



# Evensong

The Order for Evening Prayer  
according to  
the Book of Common Prayer

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) is largely the work of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, who started compiling it in the reign of Henry VIII, and then continued under his son Edward VI. It dates from 1549, and was written in English, some 60 years before the King James Bible.

The protestant movement had started in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of his church in Germany. But until Henry VIII established the Church of England all services were conducted in Latin. Cranmer set about compiling a book which would set out how every service should be conducted in English. By 'every' he meant 'every' – from baptisms, marriages and funerals to the ordination of priests and bishops; from daily services to Holy Communion. He set out readings so that the Old Testament was read through once a year and the New Testament three times a year. He also compiled collects (short prayers) for every Sunday in the church calendar.

The daily services of Matins and Evensong were derived from the many services of prayer which had punctuated the days and nights of the medieval church and its monasteries. In addition, Cranmer included the book of Psalms. Psalms which express hopes and fears, inspire faith, and renew trust in God. The current version of the BCP was finalised in 1622 during the reign of James I

In order to enter into the spirit of these services we need to do two things. First, we have to be patient and relaxed enough to allow a long and much-loved tradition to have its say. Then we should allow our own thoughts and feelings to become closer to us than life often admits.

These two things are not separate. Along with much that is now unfamiliar, the tradition includes strong expressions of our basic feelings about ourselves and God. And it is precisely the cool and ancient order of the services which can both prompt and structure reflection on our regrets and hopes and gratitudes. The best analogy for this is a relation of love, in which by attending to someone else we find ourselves. So let us pray that through these beautiful services we may learn more about the love of God for his world, his people and each one of us.

## EVENSONG

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#### ORGAN VOLUNTARY

*Please stand at the entrance of the choir and clergy. Anyone who finds it difficult to stand for any part of this service is very welcome to remain seated.*

*We say together all the words in **bold**.*

#### SENTENCE

#### BIDDING PRAYER

DEARLY beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us, in sundry places, to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought, at all times, humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me;

#### GENERAL CONFESSION

*Please sit or kneel*

**ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are**

**penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.**

#### THE ABSOLUTION

**ALMIGHTY** God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live; and hath given power, and commandment, to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance, and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him, which we do at this present; and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure, and holy; so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.**

#### SUNG RESPONSES

*Priest.* O Lord, open thou our lips.

**Answer.** And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

*Priest.* O God, make speed to save us.

**Answer.** O Lord, make haste to help us.

*All stand*

*Priest.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

**Answer.** As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

*Priest.* Praise ye the Lord.

**Answer.** The Lord's Name be praised.

*Please stand for the PSALM (which can be found on pages 347 to 537 of the Book of Common Prayer)*

*Following the psalm use these words:*

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: world without end.  
Amen**

*Please sit for the*  
FIRST LESSON

*Remain seated for the Magnificat, standing for the Gloria*  
St. Luke I.

**MY soul doth magnify the Lord:**

**and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.**

**For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden.**

**For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed.**

**For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name.**

**And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations.**

**He hath showed strength with his arm:**

**he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.**

**He hath put down the mighty from their seat:**

**and hath exalted the humble and meek.**

**He hath filled the hungry with good things:**

**and the rich he hath sent empty away.**

**He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:**

**as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost**

**As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: world without end.**

**Amen**

*Please sit for the*  
SECOND LESSON

*Remain seated for the Nunc Dimittis, standing for the Gloria*  
St. Luke ii. 29.

**LORD, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:  
according to thy word.**

**For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation,**

**Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people;**

**To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:**

**and to be the glory of thy people Israel.**

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: world without end.  
Amen**

#### APOSTLES' CREED

**I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy  
Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary: Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was  
crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; The third day he rose  
again from the dead: He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right  
hand of God the Father Almighty: From thence he shall come to judge the  
quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost: The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of  
Saints: The Forgiveness of sins: The Resurrection of the body, And the Life  
everlasting. Amen.**

#### SUNG RESPONSES

*Priest.* The Lord be with you.

***Answer.* And with thy spirit.**

*Priest.* Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Christ, have mercy upon us.**

Lord, have mercy upon us.

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

**OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom  
come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our  
daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who  
trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from  
evil. Amen.**

*Priest* O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

***Answer.* And grant us thy salvation.**

*Priest.* O Lord, save the Queen.

***Answer.* And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.**

*Priest.* Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

***Answer.* And make thy chosen people joyful.**

*Priest.* O Lord, save thy people.

***Answer.* And bless thine inheritance.**

*Priest.* Give peace in our time, O Lord.

***Answer.*** Because there is none other that fighteth for us,  
but only thou, O God.

*Priest.* O God, make clean our hearts within us.

***Answer.*** And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

SECOND COLLECT

for peace

O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. ***Amen.***

THIRD COLLECT

*for Aid against all Perils.*

**LIGHTEN** our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. ***Amen.***

*Please sit*

THE ANTHEM

ADDRESS

*Please kneel*

PRAYERS (*ending with*)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. ***Amen.***

**HYMN**

*during which the collection will be taken*

BLESSING

ORGAN VOLUNTARY

*Additional Prayers*

THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men; We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.**