

JANUARY

- 1 Ezekiel 11:14-20;
Revelation 21:1-5
- 5 Psalm 148;
Philippians 4:1-9
- 12 Psalm 4;
Matthew 6:16-24
- 19 Isaiah 11:1-9;
Romans 12:14-21
- 26 Micah 4:1-4;
Ephesians 3:3-14

God is more than we are without overwhelming us to our undoing. I will that this God -- the God predisposed to 'make all things new' -- overwhelm me, to my remaking.

It is not true that there are many ways to God. There is only one. It is the hallowing of the everyday.

Wherever I move, I move into brokenness. Where I move, I will move into wholeness.

A saint, a holy one of God, will dream of something more than unbroken sunshine, stew over something more than personal annoyances, and scratch more than petty itches.

The Kingdom of God is both the goal toward which we strive, and the pregnant reality in which here and now God allows us, calls us, to participate. The calling and allowing are grace, the striving is works, and the King is with us in the gracious deeds of longing love.

FEBRUARY

- 2 Psalm 40:1-3;
Ephesians 3:14-21
- 9 II Chronicles 7:14;
II Corinthians 4:1-7
- 16 Psalm 16;
II Corinthians 12:7-10
- 23 Isaiah 9:1-7;
Matthew 26:36-44

Jesus Christ introduces me to myself. Horror!
Jesus Christ introduces me to my true self. Joy!

Into that darkness that I deserve comes a Light beyond my deserving or comprehending. "Religion" means taking that Light more seriously not only than the darkness, but even than this self, myself.

"With God, nothing is impossible." But for us there are dark, impenetrable untowardnesses that cause pain and humiliation and confusion, and provide opportunities to learn patience, trust, compassion -- in a word, to grow.

O Lord Jesus Christ, be where my thoughts and deeds are born, take their hand and guide them into your Kingdom.

MARCH

- 2 Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24;
Matthew 6:25-34
- 9 Psalm 42:1-6, 9-11;
Matthew 10:24-33, 40-42
- 16 Isaiah 53:4-10a;
II Corinthians 1:3-7
- 23 Psalm 23:4;
II Corinthians 5:1-5
- 30 Isaiah 25:6-9;
Romans 6:1-11

My experience of God contains God as a kite contains the wind -- not much of it, only dynamically, in need of continuous replenishment, and only if I hold on and stand in tension at attention -- in a relaxed, trusting way.

No pain no gain -- for God, for man, for me.
No cost all lost -- for God, for man, for me.

There is a Story about a Great Wound that took all of us to inflict and can heal all our afflictions.

(Holy Week) God cannot be relied on to stay dead. When he is present I can be sure only of this, that he is present. I cannot be sure even of death, for in his presence death itself is uncertain and finally undone.

(Easter) The very moment when man did his worst God did his best. Cross and Resurrection together invert the daily values, the street expectations.

APRIL

- 6 Leviticus 19:1-4;
Hebrews 12:12-25
- 13 Psalm 96;
John 20:1-18
- 20 Proverbs 2:1-10;
Luke 6:27-37
- 27 Psalm 19:1-10;
I Thessalonians 4:13-14

Let us pray for peace -- but for justice, more. For reconciliation -- but for truth, more. And, more than for all, to know what this means: "Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."

God poured new wine into old wineskins. The wineskins burst -- but the Wine was not lost. "Drink, all of you, of it."

Before I act, Jesus cares about my motives. After I act, he asks only about my act, which has made me either a sheep -- or a goat.

We don't know enough to be atheists or pessimists. We know enough to trust and hope. "God" is our word for trust raised to the highest power, and "hope" is our word for life's power to knock the bottoms out of cul-de-sacs and the ends out of dead-ends. Because God is unconfined, so are trust and hope.

MAY

- 4 Psalm 122;
I Corinthians 2 (Mark 1)
- 11 Genesis 12:1-9;
Hebrews 12:1-13 (Mark 2)
- 18 Deuteronomy 5:28-29,
6:1-7;
Hebrews 5:7-10 (Mark 3)
- 25 Psalm 84:1-7;
Matthew 22:12-22 (Mark 4)

In seeking to understand God, no idea is wholly adequate and few ideas are wholly appropriate. Thus, through the power and the limits of our understanding, God himself calls us to openness, tolerance, expectation -- in a word, by and to grace and gracious affirmation.

What gets my attention for the moment, gets me for the moment. What holds my attention has me as long as my attention is held. Whatever, beyond all else, keeps my attention is my God.

Politics, we say, is the art of the possible. But what happens to the limits of the possible when, aflame with love, we become servants of justice and peace, subjects of that Kingdom which is over all?

On me is the stamp of God's image. I am the tax that is to be paid to God, a temple tax in the temple of the world. May I not evade this tax?

JUNE

- 1 Psalm 27:1-6;
John 20:19-31 (Mark 5)
- 8 Psalm 111;
I Corinthians 15:35-50
(Mark 6)
- 15 Psalm 51;
Galatians 5:13-25 (Mark 7)
- 22 Psalm 27:7-14;
Matthew 6:9-13 (Mark 8)
- 29 Psalm 24;
Romans 8:9-27 (Mark 9)

God help me! The darkness is more than I have courage to enter, the Resurrection light is more than I have wisdom to understand, and the Love is more than my hesitant heart wants to obey.

O Thou who art with me when life opens out and when life closes in, this day may I be with Thee in my going out and my coming in.

Mine is not to choose whether to endure or to perish from the earth. Mine only to choose, while perishing, whether I live for long dreams or short ones, for great visions or petty projects, for my little sovereignties or God's Kingdom.

The Holy One is present this day, and this day I am hallowable through the divinely given power to place myself at his disposal. This is to hallow his Name. This is to live the Lord's Prayer.

The soul is nothing. The soul and God are nothing. God, the soul, and the world are everything, all. God is more than all.

KIRKBRIDGE

Readings and Intentions 1975



As since 1942, Kirkridge finds useful for a devoted life the week's daily reading of a Scripture lection (in differing translations and with a commentary). For many of us this is linked with the intentions and prayer given at the end. Choice of this year's readings, and the theme wordings to go with them each week, are by *Willis E. Elliott*, who teaches at New York Theological Seminary and is a Kirkridge trustee. May-to-August lections from Mark are added for those of us who wish to work through one Gospel each year. The resident group at the ridge this year shares worship and intercessions Mondays at 4:30 and at other times in the week. Join us in any observance you find rewarding in your devotion.

THE KIRKBRIDGE PRAYER — Almighty Father, 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 Him. Deepen, O God, Thy intention for our life in Thee, 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. Centering down in silence for at least minutes before God;
4. Seeking to act out 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!

- 6 Psalm 30;
Matthew 5:1-11
(Mark 10:1-31)
- 13 Isaiah 40:1-11;
John 15:12-17
(Mark 10:32-46)
- 20 Ezekiel 14:1-11;
Luke 16:1-9 (Mark 11)
- 27 II Samuel 12:1-10, 13;
John 13:1-5, 12-15
(Mark 12)

If we succeed in our revolt against God, God and we are the victims. If we fail and yield, he conquers, and we become more than conquerors through him who loves us.

Lord, help my unbelief! -- Child, love.
Amo ut credam: I love so that I may believe.

My heart is a hollow which must take something into itself -- God or an idol. Deliver me, O Lord, from self-subversion, from being like those who "took their idols into their hearts"! Show me how to take the world into my heart as *your* world, without idolatry.

While it is better to practice the presence of man without God than of God without man, it is best to practice the presence of both, as God in his grace practices the presence of us all.

AUGUST

- 3 Psalm 8;
Matthew 25:1-13 (Mark 13)
- 10 Psalm 103:1-14, 19-22;
I Peter 1:13-23
(Mark 14:1-50)
- 17 Psalm 33:1-12, 18-22;
Hebrews 12:1-12
(Mark 14:51-72)
- 24 Isaiah 43:8-12;
I Peter 3:13-15 (Mark 15)
- 31 Psalm 63:1-8;
Ephesians 5:1-20
(Mark 16)

This day O Lord is yours. This day may we also be yours, that the whole earth may see your glory and turn from its distress and shame to your justice and joy.

What do I know of the neighbor I find hardest to love? That she hurts, and bleeds the same color as I do. That he hungers, and isnourished by the same nutrients. That she hopes, and like me perishes when vision fails. That he/she is loved with the same Love.

It is possible to abide in the eternal without keeping up with the temporal, but it is not Christian. Nor is it Christian to become enmired in the earth from which the flowers spring.

The God who works within and among us before we start talking about him does not cease the working when we stop talking about him. But it is at that time that we stop thinking about him and consciously worshiping him and seeking and doing his will.

I can have a doctrine without having a religion. The first is an ideal, the second a practice. To have a religion means to practice devotion to what one most prizes, which thus is one's God.

SEPTEMBER

- 7 Isaiah 58:6-12 and
Isaiah 61:1-3, 8-11
- 14 Isaiah 1:11-20;
I Timothy 6:6-10
- 21 Psalm 146;
I Peter 5:6-11
- 28 Psalm 46;
John 15:1-11

Jesus makes himself one with the world's wounds. These (his and the world's and therefore mine) are the context for understanding and proclaiming the text of the Word which he is and brings. Believers say, "We have seen the Lord!" The world says, "Unless I see the wounds, I will not believe."

I'm tempted to think Jesus calls me to do better what I'm already doing well. That's not so hard a thought as this: he may be calling me to stop doing much of what I am doing, to do the rest for higher reasons, and to do some things I never otherwise would do.

Can God count? We say one, two three-- whereas he says one, one, one.

I am a saint, open to the One who is holiness and love, justice and joy. That is, since saint is what I am called to be, saint is what I am most uncomfortable in not being.

OCTOBER

- 5 Joel 2:21-29;
Mark 10:17-31
- 12 Psalm 100;
II Corinthians 6:1-10
- 19 Psalm 113;
Matthew 11:28-30
- 26 Exodus 3:1-10;
Matthew 7:21-27

God protests against both fragments when nature and spirit are separated, body and soul, outer and inner life. In each hour and place, the New Heaven and the New Earth offer themselves under the one Lord.

Since "the gospel" means the Good News, no news and bad news are not the gospel. This day, O God of the Glad Tidings, help me to be and to do and to tell the gospel.

The world knows much suffering, some sympathy, little compassion. For to suffering nothing need be added; to sympathy, only imagination; but to compassion, one's self.

In the world, only within severe limits are things within my power. But in my assignment -- what God has for me to do today -- things are wholly within my power: that is the divine self-effacement. But when evening comes, I shall be the size of my response to my task under my authority: that is the divine judgment. But because the Assigner is with me and for me, I shall find strength and forgiveness: that is the divine grace.

NOVEMBER

- 2 Psalm 138;
Matthew 6:19-21
- 9 Deuteronomy 10:12-21;
James 5:13-20
- 16 Psalm 95:1-7;
II Corinthians 9:6-12
- 23 Psalm 97;
Matthew 12:1-13
- 30 Jeremiah 35:1-7;
Luke 24:13-35

Positivism leaves out man. Existentialism leaves out the world. Atheism leaves out God. Absolutisms leave out the precarious and the contingent. Relativisms leave out permanence, stability, peace. Nihilism leaves out everything. It's what you leave out that wrecks you.

The Christian and the Church may be effective for Jesus Christ where they are: they cannot be effective where they are not. May I be this day, O Lord, where I should be, and be there what I should be.

All the leaves of the Bible are rustling with the rumor that we are, beyond our deserving, known and loved by Life itself, by God the source of all knowing and all loving. Of that knowledge, all our knowing is only a pale reflection. To that love, all our living points, and toward it hopes and moves. Therefore, Thanksgiving Day is daily.

(Thanksgiving) Today I shall be in the presence of something struggling, needing to be born. May I know it, and midwife it. *Maran atha*: Come, Lord!

People who don't know who they are need a Church that knows what it is and what it should be. To them and to it may I be what I should be.

DECEMBER


- 7 Psalm 118;
II Timothy 3:10-17
- 14 Isaiah 53:1-3;
Luke 2:1-7
- 21 Job 11:16-19;
Ephesians 4:11-16

A faithful Church -- the faithful Christian -- will live in the midst of controversy and accept the assaults which follow from faithful living. We belong in many places where we are reluctant to go.

Where God was homeless -- in the world -- there he intends that all shall be at home.

We are all God's damaged children, tempted to see ourselves as victims of the past. But we are his *children* -- and it is of the nature of children to grow, and to forget, and to trust, and to be eager for tomorrow.

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