

## DAILY OFFICE

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Since **the English Reformation, the Daily Office in Anglican churches** has principally been the two daily services of Morning Prayer (sometimes called Mattins or Matins) and Evening Prayer (usually called **Evensong**, especially when celebrated chorally). These services are generally celebrated according to set forms contained in the various local editions of the ***Book of Common Prayer***. The **Daily Offices** may be led either by **clergy** or lay people. In many Anglican provinces, clergy are required to pray the two main service

The Anglican practice of saying daily morning and evening prayer **derives from the pre-Reformation canonical** hours, of which seven were required to be said in churches and by clergy daily: **Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers,** and **Compline**. **This practice derived from the earliest centuries of Christianity,** and ultimately from the pre-Christian hours of prayer observed in the **Jewish temple**.<sup>[1]</sup>

**The first *Book of Common Prayer* (1549),** which first presented the modern Anglican Daily Office services in essentially the same form as present.

The first ***Book of Common Prayer of 1549***<sup>[2]</sup> radically simplified this arrangement, **combining the first three services of the day into a single service called** Mattins and the latter two into a single service called Evensong (which, before the Reformation, was the English name for Vespers<sup>[3]</sup>). The rest were abolished. The second edition of the ***Book of Common Prayer (1552)***<sup>[4]</sup> renamed these services to **Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer**, respectively, and also made some minor alterations, setting the pattern of daily Anglican worship which has been essentially unchanged in most cathedrals and other large churches ever since, continuing to the current edition of the Church of England's ***Book of Common Prayer* of 1662**.

In most Anglican provinces, ordained ministers are required to say Morning and Evening Prayer daily; devout lay Anglicans also often make this a part of their spiritual practice. Historically, Anglican religious communities have made the Daily Office a central part of their communal spiritual life, beginning with the community at Little Gidding established in the 17th century by Nicholas Ferrar.<sup>[5]</sup> Regular use of Morning and Evening Prayer from the *Book of Common Prayer* was also a part of the "method" promoted by John Wesley and the early Methodist movement.<sup>[6]:283</sup>

Since the Oxford (Tractarian) and ritualist movements of the 19th century, interest in the pre-Reformation practice of praying the office eight times a day has revived. Before his conversion to Roman Catholicism, the Tractarian priest John Henry Newman wrote in *Tracts for the Times* number 75 of the Roman Breviary's relation to the Church of England's daily prayer practices, encouraging its adoption by Anglican priests.<sup>[7]</sup> The praying of "little hours", especially Compline but also a mid-day prayer office sometimes called *Diurnum*, in addition to the major services of Morning and Evening Prayer, has become particularly common, and is provided for by the current service books of the Episcopal Church in the United States<sup>[8]:103–7, 127–36</sup> and the Church of England.<sup>[9]:29–73, 298–323</sup>

The Anglican forms of the Daily Office have spread to other Christian traditions: as mentioned, the Anglican Morning and Evening Prayer services were a central part of the original Methodist practice. The popularity of choral Evensong has led to its adoption by some other churches around the world. In addition, since the Roman Catholic Church established the Pastoral Provision and the Anglican Use in the United States, and continuing into the current personal ordinariates for former Anglicans who have joined the Roman Catholic church, forms of Morning and Evening Prayer based on the Anglican pattern have come into use among some Roman Catholics, contained in the *Book of Divine Worship* and its successor publications.

### Liturgical practice<sup>[edit]</sup>

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Traditional Anglican worship of the Daily Office follows the patterns first set down in 1549 and 1552. Since the 20th-century liturgical

movement, however, some Anglican churches have introduced new forms which are not based on this historic practice.<sup>[9][10]</sup> This section will describe the traditional form, which is still widely used throughout the Anglican Communion.

The *Book of Common Prayer* has been described as "the Bible re-arranged for public worship":<sup>[11]:155</sup> the core of the Anglican Daily Office services is almost entirely based on praying using the words of the Christian Bible itself, and hearing readings from it.

Confession and absolution

Bible readings[[edit](#)]

The introduction to the first *Book of Common Prayer* explained that the purpose of the reformed office was to restore what it described as the practice of the Early Church of reading the whole Bible through once per year, a practice it praised as 'godly and decent' and criticized what it perceived as the corruption of this practice by the mediaeval breviaries in which only a small portion of the scripture was read each year, wherein most books of the Bible were only read in their first few chapters, and the rest omitted.<sup>[8]:866–7</sup>

While scholars now dispute that this was the practice or intention of the Early Church in praying their hours of prayer,<sup>[16]</sup> the reading of the Bible remains an important part of the Anglican daily prayer practice. Typically, at each of the services of morning and evening prayer, two readings are made: one from the Old Testament or from the Apocrypha, and one from the New Testament. These are taken from one of a number of lectionaries depending on the Anglican province and prayer book in question, providing a structured plan for reading the Bible through each year.

## LECTIONARY

A lectionary is a book or listing that contains a collection of scripture readings appointed for Christian or Judaic worship on a given day or occasion

Both Hebrew and Christian lectionaries developed over the centuries. Typically, a lectionary will go through the scriptures in a logical pattern, and also include selections which were chosen by the religious community for their appropriateness to particular occasions. The one-year Jewish lectionary reads the entirety of the Torah within the space of a year and may have begun in the Babylonian Jewish community; the three-year Jewish lectionary seems to trace its origin to the Jewish community in and around the Holy Land.<sup>[2]</sup> The existence of both one-year and three-year cycles occurs in both Christianity and Judaism.

### Three-year cycle

A German Roman Catholic lectionary for year C on an ambo after mass.

The lectionaries (both Catholic and RCL versions) are organized into three-year cycles of readings. The years are designated A, B, or C. Each yearly cycle begins on the first Sunday of [Advent](#) (the Sunday between November 27 and December 3 inclusive). Year B follows year A, year C follows year B, then back again to A.

- Year A: [Gospel of Matthew](#) (Advent 2019 through 2020 - current year)
- Year B: [Gospel of Mark](#) (Advent 2020 through 2021)
- Year C: [Gospel of Luke](#) (Advent 2021 through 2022)

The [Gospel of John](#) is read throughout [Easter](#), and is used for other liturgical seasons including [Advent](#), [Christmas](#), and [Lent](#) where appropriate.

