

**CHRISTMAS EVENING PRAYER
From Christmas Eve to Epiphany**

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Introductory Responses

Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

or

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

A light no darkness can extinguish.

Then the Thanksgiving for the Light may be said or sung.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, the Source of our life and David's sovereign. You have made our gladness greater and increased our joy by sending to dwell among us the Wonderful Counsellor, the Prince of Peace. Born of Mary, proclaimed to the shepherds, and acknowledged to the ends of the earth, your unconquered Sun of righteousness destroys our darkness and establishes us in freedom. All glory in the highest be to you, through Christ, the Son of your favour, in the anointing love of his Spirit, this night and for ever and ever. **Amen.**ⁱ

Evening Prayer continues with the Psalm of the Day.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

The Psalm

A Psalm from the Daily Office Lectionary, the Weekday Eucharistic Lectionary or the Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings is said or sung.

Evening Prayer continues with the Reading.

The Reading

A Reading from the Daily Office Lectionary, the Weekday Eucharistic Lectionary or the Revised Common Lectionary Daily Readings is read. After a period of silent reflection one of the following is said.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

or

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Thanks be to God.

or

Holy Word, Holy Wisdom.

Thanks be to God.

Evening Prayer continues with the Responsory or the Canticle or both. If two Readings are read, then the Responsory follows the first Reading and the Canticle the second.

The Responsory

The Responsory is said or sung.

Your salvation, O God, is near to those who fear you:
your glory shall dwell in our land.

**Your salvation, O God, is near to those who fear you:
your glory shall dwell in our land.**

I will listen to what you are saying, O Lord God,
for you are speaking peace to your faithful people
and to those who turn their heart to you.

Your glory shall dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Your glory shall dwell in our land.

Truth shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Your glory shall dwell in our land.

Glory to God, Source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

**Your salvation, O God, is near to those who fear you:
your glory shall dwell in our land.**

Evening Prayer continues with [the Second Reading or] the Canticle or an Affirmation of Faith.

The Canticle

'The Song of Mary' or one of the seasonal canticles, 'A Song of Redemption' or 'A Song of God's Love', may be said or sung.

The Song of Mary (Luke 1.46-55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, *
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for you, Lord, have looked with favour *
on your lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your name.
You have mercy on those who fear you, *
from generation to generation.
You have shown strength with your arm *
and scattered the proud in their conceit,
casting down the mighty from their thrones *
and lifting up the lowly.
You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, *
to remember the promise of mercy,
the promise made to our forebears, *
to Abraham and his children for ever. ⁱⁱ

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.

or

Glory to God, Source of all being, eternal Word and Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.

Evening Prayer continues with an Affirmation of Faith or the Litany.

A Song of Redemption (Colossians 1.13-18a, 19, 20a)

The Father has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, *
and transferred us to the kingdom of the beloved Son;
in whom we have redemption, *
the forgiveness of our sins.
Christ is the image of the invisible God, *
the firstborn of all creation.
For in him all things were created, *
in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.
All things were created through him and for him, *
he is before all things and in him all things hold together.
He is the head of the body, the Church, *
he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.
In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell; *
and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things. ⁱⁱⁱ

Evening Prayer continues with an Affirmation of Faith or the Litany.

A Song of God's Love (1 John 4.7-11, 12b)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; *
 everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
Whoever does not love does not know God, *
 for God is love.
In this the love of God was revealed among us, *
 that God sent the only Son into the world,
 so that we might live through him.
In this is love,
not that we loved God but that God loved us, *
 and sent the Son to be the expiation for our sins.
Beloved, since God loved us so much, *
 we ought also to love one another.
For if we love one another, God abides in us, *
 and God's love will be perfected in us. ^{iv}

Evening Prayer continues with an Affirmation of Faith or the Litany.

Affirmation of Faith

Either The Apostles' Creed or the 'Hear, O Israel' may be said or sung.

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,**

and the life everlasting. Amen. ^v

Evening Prayer continues with the Litany.

Hear, O Israel

Hear, O Israel,
the Lord our God, the Lord is one.
Love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind,
and with all your strength.

This is the first and the great commandment.
The second is like it:
Love your neighbour as yourself.

There is no commandment greater than these.

The following may be said or sung after 'Hear, O Israel'.

Lord, have mercy upon us,
and write both these commandments in our hearts,
we beseech you.

Evening Prayer continues with the Litany.

THE PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

The Litany

The Litany is said or sung.

Let us pray to the God of Mary and Joseph, saying, "God of love, look with favour on your servants."

God of Mary and Joseph, you entrusted them with the life of your child, Jesus. Strengthen all families and all those who care for child in the bonds of love, peace and faith. God of love, **look with favour on your servants.**

Creator of life, make your church a fruitful vine to all who are reborn in the living waters of baptism. Nourish and refresh us continually at the table of Christ. God of love, **look with favour on your servants.**

Consoler of the afflicted, sustain the homeless and the abandoned. Protect the widowed and the orphaned. Comfort those who mourn the dead. God of love, **look with favour on your servants.**

Source of love, like a mother you nourish us with your grace. Quicken in us the seed of Christ's word so that we might reveal him to the whole human family. God of love, **look with favour on your servants.**^{vi}

Additional intercessions, petitions and thanksgivings may be offered in silence or aloud. After a period of silence either the Collect of the Day or one of the following Collects may be said or sung.

Christmas I

God of all ages, in the birth of Christ your boundless love for your people shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us with that same love and light, that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth to the glory of your holy name. **Amen.**^{vii}

Christmas II

Christ, our God, whom humble shepherds worshipped at a manger, you are holy and most high, merciful and mighty. Startle us to wakefulness, that we may rejoice in your new and glorious dawn, and, in your holy name, act to mend this suffering world. **Amen.**^{viii}

Christmas III

God, you spoke and your Word became flesh, breathing a new song of joy and praise into the world. Grant that we may bear the good news of your salvation, proclaiming your promise of peace to the ends of the earth. **Amen.**^{ix}

Morning Prayer continues with the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray as our Saviour taught us,
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.
For the kingdom, the power,

**and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Morning Prayer continues with the Dismissal.

THE SENDING FORTH OF THE COMMUNITY

The Dismissal

Let us bless the incarnate Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Morning Prayer may conclude with the following Sentence.

May Christ, by whose Incarnation earthly and heavenly things are gathered into one, fill us with his joy and peace. **Amen.**^x

Note

All liturgical texts are taken from *The Book of Alternative Services* unless otherwise noted and may have been emended for more inclusive language.

ⁱ *Praise God in Song* (1979) as published in *The Book of Alternative Services* (1985), 64 alt.

ⁱⁱ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006), 315.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* (2000), 222 alt.

^{iv} *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* (2000), 626 alt.

^v *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006), 105.

^{vi} *Intercessions for the Christian People* (1988, 1990), 79 alt.

^{vii} *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (2002), 39.

^{viii} *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (2002), 40.

^{ix} *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers* (2002), 41.

^x *The Book of Occasional Services* (2003), 23 alt.