

**YEAR 2, EPIPHANY 7, FRIDAY:
EVENING PRAYER**

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Book of Ruth

Na'omi her mother-in-law said to Ruth, “My daughter, should I not seek a home for you, that it may be well with you? Now is not Bo'az our kinsman, with whose maidens you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do.” And she replied, “All that you say I will do.” So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had told her. And when Bo'az had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and lay down. At midnight the man was startled, and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant; spread your skirt over your

maidservant, for you are next of kin.” And he said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter; you have made this last kindness greater than the first, in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear, I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of worth. And now it is true that I am a near kinsman, yet there is a kinsman nearer than I. Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will do the part of the next of kin for you, well; let him do it; but if he is not willing to do the part of the next of kin for you, then, as the LORD lives, I will do the part of the next of kin for you. Lie down until the morning.” So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another; and he said, “Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” And he said, “Bring the mantle you are wearing and hold it out.” So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and laid it upon her; then she went into the city. And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did you fare, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her, saying, “These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said, ‘You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’” She replied, “Wait, my

daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today.”

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to Philemon

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved and fellow worker, and Ap'phia our sister and Archip'pus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may promote the knowledge of all the good that is ours in Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an ambassador and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus—I appeal to you for my child, Ones'imus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but

now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will. Perhaps this is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand, I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be granted to you. Ep'aphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristar'chus, Demas,

and Luke, my fellow workers. The grace of the Lord
Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

The Reader concludes The Word of the Lord.