

The term “Evensong” is derived from the Old English *ǣfensang*, originally applied to the pre-Reformation service of Vespers during the Middle Ages. Thomas Cranmer’s 1549 Book of Common Prayer combined elements of the old monastic services of Vespers and Compline into a unique English-language service focused on the wonder of Christ’s Incarnation, built around the two great Canticles from Luke’s Gospel, the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis, supplemented with psalmody and Scripture. Contemplative in tone, the liturgy for this service has remained essentially unchanged for some 500 years, and connects us to the countless host of saints who have gone before, singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Commencing with the confession of sin, followed immediately by the sung prayer “O Lord, open Thou our lips,” we affirm that the gifts of speech and of song come from God alone and that we are created to sing His praise. May the words and music sung by the choir become a prayer within us and lift us to contemplate God’s beauty and glory as we worship Jesus, the Light of the world.

-- The Rev. Brian McGreevy