

**Lectionary readings: Jeremiah 2: 4-13; Psalm 81: 1, 10-16; Hebrews 13: 1-8, 15-16; Luke 14: 1, 7-14**

**For reflection and prayer**

- **Jeremiah 2:** It never occurred to people of Jeremiah's day to ask, 'Where is God?' A bit like today really, except when tragedy strikes, and then people ask the question. But if we have eyes to see, we can see God all around us. It might be good for us this week to look for God in the everyday events of our life, in the people we meet and in the world of nature. We live in a society which trusts in false gods, rather like Jeremiah's generation. We are surrounded by people - and we must include ourselves in their number - who are building wells which leak, instead of opening ourselves up to the life-giving water that only God can provide, and which refreshes and renews us. How about asking ourselves this week what kind of broken cisterns or leaking wells we are trusting in - money, material goods, busy-ness etc? Are we shoring up a false self? Or are we seeking to find our true self in God?
- **Psalm 81:** Verse 10: *'Open your heart wide, and I shall fill it.'* Verses 13-14: *'O that my people would listen, that, as friends, you would walk in my ways! Your fears would soon flee and your hearts would overflow.'* Verse 16: *'I would satisfy your hunger, and, with streams of Living Water, you would live in the joy of heaven here on earth.'* (Psalms for Praying) This is God's invitation to all of us. He waits for our response. What is your response?
- **Hebrews 13:** The writer here describes the marks of the Christian community. Love, hospitality, identification with and empathy for those in need, compassion for e.g. prisoners, not only those locked up in a prison, but also those around us who are imprisoned by fear, guilt, addictions, compulsions etc; no obsession with the desire for material things, but contentment with what we have; trust in God who has promised to be with us always; appreciation for our leaders of integrity; faithfulness in our relationships; praise and thanksgiving to God continually for His love and reaching out with that same love and acceptance to others. How can we become more like Christ?
- **Luke 14:** This is not simply about a dinner party, but about those invited into God's Kingdom. And that includes all - even those we think don't merit an invitation. After all, do we deserve an invitation? All is of grace. All are of equal value in God's sight. The guests were jostling for position and recognition. There is no place for this in the Christian church. Do we treat everyone as of equal value in our church? Do we extend love to all? Jesus speaks here of those who are humble. One definition of humility is - accepting myself as I am, not trying to impress others, not wearing masks, not pretending to be what I am not. I love verse 11 in The Message: *'If you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself.'* This speaks of change and transformation. When we enter God's Kingdom through faith, we start out on a journey of change as we allow God into our lives more and more so that we become all that God created us to be. We might like to reflect on this and hear what God is saying to us this week about how we might be changed.