

27th December 2020 6pm Compline

Service led by Felicity Hawke

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Introduction

[Felicity Hawke:]

[Felicity:] Good evening and welcome to this service of night prayer or Compline coming from St. John's Kenilworth. My name is Felicity Hawke, and I'll be leading the service, with Matt King doing the clever stuff on Zoom tonight. The order of service was emailed around before Christmas, and it's also on the church website, stjohn316.co.uk if you want to download it over the next few moments.

I hope that in this strange year, whether or not you met up with family and friends, you enjoyed a blessed and enjoyable Christmas Day. The weather has been generally bright and cheerful, which always helps. When we were out walking at Ryton Pools yesterday, there were plenty of people about, enjoying the sunshine.

Compline seems a particularly appropriate service for this Sunday. It's an old service, originating in Benedictine communities, and it was the final service of the day. The name comes from the Latin *completorium*, marking the completion of the working day. This Sunday, of course, is the final one in 2020, so we are, in a sense, marking the completion of the year. Considering what a difficult, challenging and sad year it's been, many of us will be glad to see it go. The liturgy also talks of safety, and one of the phrases that we would have heard so much this year is 'keep safe'. The reading and the reflection that you'll hear later, from J. John's book, God With Us, also talks about waiting and coming hope, and this seemed very apt as we go into a new year, praying for the successful roll-out of the vaccine, and a return to more normal life.

So please join me in this service of Compline. If you have an order of service to hand, then join in the words in bold. And if you don't, just listen and absorb the peace and comfort of the words.

Preparation

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

All Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord

All who made heaven and earth.

Let's reflect in silence for a moment on the past day, and on the past year.

[pause]

All **Most merciful God,
we confess to you,
before the whole company of heaven and one another,
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed
and in what we have failed to do.
Forgive us our sins,
heal us by your Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ. Amen.**

O God, make speed to save us.

All **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

All **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.
Alleluia.**

Psalm 134 [cw]

¹ Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, ♦
 you that by night stand in the house of the Lord.

² Lift up your hands towards the sanctuary ♦
 and bless the Lord.

³ The Lord who made heaven and earth ♦
 give you blessing out of Zion.

All **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.**

Reading: Luke 2:28,38

28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God

38 ... {Anna} gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Reflection from God With Us, by J. John

By Boxing Day, preachers want to put Christmas behind them and start to think about the new year. So the story of Simeon and Anna, and the Presentation at the Temple is often overlooked. Joseph and Mary treat the new Baby according to the Jewish traditions of their day. The baby was circumcised, and then 40 days after the birth, Mary and Joseph take the child to the Temple in Jerusalem, for Mary's ritual purification, and Jesus' dedication to God as the firstborn son. At the temple, they meet two people. The first is Simeon. He has been told by the Holy Spirit that He will not die without seeing the Messiah, and he has been summoned to the Temple. On this day, Simeon takes the infant Jesus, praises God because of him, and prophetically declares that he has now seen salvation, and that the child will be a blessing to Jew and Gentile. But the baby will be a mixed blessing for the people of Israel, causing some to rise and some to fall, and

Mary will know bitter pain because of his ministry. The second encounter is with Anna, an aged prophetess, who recognises in the baby the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel.

There is much here to encourage and challenge us. Notice first how religious duty is not incompatible with the working of the Holy Spirit. Mary, Joseph and Jesus are in the Temple to fulfil the Old Testament law. Yet God works in that ritual duty through His Holy Spirit. It is a reminder to us that church-going and doing those things that we consider to be our duty do not exclude us from the works of the Holy Spirit. Notice too, that God uses the elderly. Our culture has little time for senior citizens, and old age often comes with a loss of hope. Not so with Simeon and Anna: they have hope. Time waiting for God is never time wasted. Simeon highlights Jesus' significance, declaring, "for my eyes have seen Your salvation." The infant is not going to talk about how people are to be saved, but will be the means through which they are saved. Simeon also says that the child is to be a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. That is, the Good News will go out across the world to all people, salvation, light to the world, the glory of Israel. All be accomplished, not through the Temple building, but through this Child.

In a world where we can often feel reduced to insignificance, we need to remember the Baby in the Temple. Sometimes the little things are vastly more significant than the big ones.

Just to ponder: it doesn't matter what age you are. God can use you if you allow Him to.

Let's pause for a moment to think about those words.

So we continue with words that come from those readings.

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

All **Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**

For you have redeemed me, Lord God of truth.

All **I commend my spirit.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

All **Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.**

Keep me as the apple of your eye.

All **Hide me under the shadow of your wings.**

Gospel Cantic: The Nunc dimittis (The Song of Simeon)

All **Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.**

¹ Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: ♦
your word has been fulfilled.

² My own eyes have seen the salvation ♦
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;

³ A light to reveal you to the nations ♦
and the glory of your people Israel.

All **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.**

All **Save us, O Lord, while waking,
and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ
and asleep may rest in peace.**

Intercessions

And so we come to our prayers. Let us pray.

Lord, at this end of a difficult year, we pray for all those in authority, both in the secular and the spiritual world, as they make decisions and issue guidance that affects so many millions of people, and offer words of reassurance and comfort. Help them to do what is best for everyone, to put personal preferences and selfishness aside, and work together for the good of all people.

We thank You, Lord for the dedicated work of doctors, nurses, care workers, and all those caring for the sick and dying. And we thank you for the dedication of all the scientists, the researchers, who've been working to find out what this virus is, and how they can treat it. Give them all skill and patience and love.

Thank You, Lord for all those other people who have continued to work, risking infection and sometimes physical harm and abuse. We think of emergency workers, delivery drivers, shop workers, transport workers, teachers and lecturers and many others. Give them strength, protect them from harm, and assure them of the love of those they serve, and of your love too.

We pray for all those who are sick or suffering, whether at home, in hospital or in hospices. And we pray that they will soon be able to see their loved ones again. We pray, too, for all those who were not able to be with family over Christmas, either because they couldn't travel or meet up or because they were stranded in the wrong place, or unable to get the necessary tests and paperwork. We spend a moment thinking of those that are particularly on our hearts.

[pause]

Lord, in your mercy
All **hear our prayers.**

Collect for the First Sunday in Christmas

Almighty God,
who wonderfully created us in your own image
and yet more wonderfully restored us
through your Son Jesus Christ:
grant that, as he came to share in our humanity,
so we may share the life of his divinity;
who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

[pause]

The Compline Collect

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace,
and may your blessing be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Conclusion

And so we come to the conclusion of this short service.

In peace we will lie down and sleep;

All **for you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.**

Abide with us, Lord Jesus,

All **for the night is at hand and the day is now past.**

As the night watch looks for the morning,

All **so do we look for you, O Christ.**

Come with the dawning of the day and the dawning of the new year

All **and make yourself known in the breaking of the bread.**

The Blessing

The Lord bless us and watch over us;

the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us;

the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace.

All **Amen.**

Thank you for joining me for this short service, and may God bless you all with a happy and hopeful New Year.

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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The order for Compline can be found here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/service-word/service-word-morning-evening-prayer-night-prayer#mm6e1>

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