

Ascension News
Church of the Ascension –
The Anglican Church in Hilton, KZN
Diocese of Natal in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa
October Edition 2016



With the tempestuous and unsettling times we are experiencing I thought featuring “Shalom” or “Peace” this month would be most appropriate. Co-incidentally Michael Cassidy in *Theologically Speaking* September 2016 has also focused on Shalom.

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Shalom – Roger Ellis

Shalom or Peace is what Jesus offered to his disciples and always offers to His Church, as one moves into the central act of the Eucharist the “Peace of the Lord” is shared between Priest and people.

“Shalom” should be translated “Peace!” with a stress on the exclamation mark, for Shalom is a dynamic word, a word wishing

wholeness for the other person in a meaningful way. May these words coming into your home be a dynamic maker of that real peace Jesus offers. Yet how easily such words are written and said and how necessary it is that we carefully explore what the real meaning of that simple and old used word, 'peace' really is.

It is so easy to define peace simply as an absence of strife or violence and thus as a passive or quietistic word, but that is only a small part of its meaning in our Christian understanding. Certainly it is a real part, for there should be neither strife nor violence, nor conditions that provoke others to strife and violence! In this context peace has the positive sense of 'reconciliation' - the creating of right relationships between man and man, or between husband and wife, or wherever there is strife and enmity. This is the peace which Christ has brought about between people, regardless of who they are (Ephesians 2: 14 -17) and so when He says "Blessed are the Peacemakers" – it in effect means happy are those who produce right relationships between man and man. Again here the creative and positive sense of 'peace' comes through loudly and clearly and dare not be forgotten: it means so much more than an absence of strife!

"Shalom" in the Old Testament is also used dramatically to describe the relationship between man and God. To know God as father, as Abba, is to know something of that "Peace which passes all understanding". So to wish Shalom for another person is to want for them a meaningful and exciting relationship with God. Christ is indeed our peace (Ephesians 2:14) for in Him we find the real relationship with God as Father, the source of all and the giver of Peace.

Finally from this relationship we can gain that peace of mind which makes life really significant for peace is one of the gifts of the Spirit highlighted along with love and joy. (Galatians 5:22) This is that promise of Jesus we need to hear and accept for ourselves – "Peace is my parting gift to you" (John 14:27)

Thus Shalom as a greeting, as a shared greeting, wish and hope, is the willing of WHOLENESS in every relationship – to self, to

neighbour and to God – and so too the highest good for the other person.

May Peace! be so very much yours that you can meaningfully share it and effectively become “Instruments of Peace”.

Footnote: How to pronounce this Hebrew word is open to debate. It is generally accepted that in Classical Hebrew the ‘o’ was a long vowel and sounded like the stressed letters in ‘home’. In Modern Hebrew the ‘o’ is short sounding as in ‘long’. With the warmth and depth of meaning the word contains, I have long preferred the classical pronunciation which is that most likely used by Jesus himself.



Paul's Ponderings - *Shalom* and the "land between"

We generally translate the Hebrew word *Shalom* in to English as "peace". However, this is not a complete translation that captures the full sense of Hebrew thinking behind the word. I am sure that much will be said about this very thing in this edition of our newsletter, so I won't bore you by dwelling on it. I would like to

engage with something written by Rabbi David Zaslow regarding the notion of *Shalom*.

He argues that the word is better translated as “wholeness”. In Hebrew thought it denotes continuity and a connectedness to the real world as we experience it. He uses the fact that the word *Shalom* is used by Jewish people to say both “hello” and “goodbye”:

“That’s why we say “shalom” when we greet friends and when we are wish[sic] them farewell. In the most opposite of situations (coming and going) we use the same word, “shalom.” There is a hidden connection to all our comings and goings; they are wondrously linked together. When I come from somewhere, I am going to someplace else. When I realize this, I feel “wholeness,” and that is the source of peace – the knowledge that all my opposing energies are somehow linked and part of a single whole.

In many ways I see connection points with this notion and my own faith. Firstly, it gives me hope as I live out my life now, anticipating something more in the life to come. I am connected with those who have been before me in the faith (*cf* Hebrews 11), with those alongside me today, and I look forward to a time when I will see God face to face. There is a hidden connection.

Zaslow goes on to remind his readers that *Shalom* “brings the binary mind together”. In a nutshell, what he is saying is that peace, or wholeness, is rarely found at the extremes of our thought processes. A political right winger, or left winger for that matter, flies only with one wing. Finding middle ground, the land between, is where *Shalom* is. We have seen examples recently at our universities of how rigid stances, from many sides, have led to a palpable brokenness. *Shalom* is in the land between, waiting to be embraced.

We see it in the church too, where fundamentalism leads to judgment, or unbridled liberalism leads to intolerance. We are called to live *Shalom* lives that can recognise our own connectedness with people that are “other” to us: who look different from us, who think differently from us or who are of a different social class from us. *Shalom* connects us!



John's Jottings – Shalom

“Along with truth and justice, peace is among the most hallowed of Jewish values.” – Dr Aviezer Ravitzky

The Hebrew symbol for SHALOM

שָׁלוֹם

I am writing this on St Luke's Day – 18 October (also my daughter's birthday!) – a day associated with healing and medicine and, hence, also with SHALOM.

The Hebrew word for peace, **shalom**, is derived from a root denoting wholeness or completeness, and its frame of reference throughout Jewish literature is bound up with the notion of shelemut, perfection. In this sense, then, it betokens far more than *peace – the absence of conflict*. To wish someone Shalom, is to

wish upon their lives a deep, underlying peace of mind, a sense of the presence of God in their lives, a firm foundation regardless of the attacks of “the world, the flesh and the devil”, and a knowledge that one is made whole and complete in God.

Shalom is also the name of the Holy One, the name of Israel, and the name of the Messiah. Thus it comes as no surprise that so much of Jesus’ ministry on earth should have revolved around healing – not only physically, but emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Likewise, Shalom implies the presence of the grace of God, God’s wonderful mercy, healing, forgiveness, salvation and restoration to full relationship with **Abba**, the Father, which we cannot earn, we do not deserve and we cannot enjoy in any other way than throwing ourselves completely on His forgiveness in Jesus, the Gentle Healer.

As we pray for all doctors, nurses, paramedics, hospital orderlies and all involved in caring for the sick and hurting, may we pray God’s Shalom on them that they may be agents of healing and wholeness. And may we open ourselves to the healing power of God’s Shalom in our lives until we come finally to the great peace of passing from limited, temporal life to boundless, eternal life.

***May the Lord bless you and keep you;
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you.
May the Lord look favourably upon you
and give you PEACE.***

(With acknowledgement to the website: myjewishlearning.com)





CHRISTMAS GIFTS 2016

Please support the project to give gifts to over 100 children from the Sizanani Soup Kitchen in Mpophomeni.

There are fliers at the back of the Church - please ask sidespeople on duty.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE?:

Samples of gifts & Shopping Lists are available after each service on Sunday or alternatively:

Option 1: Too busy to shop? Donate cash to sponsor a gift

We are aware that everyone is very busy and some may not have time to purchase the items needed to fill the shopping bag - so we'll do that part for you!

A typical 'gift bag' will probably cost in the region of R200 – but every donation will be welcome. Simply place money towards a gift bag/s in an envelope clearly marked **GIFT BAG PROJECT**, place it in the collection plate or hand in at the office - and we will DO THE REST!.

Option 2: Too busy for Option 1 and keep forgetting to bring cash to church?

When you're doing your internet banking in the comfort of home/office – please make an electronic transfer to the Church account (BANK DETAILS BELOW) marked clearly as a reference: **GIFT BAG PROJECT**.

Bank details:

Kirby Hilton Parish,
FNB

Branch: 221325

Account: 509 3210 9884

Enquiries: Rosemarie Bullock 033 343 1434 /
084 549 5843 or email rmlbullock

PARISH NEWS



BAPTIZMS

18 September 2016

Harriet Fleur Robinson

CONFIRMATIONS:

16 October 2016

Hannah Armitage, Simon Krone &
Zolwandle Mnguni

DEATHS:

04 September 2016

Allan Manning

GRANDCHILDREN:

James Rex Redvers Shuttleworth, grandson for Laurie & Sally Kelly, great grandson for Betty Allen

WEDDINGS:

01 October 2016

Caitlin Scott and Trystan Banger

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday – Friday 9h00 – 13h00
The Church is open week days from 07h00 - 16h00

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