

Night Prayer

AGNES TSAO KOU YING, AGATHA LIN ZHAO, & LUCY YI ZHENMEI

Catechists & Martyrs, 1856, 1858, & 1862

Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Wakefield, MA
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From A New Zealand Prayer Book,
adapted to include elements of *BCP* Evening Prayer

The offering of prayer late in the evening, by laity, religious orders or clergy, often called Compline, has sometimes been described as the 'goodnight prayer of the Church'. It rounds off the day and prepares us for a quiet night. As the psalmist wrote:

*I lie down in peace and take my rest
for it is in God alone that I dwell unafraid.*

Night Prayer derives its content from the wisdom of the centuries in Scripture and above all in the psalms, but also from contemporary Christian experience of God. It celebrates the awareness that each of us who tries to pray is a part of the human whole. So we are taken over the threshold from daytime, not in a mood of self-centered spirituality, but as representatives of humanity, acknowledging our creaturehood before God.

APPROACH

The angels of God guard us through the night,
and quieten the powers of darkness.

The Spirit of God be our guide
to lead us to peace and to glory.

It is but lost labor that we haste to rise up early, and so late take rest, and eat the bread of anxiety.
For those beloved of God are given gifts even while they sleep.

My brothers and sisters, our help is in the name of the eternal God,
who is making the heavens and the earth.

CONFESSION

**Dear God, thank you for all that is good,
for our creation and for our humanity,
for the stewardship you have given us of this planet earth,
for the gifts of life and of one another,
for your love which is unbounded and eternal.**

**O thou, most holy and beloved, our Companion,
our Guide upon the way, our bright evening star.**

We repent the wrongs we have done:

Silence

We have wounded your love.

O God, heal us.

We stumble in the darkness.

Light of the world transfigure us.

We forget that we are your home.

Spirit of God, dwell in us.

Leader: Eternal Spirit, living God, in whom we live and move and have our being, all that we are, have been, and shall be is known to you, to the very secret of our hearts and all that rises to trouble us. Living flame burn into us, cleansing wind, blow through us, fountain of water, well up within us, that we may love and praise in deed and in truth. **Amen.**

INVOCATION

Eternal Spirit, flow through our being and open our lips,
that our mouths may proclaim your praise.

Let us worship the God of love.

Thanks be to God.

FIRST LESSON: Exodus 23:1-9

You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as a malicious witness. You shall not follow a majority in wrongdoing; when you bear witness in a lawsuit, you shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice; nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit.

When you come upon your enemy's ox or donkey going astray, you shall bring it back.

When you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden and you would hold back from setting it free, you must help to set it free.

You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in their lawsuits. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or those in the right, for I will not acquit the guilty. You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.

You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

PSALM 25

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you; *
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

**Let none who look to you be put to shame; *
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.**

Show me your ways, O Lord, *
and teach me your paths.

**Lead me in your truth and teach me, *
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.**

Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, *
for they are from everlasting.

**Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; *
remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.**

Gracious and upright is the Lord; *
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

**He guides the humble in doing right *
and teaches his way to the lowly.**

All the paths of the Lord are love and faithfulness *
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

**For your Name's sake, O Lord, *
forgive my sin, for it is great.**

Who are they who fear the Lord? *
he will teach them the way that they should choose.

**They shall dwell in prosperity, *
and their offspring shall inherit the land.**

The Lord is a friend to those who fear him *
and will show them his covenant.

**My eyes are ever looking to the Lord, *
for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.**

Turn to me and have pity on me, *
for I am left alone and in misery.

**The sorrows of my heart have increased; *
bring me out of my troubles.**

Look upon my adversity and misery *
and forgive me all my sin.

**Look upon my enemies, for they are many, *
and they bear a violent hatred against me.**

Protect my life and deliver me; *
let me not be put to shame, for I have trusted in you.

**Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, *
for my hope has been in you.**

Deliver Israel, O God, *
out of all his troubles.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

READING – Matthew 25:1-3

‘Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept.

But at midnight there was a shout, “Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.” Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” But the wise replied, “No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.”

And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, “Lord, lord, open to us.” But he replied, “Truly I tell you, I do not know you.” Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

(silence to prayerfully collect our thoughts)

We share reflections on the day’s scripture.

What do you notice?

What is speaking to you?

What difference does it make?

How can we help each other “keep awake?” What does that mean for us?

Hymn (spoken together)

God be in my head, and in my understanding;

God be in my eyes, and in my looking;

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;

**God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at my end, and at my departing.**

Prayers

Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit,
for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love.
Keep me, O God, as the apple of your eye;
hide me under the shadow of your wings.

**Preserve us, O God, while waking, and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.**

Collect of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, who willingly walked the way of the cross: Strengthen your church through the witness of your servants the Catechists and Martyrs of China to hold fast to the path of discipleship even unto death; for with the Father and Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

**Preserve us, O God, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ,
and asleep may rest in your peace.**

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord have mercy.

*We offer intercessions and thanksgivings from our heart
either silently or aloud or in the chat function.*

We pray for healing for those on the parish prayer list, including: Allison, Phoebe Babb, Kristin Baird, Berry, Bruna, Heather Cameron, Cathie Cardelucci, Lydia Cedrone, Ann Daily, Dave, John DeNatale, Peggy Downs, Jonathan English, David Fieldhouse, Claudette Forss, Connor Gallagher, Kristen Goddard, Louise Haldeman, Lester Hartman, Karen Dodd Howard, Jeffrey, Pete Jeffrey, Jack Jephson, Jerry, Jordan, Debra Katt-Lloyd, John & Theresa Kelly, Kevin MacKenzie, Keith & Joanne Manville, Mark Martino, Melissa, Becky Miller,

Sebastian Miller, Jim & Sara Murphy, T.A.N, Steve Newman, Jim O'Reilly,
Emma Parese, Pat & Joe, Jane Pennacchia, Muriel Peters, Kirk Ronaldson, Cheryl
Santarelli, Linda Shapiro, Carol Slaughter, Trudy, Mariann Ventura, Bill & Jan
Walsh, Jane Wilkins, Kelly Wood

The Lord's Prayer

**Eternal Spirit,
Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples
of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and for ever. Amen.**

I will lie down in peace and take my rest,
for it is in God alone that I dwell unafraid.
Let us bless the Earth-maker, the Pain-bearer, the Life-giver,
let us praise and exalt God above all for ever.
May God's name be praised beyond the furthest star,
glorified and exalted above all for ever.

Night Prayer

**Lord,
it is night.
The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.
It is night after a long day.**

**What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.**

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.

The night is quiet.

**Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no
peace.**

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities.

In your name we pray. Amen.

Sentence of the Day:

Christ be within us to keep us,
beside us to guard,
before us to lead,
behind us to protect,
beneath us to support,
above us to bless.

Wednesday:

Dear God, your eternal word of love
endures for ever in the universe.

Your truth stands fast from one generation to another.

You have laid the foundations of the earth, and it abides.

In fulfilment of your purpose it continues to this very day,
for all things serve you.

If my delight had not been in your wisdom,

I should have perished in my trouble.

I shall never forget your truths,
for with them you have given me life.

I belong to you: save me;

for I have sought your counsel.

The ungodly laid wait for me to destroy me,
but I will meditate on your law.

I see that all things come to an end,

but your commandment is exceeding broad. (Psalm 119:89–96)

Final Versicle

The divine Spirit dwells in us.

Thanks be to God.