

Morning Prayer Online or at Home

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The service of Morning Prayer has roots in the regular daily prayer in monastic and early Christian communities. In many parts of the Anglican Communion, Morning Prayer (or “Matins”, from the Latin term for morning) has been the principal Sunday service for faithful communities, and this service has a rich history of use in The Episcopal Church.

A main feature of the service is the pattern of said, sung, and heard scripture, as we read together from the Psalms, hear the narrative of God’s presence with God’s people through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, and sing poetic excerpts of scripture (called “canticles”, or “little songs”).

If you’re not familiar with Morning Prayer in The Episcopal Church, you’ll probably notice that we stand and sit and stand and sit a lot. These changes in posture reflect the focus of our attention, switching continually between proclamation and praise (standing) and listening and receptivity (sitting). Please join in all of our postures, proclamation, prayer, and praise as fully as your body permits!

Morning Prayer

Before beginning the service, take a moment to quiet your heart and body, as you would when entering and sitting in the church.

Play some music, if that helps you, or take slow quiet breaths.

The service of Morning Prayer immerses us in scripture, and the **Opening Sentences** provide a scriptural call to worship which varies with the season or occasion.

Choose any one of these to begin if you’re leading this service for yourself.

The Officiant begins with one or more of these sentences of Scripture.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1:8, 9*

Rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil. *Joel 2:13*

I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." *Luke 15:18, 19*

Jesus said, "If any of you would come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me." *Mark 8:34*

Confession of Sin

The Deacon or Officiant says to the people
Let us confess our sins to God.

Silence may be kept.

Officiant and People together, all kneeling
**God of all mercy,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
opposing your will in our lives.
We have denied your goodness in each other,
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,
the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us
through our Savior Jesus Christ,
that we may abide in your love
and serve only your will. Amen.**

The Priest alone stands and says
Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

THE INVITATORY AND PSALTER

All stand

Officiant Lord, open our lips.
People **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.
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.**

The **Confession** which we say together as part of our preparatory acts of worship allows us to bring our failures and weakness, individually and as a community, to God, to ask God's help in facing the evil in the world around us, and to receive the assurance of God's forgiveness and strength, which the priest reminds us of in the **Absolution**. We kneel for this prayer to show penitence and our dependence on God.

If you're leading this for yourself, substitute "us" for "you" and this priestly absolution becomes a prayer for pardon that God answers directly.

We greet God and one another in a responsive phrase from Psalm 51, and with praise of God who is known to us in relationship as the Father, Son, and Spirit.

If you're praying on your own, read all the parts, both "Officiant" and "People"

We begin the immersion in scripture which is a primary feature of the church's daily prayer by saying an **Invitatory Psalm**, a short excerpt from the Book of Psalms which invites us into the presence of God.

The "Jubilate" is the text of Psalm 100.

Praying at home? simply say the words out loud. Or watch this video of the choir of St. John's in Detroit:
<http://bit.ly/2QhAW8y>

Psalm 95 is sometimes used as the Invitatory Psalm in Morning Prayer. Today, it's an assigned reading in the *Revised Common Lectionary*. Look for the connection between the words of this psalm and the story in the reading from Exodus.

If you're reading with others at home, you can alternate verse by verse, as we do on Sunday mornings at Trinity. If you're on your own, read the whole psalm.

Then follows one of the Invitatory Psalms:

Jubilate *Psalm 100*

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; *
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.
Know this: The Lord himself is God; *
he himself has made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise; *
give thanks to him and call upon his Name.
For the Lord is good;
his mercy is everlasting; *
and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

The Psalm of the Day

Psalm 95

1 Come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and raise a
loud shout to him with psalms.
3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.
4 In his hand are the caverns of the earth, and the heights of the
hills are his also.
5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands have molded the dry land.
6 Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, and kneel before
the LORD our Maker.
7 For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!
8 Harden not your hearts,
as your forebears did in the wilderness, at Meribah, and on that day
at Massah, when they tempted me.
9 They put me to the test,
though they had seen my works.
10 Forty years long I detested that generation and said, "This
people are wayward in their hearts;
they do not know my ways."
11 So I swore in my wrath,
"They shall not enter into my rest."

THE LESSONS AND RESPONSE

A reading from the book of Exodus (*Exodus 17:1-7*)

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Song of the Redeemed *Magna et mirabilia*

Revelation 15:3-4

O ruler of the universe, Lord God,
great deeds are they that you have done, *
surpassing human understanding.
Your ways are ways of righteousness and truth, *
O King of all the ages.

Who can fail to do you homage, Lord,
and sing the praises of your Name? *
for you only are the Holy One.
All nations will draw near and fall down before you, *
because your just and holy works have been revealed.

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.

Our **readings** follow the Revised Common Lectionary, a three-year cycle of readings shared by many Christian denominations. You can find the calendar of readings on pages 888-932 of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

In Lent, the readings are all chosen to relate to one another. See what connections you spot among the psalm, lessons, and gospel.

If you are praying with a group at home, choose different people to read each scripture passage out loud, as far as possible.

The **canticles** which respond to the readings are chosen from a selection designed for use in this way found in pages 85-96 of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

This canticle, with a theme of praise to God, is recommended for use in the seasons of Advent and Lent when the *Gloria in excelsis* would not be appropriate.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (*Romans 5:1-11*)

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Second Song of Isaiah *Quaerite Dominum*

Isaiah 55:6-11

Seek the Lord while he wills to be found; *

call upon him when he draws near.

Let the wicked forsake their ways *

and the evil ones their thoughts;

And let them turn to the Lord, and he will have compassion, *

and to our God, for he will richly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, *

nor your ways my ways, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, *

so are my ways higher than your ways,

and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as rain and snow fall from the heavens *

and return not again, but water the earth,

Canticles are excerpts from scripture that can be sung as an expression of praise or prayer to God.

This canticle, read in the voice of God speaking to God's people, reminds us that God provides the food we depend on, in a slight echo of the theme in the readings of God providing water for our thirst.

Bringing forth life and giving growth, *
seed for sowing and bread for eating,
So is my word that goes forth from my mouth; *
it will not return to me empty;
But it will accomplish that which I have purposed, *
and prosper in that for which I sent it.

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.

A reading from the Gospel according to John (*John 4:5-42*)

Jesus came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know,

When we celebrate the Eucharist, the Deacon reads the gospel, and it is brought into the middle of the congregation to emphasize our respect for the stories of Jesus recorded in the Gospels.

In Morning Prayer, anyone may read the gospel text to share with others, recognizing the equal access we all have to the word of God and the person of Jesus.

You're probably noticing that this is a long gospel reading.

The assigned gospels for the season of Lent, Year A, draw on a series of stories in John's gospel in which Jesus reveals himself as God through various miracles and conversations. These contain a great deal of theology in the story, which tends to make them longer than the usual stories of Jesus we read on Sunday mornings.

A service of Morning Prayer is not usually designed to include a sermon. Rather, it's a sustained pattern of immersing ourselves in scripture and letting God speak to us.

When we join together in Morning Prayer on Sunday mornings, though, we usually do include a sermon.

Mother Emily will record her sermon for March 15 separately, and share it online.

for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?"

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

[The Sermon]

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.

THE PRAYERS

The people stand

Officiant: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

We now turn our attention to responding to the Word we have been immersed in, with affirmation that these stories are part of our Christian story, and with prayer.

As part of our response to the Word of God in our lives, we proclaim **The Apostles' Creed**, the earliest known formal statement of Christian faith, found in ancient liturgies of baptism. The term "creed" comes from the Latin *credo*, "I believe". We are using the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) text of the Apostles' Creed that was approved for use in the Episcopal Church in 1994.

We pray together, first in the traditional form of **the Lord's Prayer**, based on the way that Jesus taught his first disciples to pray (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4).

The **suffrages** are a responsive form of prayer for the needs of the world and of the gathered community composed almost entirely of scriptural excerpts, especially from the Psalms

The **Collect of the Day** helps to focus our attention on a theme of the day or season.

You can find the Collect assigned to each Sunday and special celebrations in the church year between pages 211-236 of *The Book of Common Prayer* (the black book found in your pews).

The **Collects** are prayers following a pattern of acknowledgement of God's work and petition for a gift such as protection, guidance, or renewal.

The Officiant may choose any one or more of those found on pages 98-100 of the Book of Common Prayer. For today, we have made the choices for you.

Suffrages

- V. Help us, O God our Savior.
R. Deliver us and forgive us our sins.
V. Look upon your congregation.
R. Give to your people the blessing of peace.
V. Declare your glory among the nations.
R. And your wonders among all peoples.
V. Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away.
R. Never forget the lives of your poor.
V. Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you.
R. And your favor to those who are true of heart.
V. Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning.
R. So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

The Collects

The Collect of the Day

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

A Collect for Sundays

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Grace

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Mission

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

The congregation is invited to offer to God their prayers of intercession or thanksgiving; if you are praying from paper rather than a recording, take some time now to quietly offer your concerns, hopes, and needs to God.

Exchange of Peace

Then the Officiant says to the people:

The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Today, in the spirit of Christ's peace, please reach out to greet someone you might normally see in worship by telephone, internet, or text message.

We also would normally receive a collection of money for the support of the church, while the choir sings an anthem related to the seasonal or scriptural themes of the day.

Please visit www.trinitymoorestown.org/donate to make your weekly gift or regular pledge offering while we are unable to gather in person.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS AND SENDING FORTH

The General Thanksgiving

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;**

A Collect for Mission always concludes these prayers so that our attention and prayer are drawn toward the ongoing work of God in redeeming the whole world.

The exchange of Peace is not a standard part of Morning Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer, but we offer it to one another when we gather for Sunday worship.

We affirm our offering and finish our shared work of prayer in **The General Thanksgiving**, an expression of gratitude and commitment to God.

for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness
of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts
we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

2 Corinthians 13:14

Dismissal

Deacon: Let us bless the Lord.

The people respond: **Thanks be to God.**

The optional “Prayer of St. Chrysostom” affirms God’s commitment in Jesus to be present in every gathering of Christians and asks God to respond to the fullness of the prayers we have offered together today.

We pray it today to affirm our confidence that Jesus is as present when we gather electronically in his name as when we gather physically.

We conclude as we began, with a sentence of scripture. In this case, Morning Prayer offers a choice of several short passages that contain a benediction.

Then we are dismissed to carry our experience of scripture and prayer into the world.