23-24 .... In the Bible, militant faith unashamedly uses military metaphors for the **spiritual warfare** "against the schemes of the devil," whose "flaming missiles" will be aimed at us (so we'll need "the shield of faith") when we attack with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The suggestions of both offensive and defensive armor show that we are to fight intelligently, with balanced skills -- not as turncoats or hotheads. We must win this war if we are ever going to "study (the other kind of) war no more."

31--Isaiah 53.10-12; Hebrews 4.12-16; Mark 10.35-45; Philippians 4.1-9; Colossians 1.13-11; 3.12-17; 1 Thessalonians 4.1-12 .... Since war is about **space**, land-claims, the occupation and control of real estate, the privilege of right of access to sea and sky and "the underparts of the earth," the most radical single sentence against war is this: "The earth is the Lord's." We are territorial animals, and we've been living the role: we are also, as children of the one God, sisters and brothers -- and we've not been living the role. On issues of peace and war, nothing else is as basic and as relevant as the Bible's way of seeing the world and telling us how to live in it.

## NOVEMBER

7--Jeremiah 31.7-9; Hebrews 4.2-10; Mark 10.46-52; 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11; 5.12-28; 2 Thessalonians 3.6-18; 1 Timothy 2.1-8 .... In addition to all the fears the strong share with the weak, the strong have the fear of falling from power. That special fear, rather than any objective calculus of power's responsibility to human need, makes power violence-prone vis-a-vis domestic challengers and war-prone vis-a-vis foreign challengers. After promises that feed the people's hopes, power performs according to its own fears. **Power is as paranoid as war is insane.** So to speak up for peace is to resist power in the name of reality, in the name of God.

14--Deuteronomy 6.1-9; Hebrews 7.23-28; Mark 12.28-34; 1 Timothy 6.11-16; 2 Timothy 1.1-11; 2.22-26; 4.7-18 .... Goodwill, bread and wine, honest love, and eagerness to find the funny and celebrate it with laughter -- all these perpetually argue for **peace** by opening the door to faith and prayer and thus to every neighbor. And these argue for **peace** by opening the door to illwill, separatism, self-calculation of advantage, and grim humorlessness. We are without excuse: we know both "the things that make for peace" and the things that make for war.

21--1 Kings 17.8-16; Hebrews 9.24-28; Mark 12.38-44; Titus 1.1-9; Philemon 1-17; Hebrews 7.1-10; 12.11-24 .... A military chaplain showed me his secret listing marked "Unblessables." "This list helps keep me sane, if not entirely honest, when I am expected to bless everything in sight and in planning," said he. So I started my own "Unblessables" list. Such a list mirror's one's character. Does my list show that I am a man of shalom?

28--Daniel 12.1-4; Hebrews 10.11-18; Mark 13.14-23; Hebrews 13.18-25; James 2.14-20; 3.13-18; 4.1-12 .... Looking down on Harlem from my commuter train, I saw this graffiti in huge, rough-sprayed letters on a high brick wall: "WE'RE HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE THERE." A basketful of truths, falsities, and illusions! Should an answering graffiti be sprayed on the train-side facing that wall? If so, what? Or should a skywriting plane puff out over train and wall "WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER"? **Truth is the hidden victim in social wars**, national and international. Mutual recrimination and confrontation seem less costly than honest negotiation and truth-facing. The Hebrew for "truth" is "straightness": "I hate your crooked ways," says the Lord, "and your bloody hands."

## DECEMBER

5--Isaiah 63.16-14.8; 1 Corinthians 1.3-9; Mark 13.32-37; 1 Peter 2.11-25; 3.8-16; 2 Peter 1.1-9; 1 John 1 .... Like the kingdom of God, shalom is both **here** and **not yet**. As an exercise in its hereness, write "SHALOM" on every shalom-speaking article in today's newspaper. Use a juicy felt pen so the articles you think worthy of the word will pop off the page. Ask a neighbor to do the same with her/his copy; then compare "shalom." Your reading of that newspaper will have been a prayer of affirmation, and your conversation with the neighbor will be a peace fellowship. We are the lords and ladies of our attending and intending.

12--Isaiah 40.1-11; 2 Peter 3.8-14; Mark 1.1-8; 1 John 2.7-14; 3.11-24; 4.7-21; 2 John 1-6 .... Hidden in the heart of prophet and poet and wise one is the hope, the prayer, the surmise, the dream that **the right words** -- "apples of gold in pitchers of silver" -- **can transform the world.** "The worlds were created by the Word of God," were they not? Then why should words not be able to transform the sin-deformed world? O Living Word, may my words make for gathering against scattering, reconciliation against strife, persuasion against coercion, peace against war; speak shalom, the word of New Being.

19--Isaiah 61.4, 8-11; 1 Thessalonians 5.16-24; John 1.6-8, 19-28; 3 John; Jude; Revelation 1.1-6; 1.7-18 .... A Christmas hymn says that the time is coming when the whole world will "give back the sound which now the angels sing." That sound was "Glory to God on high, and on earth SHALOM!" We don't have to wait till the end-time to begin to give back that sound. It is now the sound of freedom **from** the tyranny of the past, the terror of the present, and a future full of threat. It is now the sound of freedom **for** disciplined memory in appropriating the past and for disciplined action toward a truly human future.

26--2 Samuel 7.1-5, 7-16; Romans 16.25-27; Luke 1.26-38; Revelation 6; 12.7-17; 21.1-6; 22.1-5 .... Under the technological canopy, provincial issues are global and public issues invade all privacies. The world has become, beyond its willing, **one**. But, since the world's heart is far from one, the world's heart is dated. But the shalom heart is up-to-date and even ahead of the times! The Christmas carols are true. And our God is entirely reliable every New Year.

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### THE KIRKRIDGE PRAYER —

(unison) **ALMIGHTY GOD**, Known in our silence and entreated in our hunger for Thee, nourish us now with the common bread of Thy grace. Shape with Thy hands the witness of this quiet company, that our ministry may be Christ's own life in our day. Bestow Thy serenity and clean strength on each member of this circle, granting us honest work and steadfast friendship in Thee. Deepen, O God, Thy intention for our life in Thy Spirit. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**SHARED INTENTIONS** — This varied fellowship seeks a style-of-life with *daily*:

1. Openness to Scripture till word or verse speaks with power;
2. Intercessions by name, with thanks and praise;
3. Seeking out in silence for at least minutes before God;
4. Centering to act in Christian claims about justice, enemies, church, families, body-earth-air, intellect, our own affluence.

It is the aim of Kirkridge in everything to celebrate Christian faith in joy, without compulsion and without anxiety. Join us!

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**KIRKRIDGE**

Bangor, Pennsylvania 18013

The Kirkridge symbol, a modified Celtic cross, is actually the medieval sign for annealing, tempering -- our own devout intention.