

THE BOURNE VALLEY BENEFICE

NIGHT PRAYER

9TH MARCH 2025 - YEAR C – FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

WELCOME

Welcome to this service of Night Prayer for the first Sunday of Lent. Please join in with the words printed in bold type. Although our service does not completely follow the traditional form of Compline, it is intended as a service to complete the day, before going into the silence of the night – so it will be a quieter service and will end with silence after the closing prayer.

Throughout this series of services, our opening and closing responses are being drawn from patterns of worship at Iona. Our act of penitence this evening is a prayer based on Psalm 51. And our services of night prayer through Lent will include the Prayer of St Ephrem which comes to us from the Eastern Orthodox tradition where it is a regular part of the Lenten prayer cycle because it summarises the virtues and disciplines that Christians are encouraged to practice in their lives and especially during Lent. The traditional words of the Lord's Prayer, this evening, are interwoven with a translation and interpretation based on the Aramaic version – please feel free to join with either set of words, or both, as you prefer.

Opening responses

Let the light fall warm and red on the rock,¹
let the birds sing their evening song
and let God's people say Amen.

Amen

Let the tools be stored away,
let the work be over and done
and let God's people say Amen.

Amen

Let the flowers close and the stars appear
let hearts be glad and minds be calm
and let God's people say Amen.

Amen

¹ From Iona Community: *A Wee Worship Book*, 1989

PENITENCE

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions.

Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities
and cleanse us from our sin.

Against you, you alone, have we sinned and done evil in your sight
Hide your face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities.

Create in us clean hearts, O God, and put new and right spirits within us.

Do not cast us away from your presence,
and do not take your Holy Spirit from us.

Restore to us the joy of your salvation
and sustain in us a willing spirit.

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouths will declare your praise.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Create in us clean hearts, O God, and put new and right spirits within us.

Take away, good Lord, the sin that corrupts us;
give us the sorrow that heals and the joy that praises
and restore by grace your own image within us,
that we may take our place among your people;
in Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen**

PSALM 119.73-88

Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
give me understanding, that I may learn your commandments.

Those who fear you will be glad when they see me,
because I have hoped in your word.

I know, O Lord, that your judgements are right,
and that in very faithfulness you caused me to be troubled.

Let your faithful love be my comfort,
according to your promise to your servant.

Let your tender mercies come to me, that I may live,
for your law is my delight.

Let the proud be put to shame, for they wrong me with lies;
but I will meditate on your commandments.

Let those who fear you turn to me,
even those who know your testimonies.

Let my heart be sound in your statutes,
that I may not be put to shame.

My soul is pining for your salvation;
I have hoped in your word.

My eyes fail with watching for your word,
while I say, 'O when will you comfort me?'

I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,
yet I do not forget your statutes.

How many are the days of your servant?
When will you bring judgement on those who persecute me?

The proud have dug pits for me
in defiance of your law.

All your commandments are true;
help me, for they persecute me with falsehood.

They had almost made an end of me on earth,
but I have not forsaken your commandments.

Give me life according to your loving-kindness;
so shall I keep the testimonies of your mouth.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.**

READINGS

Reflection for the First Sunday of Lent²

² By Thom M Shuman, as published in the Iona Community *Wild Goose big book of worship resources*

Like a kitten

My temptations do not come
like a prowling lion
seeking to devour me;
no:
like a kitten,
they curl up in my lap
purring me to complacency.

My desert experience
is not somewhere
'out there' –
It is shuffling papers
at my desk;
dumping another load
of dirty jeans
into the machine;
commuting in my car,
listening to my angry voice
at the drivers around me
echo the ones on the radio.

The Evil One
is too smart to come to me
in a Halloween costume
but comes
in the neighbour
a couple of doors down
who fears the way life is changing;
in the knot of teenagers
walking down the street towards me;
in any person, in every person,
who is not my child, my spouse, me.

Tempted one:
strengthen me with your word,

feed me with the sweetness of your grace,
shelter me in the coolness of your love;
then, together,
we can journey to Jerusalem.

Gospel reading – Luke 18.9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: ‘Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, “God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.” But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!” I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.’

CANTICLE - Nunc Dimittis (Song of Simeon)

**Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever. Amen.**

PRAYERS

Prayer of St Ephrem

**O Lord and Master of my life,
spare me from the spirit of apathy and meddling,
of idle chatter and love of power.**

**Instead, grant to me, your servant,
the spirit of integrity and humility,
of patience and love.**

**Yes, O Lord and God,
grant me the grace to be aware of my sins
and not to judge others,
For You are blessed, now and forever. Amen**

Intercessions

Collect

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord's Prayer (with translation from Aramaic)

OUR Father, who art in heaven,

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos,

Hallowed be thy Name,

Focus your light within us – make it useful

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,

Create your reign of unity now

on earth as it is in heaven.

your one desire then acts with ours, as in all light, so in all forms.

Give us this day our daily bread;

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us;

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,

as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Don't let surface things delude us,

but free us from what holds us back.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,

For ever and ever.

*From you is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do,
the song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews.*

Amen

power to these statements

– may they be the ground from which all our actions grow:

*Amen.*³

CLOSING

For the day now done⁴

thanks be to God.

For the rest before us

thanks be to God

Because God never sleeps so that we can,

thanks be to God.

But before the day is done,

let God's holy name be praised;

and let God's people say Amen.

Amen.

³ *Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus* by Neil Dlouglas-Klotz.

⁴ From the *Iona Abbey Worship Book*