

Night Prayer

July 1, 2026

[Harriet Beecher Stowe-Writer and Prophetic witness-1896](#)

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. (psalm 127.3)

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!

Psalm 94

1 O Lord God of vengeance, *

O God of vengeance, show yourself.

**2 Rise up, O Judge of the world; *
give the arrogant their just deserts.**

3 How long shall the wicked, O Lord, *
how long shall the wicked triumph?

**4 They bluster in their insolence; *
all evildoers are full of boasting.**

5 They crush your people, O Lord, *
and afflict your chosen nation.

**6 They murder the widow and the stranger *
and put the orphans to death.**

7 Yet they say, "The Lord does not see, *
the God of Jacob takes no notice."

**8 Consider well, you dullards among the people; *
when will you fools understand?**

9 He that planted the ear, does he not hear? *
he that formed the eye, does he not see?

**10 He who admonishes the nations, will he not punish? *
he who teaches all the world, has he no knowledge?**

11 The Lord knows our human thoughts; *
how like a puff of wind they are.

**12 Happy are they whom you instruct, O Lord! *
whom you teach out of your law;**

13 To give them rest in evil days, *
until a pit is dug for the wicked.

**14 For the Lord will not abandon his people, *
nor will he forsake his own.**

15 For judgment will again be just, *
and all the true of heart will follow it.

**16 Who rose up for me against the wicked? *
who took my part against the evildoers?**

17 If the Lord had not come to my help, *
I should soon have dwelt in the land of silence.

**18 As often as I said, "My foot has slipped," *
your love, O Lord, upheld me.**

19 When many cares fill my mind, *
your consolations cheer my soul.

**20 Can a corrupt tribunal have any part with you, *
one which frames evil into law?**

21 They conspire against the life of the just *
and condemn the innocent to death.

**22 But the Lord has become my stronghold, *
and my God the rock of my trust.**

23 He will turn their wickedness back upon them
and destroy them in their own malice; *
the Lord our God will destroy them.

READINGS

First Reading: Isaiah 26:7-13

⁷ The way of the righteous is level;
O Just One, you make smooth the path of the righteous.

⁸ In the path of your judgements,
O Lord, we wait for you; your name and your renown
are the soul's desire.

⁹ My soul yearns for you in the night,
my spirit within me earnestly seeks you.
For when your judgements are in the earth,
the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

¹⁰ If favor is shown to the wicked,
they do not learn righteousness;
in the land of uprightness they deal perversely
and do not see the majesty of the Lord.

¹¹ O Lord, your hand is lifted up,
but they do not see it.
Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed.
Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.

¹² O Lord, you will ordain peace for us,

for indeed, all that we have done, you have done for us.
¹³ O Lord our God,
other lords besides you have ruled over us,
but we acknowledge your name alone.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:8-12

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. ¹⁰For
'Those who desire life
and desire to see good days,
let them keep their tongues from evil
and their lips from speaking deceit;
¹¹ let them turn away from evil and do good;
let them seek peace and pursue it.
¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'

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.**

Harriet Beecher Stowe (Sources: Stowecenter.org)

Born 1811 in Cincinnati, Ohio, at age 32 married Calvin Stowe, had 7 children; Author of essays, short stories, and over 30 books. Throughout her life exposed to encountered indentured servants and slaves. As a young woman visited a plantation in Kentucky where slavery was legal--which inspired her book --Uncle Tom's Cabin.

- *In 1850 -Congress passed: Fugitive Law: Anyone could be taken from the street, accused of being a fugitive from slavery, and taken before a federally appointed commissioner, who received \$5 by ruling the suspected fugitive person was free, and \$10 for ruling the person was "property" of an enslaver. The new law effectively bribed commissioners to unjustly enslave kidnapped people- according to free black people and anti-slavery activists.*

- *Stowe was furious, believing slavery was unjust and immoral, and bristled at any law requiring citizens — including her — complicity. When sharing her frustrations and feelings of powerlessness, her sister-in-law suggested she do more: “...if I could use a pen as you can, Hatty, that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is.”*
- *In writing Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Stowe offered the publisher of the abolitionist newspaper, The National Era, a piece that would “paint a word picture of slavery, sharing ideas about the injustices of slavery, pushing back against dominant cultural beliefs about the physical and emotional capacities of black people. Putting pen to paper, she illustrated slavery’s effect on families and helped readers empathize with enslaved characters.*
- *Published in 1852, Uncle Tom's Cabin became the best-selling novel in the 19th century-highlighting the horrors of slavery and called on Antebellum white Christians to take up the cause to end the violent, racist institution. Critics attacked the novel as not factual, prompting Stowe to write a 2nd book "Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin" a 268-page volume of collected letters, speeches, and excerpts from Black-authored narratives about the lives of enslaved Black people and their continued fight for freedom. Both books galvanized anti-slavery sentiment and influenced politicians including Abraham Lincoln.*
- *During these years, movements to end slavery provoked hostile responses north and south, including violent mobs, burning mailbags of abolitionist literature, and passage of a “gag rule” banning consideration of anti-slavery petitions in the U.S. House of Representatives.*
- *Inspired to fight injustices of slavery, Stowe, through her writings, became a leading voice in the anti-slavery movement. With other abolitionists, slavery was ended*

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?

Stowe's words changed the world, yet the issues she wrote about still persist.

How can her work inspire us to think and act on issues facing our world today?

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 may rest in your peace.

Commemoration-Harriet Beecher Stowe

Gracious God, we thank you for the witness of Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose fiction inspired thousands with compassion for the shame and sufferings of enslaved peoples, and who enriched her writings with the cadences of The Book of Common Prayer. Help us, like her, to strive for your justice, that our eyes may see the glory of your Son, Jesus Christ, when he comes to reign with you and the Holy Spirit in reconciliation and peace, one God, now and always. **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:

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Mo Pollman, JP Quinn, Tim, Rebecca, Carolyn and Jeff Robinson, Trudy, Amy Walsh, Vicky Wegweiser, Kelly Wood, and Alan Wright.

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.**

Sentences to keep us

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.

The blessing of God, the eternal goodwill of God, the shalom of God, the wildness and the warmth of God, be among us and between us, now and always.

Final Versicle

The divine Spirit dwells in us.
Thanks be to God.