

# Morning Prayer Online or at Home

March 22, 2020



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Episcopal Church

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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!*

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.*

## Morning Prayer

*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 against God and our neighbor.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Officiant and People together, all kneeling*

**Most merciful God,  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

*The Priest 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 Morning prayer by saying an **Invitatory Psalm**, a short excerpt from the Book of Psalms which *invites* us into the presence of God.

The “Venite” in The Book of Common Prayer is part of the text of Psalm 95. In Lent we usually recite all of Psalm 95 here.

*Praying at home? simply say the words out loud (together).*

*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 the Invitatory Psalm:*

### **Psalm 95**

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

### **The Psalm of the Day**

*Psalm 23*

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; \*  
I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures \*  
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He revives my soul \*  
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I shall fear no evil; \*  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me  
in the presence of those who trouble me; \*  
you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.
- 6 Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life, \*  
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

## THE LESSONS AND RESPONSE

A reading from the first book of Samuel (*1 Samuel 16:1-13*)

The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.’ Samuel said, ‘How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.’ And the Lord said, ‘Take a heifer with you, and say, “I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.” Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.’ Samuel did what the Lord commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, ‘Do you come peaceably?’ He said, ‘Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.’ And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the Lord’s anointed is now before the Lord.’ But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.’ Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, ‘Neither has the Lord chosen this one.’ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, ‘Neither has the Lord chosen this one.’ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, ‘The Lord has not chosen any of these.’ Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Are all your sons here?’ And he said, ‘There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.’ And Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.’ He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, ‘Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

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. (There might be two themes today.)

*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 penitence, is especially recommended for use in the season of Lent.

A Song of Penitence *Kyrie Pantokrator*

*Prayer of Manasseh 1-2, 4, 6-7, 11-15*

O Lord and Ruler of the hosts of heaven, \*  
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,  
and of all their righteous offspring:  
You made the heavens and the earth, \*  
with all their vast array.  
All things quake with fear at your presence; \*  
they tremble because of your power.  
But your merciful promise is beyond all measure; \*  
it surpasses all that our minds can fathom.  
O Lord, you are full of compassion, \*  
long-suffering, and abounding in mercy.  
You hold back your hand; \*  
you do not punish as we deserve.  
In your great goodness, Lord,  
you have promised forgiveness to sinners, \*  
that they may repent of their sin and be saved.  
And now, O Lord, I bend the knee of my heart, \*  
and make my appeal, sure of your gracious goodness.  
I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, \*  
and I know my wickedness only too well.  
Therefore I make this prayer to you: \*  
Forgive me, Lord, forgive me.  
Do not let me perish in my sin, \*  
nor condemn me to the depths of the earth.  
For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent, \*  
and in me you will show forth your goodness.  
Unworthy as I am, you will save me,  
in accordance with your great mercy, \*  
and I will praise you without ceasing all the days of my life.  
For all the powers of heaven sing your praises, \*  
and yours is the glory to ages of ages. Amen.

A reading from the letter to the Ephesians (*Ephesians 5:8-14*)

once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do

secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.'

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,  
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.

A reading from the Gospel according to John (*John 9:1-41*)

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and

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, also reminds us of the Lenten theme of returning to God, and trusting God's provision for us.

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.

spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.' They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.' So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that



God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.’ They answered him, ‘You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?’ And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ He answered, ‘And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.’ He said, ‘Lord, I believe.’ And he worshipped him. Jesus said, ‘I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.’ Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, ‘Surely we are not blind, are we?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, “We see”, your sin remains.

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, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He 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,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**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.**

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.

Deacon Leslie will record her sermon for March 22 separately, and share it online.

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”.

## THE PRAYERS

*Officiant:* The Lord 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.**

## Suffrages

- V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;  
R. **And grant us your salvation.**  
V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;  
R. **Let your people sing with joy.**  
V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;  
R. **For only in you can we live in safety.**  
V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;  
R. **And guide us in the way of justice and truth.**  
V. Let your way be known upon earth;  
R. **Your saving health among all nations.**  
V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;  
R. **Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**  
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;  
R. **And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.**

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. Suffrages consist of a *versicle* (V), or "little verse" and *response* (R), usually the second half of the original scripture verse.

## The Collects

### *The Collect of the Day*

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for 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 the Renewal of Life*

O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness during the day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; 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.**

*This week please pray for:*

All those who are ill, particularly those ill with COVID-19

Medical professionals and health care workers

Leaders of government, organizations, and businesses,  
making challenging decisions that affect the health  
and economic safety of many.

Those who are vulnerable due to loss of income or support.

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 **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.

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.

Morning Prayer offers the opportunity for free-ranging prayer, as each person offers to God the needs, hopes, thanksgivings, and concerns we carry in our hearts.

Some shared concerns are suggested here. It is important also to offer your personal prayers. Take a few minutes of silence to open your heart to God – or, if praying with others, share those needs and thanks with your prayer partners.

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

Those on whose work we depend even during a health crisis:  
grocers, delivery personnel, cleaners, public safety officers,  
sanitation workers....

Those who are either too alone, or too close to others,  
as we stay home to slow transmission.

All who are suffering from fear and anxiety.

*We give thanks for:*

All those making an extra effort to care for others  
The patience, kindness, and generosity of spirit we ourselves have  
experienced

### **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 would normally receive a collection of money for the support of the church, at this point in a Sunday service, while the choir sings an anthem.

Please mail your regular pledge check to the office, use your bank's online payment system, or visit [www.trinitymoorestown.org/donate](http://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;  
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.

