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RLN exists to explore issues at the intersections of faith and life. In doing so we solicit and publish a range of opinions, not all of which reflect the official positions of the Diocese.

We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2, and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work, and serve God the Creator here.

RLN welcomes story ideas, news items, and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please email the editor.

Cover: [Alonso Reyes](#)

Length of Days

Photo: [Klavs Kruminsz](#)

“My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you.”¹

While there is often an air of busyness and stress that can surround our lives, what this passage always reminds me of is that it is both the quantity and the quality of our lives which makes us who we are. Will we make room for God? Will we step outside of our comfort zones for the sake of helping others? What will the fruits of our prayers and actions be?

It is my hope that we remember the commandments and teachings of God and continue to explore their meanings as we live out our lives. It is my hope that the grace and mercy of God will always be the path on which we walk towards righteousness. And it is my hope that in each and every day that our Lord has given us, we may spend them seeking to better our minds, bodies, and souls — that we may grow in all ways as disciples of Christ.

To begin this issue, I got a chance to sit down and chat with our new Bishop-Elect, Rev. Naboth Manzongo. In this interview, he shares his interests and hobbies, information about his prayer life and ministry, and some of the lessons he has learned throughout his life.

Then, on behalf of Alongside Hope (formerly PWRDF), Kaitlyn Duthie-Kannikkatt writes on the Grow Hope campaign. She tells us about what it is, how it works, how Manitobans are helping those all the way in Marsabit

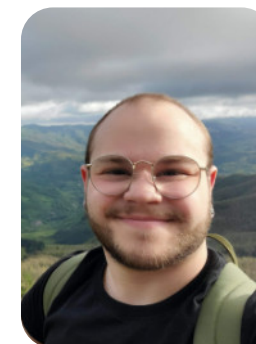
County, Kenya, and what each of us can do to support the project.

Following this, Rev. Theo Robinson says goodbye to the Diocese of Rupert's Land as he moves to B.C. at the end of the summer. Looking back, he reflects on his faith journey and offers some advice for those who may be wondering what the point of going to church is.

Lastly, Rev. Andrew Rampton looks at how the patterns of daily prayer reflect the rhythms of our entire lives, not just our individual days. He does this by looking at how morning prayer reflects new life, midday prayer reflects the energy of midlife, evening prayer reflects the wisdom of age, and night prayer reflects the preparations for our death.

As this season of Rupert's Land News comes to an end, I wish to extend my sincerest thanks to all of those who have helped to contribute to the magazine, and to all you who have taken the time to read it. I hope you are looking forward to the year ahead as much as I am!

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.”²



CINNA BARAN

Editor of Rupert's Land News

¹ Proverbs 3:1-2

² 2 Corinthians 13:13

Looking Backward with Gratitude and Forward with Fortitude

An Interview with Bishop-Elect
Rev. Naboth Manzongo



Photo: [Rurendo Petros](#)

RUPERT'S LAND NEWS: What do you like to do in your free time?

REV. NABOTH MANZONGO: I spend time with my wife, Thelma, and my three children, Emily (11), Ngoni (7), and Amy (9 months). I love gardening. I enjoy working in the soil, growing my own food, because that's how I was raised. I enjoy walks, soccer, and theatre. And I like long drives as well. I kind of think through things on those long drives, especially when I'm alone. I can talk to myself, and sometimes sermons come through.

RLN: What is your favourite book in the Bible and why?

NM: It is difficult to really choose one over the other. It just depends on the situation. I think with what has happened in my life, I lean more on Paul's letters to Timothy. As a young man in ministry I really needed to hear the instructions of a mentor to a mentee. I was ordained to the priesthood when I was young. So, I needed to hear those words and those instructions to keep the fire burning, to fan the flames.



Photo: [Steven Weeks](#)

RLN: Wow, so you must have known early on that you wanted to enter the priesthood. Tell me more about that.

NM: I believe that my calling came when I was in grade 9. So yes, from an early age I knew that I wanted to be a priest. The nuns at the Convent of the Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary (CBLM) and the Priest in Charge, Rev. Clifford Dzavo (MHSRIEP) talked me into it and continued supporting me throughout the journey.

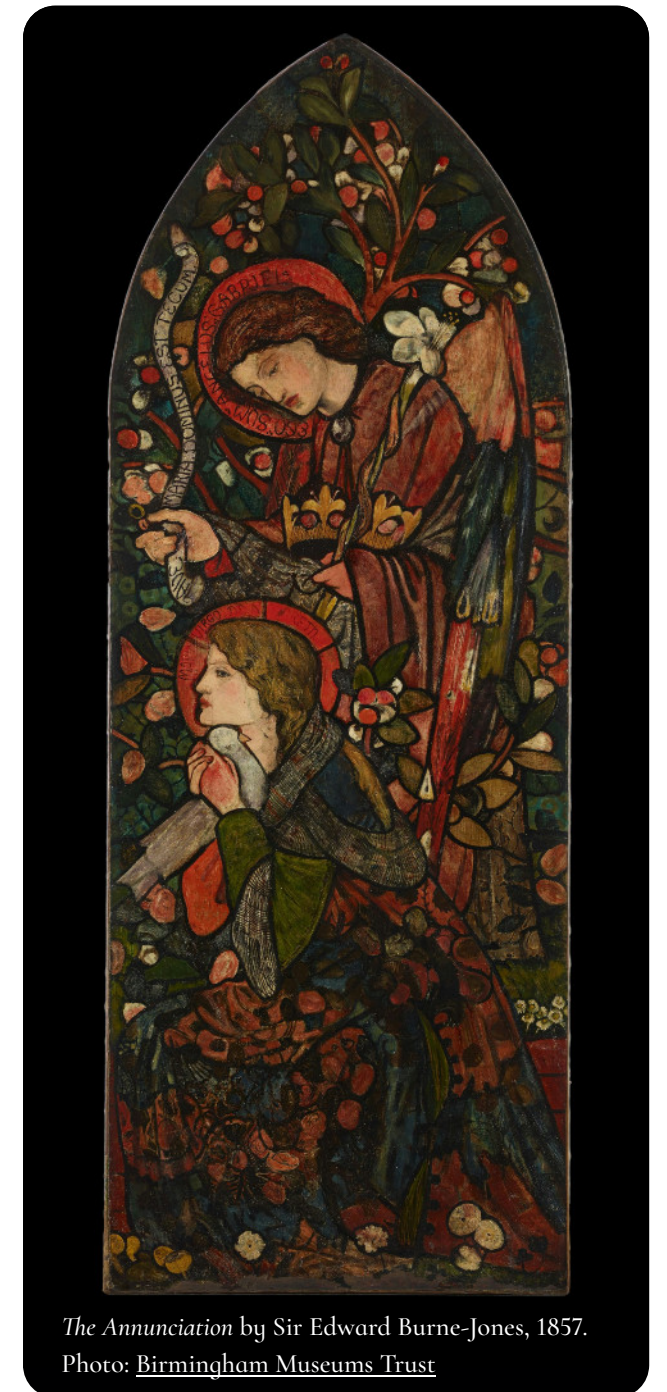
RLN: What made you feel called to ordained ministry?

NM: I became an altar server when I was in grade 4. I was brought up in a mission school of the Anglican Church. The life of doing the offices i.e. Morning Prayer, the Angelus at noon, Evensong, and Compline at the end of the day was normal. When I was in grade 9, that's when I became the head server for the whole mission. At first, I thought I wanted to be a lawyer, but I would say that it was in grade 9 when I felt the call to the priesthood. The Rev. Clifford Dzavo got me more involved by training me as a lay reader. He trained me on how to read scripture and construct a sermon. In his absence he would ask me to officiate at Morning Prayer and preach to fellow students. So, by grade 10, it was now clear that this was what was happening. When I graduated high school the bishop knew me, and everyone in the diocese knew that there was a guy from one of the mission schools who was entering seminary.

RLN: How has your prayer life changed and developed over time?

NM: I had a rule of life, without knowing that I had a rule of life, because I was brought up in a mission. In the mission, there is this rhythm of doing the offices — a Morning Prayer, Eucharist, Midday Prayer, Evensong, and Compline. So, you see how I had a rule of life without knowing it was a rule of life. Moving into seminary it was the same thing with weekends assigned to assisting clergy in the parishes.

So, yeah, my life was very structured and has been informed with all these things — the offices, the structure, the reasoning. But for myself, I understand life and God more in retrospect. I look back with gratitude and I'm like, "God, I thank You, because whatever I've gone through, it is because You are moving me from one place to the other." So, I've learned to live looking back with gratitude, but at the same time, I look forward with fortitude to say that whatever comes, I have been able to stand because I don't know what the trials and tribulations I face will be. But, one day, I will



The Annunciation by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, 1857.
Photo: [Birmingham Museums Trust](#)

look back and say "Wow, I didn't know why God had put these things in my way." So, that has been my life, all those ups and downs. Many times, I look back, especially at the downs, and say "Oh, God, You had a message."

I can't say that all has been smooth. I remember that after being ordained I neglected the rule of life. I would do the offices less and I would always think I was busy and didn't have time to include the office. In retrospect I think that I

was just a young man reacting to the newly found freedom and autonomy where no one is monitoring your rule of life. It was only when I sought spiritual direction from my mentor after a phase of burnout that he asked me about my rule of life. It was only then that I realized that the whole structure had given balance and rhythm to my life. I also realized that I had grown up being shielded from many things. The rule of life and community shielded me from many things, and I think that's why I am who I am today, because people were there looking out for me. So, I think that my community and also that attitude of looking back with gratitude and forward with fortitude helped me to pray faithfully.

RLN: When and where would you say you feel closest to God?

NM: When I am in the valley, that is when I feel closest to God. Because when you are in the valley, in the downs of life, God has a way of talking to you. Sometimes in that valley of life, I feel as if God is saying, "I'm bringing you here for a lesson so that you can go up encouraged, you can

go up more strengthened." I have understood that to say that life is not that consistent. An example is the machine in hospitals, the cardiac monitor (ECG), that shows the ups and downs. When the line becomes straight, that means the person is dead. But, if it is up and down, you know that there is life. So, when I get my downs, I get to understand God better and I'm closer to Him. I know that I am being brought down in order for Him to bring me up. I'm being brought down for instruction so that I may listen. That way, when I go up, I may be able to do that which I have been instructed to do. There is resurrection in that. Even that is why I enjoy my garden, because I know that the only way to live is to die first. The seed must rot and die in the ground in order to germinate.

RLN: What are some books that have been very influential in your life?

NM: I like (auto)biographies. My first autobiography was Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* which I read when I was in grade 8. I also read Desmond Mpilo Tutu's *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*. The



Photo: [LoboStudio Hamburg](#)



Photo: [Paul Zoetemeijer](#)

"Ubuntu" philosophy from Desmond Tutu also resonates with me. For him, "No man is an island, but it takes a village to raise a child." I don't understand myself as an island or an individual. I understand myself collectively with the village. So that gives me grounding. I also enjoy books that have to do with liberation. Most of the writers in Africa who write about liberation make no disconnect between liberation and the land. So even when I read about indigenous issues here, I make that connection that there is no liberation without the land. When you are oppressed, you are landless. But, when you are liberated, you have land; you have somewhere to stand and a means of production. What inspires me are the values that people in the biographies hold. For me, what inspires is not how great these people have become but the challenges they faced and the bravery they exhibited.

RLN: Where do you find hope?

NM: My hope is in Christ. The "sure hope of the Resurrection." If after the horrible event of Good Friday, when even the physical nature seemed to mourn, and darkness covered the earth — if after that you see the glorious Resurrection, what can ever be worse than that moment? And what can ever again make you doubt that if God be for us, who can be against us? If that has happened, what can ever again separate us from the love of God? Desmond Tutu believed that evil, death, hate and injustice will never have the last word. If Christ conquered death, what else worse can make us hopeless? We have hope in Christ and we are prisoners of hope.

Growing Hope: Here & in Marsabit County, Kenya

KAITLYN DUTHIE-KANNIKKATT



Photo: Rev. Gabriel Kwenga

The Trump administration's policy direction since taking office earlier this year has been concerning for many reasons. Among the most concerning and immediately impactful have been their sweeping cuts to foreign aid which have left international development organizations and the partners they support suddenly without sufficient funding to meet their basic needs. At a time when countries of the Global South are already struggling immensely with adapting to climate change, recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and coping with economic inequality, they are now left to deal with the added burden of anticipated aid dollars for their life-saving work suddenly not arriving in their bank accounts.

Alongside Hope (formerly PWRDF) has been playing a critical role in helping to support partners who are feeling the impact of these devastating cuts. Since 1958, Alongside Hope has been the Anglican Church in Canada's primary mechanism for channeling the generosity of our parish communities into effective support for global partners carrying out critical development and relief efforts on the ground, all over the world. In this time of great uncertainty for our brothers and sisters in the global church community, it is important that we as Anglicans step up our solidarity efforts and our support for Alongside Hope.

Anglican Grow Hope Campaign: Supporting pastoralist communities in Kenya

Raising money for our global partners is a great way to channel our fear and anger at the state of the world into hopeful and loving action. In the Diocese of Rupert's Land, we invite you to participate in the Anglican Grow Hope Campaign. We are currently fundraising in support of a project that will build on our partners' successes in improving food security and increasing resilience among drought-affected pastoralist people in Marsabit County, Kenya. Marsabit County is recovering from the worst drought in 40 years. During the past four years, many of the men in the community have had to migrate with their herds in search of water and pastures, often leaving women and children vulnerable to food insecurity and gender-based violence.

To overcome these challenges, our Alongside Hope partner in Kenya, Church World Service, supports farming households by providing agricultural inputs, securing water sources, and promoting traditional income generating activities. Projects are funded on a cost-sharing basis so that participants are also investors, increasing the project's sustainability. Church World Service has also helped community members establish Village Saving and Loan Associations, allowing them to save money together and enhance everyone's access to funds to improve their livelihoods. With these supports, new crops are being grown, food security has improved, and women report a feeling of empowerment and enhanced self-sufficiency. The project has created a sense of optimism and hope for the future.

WOMEN OF MARSABIT COUNTY HAVE INCREASED FOOD SECURITY FOR THEIR FAMILIES WITH SUPPORT FROM OUR PARTNER CHURCH WORLD SERVICE.



Photo: Carolyn Cummins, Alongside Hope

Manitoban farmers help grow fundraised dollars

For many years, the Anglican Grow Hope Campaign has been fortunate to have the support of Manitoban farmers who can multiply our fundraising efforts. Farmers direct the proceeds from a portion of their harvest to the campaign. Our parish fundraising efforts cover the cost of farm inputs (approximately \$300 per acre), and farmers do all the work to grow, harvest, and sell the crop in support of Alongside Hope. These proceeds are then matched 4:1 by Global Affairs Canada, meaning every dollar you fundraise grows twice!

For the third year in a row, we have partnered with Time to Grow Farms, operated by Fred and Christine Wiebe and family. Time to Grow Farms is located between Oak Bluff and Starbuck. Fred and Christine both grew up on farms in Manitoba and have farmed together for the past 31 years. Two of their sons, Austin and Cooper, have both graduated from the University of Manitoba in Agriculture Studies, and are actively farming alongside Fred.

In 2024, the \$18,000 raised by Rupert's Land parishes enabled the Wiebe family to donate \$35,000 from their crop, which was further matched by Global Affairs Canada. We are so grateful for their support — it is a wonderful example of farmers around the world showing solidarity with one another.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT,
WIEBE FAMILY!



Photo: Carolyn Cummins, Alongside Hope



Photo: Carolyn Cummins, Alongside Hope

How you and your parish can help

Parishes and individuals are invited to show solidarity with our global partners and participate in fundraising for the Anglican Grow Hope campaign this year.

1. Make a donation to the Diocese of Rupert's Land with "Anglican Grow Hope" in the memo line. Both churches and individual parishioners can make donations. Individual donations made directly to the Diocese will receive a tax receipt from the Diocese.
2. Hold a fund-raising event and send the proceeds to the Diocese of Rupert's Land with "Anglican Grow Hope" in the memo line. Get creative! This can even be an opportunity to build relationships with other parishes with a co-hosted event.

Please note that funds raised for Anglican Grow Hope must be directed to the Diocese of Rupert's Land separately from other Alongside Hope donations.

When your parish becomes a Grow Hope partner, you are helping feed hungry people, growing hope among the world's most vulnerable. Please show your solidarity with farmers in Kenya and consider joining our Anglican Grow Hope 2025 initiative. We will keep you informed of progress throughout the growing season. Let us continue to *Grow Hope* even in these challenging times!



**KAITLYN
DUTHIE-KANNIKKATT**

Kaitlyn attends St. Matthew's Anglican Church, supports Alongside Hope (formerly PWRDF), and supports the Diocesan Grow Hope committee, convened by Colin Dorrian of St. Peter's Anglican Church.



So Long, Farewell

REVEREND THEO ROBINSON

Photo: [Veronica Dudarev](#)

It is an interesting time in both my life and in the life of the Diocese right now. At the time I am writing this story, we are in the process of electing a new bishop, and I am 8 weeks from moving from Winnipeg, a place I was born and raised, to North Cowichan, BC to begin a new step on my pastoral journey.

It's hard to imagine that I began my relationship with the Diocese of Rupert's Land over 17 years ago. For those of you in the know, I'm looking at you St. George's Transcona, that means my oldest child is almost 17 years old. Where on earth did the time go? A lot has changed for me over all that time, and being part of this diocese has been an important piece of my growth as a person and as a priest.

My journey began with a chance meeting of a priest in training — a friend of a friend. I had been struggling with my faith for years and decided on a whim to attend this priest's church. Why? Because I had never heard of women being priests before, let alone one who rode a motorcycle, and so I was immediately intrigued. I think the most appealing part, right from the beginning, was that they allowed me to return to the church slowly, at the pace that worked for me. That is a lesson that I carry in my heart and pass on to my parishes. While it is important to have people come in the door, it is just as important to let them grow at their own pace and not to try and get them to join vestry, or any other committee, on their first day.

What I received at St. George's Transcona was also provided to me through the Diocese of Rupert's Land — a chance to grow as a person of faith, as a person of the collar, and as a person on the whole. I acknowledge that this diocese still has a long way to go, but I honestly feel as if it has grown

alongside of me. Whenever I tell my story of coming out as transgender to Bishop Don, people are pleasantly surprised to hear that, rather than barriers, he extended me his full support. Most importantly, he allowed me to continue my pursuit of becoming an Anglican priest.



Photo: Cass Smith

While people have told me of different experiences in various dioceses, the Diocese of Rupert's Land has accepted me for who I am. At least, those who don't have kept quiet about it. I have been allowed to experience all levels of diocesan

government right from a lay member of diocesan council up to a clerical representative at General Synod. I have helped organize events, facilitate workshops, and head committees. I have learned so much from the people, lay and clergy, in this diocese, and I have gained plenty of experience. The Diocese of Rupert's Land has helped to shape me into the person I am today.

While I want to express my gratitude and pen a farewell letter to everyone I've connected with through the diocese, I also have a piece of advice to offer regarding a common question nowadays: why should I go to church? Well, if I hadn't gone to church 17 years ago, where would I be today? Stepping through the doors of St George's Transcona all those years ago changed who I was; it changed the direction of my life. I don't know if I would have regained my faith if that wonderful church hadn't opened its doors to me. I truly think if that chance meeting hadn't happened, I never would have rekindled my relationship with God, and I certainly would never have heard the call to spread the Gospel to others, with or without the collar.

Going to church is like going to the gym. You go to the gym to work out your body, get yourself into shape, and increase your bodily health. Going to church is a workout for your spirit, a place to get it into shape and increase your spiritual health. You go to church to reconnect with God and renew your relationship with Jesus. We falter throughout our lives, losing our way, let our faith slip. We are only human after all. But going to church is how we reset our mind, our soul, and our spirit. Through the prayers, liturgy, ritual, and hymns, we can return to God and strengthen our faith. Church is also where you go to find a community of people who can enrich your spiritual life. It is a place full of people wanting to talk about Jesus and wanting to experience a life of faith together.

Is that why I went to church 17 years ago? Not consciously, but something inside pulled me to church. I stayed because I found what I didn't know I was looking for — spiritual peace. I'm still here because I want to share what I found with others.

So, as I pack my life up to head west, I have nothing but fondness and love for the people who helped me start my journey, the people who supported me along the way, and a diocese that gave me ample opportunity to flourish.

So long. Farewell. Goodbye. Until we meet again.



Photo: Sies Kranen



REVEREND THEO ROBINSON

The Reverend Theo Robinson is an Anglican priest serving as a Pastor in the Interlake Regional Shared Ministry with the Lutheran Church of the MNO Synod, and is in the process of transferring to St.

Peter, Quamichan in the Diocese of Islands & Inlets. He is an openly transgender priest who wants to be a visible example that God loves all of creation. You can follow his blog at tjrobinson.blogspot.com or look him up on Facebook ([@revtheorobinson](https://www.facebook.com/revtheorobinson)) & Instagram ([@theconversepriest](https://www.instagram.com/theconversepriest)).

Lives of Ceaseless Praise

ANDREW RAMPTON

Introduction

It doesn't take long in the Anglican tradition before one hears or reads some version of the teaching, "The way we pray shapes the way we believe." From the very early days of our faith, Christians have maintained the idea that prayer, reading the Bible, and returning to God throughout the day are good and important practices. These practices have taken different shapes over history, changing as seemed to be best in various times and places, but the foundational desire for lives shaped by prayer has remained the same.

Some of this may be the spiritual version of eating our vegetables. Prayer, Scripture study, and setting aside time to focus on God alone are good for us, so we ought to do them. Even, perhaps especially, when we don't love them, or when we feel like we haven't enough time for them. But, just like the development of any other beneficial habit, when we're consistent with our prayer practices, we see the benefits. We can feel ourselves being shaped by them over time, with prayer changing the way we see ourselves and our neighbours, and the continuous relationship with Scripture becoming part of how we move and speak in the world.

To help build a habit of praying consistently, the Anglican tradition has historically offered a fourfold pattern of prayer each day. Two times of prayer, at midday and at night before going to sleep, that are brief and simple, with very little that changes from day to day or season to season. These are staggered with two other times of prayer, in the morning and in the evening, that are longer and a little more complicated. These times of prayer often include canticles (songs from the Bible), prayers, and other aspects that change with the days of the week or the seasons.

In addition to building a daily habit of prayer, regularly reading Scripture, praying through the psalms, and keeping our hearts and minds focused on God, these times of prayer are also meant to help us reflect on our whole lives. If we



The Visitation by the master of the calendar of the hours of Aurillac, France, 1430-1440.

imagine a single day as representing a whole human life, we can see how these times of prayer align with important stages of life: Morning Prayer and the gift of new life; Midday Prayer and the energy of midlife; Evening Prayer and the wisdom of age; finally, Night Prayer and preparing for our death. With this relationship in mind as we pray, we not only shape our current day and practices, but prepare ourselves for the next stage of life, reflect on our past, and always seek to align our living with the will of God.

Lastly, it is important to note that these patterns of prayer developed in cultures that were primarily agrarian and before the incredible technologies of the last 200 years. Following the times of day and the natural seasons made great sense because it was how most lives were structured. As this rhythm of prayer was taking shape, 24-hour factories with staggered shifts and indoor lighting at the flip of a switch were not even glimmers in the collective imagination. Some of the associations with certain prayers at times of day may make less immediate sense to us now. Even so, there is value in learning and contemplating them as a connection to this centuries-old pattern that has sustained and formed our ancestors in the faith for so long.

Morning Prayer and New Birth

Each day begins with prayers of thanksgiving to God. Thanks for our safe arrival at the beginning of a new day, prayerful acknowledgement of the glory of God who makes all things possible, from the beauty of the rising sun to the details of our own lives, and all of our hopes for the day before us. Just as childbirth is risky, we offer thanks and recognize that every day we are given to live is a gift.

Traditionally, Morning Prayer holds the largest portion of Bible reading in these times of prayer. There are usually two or more psalms and two other passages of Scripture to be read. These are paired with canticles, so by the time Morning Prayer is finished, we have heard a handful of psalms and four or more portions of the Bible. The readings assigned to Morning Prayer are also often the longest of the day. Just as children at the beginning of life need plenty of care and instruction in how to survive and thrive in this world, we begin each day with an abundance of God's Word, filling us with inspiration, teaching, and wisdom to carry us through the day ahead.

The traditional readings and prayers at Morning Prayer also tend to focus on the hopes for the day ahead, the anticipated needs, and many reminders of the glory of God made known throughout creation. These are paired with prophetic canticles like The Song of Zechariah, looking forward to what will be accomplished for God's people.



Photo: [Michael Held](#)



Photo: [Spiros Mousouris](#)

Midday Prayer and the Energy of Midlife

The middle of the day is similar to the middle of our lives. We are still being formed, still learning, still growing. There is much that yet lies ahead of us, but we are also full of energy and capability. Part of the plan has been revealed to us, and we are in the middle of pursuing it with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

It is also the time of day when the sun shines at its brightest and hottest. We can easily wear ourselves out if we try to do too much. And so, there is a time of rest appointed where we can stop working, pray, reflect, plan ahead, and reconnect with God and our community before taking up the rest of the day's work.

The Bible readings appointed for Midday Prayer are usually very short, sometimes just one or two verses. They are also often the same readings every day, paired with a few short prayers about gratitude for the time of rest and refreshment, the work that has been accomplished, and the needs of the afternoon. This time of prayer is intentionally short and repetitive, allowing it to be easily memorized. This means Midday Prayer can be said without a prayerbook or Bible at a desk, in a field, or anywhere else that a quiet few minutes can be found.

Evening Prayer and the Wisdom of Age

The timing of Evening Prayer is a bit complicated for Canadians. It is traditionally said around sundown and often opens with prayers of thanksgiving for God's gift of light as the household candles are lit or, in 2025, the lights are turned on. Of course, in our Canadian summer months, sundown can be a long time in coming, so Evening Prayer is often said in the late afternoon or early evening, regardless of where the sun is in the sky.

Evening Prayer includes prayers of thanksgiving for the blessings of the day past, for a time of evening rest before sleep, and offers time to reflect on what has been learned. What was of God today? What was not of God? What were the day's blessings? Like Morning Prayer, there are usually a handful of psalms to read and at least one passage from the Bible, along with a canticle. Depending on the version of Evening Prayer, there may be more readings and canticles. This time of prayer may also include changing elements that reflect aspects of the week or season.

The traditional canticle for Evening Prayer is Mary's Song. In the same way that Morning Prayer's canticles focus on prophecy for what will be done, Mary's Song is full of statements about what God has done, looking back on events past and reflecting on their consequences. With this reflective attitude, drawing wisdom out of the experiences of the day, Evening Prayer aligns with age beyond midlife. A time of less strenuous physical activity, but no shortage of thoughtful prayer and learning to share.



Photo: [Agto Nugroho](#)

Night Prayer and Preparing to Die

Finally, just before turning in to sleep for the night, there is Night Prayer. This time of prayer is still often referred to by its Latin name, Compline. Like Midday Prayer, this time of prayer is shorter and stays the same throughout the days and seasons. It, too, can be memorized and said no matter where one lays one's head that evening. (In my experience, Night Prayer is often said lying in bed, before drifting off to sleep.)

Night prayer focuses on petitions for safety through the night and acknowledges that tomorrow is not guaranteed. Many of the prayers about the end of day and a time of sleep are similar to the prayers we hear at funerals and this is no accident. Having come to the end of the day, our prayers and reflections turn to thoughts of the end of life. In preparation for this, we rehearse the steps of our own funerals before we sleep. Even the familiar, single-prayer version of Night Prayer taught to many children since the 1700s, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my Soul to keep; If I should die before I 'wake, I pray the Lord my Soul to take," contains a reminder that each night might be our last. And, if it is to be so, we pray for a good death.

The language we use around the end of the day and sleep are similar to those we use when talking about death. Falling darkness and the onset of night are often euphemisms for the end of life. Eyes close, breathing slows down, the world seems to drift away as the sleeper travels elsewhere, whether in dreams or away from this life entirely.

This is, perhaps, the most difficult daily time of prayer to reconcile with our contemporary culture. We are reminded, each night, that we will, someday, die. That we should be prepared for this and that we should pray, not to avoid death, but that, when it comes, it is a good death. We Christians do not fear death because its power has been stripped away since we share in the eternal life of Christ's resurrection. Just as each night is not the end of time, but a passage to the next day, so, too, do we live in the sure and certain hope that death is not the end, but a passage to the next life.

Photo: [David Schultz](#)



Photo: Cinna Baran

The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple of
Jerusalem by the master of the calendar of
the hours of Aurillac, France, 1430-1440.

Conclusion

A pattern of regular times of prayer throughout the day can feel like an interruption in a world that demands we constantly be producing. Prayer does not create anything that can be sold or traded. As Christians, we know that our true worth is not in what we produce, but in who we are: beloved people made in the image and likeness of God.

A pattern of daily prayer calls us to put down whatever is occupying us and return to the Bible, prayer, and place our focus on God. This is not accidental. As Holy Scripture reminds us, we are to “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit.” Prayer, thanksgiving, and attendance to the Spirit’s moving in our lives is meant to be our first priority.

It is the work of our mortal lives that is the interruption to our prayer, not the other way round. The practice of regularly returning to God in prayer reminds us that we were made for more than the grind, or the hustle. Daily

prayer shapes us, not only day by day, but over our entire lives. We begin to show in our words and actions the fruit of years spent with Holy Scripture, of listening to God in prayer, and reflecting with intention on our lives. The way we pray can shape not only the way we believe, but the ways in which we live and move and have our being in this world.



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