



AN ORDER FOR MORNING PRAISE AND PRAYER

This service, found in the UM Hymnal on page 876, is typically used by groups at dawn or as they begin their day in prayer. It can be adapted by an individual, or said by the individual while recognizing that other Christians around the world are joining you in the prayers. Pastor Nikki Raye has adapted this service to include a devotional.

CALL TO PRAISE AND PRAYER

O Lord, open our lips.

And we shall declare your praise.

(PSALM 51:15, ALT.)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING*

See For a New Day (UMH 676), Listen, Lord (UMH 677), and For Help for the Forthcoming Day (UMH 681).

For a New Day

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We give you hearty thanks for the rest of the past night
and for the gift of a new day, with its opportunities of pleasing you.
Grant that we may so pass its hours in the perfect freedom of your serv
that at eventide we may again give thanks unto you. Amen.

Eastern Orthodox Prayer

Along with praying a prayer from the hymnal, you can also take a moment to thank God for the blessings in your life. If you are praying as a family, you could each take a turn naming something you are grateful for, and close with, “For all these blessings we have names, and for all the gifts you give known and unknown, we give you thanks, O God.”

MORNING HYMN *

JUSTIFYING GRACE

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Blessed Assurance

WORDS: Fanny J. Crosby, 1873
 MUSIC: Phoebe P. Knapp, 1873

ASSURANCE
 9 10.9 9 with Refrain

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:1-12 (This Sunday's Lectionary Gospel Reading)

5:1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him.

5:2 And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

5:10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

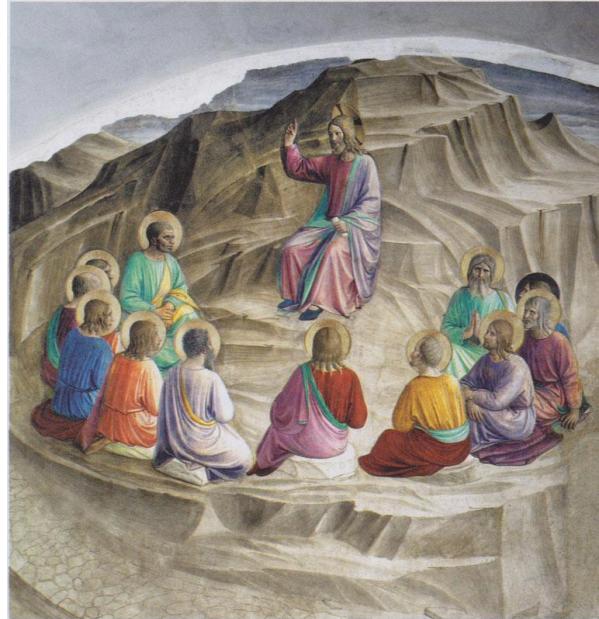
5:12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

SILENCE

Typically in morning prayer, there is time given for silent meditation on the scripture that has been read and there is no sermon or devotional. I encourage you to take a moment of silence to meditate on the passage before reading the devotional, which has been added for our purposes this week.

DEVOTIONAL

Art: Angelico, approximately 1400-1455. Sermon on the Mount, fresco found at [Museo Nazionale di San Marco](#), Florence, Italy.



The Beatitudes

Reflection by Frederick Buechner, From his book *Whistling In the Dark*

If we didn't already know but were asked to guess the kind of people Jesus would pick out for special commendation, we might be tempted to guess one sort or another of spiritual hero men and women of impeccable credentials morally, spiritually, humanly, and every which way. If so, we would be wrong. Maybe those aren't the ones he picked out because he felt they didn't need the shot in the arm his commendation would give them. Maybe they're not the ones he picked out because he didn't happen to know any. Be that as it may, it's worth noting the ones he did pick out.

Not the spiritual giants, but the "poor in spirit," as he called them, the ones who, spiritually speaking, have absolutely nothing to give and absolutely everything to receive, like the Prodigal telling his father "I am not worthy to be called thy son," only to discover for the first time all he had in having a father.

Not the champions of faith who can rejoice even in the midst of suffering, but the ones who mourn over their own suffering because they know that for the most part they've brought it down on themselves, and over the suffering of others because that's just the way it makes them feel to be in the same room with them.

Not the strong ones, but the meek ones in the sense of the gentle ones, that is, the ones not like Caspar Milquetoast but like Charlie Chaplin, the little tramp who lets the

world walk over him and yet, dapper and undaunted to the end, somehow makes the world more human in the process.

Not the ones who are righteous, but the ones who hope they will be someday and in the meantime are well aware that the distance they still have to go is even greater than the distance they've already come.

Not the winners of great victories over evil in the world, but the ones who, seeing it also in themselves every time they comb their hair in front of the bathroom mirror, are merciful when they find it in others and maybe that way win the greater victory.

Not the totally pure, but the "pure in heart," to use Jesus' phrase, the ones who may be as shopworn and clay-footed as the next one, but have somehow kept some inner freshness and innocence intact.

Not the ones who have necessarily found peace in its fullness, but the ones who, just for that reason, try to bring it about wherever and however they can peace with their neighbors and God, peace with themselves.

Jesus saved for last the ones who side with heaven even when any fool can see it's the losing side and all you get for your pains is pain. Looking into the faces of his listeners, he speaks to them directly for the first time. "Blessed are you," he says.

You can see them looking back at him. They're not what you'd call a high-class crowdpeasants and fisherfolk for the most part, on the shabby side, not all that bright. It doesn't look as if there's a hero among them. They have their jaws set. Their brows are furrowed with concentration.

They are blessed when they are worked over and cursed out on his account he tells them. It is not his hard times to come but theirs he is concerned with, speaking out of his own meekness and mercy, the purity of his own heart.

Matthew 5:1-12

~originally published in [Whistling in the Dark](#) and later in [Beyond Words](#)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Traditionally the morning prayer puts a Song of Praise in this place, like the Song of Zechariah (UMH 208, 209- Which is Luke 1:68-79) or other optional psalms and canticles. For us, I have included the Apostles Creed as a response.

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *

The following or other of litany of intercession (see another litany) may be prayed, during which any person may offer a brief prayer of intercession or petition.

*After each prayer, the leader may conclude: Lord, in your mercy, and all may respond:
Hear our prayer.*

*Or the leader may intone: Let Us Pray to the Lord (UMH 485), and all respond singing:
Lord, have mercy.*

Together, let us pray
for the people of this congregation...

for those who suffer and those in trouble...
for the concerns of this local community...
for the world, its peoples, and its leaders...
for the earth you have given to our care...
for the Church universal—its leaders, its members, and its mission...
in communion with the saints....

Circle of Concern

Victoria Armstrong, Don Butler, Regas and Kathleen Chefas, Sally Costello, Chris Durr, Sharon Eldreth, Carol & Larry Fisher, Darlene Flahive, Caleb Greene, Leslie Greene, Richard Greene, Dawn Hand, Laci Everhart Hardin, Kelly Hill, Logan Hollars, Carla Houck, Jo Ann Houck, Anthony Howell, Jayme Inman, Brenda Jolly, Micheal King Jolly, Patsy Kanagy, Joyce Kilby, Sarah Lang, Jim Mathews, Eddie Miller, Laura M., Jessica Rice Minton, Kimberly Money, Jeanie P., Mark Rawls, Josie Reeves, Libby Reeves, Judith Rodgers, Dylan Romans, Abigail Rowe, Eugene S., Edna Santana, JoAnn Scott, Don Sloan, Helen Spiegel, Nancy Thomas, Steve Turner, Mildred Wallace, Vickie Walton, Sue Wilkinson.

Serving in the Military: Daniel Ashley, Adam Barlow, SGT Kaleb Lemly-Bruce, Brody Denig, Jordan Dreyer, Casey Ellis, Brian Grisham, Dustin Minton, Eric Prange, and LT JG William Wolfberg.

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.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING *

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all. **Amen.**