

**YEAR 2, PROPER 26, SUNDAY:  
EVENSONG & BENEDICTION**

**For use with the First Lesson**

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

Nehemi'ah

nee-huh-MIGH-uh

Ar-ta-xerx'es

ahr-ta-ZURK-seez

*The First Lesson. The Reader begins*

**A Reading from the Book of Nehemiah**

Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brethren. For there were those who said, “With our sons and our daughters, we are many; let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive.” There were also those who said, “We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine.” And there were those who said, “We have borrowed money for the king’s tax upon our fields and our vineyards. Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children are as their children; yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved; but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our

vineyards.” I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, “You are exacting interest, each from his brother.” And I held a great assembly against them, and said to them, “We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brethren who have been sold to the nations; but you even sell your brethren that they may be sold to us!” They were silent, and could not find a word to say. So I said, “The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies? Moreover I and my brethren and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us leave off this interest. Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the hundredth of money, grain, wine, and oil which you have been exacting of them.” Then they said, “We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say.” And I called the priests, and took an oath of them to do as they had promised. I also shook out my lap and said, “So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not perform this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied.” And all the assembly said Amen” and praised the LORD. And the people did as

they had promised. Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Ar-ta-xerx'es the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brethren ate the food allowance of the governor. The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens upon the people, and took from them food and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God. I also held to the work on this wall, and acquired no land; and all my servants were gathered there for the work. Moreover there were at my table a hundred and fifty men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations which were about us. Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; fowls likewise were prepared for me, and every ten days skins of wine in abundance; yet with all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the servitude was heavy upon this people. Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

*The Reader concludes*

The Word of the Lord.

*The Second Lesson. The Reader begins*

## **A Reading from the**

### **First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians**

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues,

they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

*The Reader concludes*

The Word of the Lord.

*At Eucharistic Benediction*

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

Jesus said, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast

forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.”

*No concluding versicle is added after the reading at Benediction.*