**MORNING PRAYER READINGS
March 20-24, 2023**  **The Fourth Week of Lent**

MONDAY: March 20 (PSALM 89:1-29\* BCP 713)
Holy Day: ST JOSEPH (BCP 239) *transferred*
*\*The psalm is from the Holy Day’s Principal Service Lectionary.
The second lesson is from the Daily Office Lectionary for the Holy Day.*

## FIRST LESSON A reading from the Book of Jeremiah [16:10-21]The word of the Lord came to me:When you tell this people all these words, and they say to you, ‘Why has the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? What is our iniquity? What is the sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?’ then you shall say to them: It is because your ancestors have forsaken me, says the Lord, and have gone after other gods and have served and worshipped them, and have forsaken me and have not kept my law; and because you have behaved worse than your ancestors, for here you are, every one of you, following your stubborn, evil will, refusing to listen to me. Therefore I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your ancestors have known, and there you shall serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favour. Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, ‘As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of Egypt’, but ‘As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them.’ For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their ancestors. I am now sending for many fishermen, says the Lord, and they shall catch them; and afterwards I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks. For my eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from my presence, nor is their iniquity concealed from my sight. And I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations. O Lord, my strength and my stronghold,   my refuge on the day of trouble,to you shall the nations come   from the ends of the earth and say:Our ancestors have inherited nothing but lies,   worthless things in which there is no profit. Can mortals make for themselves gods?   Such are no gods! ‘Therefore I am surely going to teach them, this time I am going to teach them my power and my might, and they shall know that my name is the Lord.’

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

## SECOND LESSON A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew [1:18-25] Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,   and they shall name him Emmanuel’,which means, ‘God is with us.’ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

TUESDAY: March 21 (PSALM 97 & 99 BCP 726)
*Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Lent*

## FIRST LESSON A reading from the Book of Jeremiah [17:19-27] Thus said the Lord to me: Go and stand in the People’s Gate, by which the kings of Judah enter and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem, and say to them: Hear the word of the Lord, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. Thus says the Lord: For the sake of your lives, take care that you do not bear a burden on the sabbath day or bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem. And do not carry a burden out of your houses on the sabbath or do any work, but keep the sabbath day holy, as I commanded your ancestors. Yet they did not listen or incline their ear; they stiffened their necks and would not hear or receive instruction. But if you listen to me, says the Lord, and bring in no burden by the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but keep the sabbath day holy and do no work on it, then there shall enter by the gates of this city kings who sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their officials, the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall be inhabited for ever. And people shall come from the towns of Judah and the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the Shephelah, from the hill country, and from the Negeb, bringing burnt-offerings and sacrifices, grain-offerings and frankincense, and bringing thank-offerings to the house of the Lord. But if you do not listen to me, to keep the sabbath day holy, and to carry in no burden through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates; it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be quenched.

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

## SECOND LESSON A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans [7:13-25]Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

WEDNESDAY: March 22 (PSALM 101 & 109:1-4,20-30 BCP 730)
*Wednesday in the Fourth Week of Lent*

## FIRST LESSON A reading from the Book of Jeremiah [18:1-11] The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ‘Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.’ So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it.

## And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, all of you from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

## SECOND LESSON A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans [8:1-11] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

THURSDAY: March 23 (PSALM 69:1-23,31-38 BCP 679)
*Thursday in the Fourth Week of Lent*

## FIRST LESSON A reading from the Book of Jeremiah [22:13-23] Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness,   and his upper rooms by injustice;who makes his neighbours work for nothing,   and does not give them their wages; who says, ‘I will build myself a spacious house   with large upper rooms’,and who cuts out windows for it,   panelling it with cedar,   and painting it with vermilion. Are you a king   because you compete in cedar?Did not your father eat and drink   and do justice and righteousness?   Then it was well with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy;   then it was well.Is not this to know me?   says the Lord. But your eyes and heart   are only on your dishonest gain,for shedding innocent blood,   and for practising oppression and violence. Therefore thus says the Lord concerning King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah:They shall not lament for him, saying,   ‘Alas, my brother!’ or ‘Alas, sister!’They shall not lament for him, saying,   ‘Alas, lord!’ or ‘Alas, his majesty!’ With the burial of a donkey he shall be buried—   dragged off and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem. Go up to Lebanon, and cry out,   and lift up your voice in Bashan;cry out from Abarim,   for all your lovers are crushed. I spoke to you in your prosperity,   but you said, ‘I will not listen.’This has been your way from your youth,   for you have not obeyed my voice. The wind shall shepherd all your shepherds,   and your lovers shall go into captivity;then you will be ashamed and dismayed   because of all your wickedness. O inhabitant of Lebanon,   nested among the cedars,how you will groan when pangs come upon you,   pain as of a woman in labour!

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

## SECOND LESSON A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans [8:12-27] Brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

## FRIDAY: March 24 (PSALM 102 BCP 731)*Friday in the Fourth Week of Lent*FIRST LESSON A reading from the Book of Jeremiah [23:1-8] Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord. The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’ Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, ‘As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of Egypt’, but ‘As the Lord lives who brought out and led the offspring of the house of Israel out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them.’ Then they shall live in their own land.

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

## SECOND LESSON A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans [8:28-39] We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,‘For your sake we are being killed all day long;   we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

— Here ends the Lesson (*or* Reading). *[OR* The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.]*

**NOTE ABOUT THE PSALTER SELECTIONS LISTED:**
In an effort to pray a majority of the 150 psalms every few months, those referenced above are appointed by *The Book of Common Prayer* for use in the morning during Lent.