

Daily Vespers (outside of Lent)

Since ancient times, the going down of the sun has marked the beginning of the new day. This is reflected in the Genesis account of creation: "and there was evening, and there was morning: one day". The Church has never forgotten this and, faithful to this understanding, each evening She calls her children to gather in prayer to greet the coming day in the service of Vespers.

Vespers recalls and represents events in the salvation history of mankind, from creation (which we recall in the words of Psalm 103) up to and including the revelation of God as man in the person of Jesus Christ, the Joyous Light Who shines upon the world. From that point, everything – all prayers, hymns, and readings, are heard in the light of the knowledge and light of the salvation brought to us in the New Covenant.

Below is the order for Daily Vespers which is served on a daily basis when there is no feast of higher rank being celebrated. The order is slightly different for the weekdays of Lent. This is dealt with in a separate guide.

Certain books are referred to here. More detail about these may be found in the guide to the liturgical books on our parish website.

- Priest: Blessed is our God...
- People: Amen.
- Reader: "Glory be to Thee, our God; glory to Thee!" and the Trisagion Prayers (some books refer to this as "The usual beginning")
- Reader: The Call to Prayer ("O come, let us worship God our King...")
- Psalm 103

This is always read, and not sung, at Daily Vespers.

- The Great Litany
- The Kathisma

The Psalter is divided into sections, each called a kathisma, which literally means a "sitting" or a "session". Each kathisma is further subdivided into three stases.

The portion of the Psalter appointed to be read on a given day is indicated in tables found in most editions of the Psalter. On Sunday evenings (Vespers of Monday), no kathisma is read.

- The Short Litany

- The Psalms of Light: Psalms 140, 141, 129, & 116

These psalms are sung/read in the following manner:

The first few verses are sung in the same tone as the first of the stikhera that follow. The reader announces the tone using this form, "In the nth tone: 'Lord, I Cry to Thee; hear me'".

The subsequent verses of the Psalms of Light are chanted simply, alternating between right and left choirs (or between readers at the kliros), until the final few verses.

Each of the final few verses of these psalms is followed by a hymn called a stikheron, which comes either from the Octoechos (for the day of the week) or the Menaion (for the feast or saint), Triodion, or Pentecostarion, as appointed. Each psalm verse is divided into two parts, the reader reading the first part, and the choir concluding the verse in the same tone as the stikheron that follows it. The first of these stikhera determines the tone in which "Lord, I Cry" is sung at the very beginning.

After "Glory... Both now", there is a final stikheron, which is in honour of the Mother of God. This is called a dogmatic theotokion, and comes from the Octoechos in the tone of the stikheron immediately preceding it. Therefore, if the preceding stikheron is in tone 4, the theotokion will be the one from tone 4 of the Octoechos.

(Sometimes, according to the feast or saint, an additional stikheron, called a doxastikon, may be appointed to be sung between "Glory" and "Both now".)

- Deacon: Wisdom! Stand upright!
- People: O Joyous Light

The people sing the ancient hymn "O Joyous Light". At our parish, we use two settings. The Carpatho-Russian setting is only used during Lent and Holy Week, and on other days of greater sobriety.

- The Prokimen

The Prokimen is that appointed for the day of the week, in the pertinent tone.

- "Vouchsafe, O Lord"
- The Evening Litany
- The Prayer with Bowed Heads
- The Aposticha

These are further stikhera appointed to be sung from the Octoechos, Menaion, Triodion, or Pentecostarion.

- The Song of Symeon

The Song of Symeon is always read at Daily Vespers.

- The Trisagion prayers
- The Dismissal Troparia
 - The troparion of the saint from the menaion is sung in the appointed tone. If there are two saints, only troparion of the primary saint is read. (If the saint is not observed, the daily dismissal troparion from the Octoechos is read.) Then, "Glory... Both now..." and the daily dismissal theotokion in the same tone as the preceding troparion.*
- The Litany of Fervent Supplication
- The Dismissal Sequence