

# Advent Sunday Vespers Dec. 2, 9, 16~4:30 pm

Prayer during these dark days of abuse, scandal, loss, & doubt...

**O**ur day is framed by the rising and the setting of the sun. Sunrise and sunset, in many ways, define our life and mark our years. At sunset the “days allotted span draws to a close.” Through the ages Christians have known that moment as prayer, looking beyond the darkness to the Light of the risen One, whom no darkness can overcome.

Vespers gives shape to our praise and thanks to God marking the allotted span of our days.

Evening prayer is a time to remember to see in the darkness of our world, our church and our own life, the light of the world, Jesus Christ, the one for whom we wait.

Prayer together at days end is a sacrifice of praise for the life we have and the life we can share.

Prayer at sunset is a time to “hand over the burdens of the day” praying for pardon, peace and protection, trusting in the mercy of God and the gift of forgiveness. These days it is a prayer for and with our Church beset by scandal. “Let our prayers rise like incense,” we sing, “and our hands like an evening offering.” So we offer incense, a sign of the burdens we bring, consumed by the love of a merciful God surrounding us with the sweet odor of healing love. We offer our open hands to serve, embrace, hold and give.

This prayer in the closing hours of the day is a gathering of faithful believers, singing the Psalms, the prayers of Jesus; making an offering of incense for our own sins, the sins of the church and the sins of the world; listening to God’s word, singing together the great Gospel Canticle of Mary, Mother of the Lord; praying for the world; and giving voice again to The Lord’s Prayer.

These days of Advent expectation, and the struggles and burdens of these times, beckon us, with the whole Church, to end the Lord’s Day with thanksgiving, repentance, persistent prayer for the many, a hopeful song, a new way of seeing in the darkness, and a “sacrifice of praise.”

As followers of Christ, as people of the Church, SUNDAY is the first day of the week and the last day of the week—the beginning and the end. It is the Day of the Lord, the Day of Eucharist. It is a whole day with an allotted span of the whole week. Concluding these Advent Sundays with vespers gives a space and a time to remember, to focus, to hope and to set aside all the burdens that fall upon us these Advent weeks before Christmas. A time to gratefully remember the gift received in the Eucharist celebrated hours before.

**Make this Advent Sunday Evening Prayer a time to step aside,  
to offer an evening sacrifice of praise,  
to be quiet, to sing, to lament,  
to be grateful, to hear, speak  
and to WAIT IN JOYFUL HOPE.**

