

## Customary for Online Compline Virginia Theological Seminary Virtual Liturgies

At present, compline is held online Mondays through Fridays at 8:30 p.m. during the academic year on Facebook Live (through the VTS Community closed group) or Zoom.

### Preparation prior to livestreaming:

- At some point during the day you are leading compline, post an announcement in the VTS Community (closed) Facebook group; direct people to the Zoom link in the comments. Use a colored background or image for visibility.
- If broadcasting on **Zoom**, log in approximately 5 minutes ahead of time; if on **Facebook**, make sure your settings and camera are ready to go live 10-15 minutes ahead of time in case there are any technological glitches.
- If you are the host on **Zoom**, make sure to create a waiting room for all who log on so that you can monitor any visitors.

### Platform Considerations

- A service can be live-streamed through most any device (laptop, smart phone, tablet or iPad). A laptop may allow you to navigate among readings/resources more easily. If you use an iPhone, the phone should be placed vertically.
- Know that you make “eye contact” by looking directly at the built-in camera on your device, not the screen (both on Zoom and on Facebook). Choose how you will alternate your visual field. “Eye contact” works much the same way it does when leading a service in a church – when you would normally look at your congregation, look at the camera. For prayers, you may wish to close your eyes or keep your eyes on what you are reading. When reading scripture or giving reflection, make eye contact as you would in the church.
- On **Zoom**, don’t neglect the monitor either, as that’s where you’ll catch people’s reactions – smiles, laughs (yawns!) – and they will more likely look at their monitor rather than at the camera.

### *Additional Zoom-specific considerations*

- Unless you have a group of more than 20 or so, use Gallery View, which allows you to see and more easily interact with all the participants.
- The more people who are attending, the more the need for participants to mute when they are not speaking (see below sections for more options on muting).
- Record the service, usually beginning after the initial conversation for privacy concerns, so that it can be uploaded and viewed later if wished.
- The individual who leads the service does not need to be the host or co-host; depending on how many attend, it may be easier to have someone else monitor the waiting room.

*Facebook-specific considerations*

- You will not be able to see the faces of participants on Facebook Live, and if a participant does not comment or react to the video, you may not know they are there.
- Follow the same suggestions above for eye contact
- Following the service, respond and react to participants' comments, prayer requests and greetings.

Considerations: Responses, Muting, Unison prayers

On **Facebook**, no one will hear the voices of other participants, so the leader should read the responses as well as speaking the officiant's parts.

On **Zoom**, based on the number of participants and personal tolerance of cacophony, the leader may make a decision as to how many voices should be fully audible during the service. For unison reading, you may request everyone to remain muted. The Lord's Prayer can be a good place for a full unison reading (see below for more). For Psalms and responsive readings, see below. Texts spoken in unison include:

Confession  
Gloria patri  
Lord's Prayer

## Order of Service

### Welcome

Compline is a more intimate, less formal liturgy (one of the daily orders, with roots in monastic, house church and at-home worship traditions). It creates a space for quiet fellowship and sometimes unexpected pastoral care before and/or after the service (and during at times, especially in the Prayers) – and this is true online just as much as it is in physical spaces, and sometimes that pastoral care and fellowship is even more important when online, especially in pandemic times. It is not necessary to create a physical space from which to live-stream but not discouraged, if you choose to incorporate a candle or quiet music ahead of the service.

During the few minutes before beginning the service (which may start a few minutes past the start time of 8:30, but should not go much later than 8:33 or so), welcome attendees (if on Facebook, you can take note of names that appear), allow a place for conversation and checking in (an 8:25 check-in can also facilitate this).

Announce the appointed Psalm and page number, if other than one of the Psalms in the rubrics (you may also wish to type this into the chat box on **Zoom** or the comments or description on **Facebook**). This is a good opportunity to announce anything unusual that is part of the evening's particular service. If you plan to rotate the reading of the Psalm rather than a call-and-response, this is a good time to explain that.

Invite people to add prayers, greetings or other thoughts to the comments (**Facebook**) or chat box (**Zoom**).

### Opening

Invite participants to a moment of silence or centering before beginning the liturgy. Don't feel awkward in silences – even online, they help create a setting for worship and contemplation.

You may wish to begin the opening sentences (“The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end”) while looking down or with eyes closed, so as not to jar the quiet of the centering time before beginning the liturgy.

On **Facebook**, speak for both the Officiant and the People in every place where there is a call and response, and read all unison passages. Be aware of how you pace these - don't rush them; be aware of places where congregational readings often include pauses.

### Confession

Leave a moment of silence after the invitation: “Let us confess our sins to God.”

On **Zoom**, you may wish to mute all participants except the officiant during the Confession, or to mute all but one voice in addition to the officiant.

### Psalm

Determine whether you will use one of the Psalms appointed for Compline (on pages 128-131 of the *Book of Common Prayer*) or one or several of the Psalms appointed for the day (a daily lectionary is found beginning on page 889 of the *Book of Common Prayer*).

Options for reading the Psalm on **Zoom**:

- The leader reads the Psalm aloud
- Leader and group read the Psalm in unison, all voices unmuted
- Responsive reading by whole- or half-verse, all voices unmuted
- Responsive reading by whole- or half-verse, with all voices muted except leader and a single responsive voice
- Rotating reading, by alphabetical first name or last name (even in Gallery view, the positions of the “Brady Bunch squares” shift so it’s not possible to rotate visually)

### Gloria

On **Zoom**, read in unison, with all unmuted or just the leader unmuted

### Scripture Reading

This is read by the leader, though you have the option of having a participant read. On **Zoom**, the leader should mute and the reader should unmute; on **Facebook**, this can only be accomplished through screen sharing or a prerecorded reading.

The leader may wish to substitute another scripture reading for one of the three listed in the Compline service in the BCP. This may be a seasonal decision, a text in response to a local, church-wide, national or worldwide concern, a text appropriate to a feast day or holiday.

If there is to be a homily or reflection that draws on or refers to a particular text (for instance, one of the texts responding to images and ideas drawn from the previous Sunday’s lectionary, as in Easter 2020), that text can be read here instead of one of the ones given.

### A hymn suitable for the evening

This may be skipped, but is also a good container for a creative, musical, meditative, interactive or homiletic element.

This may be incorporated as a sung hymn. On **Facebook**, the leader may wish to sing (or perhaps provide a piece of instrumental music) live, or play a recording during this time, which may be an opportunity for meditation or prayer.

The leader may wish to include a hymn text spoken (rather than sung) by the leader alone if on **Facebook** or **Zoom**, or by the group if on **Zoom** (see Psalm above for options).

The leader may choose a non-scripture reading – a poem or short essay that does not need to be explicitly religious, a hymn from another tradition, the life of a saint on a feast day or another text. Examples from previous compline services have included: poetry by Mary Oliver, John O'Donohue, slats, Emily Dickinson, William Stafford and Jan Richardson; texts by Hildegard von Bingen and St. Ephrem; a hymn from an old Baptist Bible with personal/family connections to the leader. After compline is over, on **Facebook** in particular you may wish to post a link to the reading (if it can be found online) or to the author, and/or a photo of the book cover depending on its source.

The leader may also wish to give a reflection or short homily in this space, and this can be prose or poetry. See Reflection Notes at the end of this customary for instructions for the Easter 2020 season. Recommended length: 3 to 5 minutes (rule of measurement: one page, Times New Roman 12 point double spaced, is approximately two minutes when read aloud).

Allow a period of silence after the meditation, whatever length the leader prefers – don't feel the need to push through or cut it short. Silence even and especially in online services helps pace and shape the pieces of the service, allows for transitions and gives participants time to breathe, listen and reflect.

### Responses

If on **Facebook**, the leader should read both parts. On **Zoom**, see options for Psalm above.

### The Lord's Prayer

On **Facebook**, this is read by the leader.

On **Zoom**, this may be read aloud by all participants unmuted if the leader chooses – there will be delays and it will not be perfect, but that can often be rather beautiful and appropriate in this prayer that is so personal and universal in so many traditions – a bit like the practice of speaking the Lord's Prayer “in the language of your heart” in a multilingual/multiethnic gathering or congregation.

## Responses

See above.

## Collects

There are a number of options here. The leader may choose two or three of the collects for Compline, or pull from the prayers and collects found on pages 814-841 in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The leader is also welcomed to use original collects in this space or collects from other sources, churches, writers. See also Collects at the end of this document for additional options.

The “amen” should be spoken aloud by all participants, and can be muted or unmuted on **Zoom**.

## Silence or free intercessions

The daily intercessions for Virginia Theological Seminary are found on Brightspace in the Virtual Chapel. These should be read by the leader, giving a space of silence after the thanksgivings and throughout the intercessions.

On **Facebook**, encourage participants (at the beginning of the service, though it may be mentioned at the beginning of the prayers) to add their own thanksgivings, petitions and intercessions in the comments.

The end of the invitation to prayer may be phrased “aloud, in silence, or in this congregation gathered here online” or “in the comments below” or some variant.

On **Zoom**, encourage participants (at the beginning of the service, though it may be mentioned at the beginning of the prayers) to add their own thanksgivings, petitions and intercessions aloud or in the chat box (with similar language as above in the invitation to prayer).

At the close of the daily intercessions, the leader is free to add a closing collect, and may or may not conclude with an Amen.

## Song of Simeon and Antiphon

This text is spoken aloud by all. On **Zoom**, the leader can choose to mute or unmute all, or have only the leader and a second voice be unmuted. Similar to the Lord’s Prayer, this is often a good place to have everyone unmuted, though it can sound “messy.”

If the leader chooses to incorporate an additional short prayer or collect, it may be included after the second antiphon.

Blessing and dismissal

On **Zoom**, ideally unmute everyone so that the last response and Amen can be shared.

The leader may wish to substitute another blessing for the one in the BCP compline.

On **Zoom**, be ready to leave a little extra time for conversation if you sense that people would like to stay and talk – also be open in case one person would like to remain longer and talk one-on-one. If there's a sense that no one wants to hang up first but the evening is moving on, a warm good night and ending the session on the leader's end helps alleviate that. On **Zoom** or on **Facebook**, feel free to use this space (after taking a breath) to invite people to the next service, or announce any upcoming changes in service platforms or schedule, to wish folks a good night or weekend. It is another space for a little bit of kindness.

*Customary created Easter 2020.*

*Cara Ellen Modisett*

## Reflection Notes for Easter 2020

Each week, two images/words have been drawn from the Sunday lectionary, with an invitation for a reflection based on each word during the week following. Reflections may reference that particular Sunday's lectionary but that is not required. These reflections will fall in the Hymn rubric of the compline service, and the reflector would also lead the service.

Reflections should be very short – around three to four minutes. A good rule of measurement for that is that one typed page, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point, is approximately 2 minutes of spoken word.

### **EASTER WEEK**

Dawning (Early service Gospel)

Dance (Primary service 1st Reading)

### **EASTER II**

Peace (Gospel)

Always (1st Lesson)

### **EASTER III**

Promise (1st Lesson)

Hearts (Gospel)

### **EASTER IV**

Wonders (1st Lesson)

Dwell (Psalm)

### **EASTER V**

Stronghold (Psalm)

Ask (Gospel)

### **EASTER VI**

World (1st Lesson)

Bless (Psalm)

### **EASTER VII**

Restore (1st Lesson)

Ancient (Psalm)

### **PENTECOST**

Sing (Psalm)

Water (Gospel, second option)

## Additional Collects for the Easter Season

### **Easter II**

Peace

John 20.19-31

God of peace, your love stretches across politics, ideology, conflict and bureaucracy. Help us not only to find peace within ourselves but to seek and build it in the communities we touch. Inspire kindness when we are angry, patience when we are frustrated, love when we meet strangers, so that your peace might heal our world. In the name of your son Jesus Christ, amen.

Always

*Acts 2.14a, 22-32*

Creator of the morning, you are always with us, even when the dark seems endless. Your son's Resurrection was not just one morning, two thousand years ago, but every morning of every day. We give you thanks for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Help us to live into the promise of that new life and light. In his name we pray, amen.

### **Easter III**

Promise

*Acts 2.14a, 36-41*

God of faithfulness, you remind us of your goodness in the rebirth of spring, the bright sun, blue sky and flowering blooms that echo Christ's resurrection in glorious colors. We live in your promise to be with us always, in the life of your son on earth and in the promise of his coming again in glory. Help us remember that we carry forward his incarnation, we honor the gift of your grace by continuing your work in the world as Christ's hands and feet, that we may do good and bring your love to all who dwell in the winter of grief and need. In the name of your incarnate son, Jesus Christ, amen.

Hearts

*Luke 24.13-35*

Heavenly Father, you have created this world and its people in all our diversity of voices, gifts, opinions, dreams, griefs and joys. Speak peace to our hearts; remind us that in that beautiful diversity we are made in your profound image, and that each person we meet is loved by you. Speak love to our hearts so that conflicts may cease and divisions heal, that this world might be a place for all to find safety and communion with you. In the name of Christ, amen.

## **Easter IV**

Wonders

*Acts 2.42-47*

God of the universe, you created the galaxies spinning in space and the smallest miraculous mouse. Your design brings beauty into being, and inspires our minds to discover your wonders through science and philosophy and exploration. Help us be good stewards of your earth, let us find the peace of your heavens and come to you always in awe, thankfulness and love. In the name of your son Jesus Christ, amen.

Dwell

*Psalms 23*

God of love, you are with us wherever we are, in isolation, in the comfort of home, in the strangeness of a shelter, in the coldness of a hospital room. You are with us whomever we are, in the congregation of our church, in the anonymous city streets, in the virtual world that is hard to trust, at the border facing strangers who need our help. As you are with us, let us be with each other, affirming, compassionate, present, loving. In the name of your son Jesus Christ, with whom we will one day dwell with in you forever, amen.

## **Easter V**

Stronghold

*Psalms 31.1-5, 15-16*

God of refuge, you are our stronghold in the midst of fear, our comfort in days of grief. Help us to find strength in you always, and hope in the resurrection of your son, who overcame death and lives again, in whom we are born again to joy and healing and communion with you. Help us carry that strength and joy and healing to others, so that we may reconcile your children to one another and to you. In the name of your risen son Jesus Christ, amen.

Ask

*John 14.1-14*

Creator God, your glory is beyond our comprehension and our vision. We forget that you are present not only in the vast beauty of your universe, but also in the quiet of our hearts. You know our hopes and our griefs before we ask, you know us before we know ourselves. Be with us in glory and in quiet, and let us never forget that you are no further away than our breath. In Christ's name we pray, amen.