

**YEAR 2, PROPER 28, WEDNESDAY:
EVENING PRAYER**

For use with the First Lesson

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

Maccabees	MAK-uh-bees
Miz'pah	MIZ-puh
Naz'irites	NAZ-uh-rights
Emma'us	i-MAY-uhs

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the First Book of the Maccabees

Now Judas and his brothers saw that misfortunes had increased and that the forces were encamped in their territory. They also learned what the king had commanded to do to the people to cause their final destruction. But they said to one another, “Let us repair the destruction of our people, and fight for our people and the sanctuary.” And the congregation assembled to be ready for battle, and to pray and ask for mercy and compassion. Jerusalem was uninhabited like a wilderness; not one of her children went in or out. The sanctuary was trampled down, and the sons of aliens held the citadel; it was a lodging place for the

Gentiles. Joy was taken from Jacob; the flute and the harp ceased to play. So they assembled and went to Miz'pah, opposite Jerusalem, because Israel formerly had a place of prayer in Miz'pah. They fasted that day, put on sackcloth and sprinkled ashes on their heads, and rent their clothes. And they opened the book of the law to inquire into those matters about which the Gentiles were consulting the images of their idols. They also brought the garments of the priesthood and the first fruits and the tithes, and they stirred up the Naz'irites who had completed their days; and they cried aloud to Heaven, saying, "What shall we do with these? Where shall we take them? Thy sanctuary is trampled down and profaned, and thy priests mourn in humiliation. And behold, the Gentiles are assembled against us to destroy us; thou knowest what they plot against us. How will we be able to withstand them, if thou dost not help us?" Then they sounded the trumpets and gave a loud shout. After this Judas appointed leaders of the people, in charge of thousands and hundreds and fifties and tens. And he said to those who were building houses, or were betrothed, or were planting vineyards, or were fainthearted, that each should return to his home, according to the law. Then the army marched out and encamped to the south of Emma'us. And Judas said,

“Gird yourselves and be valiant. Be ready early in the morning to fight with these Gentiles who have assembled against us to destroy us and our sanctuary. It is better for us to die in battle than to see the misfortunes of our nation and of the sanctuary. But as his will in heaven may be, so he will do.”

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Letter of James

Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have; so you

kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is in vain that the scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us”? But he gives more grace; therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you men of double mind. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you. Do not speak evil against one another, brethren. He that speaks evil against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to

destroy. But who are you that you judge your neighbor?

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.