

Using Your Book of Common Prayer - Daily Office 101

We have a treasure in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP)! With the BCP each of us can continue our worship and join other Episcopalians around the country and Anglicans around the world by praying the Daily Office.

The Daily Office is an ancient practice that utilizes daily prayers to mark the times of the day. For Episcopalians/Anglicans, this generally comes in the form of the two main offices of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, although there are also prayer offices to mark noonday and one to make the close of the day, which is known as Compline. The BCP also has a shortened version of the offices to mark the hours known as "Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families." These short prayer services are for Morning, Noon, the Early Evening, and the Close of the Day.

There are multiples places to access the Daily Office, including both online as well as the actual Book of Common Prayer.

If you're online, the Daily Office may be found at the following sites, among others:

- **Forward Movement.org** - <https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/>, then click Pray the Daily Office from the left side of the screen and you will be taken to that day's Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer or Compline, depending on the time of day. You may also pray Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families at this site https://prayer.forwardmovement.org/the_chapel.php
- **Mission St. Clare** - <https://www.missionstclare.com/english/> or <https://www.missionstclare.com/espanol/index.html> (in Spanish), then select "Calendar for March, Rite II" (or whatever the current month), find the day's date and select 'Morning' to access Morning Prayer
<https://www.missionstclare.com/english/March/whole/morning/13m.html> or 'Evening' to access Evening Prayer
<https://www.missionstclare.com/english/March/whole/evening/13e.html>; there are also options for Daily Devotions and other resources available on this site.
- **A Morning at the Office: An Episcopal Morning Prayer Podcast** (Morning Prayer only/audio only) - <https://amato.podbean.com/>; listen along as Morning Prayer is recited by the podcast crew or pray along with the podcast with your own materials.

What You Will Need (if Not using a computer/online):

- **Morning Prayer** (Rite I and Rite II) – BCP & Bible
- **Evening Prayer** (Rite I and Rite II) – BCP & Bible
- **Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families** – BCP only (p.137-140)
- **Compline** – BCP only (p.127-135)

Note, the BCP provides two forms for Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer: Rite I and Rite II. Rite I uses older English language forms such as 'thee' and 'thou' while Rite II uses more contemporary language. Thou English forms may be different, the structure is the same for both rites.

Rite I – Morning Prayer (p. 37), Evening Prayer (p.61)

Rite II – Morning Prayer (p.75), Evening Prayer (p.115)

Step 1 – Determine the assigned readings for the day and for the office (Morning or Evening Prayer) that you are praying. Turn to the Daily Office Lectionary, which begins on page 934

<https://www.bcponline.org/DOLectionary/concerndolect.html> of the BCP. Note, the Daily Office Lectionary is divided into Year 1 and Year 2, with Year 1 for odd numbered years and Year 2 for even numbered years. Next, turn to the page listing the appropriate liturgical week and see readings for the appropriate day of that week. For example, today is Friday, May 13, 2020. It is also still the second week in Lent. Therefore, we should use readings assigned for Friday of the Second Sunday of Lent, Year 2, as 2020 us an even year. This would found on page 953.

<https://www.bcponline.org/DOLectionary/Lent.html>

For Morning Prayer we would use psalms 95 & 69:1-23(optional, 24-30) 31-38 and (typically) the first two readings listed (Genesis 43:1-15 and 1 Cor. 7:1-9).

Evening Prayer typically uses the psalm listed after the asterisk and the gospel reading. For today that would be psalm 73 and Mark 4:35-41.

Step 2 – Now that you know your assigned Scripture reading, mark the pages that you will be using in your bible for those readings (<https://bible.oremus.org/>). You may also mark your BCP for the designated psalms, which are listed from page 585-808.

<https://www.bcponline.org/Psalter/psalter.html>

Step 3 – You are ready to pray the Daily Office of Morning or Evening Prayer! ***What is outlined below is (primarily) a description for praying Morning Prayer, Rite II, yet the same procedure would be followed for Morning Prayer, Rite I, as well as Evening Prayer Rite I and Rite II. This has been slightly adapted from the Society of St. Nicholas Ferrar*** <https://stnicholasferrar.wordpress.com/how-to/>

- **Opening Sentences**

The Office opens with a sentence from Scripture. In Morning Prayer these are organized according to the liturgical seasons, including special ones for feasts, fasts, and saints' days. The opening sentences for Evening Prayer aren't organized by season, however, and can be used at any time.

- **Confession (p.79, select 1 from 2 versions)**

While confession may be left out, it is worth noting that the longer introductory paragraph lays out a justification for the entire Office. Confession lets us “prepare ourselves in heart and mind” for worship, and is a very worthwhile practice. Note that if you're a lay person, the pronoun in the absolution is different.

- **Invitatory (p.80)**

Having “prepared ourselves,” this section “invites” us to worship. Here rings the first of several “*Gloria Patris*, which is simply the Latin for the opening words “Glory to the Father...” You'll find that old Latin titles are retained in most of the BCP, since the Anglican tradition is part of the Western, Latin tradition.

After the Alleluia comes the Invitatory Psalm. In Morning Prayer you can choose either the *Venite* or the *Jubilate* (the *Pascha Nostrum* is used during Easter), and you can add a seasonal antiphon before and after the psalm if you choose. In Evening Prayer, this section is simplified to the ancient Greek hymn *Phos Hilaron* ('O Gracious Light'), said without antiphons.

- Psalms (either Bible or in BCP, beginning on p.585

<https://www.bcponline.org/Psalter/psalter.html>)

Here you pray the Psalms for the day according to the schedule you are using, praying the *Gloria Patri* after each Psalm. There are two Psalm schedules to choose from. The 'lighter' one appoints Psalms with the readings in the Daily Office Lectionary (page 934). The 'heavier' one appoints Psalms in a 30-day cycle, found in the Psalter itself (page 585).

- Scripture Lessons (Readings) & Canticles

After the Psalms you read 1 or 2 selections from Scripture. These are also found in the Daily Office Lectionary starting (page 934). The Readings are introduced as they are on a normal Sunday. There are a few options for concluding a reading listed in each Office (page 84 for Rite II Morning Prayer).

Each reading is followed by a Canticle. These are mostly songs taken from Scripture, though a few are ancient songs of praise. Rite II has all the same Canticles as Rite I, just in a different order and translated into contemporary language. Rite II also offers a number of Canticles that Rite I doesn't have. To pick a Canticle, you can follow the schedule on pages 144-145. Or you can follow a more traditional pattern that focuses mostly on the hymns from Luke:

- Morning Prayer
 - Te Deum* (Canticle 7/21) or *Benedicite* (Canticle 1/12)
 - Benedictus* (Canticle 4/16)
- Evening Prayer
 - Magnificat* (Canticle 3/15)
 - Nunc Dimittis* (Canticle 5/17)

- Apostles Creed (p.96)

Pretty simple! Just say it!

- Salutation & The Lord's Prayer (p.97)

Before the Lord's Prayer there's a salutation and response. You can say both parts or skip right to the prayer.

- Suffrages (select either A or B, p.97-98)

These are snippets from the Psalms arranged in a call-and-response format. The Officiant says the V parts, and the People says the R parts. Or you can say both if you're alone. Use either set.

- **Collects (p.98-101)**

One or more Collects (a fancy word for prayer) is said. This can include the Collect from the previous Sunday. There are specific Collects for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Traditionally there are fixed daily collects: “Collect for the Grace” (page 100) & “Collect for Peace,” (page 99) for Morning Prayer and “Collect for Peace” and “Collect for Aid against Perils” (both page 123) for Evening Prayer. But you can use any of the ones there!

Unless there’s a Eucharist or a special set of prayers, you then proceed to use one of the three “Prayers for Mission.”

After the Prayer for Mission you can sing a hymn and/or pray for anything that needs praying for. You can use prayers from the prayer book (pages 810-841) or pray from your heart.

- **Prayers & Intercessions**

Prayers are offered for people and communities on your mind.

- **Optional Conclusions**

Before the close of the service you can pray the General Thanksgiving (p.101 or p.836) or the Prayer of St. Chrysostom or both.

- **Closing/Dismissal (p.102)**

“Let us bless the Lord...”

- **Final Sentences (p.102, select 1)**

The Office is finished with a final call to bless the Lord and a blessing from Scripture is read.

Useful Pages

Morning Prayer (Rite I) — 37

Evening Prayer (Rite I) — 61

Collects (Rite I) — 159

Morning Prayer (Rite II) — 75

Evening Prayer (Rite II) — 115

Noonday Prayer (Rite II) — 103

Compline (Rite II) — 127

Collects (Rite II) — 211

Daily Office Rubrics (Rules) — 141

Psalms — 585

Prayers & Thanksgivings — 814

Daily Office Lectionary — 934