

Night Prayer

The Annunciation

Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Wakefield, MA

March 25, 2026

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 - Wisdom 9: 1-12

O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy,
who have made all things by your word,
and by your wisdom have formed humankind
to have dominion over the creatures you have made,
and rule the world in holiness and righteousness,
and pronounce judgement in uprightness of soul,
give me the wisdom that sits by your throne,
and do not reject me from among your servants.
For I am your servant, the son of your servant-girl,
a man who is weak and short-lived,
with little understanding of judgement and laws;
for even one who is perfect among human beings
will be regarded as nothing without the wisdom that comes from you.
You have chosen me to be king of your people
and to be judge over your sons and daughters.
You have given command to build a temple on your holy mountain,
and an altar in the city of your habitation,
a copy of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning.
With you is wisdom, she who knows your works
and was present when you made the world;
she understands what is pleasing in your sight
and what is right according to your commandments.
Send her forth from the holy heavens,
and from the throne of your glory send her,
that she may labour at my side,
and that I may learn what is pleasing to you.
For she knows and understands all things,
and she will guide me wisely in my actions
and guard me with her glory.
Then my works will be acceptable,
and I shall judge your people justly,
and shall be worthy of the throne of my father.

PSALM 132

Lord, remember David, *
and all the hardships he endured;

**How he swore an oath to the Lord *
and vowed a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob:**

“I will not come under the roof of my house, *
nor climb up into my bed;

**I will not allow my eyes to sleep, *
nor let my eyelids slumber;**

Until I find a place for the Lord, *
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.”

**“The ark! We heard it was in Ephratah; *
we found it in the fields of Jearim.**

Let us go to God’s dwelling place; *
let us fall upon our knees before his footstool.”

**Arise, O Lord, into your resting-place, *
you and the ark of your strength.**

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness; *
let your faithful people sing with joy.

**For your servant David’s sake, *
do not turn away the face of your Anointed.**

The Lord has sworn an oath to David; *
in truth, he will not break it:

**“A son, the fruit of your body *
will I set upon your throne.**

If your children keep my covenant
and my testimonies that I shall teach them, *
their children will sit upon your throne for evermore.”

**For the Lord has chosen Zion; *
he has desired her for his habitation:**

“This shall be my resting-place for ever; *

here will I dwell, for I delight in her.

**I will surely bless her provisions, *
and satisfy her poor with bread.**

I will clothe her priests with salvation, *
and her faithful people will rejoice and sing.

**There will I make the horn of David flourish; *
I have prepared a lamp for my Anointed.**

As for his enemies, I will clothe them with shame; *
but as for him, his crown will shine.”

**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 – John 1:9-14

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

The mystery of the Annunciation is both intimately personal and universal in its significance. The event happens to one human woman: eternity enters time, the world of conception, birth, living, and dying, through her. But it initiates a transformation that happens again and again in the lives of each disciple who hears and responds with the same generous “yes.” (Br. Keith Nelson, SSJE)

(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 does Scripture inform your life?

Hymn (spoken together)

Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am God

I am the God that healeth thee

I am the God that healeth thee

I am the God that healeth thee

In thee, O God, I put my trust

In thee, O God, I put my trust

In thee, O God, I put my trust

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 - The Annunciation of Our Lord Jesus Christ To the Blessed Virgin Mary

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we who have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ, announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his cross and passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for 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: John Aalto, Donna Boudreau, Debbie Bourne, Evelyn Bourne, Peter Brown, Lydia Cedrone, Wallie Cook, Jacob DeCarlen-Bumiller, Patrick Joseph Crowe, John and Richard DeNatale, Peggy Downs, Matthew Dyer, David Fieldhouse, Michael Flynn, Connor Gallagher, Mary Gasson, Kristen Goddard, Louise Haldeman, Heidi, Karen Dodd Howard, JD, CJ, Jack Jephson, Ted Jobe, Ginny Johnson, Tim Kelsey, Kevin, Ken Leach, Linda, Kevin MacKenzie, Keith Manville, Mark Martino, Don McCarter, Sara Murphy, Neil, Gayle Gammon Nelson, Steve Newman, Judith Oder, Jim O'Reilly, Joe, Jane Pennacchia, Muriel Peters, PJ, Dustin Pollard, JP Quinn, Rebecca, Linda Russo, Trudy, Amy Walsh, Bill & Jan, Vicky Wegweiser, Kelly, 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.**

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.