**Year 2, Proper 23, Thursday: Evening Prayer**

*The First Lesson. The Reader begins*

## A Reading from the Book of Jeremiah

Shephati'ah the son of Mattan, Gedali'ah the son of Pashhur, Jucal the son of Shelemi'ah, and Pashhur the son of Malchi'ah heard the words that Jeremiah was saying to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out to the Chalde'ans shall live; he shall have his life as a prize of war, and live. Thus says the Lord, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon and be taken.” Then the princes said to the king, “Let this man be put to death, for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm.” King Zedeki'ah said, “Behold, he is in your hands; for the king can do nothing against you.” So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchi'ah, the king’s son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mire, and Jeremiah sank in the mire. When E'bed-mel'ech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, who was in the king’s house, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern—the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate—E'bed-mel'ech went from the king’s house and said to the king, “My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they did to Jeremiah the prophet by casting him into the cistern; and he will die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city.” Then the king commanded E'bed-mel'ech, the Ethiopian, “Take three men with you from here, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.” So E'bed-mel'ech took the men with him and went to the house of the king, to a wardrobe of the storehouse, and took from there old rags and worn-out clothes, which he let down to Jeremiah in the cistern by ropes. Then E'bed-mel'ech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, “Put the rags and clothes between your armpits and the ropes.” Jeremiah did so. Then they drew Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.

*The Second Lesson. The Reader begins*

**A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the sea of A'dria, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. So they sounded and found twenty fathoms; a little farther on they sounded again and found fifteen fathoms. And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let out four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.” Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let it go. As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. Therefore I urge you to take some food; it will give you strength, since not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.” And when he had said this, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. (We were in all two hundred and seventy-six persons in the ship.) And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to bring the ship ashore. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders; then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. But striking a shoal they ran the vessel aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was broken up by the surf. The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape; but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their purpose. He ordered those who could swim to throw themselves overboard first and make for the land, and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all escaped to land.

*The Reader concludes* The Word of the Lord.