

Dear Friends,

Last night when the roads around here were not in good shape because of the snow, I was very happy for the twelve of you who came to our first Evening Prayer and lesson in the church office. I hope more of you will be here next Wednesday at 6 PM for the Potluck Supper followed by Evening Prayer at 6:30 PM and a lesson on "How to Read the Bible for Maximum Learning" from 7 to 8 PM. There will be a sign up sheet for the Potluck at the services on Sunday, but, as always, you will be welcome on Wednesday evening even if you don't sign up or bring something for the Potluck.

As I promised last week, here is the answer to the question: Why do we veil the crosses in the church during Lent? I found a wonderful explanation on the Full Homely Divinity website:

Veiling according to the Sarum (Old English) Rite. ...In this tradition "according to the rules that in all the churches of England be observed, all images [are] to be hid from Ash Wednesday to Easter Day in the morning." This is called the Lenten Array and it includes a curtain which hides the reredos, a frontal which covers the altar, and veils which cover other statues and pictures in the church. The color was Lenten white which was natural linen material, sometimes referred to as ash color. According to An Introduction to English Liturgical Colours, "The explanation of this use of white, which is closely akin to ashen, is 'in this time of Lent, which is a time of mourning, all things that make to the adornment of the church are either laid aside or else covered, to put us in remembrance that we ought now to lament and mourn for our souls dead in sin, and continually to watch, fast, pray, give alms....,'

The lessons for Sunday are printed below. My sermon theme will be "Weeping."

Yours in Christ,
Allen

Nehemiah 1:1-4

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Now it happened in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Susa the capital, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came with certain men out of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that survived, who had escaped exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, "The survivors there in the province who escaped exile are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." When I heard these words I sat down and wept, and mourned for days;

and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

PSALM 89:34-48

- 34 I will not break my covenant, *
nor change what has gone out of my lips.
- 35 Once for all I have sworn by my holiness: *
'I will not lie to David.
- 36 His line shall endure for ever *
and his throne as the sun before me;
- 37 It shall stand fast for evermore like the moon, *
the abiding witness in the sky.' "
- 38 But you have cast off and rejected your anointed; *
you have become enraged at him.
- 39 You have broken your covenant with your servant, *
defiled his crown, and hurled it to the ground.
- 40 You have breached all his walls *
and laid his strongholds in ruins.
- 41 All who pass by despoil him; *
he has become the scorn of his neighbors.
- 42 You have exalted the right hand of his foes *
and made all his enemies rejoice.
- 43 You have turned back the edge of his sword *
and have not sustained him in battle.
- 44 You have put an end to his splendor *
and cast his throne to the ground.
- 45 You have cut short the days of his youth *
and have covered him with shame.
- 46 How long will you hide yourself, O LORD?
will you hide yourself for ever? *
how long will your anger burn like fire?
- 47 Remember, LORD, how short life is, *
how frail you have made all flesh.
- 48 Who can live and not see death? *
who can save himself from the power of the grave?

James 5:1-6

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

Luke 13:31-35

Some Pharisees came, and said to Jesus, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.' O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' "