
*Faith Practices and
An Order of Compline
for Advent
&
The Twelve Days of Christmas*



*St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Piney Parish
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Compline

To join, visit www.facebook.com/stpaulspiney at 8:00 p.m. each Wednesday during Advent and the 12 days of Christmas. You don't need a Facebook account to participate! **The order of service begins on page 3.**

Practices for a Holy Advent

1. **Advent Calendar:** Follow the prayers and practices on the “Faith Practices for Advent” Calendar. Available on the church’s website and at church.
2. **Compline:** Join us online each Wednesday at 8:00 p.m. for prayer. If you miss it, you can still find it online. You can also pray it with your family. The Officiant need not be an ordained person.
3. **Adopt an Advent “Fast”** – We usually think of fasting as something that happens during lent. We “give up” something sometimes as a sacrifice or a symbol of repentance and returning to God. In the frenetic “more more more” of our culture during this season, it’s a great idea for people of faith to adopt a “less, less, less” approach. Fast from buying (what would *that* look like?) or fast from busyness. Perhaps you are able to give up one weekly (or daily) meeting during advent in order to listen to God’s voice and prepare for Christ to be born anew.
3. **Gratitude paper chain** – Make a paper chain throughout advent (use blue or purple pieces of paper for a liturgical connection or use the traditional green and red). Each day write one thing you are thankful for and put it on your chain. On Christmas morning, put the chain on your Christmas tree or hang it in your home.
4. **Personal Relationships**—How is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to grow in your relationship with God, with others, and with all creation? Consider at least one relationship you will develop, nurture, or reconcile during this season of Advent.

An Order for Compline

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.

Silence

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

Confession

Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence may be kept

Almighty God, our heavenly Father:
We have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.
For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
forgive us all our offenses;
and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Officiant

May the Almighty God grant us forgiveness of all our sins,
and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Invocation

Officiant O God, make speed to save us.
People O Lord, make haste to help us.
All **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.**

Psalm

One or more of the following psalms is said.

Psalm 4

- 1 Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; *
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- 2 "You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory; *
how long will you worship dumb idols
and run after false gods?"
- 3 Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful; *
when I call upon the LORD, he will hear me.
- 4 Tremble, then, and do not sin; *
speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.
- 5 Offer the appointed sacrifices *
and put your trust in the LORD.
- 6 Many are saying,
"Oh, that we might see better times!" *
Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O
LORD.
- 7 You have put gladness in my heart, *
more than when grain and wine and oil increase.
- 8 I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; *
for only you, LORD, make me dwell in safety.

**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.**

Psalm 31 *In te, Domine, speravi*

- 1 In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame: *
deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.
- 3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.
- 4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me,
for you are my tower of strength.
- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me,
O LORD, O God of truth.

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.

Psalm 91 *Qui habitat*

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High *
abides under the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 He shall say to the LORD,
"You are my refuge and my stronghold, *
my God in whom I put my trust."
- 3 He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunter *
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He shall cover you with his pinions,
and you shall find refuge under his wings; *
his faithfulness shall be a shield and buckler.
- 5 You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, *
nor of the arrow that flies by day;
- 6 Of the plague that stalks in the darkness, *
nor of the sickness that lays waste at mid-day.
- 7 A thousand shall fall at your side
and ten thousand at your right hand, *
but it shall not come near you.

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- 8 Your eyes only have to behold *
to see the reward of the wicked.
- 9 Because you have made the LORD your refuge, *
and the Most High your habitation,
- 10 There shall no evil happen to you, *
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.
- 11 For he shall give his angels charge over you, *
to keep you in all your ways.
- 12 They shall bear you in their hands, *
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
- 13 You shall tread upon the lion and the adder; *
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent
under your feet.
- 14 Because he is bound to me in love,
therefore will I deliver him; *
I will protect him, because he knows my Name.
- 15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; *
I am with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and bring him to honor.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy him, *
and show him my salvation.

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.

Psalm 134

We your servants bless you, O God,
as we stand by night in your house.
We lift up our hands towards the holy place,
and give you thanks and praise.
Bless us from all places where you dwell,
O God, creator of the heavens and the earth.

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

Lord, you are in the midst of us, and we are called by your Name: Do not forsake us, O Lord our God.

Jeremiah 14:9, 22

People **Thanks be to God.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. *John 1:1-6*

People **Thanks be to God.**

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and those who are afraid are not perfected in love. We love because God first loved us. If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother or sister, that person is a liar; for those who do not love their brothers and sisters whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. *1 John 4:18-20*

People **Thanks be to God.**

It is the God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body.

2 Corinthians 4:6-10

People **Thanks be to God.**

According to the riches of God's glory, may you be strengthened with the might through the Holy Spirit in your inner being, and may Christ dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge; that you may be filled with the fullness of God. *Ephesians 3:16-19*

People **Thanks be to God.**

Prayers

V: Into your hands, O God, I commend my spirit,

R: for you have redeemed me, O God of truth and love.

V: Keep me, O God, as the apple of an eye;

R: hide me under the shadow of your wings.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

The Officiant then says one of the following Collects

Be our light in the darkness, O Lord, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Look down, O Lord, from your heavenly throne, and illumine this night with your celestial brightness; that by night as by day your people may glorify your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

One of the following prayers may be added

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live: Watch over those, both night and day, who work while others sleep, and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Silence may be kept, and free intercessions and thanksgivings may be offered.

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.**

*The service concludes with the Song of Simeon and this Antiphon,
which said by all.*

**Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that
awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in
peace.**

Lord, you now have set your servant free *

to go in peace as you have promised;

For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, *

whom you have prepared for all the world to see:

A Light to enlighten the nations, *

and the glory of your people Israel.

**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.**

**Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that
awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in
peace.**

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

One of the following may be said,
The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy
Spirit, bless us and keep us. **Amen.**

To God the Creator,
who loved us first and gave this world to be our home, to
God the Redeemer,
who loves us and by dying and rising
pioneered the way of freedom,
to God the Sanctifier,
who spreads the divine love in our hearts,
be praise and glory for time and for eternity. **Amen.**

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.
Blessing, light, and glory surround us
and scatter the darkness of the long and lonely night.
Amen.

GLOSSARY

Antiphon

A verse sung before and usually after a psalm, canticle, or hymn text. It is often drawn from scripture (especially the psalms) and is appropriate to the liturgical season or occasion.

Canticle

A non-metrical song used in liturgical worship. Canticles are drawn from biblical texts other than the Psalter. The term is derived from the Latin *canticulum*, a "little song." The BCP provides a Table of Canticles suggested for use at Morning and Evening Prayer (pp. 144-145). Canticles serve as responses to the readings at the services of the Daily Office. Canticles may also be used at the Burial of the Dead after the OT and NT readings, at the Holy Eucharist on certain occasions as an alternative to the psalm appointed, at the Easter Vigil after certain OT readings in the liturgy of the word, in the Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families, and after the Bible reading in the Order for Evening.

Compline

The last of the four services in the Daily Office, Compline (The word comes from the Latin "completorium," signifying the end of a complete day.) descended from the night prayers said before bed at the end of the monastic round of daily prayer. Begun in the 4th century, Compline is a simple office including a confession of sins, one or more psalms, a short reading from scripture, versicles* and responses, the Lord's Prayer, collects which ask for God's protection during the night to come, and the canticle *Nunc dimittis*. A hymn for the evening may follow the short reading from scripture. The collects (prayers) may be followed by a time of silence, along with free intercessions and thanksgivings.

Versicles (V) and Responses (R)

Short sentences, often drawn from the Psalter, that are said or sung antiphonally in worship.

Song of Simeon

Song of Simeon is a canticle based on the words of Simeon, who recognized the infant Jesus to be the Messiah at the Presentation of Jesus in the temple by Mary and Joseph (Lk 2:29-32). It had been revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah.

When Simeon saw the child Jesus he took him up in his arms, blessed God, and said, "Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised." Simeon was peaceful and ready to face death because he had seen the long-expected Messiah. The canticle is also known as the Song of Simeon. The term *Nunc dimittis* is from the initial words of the Song of Simeon in Latin, which mean "now let depart." The canticle is identified as the canticle for Evening Office by the Apostolic Constitutions of the late fourth century. In the seventh century, Pope Sergius (d. 701) introduced in Rome a procession with candles and the singing of the *Nunc dimittis* to celebrate the Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple. The day came to be known as "Candlemas." The *Nunc dimittis* became the canticle for use at Compline in the west. It was also used as the canticle following the second lesson at Evensong in the 1549 BCP. It has appeared in this place in every subsequent Prayer Book except the 1789 BCP. The 1979 BCP uses the *Nunc dimittis* after the second lesson at Evening Prayer (p. 120) and near the conclusion of Compline (p. 135). At the Burial of the Dead, the *Nunc dimittis* may be used as an anthem as the body is borne from the church after the commendation.

Sources:

The Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer* © 1979

The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *The New Zealand Prayer Book* © 1989

Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, eds., *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church* © 2000

Advent & Christmas Services

First Sunday of Advent: December 2, 9:15 a.m.

A Journey Through Advent for All Ages

December 8, 4:00 p.m.

Southern Maryland Flute Chorus Holiday Concert
to benefit the Bishop Walker School for Boys

Second Sunday of Advent: December 9, 10:15 a.m.

Second Sunday Musical Guest: Eugene Sidorov, *oboe*

December 16, 4:00 p.m.

Candlelight Christmas Concert (*string and piano trio*)

December 19, 6:30 p.m.

The Longest Night: A Service of Light and Hope

Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 23, 11:30 a.m.

Hanging of the Greens & Gingerbread House Workshop

Christmas Eve: December 24

5:00 p.m.

Candlelight Worship & Children's Message

8:00 p.m.

Candlelight Worship with Musical Fanfare

First Sunday After Christmas: December 30, 9:30 a.m.

A Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols

Feast of the Epiphany: January 6, 10:15 a.m.

Epiphany Pageant
