AN ORDER FOR EVENING PRAISE AND PRAYER

*This service is for use by groups as they end their day in prayer, especially before or after an evening meeting.*

*The people may participate by using An Order for Evening Praise and Prayer in* UMH *878.*

*The congregation may be invited to stand for the entire service, except during the reading of Scripture and Silence, when used.*

PROCLAMATION OF THE LIGHT \*

*A large unadorned candle may be lighted and lifted in the midst of the community. The following may be sung (UMBOW 221) or spoken:*

Light and peace in Jesus Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

[SERVICE OF INCENSE \*]

*Since the fourth century of the early church, the burning of incense has served as a devotional sign of prayer, based on Psalm 141. A stick of incense may be lighted, or pieces of incense may be dropped onto a lighted piece of charcoal. During this time, the following may be read:*

I call upon you, O Lord; come quickly to me;

give ear to my voice when I call to you.

Let my prayer be counted as incense before you,

and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice. (PSALM 141:1–2)

*See also Psalm 134 (*UMH *850).*

EVENING HYMN \* *Suggested from UMH:*

682–93 Evening Hymns

941 Hymns listed under Evening Prayer

498 My Prayer Rises to Heaven

686 O Gladsome Light (traditional opening hymn for Evening Prayer)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING \*

*A prayer of thanksgiving may be said by the leader or by all together:*

*See For Protection at Night (*UMH *691) and For a Peaceful Night (*UMH *693).*

SCRIPTURE

*The following or other readings appropriate to the evening, or to the day or season of the Christian year, or to the nature of the occasion, may be used:*

Genesis 1:1 –5, 14–19 The creation

Exodus 13:21 –22 Pillar of cloud and pillar of fire

Psalm 23 (UMH 137, 754) The divine shepherd

Psalm 90 (UMH 809) God's eternity and human frailty

Psalm 121 (UMH 844) Song of praise and prayer

Romans 5:6 –11 Christ died for the ungodly.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 –10 The day of the Lord

Revelation 22:1 –5 The city of God

Matthew 25:1 –13 Parable of ten bridesmaids

SILENCE

*Silent meditation on the scripture that has been read. This may be concluded with a short prayer.*

SONG OF PRAISE \*

*The traditional evening Song of Praise is the Song of Mary (UMH 198, 199, 200, 197 [stanza 4].*

*The following psalms and canticles, or other scripture songs or hymns, may also be sung:*

Psalm 134 (*UMH* 850) Canticle of Light and Darkness (*UMH* 205)

Canticle of Hope (*UMH* 734) Canticle of Simeon (*UMH* 225)

Canticle of Covenant Faithfulness (UMH 125)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE \*

*The following or other 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...

*Or prayers of confession and words of pardon may be offered. See UMH 890–93 and 474–94.*

*Following these prayers, all may sing a response such as one of the following from UMH:*

490 Hear Us, O God 482 Lord, Have Mercy

483 Kyrie Eleison 491 Remember Me

484 Kyrie Eleison

*See also:*

God Hears Our Every Need (Hymn 183) Tino tenda Jesu (Hymn 203)

Jesus, We Are Here (Hymn 187) Señor Apiádate de Nosotros (Hymn 188)

Teach Me to Hear in Silence (Hymn 194) O Lamb of God (Hymn 201)

THE LORD'S PRAYER \* *Sung or spoken. See* UMH *270–71, 894–96.*

BLESSING \*

The grace of Jesus Christ enfold you.

Go in peace.

**Thanks be to God.**

THE PEACE \*

*Signs of peace may be exchanged, or all may depart in silence.*

**Keywords:** evening prayer, vespers, evening, incense **Copyright:** “An Order for Evening Praise and Prayer” Copyright © 1992 UMPH. Note: an additional petition (for the earth) has been added, 2013, by The General Board of Discipleship, in keeping with the Council of Bishops’ 2009 teaching document, “[God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action.”](http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/gods-renewed-creation-call-to-hope-and-action)