

Concerning the Service

In this service, as in the Daily Office generally, the term “Officiant” is used to denote the person, clerical or lay, who leads the service.

It is appropriate that other persons be assigned to lead other parts of the service not assigned to the officiant. The bishop, when present, appropriately concludes the service with a blessing.

Front cover: Fribourg, Couvent des Cordeliers, Ms. 2, folio 47r (late thirteenth century)

The Singing of Psalms

The Officiant shall say to the People

The Lord be with you.

People And with thy spirit.

Officiant Let us pray.

The Officiant shall say one or more of the following collects.

FOURTH COUNCIL OF CARTHAGE 398

Bless, O Lord, us thy servants who minister in thy temple: grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 1979

O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven: be ever present with thy servants who seek through art and music to perfect the praises offered by thy people on earth; and grant to them even now glimpses of thy beauty, and make them worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

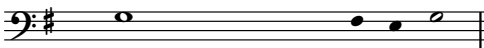
The appointed Psalms are sung. During Passiontide, the Gloria Patri is omitted.

The Office of Compline

The Officiant and the People shall begin



∨ The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end. ℞ A - men.



∨ Our help is in the name of the Lord.
℞ Who hath made heaven and earth.

The Preparation

The Officiant may then say

Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

Officiant and People

BCP 1552

Almighty and most merciful Father;
we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.
We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.
We have offended against thy holy laws.
We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;
and there is no health in us.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.
Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults.
Restore thou them that are penitent,
according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord.
And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*

If the Officiant is a member of the clergy, they may pronounce Absolution, saying

Almighty God have mercy upon you; ✠ pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Otherwise, the Officiant may say

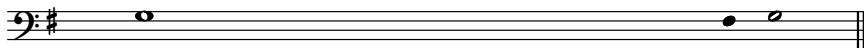
May Almighty God grant us forgiveness of all our sins, and the grace and comfort of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

The Officiant and People continue. During Passiontide, the Gloria Patri is omitted.



∇ O God, make speed to save us.

℞ O Lord, make haste to help us.



V̇ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Ghost.
 Ṙ As it was in the beginning,
 is now, and ever shall be: world without end. A - men.

During Eastertide, they add



Al-le-lu - ia.

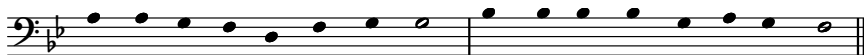
The following hymn is then sung.

Te lucis ante terminum



ST. AMBROSE

Be-fore the end - ing of the day, Cre - a - tor of the world, we pray,
 From all ill dreams defend our eyes, from nightly fears and fan - ta - sies;
 O Fa - ther, that we ask be done, through Je - sus Christ thine on - ly Son,



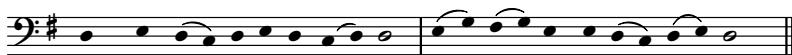
that with thy wont - ed fa - vour thou wouldst be our guard and keep - er now.
 tread un - der foot our ghost - ly foe, that no pol - lu - tion we may know.
 who with the Ho - ly Ghost and thee doth live and reign e - ter - nal - ly.



A___men.

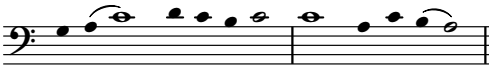
The Psalms

The Officiant and the People all sing



Have mercy_ up on me O_ God; and_ hear - ken un to_ my_ prayer.

Psalm 31:1-5. *In te, Domine, speravi*



1. In thee, O / Lord, have ^ I put ^ my trust: *
let me never be put to confusion;
deliver me in / thy righteousness.
2. Bow / down thine ^ ear to me: *
make haste to / deliver me.
3. And be thou my strong rock and / house of defense, *
that thou may / est save me.
4. For thou art my strong rock / and my castle: *
be thou also my guide
and lead me for / thy Name's sake.
5. Draw me out of the net that they have laid / privi^ly for me, *
for thou / art my strength.

Glory be...

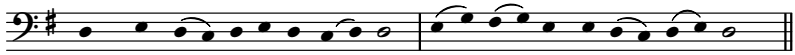
Psalm 134. *Ecce nunc*



1. Behold now, praise / the Lord, *
all ye / servants of the Lord,
2. Ye that by night stand in the house of / the Lord, *
even in the courts of the / house of our God.
3. Lift up your hands in the sanctu / ary *
-- and praise the Lord.
4. The Lord that made heaven / and earth *
give thee blessing / out of Sion.

Glory be...

Then the Officiant and People repeat

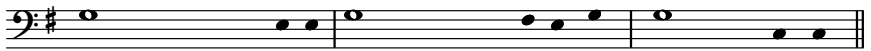


Have mercy_ upon me O_ God; and_ hear-ken unto_ my_ prayer.

The Lessons

The Officiant recites one or more of the following Lessons.

Jeremiah 14:9



Thou, O Lord,
art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name. Leave us not,
O Lord our God.

Matthew 11:28-30



Come unto me,
all ye that labour and are hea-vy laden, and I will give you rest.

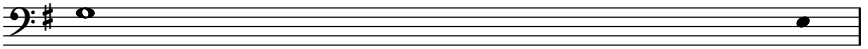


Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and low-ly in heart,



and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Hebrews 13:20-21



Now the God of peace that brought again
from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep,



through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in
every good work to do his will,

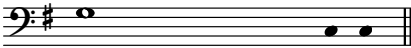


working in you that
which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to
whom be glory forever and ev-er.

1 Peter 5:8-9

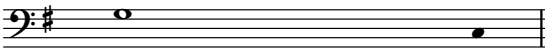


Brethren, be sober, be vi-gi-lant, because your adversary, the
devil, as a roaring lion walketh
about, seeking whom he may de-vour;



whom resist, steadfast in the faith.

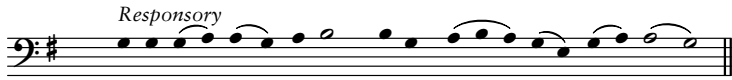
After the Lesson(s), the Officiant and the People sing



∇ But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us.
℞ Thanks be to God.

The Intercessions

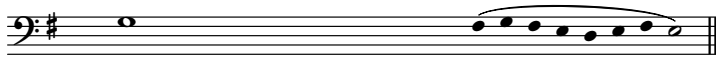
Then the Officiant and the People chant



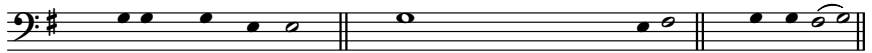
∇ In-to thy_ hands.O Lord,I commend my spi - rit.
℞ In-to thy_ hands.O Lord,I commend my spi - rit.



∇ For thou hast redeem-ed me, O Lord, O God of truth.

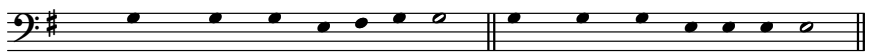


∇ Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of an eye: _____
℞ Hide us under the shadow of thy wings. _____



∇ O Lord, hear our prayer. ℞ And let our cry come unto thee. ∇ Let us pray.

Kyrie eleison



∇ Lord, have mer-cy up-on us.
℞ Christ, have mer-cy up-on us. Lord, have mer-cy up-on us.

The following are chanted on E or G.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which 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 them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✠ everlasting. *Amen.*

Then the Officiant shall chant one or more of the following collects.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give thine angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous, and for all thy love's sake. *Amen.*

ROMAN BREVIARY 1099

Visit, we beseech thee, O Lord, this place, and drive from it all the snares of the enemy; let thy holy angels dwell herein to preserve us in peace; and may thy blessing be upon us evermore; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 1549

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord, and by thy great mercy defend us from all the perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thine only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

EPISCOPAL BOOK OF OFFICES 1914

Give us light in the night season, we beseech thee, O Lord, and grant that our rest may be without sin, and our waking to thy service; that we may come in peace and safety to the waking of the great day; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PROPOSED BCP 1928

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who at this evening hour didst rest in the sepulchre, and didst thereby sanctify the grave to be a bed of hope to thy people: make us so to abound in sorrow for our sins, which were the

cause of thy passion, that when our bodies lie in the dust, our souls may live with thee; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

PROPOSED BCP 1928

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world may repose upon thy eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PROPOSED BCP 1928

Look down, O Lord, from thy heavenly throne; illuminate the darkness of this night with thy celestial brightness, and from the sons of light banish the deeds of darkness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Then the following hymn is sung. During Passiontide, the Gloria Patri is omitted.

Nunc dimittis



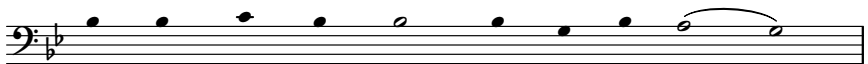
Pre-serve us,— O Lord, while wa-king, and guard us while sleep-ing,



that a - wake we may be with Christ and in peace may take our rest.



✠ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.—



For mine eyes have seen thy sal - va - tion,——



which thou hast pre-par - ed before the face of all peo-ple:——



to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Is-rael.—



Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Ghost.



As it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and ev - er shall be:



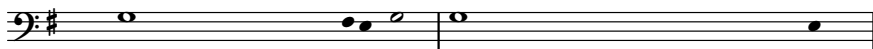
world without end. A-men._

The Benediction

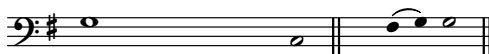
Then the Officiant and People chant



∨ Let us bless the Lord.____ ℞ Thanks be to God.____



∨ The Almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, ✠ the Son, and the Holy Ghost,



bless us and preserve us. ℞ A - men.

Here ends the Office of Compline.

About the Singing of Psalms

Singing psalms together is one of the oldest Christian traditions, rooted in Jewish practice. Jesus chanted with his disciples the night that he was betrayed, and quoted from the psalms from upon the cross. Paul urged the Corinthians to sing psalms so that the church might be built up; Pliny the Younger, on encountering a group of early Christians, wrote to the Roman emperor describing their practice of responsorial singing. Psalms went on to form the backbone of the Catholic and Orthodox canonical hours, and were given prime treatment by many Protestant groups who sang them exclusively. Psalm-singing is therefore a unifying activity that has glorified God in an unbroken manner since the time of the Apostles. Indeed, St. Basil remarked,

“Who, indeed, can still consider as an enemy him with whom he has uttered the same prayer to God? So that psalmody, bringing about choral singing, a bond, as it were, toward unity, and joining the people into a harmonious union of one choir, produces also the greatest of blessings, charity. ... A psalm is ... the voice of the church.”¹

By the eighteenth century, a manner of setting the psalms in four-part harmony became popular in England and became known as Anglican chant. This type of chant evolved out of previous plainsong, and is still in use throughout Anglican and other churches today.

About the Office of Compline

Compline, prayer before bedtime, is a feature of both Catholic and Orthodox canonical hours. English reformer Thomas Cranmer, wishing to make the hours more accessible to the laity, combined the Catholic monastic offices of vespers (prayer at evening) and compline into the Anglican office of evensong in the first Book of Common Prayer published in 1549. Compline would not reappear as a separate office in the BCP until the Canadian 1962 edition, but often appeared in supplementary liturgical texts. Compline is the shortest and simplest of the offices, with non-rotating readings and memorable versicles, so that one might pray it even when exhausted.

The main text for this office has grown out of the Roman Breviary, used since at least 1099, and the Gregorian chant accompanying it dates from at least the twelfth century.

¹*Homily 10: A Psalm on the Lot of the Just Man (On Psalm 1)*, St. Basil the Great. Translated in *The Fathers Of The Church: A New Translation*, Volume 46, *Saint Basil Exegetic Homilies*, Roy Joseph Deferrari.