**Year 1, Proper 15, Sunday: Evening Prayer**

**For use with the First Lesson**

Adapted from *The Vocabulary of the Church* (1960):

Nazirite NAZ-ur-ight

Da'gon DAY-gahn

Zor'ah ZOR-uh

Esh'ta-ol ESH-tay-ahl

Mano'ah muh-NOH-uh

*The First Lesson. The Reader begins*

**A Reading from the Book of Judges**

And Deli'lah said to Samson, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and you have not told me wherein your great strength lies.” And when she pressed him hard with her words day after day, and urged him, his soul was vexed to death. And he told her all his mind, and said to her, “A razor has never come upon my head; for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I be shaved, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.” When Deli'lah saw that he had told her all his mind, she sent and called the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up this once, for he has told me all his mind.” Then the lords of the Philistines came up to her, and brought the money in their hands. She made him sleep upon her knees; and she called a man, and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. And she said, “The Philistines are upon you, Samson!” And he awoke from his sleep, and said, “I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free.” And he did not know that the Lord had left him. And the Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with bronze fetters; and he ground at the mill in the prison. But the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaved. Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Da'gon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, “Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand.” And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, “Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has slain many of us.” And when their hearts were merry, they said, “Call Samson, that he may make sport for us.” So they called Samson out of the prison, and he made sport before them. They made him stand between the pillars; and Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, that I may lean against them.” Now the house was full of men and women; all the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about three thousand men and women, who looked on while Samson made sport. Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be avenged upon the Philistines for one of my two eyes.” And Samson grasped the two middle pillars upon which the house rested, and he leaned his weight upon them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines.” Then he bowed with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were in it. So the dead whom he slew at his death were more than those whom he had slain during his life. Then his brothers and all his family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zor'ah and Esh'ta-ol in the tomb of Mano'ah his father. He had judged Israel twenty years.

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.

*The Second Lesson. The Reader begins*

**A Reading from the Gospel According to John**

Jesus said to the Jews, “I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. If I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true; there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that the testimony which he bears to me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony which I receive is from man; but I say this that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen; and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent. You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men. But I know that you have not the love of God within you. I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.