



Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney's Lent Course 2024

THE WAY TO THE CROSS

THURSDAY 7 MARCH



CONTEMPLATIVE ACTS - PRAYING THE HOURS

Praying the hours, Daily Prayer, Evening Prayer, Morning Prayer, Compline, Mattins, Evensong.

These are all words that describe prayers said during the day, regularly committing to praying throughout the day. They can be ways of marking the hours of the day, sanctifying the day with prayer and as a practice of regular scripture reading and prayer.

The offices (services) of Mattins and Evensong or Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Compline have their roots in the monastic tradition of praying seven times throughout the day. When Cranmer was curating the Prayer Book he wanted a system of prayers that were not too many for people to attend, that included Scripture readings, were in English and were easy enough to follow and understand.

Cranmer reduced the number of offices and introduced more Scripture reading. Services of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer or Mattins and Evensong are from this tradition.

The current Scottish Episcopal Church Daily Prayer has a long (blue book) and short (green book) versions. They include Psalms, scripture readings, canticles (Magnificat, Benedictus), scripture, prayer and Collects.

Other daily prayer services are available including from the Northumbria Community, Iona Community, Community of Aidan and Hilda and other Anglican Communion churches.

Daily prayer could also be something as simple as saying the Lords Prayer and reading some scripture at certain times in the day.

Collect for
Third Sunday of
Lent

Father of mercy,
alone we have no
power in ourselves
to help ourselves.
When we are
discouraged by our
weakness,
strengthen us to
follow Christ, our
pattern and our
hope; who lives and
reigns with you and
the Holy Spirit, one
God, now and for
ever.
Amen.

In Daily Prayer practices there are changes through days of the week in the Psalms read and in the liturgical seasons. For example, during Lent the Scottish Episcopal Church's Daily Prayer is entitled 'Returning to God'. The outline of the material is below (taken from the Daily Prayer book). The material for Daily Prayer (Morning, Evening, Compline) can be found on the SEC's webpage at

www.scotland.anglican.org/spirituality/prayer/daily-offices/ which is updated each day and throughout the day. You can download a booklet of Daily Prayer (short or long) from the SEC website. At ordination Priests and Deacons promise to say the Daily Offices so you might want to ask them about their practices.

This week the invitation is to try Daily Prayer, perhaps Morning Prayer when you get up in the mornings or Evening Prayer before you eat in the evening.

The Elements which make up the order of Daily Prayer are these:

1. An introductory verse and response, invoking God's presence and help.
2. Praise to God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - with the implied request that our worship and our life reflect his glory.

3. Psalmody, which comprises:

An opening psalm (or suitable hymn), a variable psalm or psalms, and a concluding passage from elsewhere in the Bible are grouped together by a single optional antiphon or sentence. In the morning, the attitude of praise has controlled the choice; in the evening, reflective trust. Within this overall frame, it is intended that the psalms reflect the mood and images of the season of the year. In addition, the choice of the variable psalms seeks generally to follow a pattern: on Sundays celebrating new life, resurrection; on Mondays reflecting the wisdom tradition in the Old Testament; on Tuesdays songs of kingship and the holy city; on Wednesdays prayers of lament and thanksgiving; on Thursdays songs of God's saving acts; on Fridays psalms enabling reflection on the cross of Christ; on Saturdays psalms suitable to the Sabbath day.

4. Scripture reading(s). Readings for Daily Prayer are given in the Calendar and Lectionary of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Others may wish to follow a scheme of Bible reading such as that provided by the Bible Reading Fellowship, or simply to read each day a few verses from a particular book of the Bible.

5. Silence at this point allows time for reflecting or simply for being in God's presence.

6. An optional Response follows the reading. This is a traditional device for concentrating upon a particular verse and making it the vehicle of our response to God's Word.

7. The Benedictus at Morning Prayer and the Magnificat at Evening Prayer celebrate Christ as the fulfilment of God's promise to Israel and the sign of the new covenant. In these canticles both morning and evening prayer reach their climax. For each canticle an optional antiphon is provided. This usually reflects the readings given in the Revised Common Lectionary for each Sunday.

8. After this climax, a simple invocation leads into brief (and perhaps informal) intercession, which ends with the Lord's Prayer, the collect of the day (as provided in Scottish Liturgy (Eucharist), and a morning/evening collect. The conclusion of the order is marked by a verse and response which may lead into a time of silence.

You, Lord,
have the
words of
eternal life.

*Refrain for
Psalm 19*

WEEKLY PATTERN

Sunday
RCL Eucharist
Readings and Collect

Monday
Delving Deeper into
the Readings

Tuesday
Words from Others
(sacred & secular)

Wednesday
Resources from the
Arts

Thursday
Contemplative Acts

Friday
Personal Reflection
- what this means to
me

Saturday
Acts & Deeds