

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



A thousand years of God's love in Suffolk

The Order for Evening Prayer

throughout the year



A Guide to the Order of Evening Prayer

Evening Prayer in St Edmundsbury Cathedral is a tiny fragment of something else; it is a part of the worship which is offered to God by Christian people every hour of the day and night, in every part of the world.

When you come to Evening Prayer here, it is as if you were dropping in on a conversation already in progress — a conversation between God and his people which began long before you were born and which will continue long after the end of your life. So, do not be surprised or disturbed if there are some things which you do not understand straight away. For a brief moment, you step into the continual stream of worship which is being offered today and which will be offered to the end of time. You are one with those who worship here on earth and in heaven.

Evening Prayer is drawn almost entirely from the Bible. Its primary purpose is to proclaim the wonderful works of God in history and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its secondary purpose is to evoke from the worshipper a response of praise, penitence, prayer, and obedience.

Much of the English of the service is the language spoken and written by our ancestors more than four hundred years ago. It may sound old-fashioned but its meaning is not out of date.

The service is in three parts:

The first part prepares the worshipper for the story which is to follow.

The second part is the story of God's redeeming love, beginning with the Old Testament (the psalms and the first reading), proceeding to the New Testament (the Magnificat or Song of Mary, the second reading, and the Nunc Dimittis or Song of Simeon), and reaching its climax in the affirmation of what Christians believe (the Creed).

Finally, the third part is our prayerful response to God who has revealed himself in history, in Jesus Christ, and in the Church.

Evening Prayer

said by the congregation

All kneel

Officiant In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

All Amen.

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

All stand

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.

The Lord's Name be praised.

All sit

The congregation says a psalm or psalms as announced by the Officiant. You will find the text of the psalms towards the back of the Book of Common Prayer. The verses are said alternately between the Officiant and the congregation with a brief pause at the colon in the middle of each verse.

At the end of the final psalm, all stand for the Gloria

All sit for

The Old Testament Lesson

All stand

The Magnificat or Song of Mary

Officiant My soul doth magnify the Lord:
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

**All For he hath regarded:
the lowliness of his hand-maiden.**

For behold, from henceforth:
all generations shall call me blessed.

**For he that is mighty hath magnified me:
and holy is his Name.**

And his mercy is on them that fear him:
throughout all generations.

**He hath shewed strength with his arm:
he hath scattered the proud
in the imagination of their hearts.**

He hath put down the mighty from their seat:
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

**He hath filled the hungry with good things:
and the rich he hath sent empty away.**

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel:
as he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed, for ever.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
and to the Holy Ghost;**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.**

All sit for

The New Testament Lesson

All stand for

The Nunc Dimittis or Song of Simeon

Officiant Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:
according to thy word.

All For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.

All face east for

The Apostles' Creed

All 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 Catholick Church;
The Communion of Saints;
The Forgiveness of sins;
The Resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.**

Officiant The Lord be with you.
All **And with thy spirit.**
Let us pray.

All kneel for

The Lesser Litany

Officiant Lord, have mercy upon us.
All **Christ, have mercy upon us.**
Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer

All **Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in 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 Responses

Officiant O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
All **And grant us thy salvation.**
 O Lord, save the Queen.
 And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.
 Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
 And make thy chosen people joyful.
 O Lord, save thy people.
 And bless thine inheritance.
 Give peace in our time, O Lord.
 Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
 but only thou, O God.
 O God, make clean our hearts within us.
 And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect of the Day
(two collects in certain seasons)

The Collect for Peace

The Collect for Aid against all Perils

Prayers and The Grace

