NIGHT SONGS
from the Chapel of St Catharine’s College, Cambridge

Christians have gathered for prayer in the night time for hundreds of years to mark the completion of the day. This service draws on that tradition and from the ancient service of Compline, which derives its name from a Latin word meaning ‘completion’ (completorium). Traditionally the service was the last of the monastic ‘offices’ (set times of prayer) and was the beginning of the ‘Greater Silence’ lasting until the first prayers of the following day.

In our own context, we offer it as a relaxed, prayerful and reflective space at the end of the day that everybody can feel comfortable attending no matter what their familiarity with church services or the Christian tradition. You are welcome to join in where you feel able or wish to do so by participating in the responses printed in bold; please also feel free simply to think, pray or reflect upon the day, and to enjoy the music.

Opening Music
Tallis  O nata lux

O nata lux de lumine, Jesu redemptor saeculi,  
Dignare clemens supplicum laudes precesque sumere.  
Qui carne quondam contegi dignatus es pro perditis  
Nos membra confer effici Tui beati corporis.

O Light born of Light, Jesus, redeemer of the world, mercifully deign to accept the praises and prayers of your suppliants.  
O you who once deigned to be hidden in flesh on behalf of the lost, grant us to be made members of your blessed body.

Preparation

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.  
Amen.

A time of silence is kept for reflection upon the day

O God, make speed to save us.  
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.  
The Lord’s name be praised.

The Psalm: 143

Ending with:  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning; is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
Scripture Reading

This or another short sentence of scripture is read
You, O Lord, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name.
Leave us not, O Lord our God.

The reading is followed by two minutes of silence for reflection and prayer.

Responsory

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

For thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

I commend my spirit.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Keep me as the apple of an eye.

Hide me under the shadow of thy wings.
Gospel Canticle: The Nunc Dimittis

Preserve us, O Lord, while waking, and guard us while sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

1. Lord, let thy servant depart unto thy rest,
for now mine eyes are with thy long'd for deliverance blest,
Saviour, redeemer; promise of our salvation.

2. Behold thou hast prepared for all a light of love,
to lighten all thy people; a light sent from above;
The glory of thine own; the joy of ev'ry nation.

Metrical version by EW

The Antiphon is repeated
Prayers

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the silent hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this fleeting world, may repose upon thy eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Conclusion

The Lord be with you And with thy spirit.

Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.

The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost,
bless us and preserve us. Amen.

Concluding Anthem

Tallis Sancte Deus

Sancte Deus, Sancte Fortis, Sancte et Immortalis, miserere nobis.
Nunc, Christe, te petimus, miserere, quaesumus.
Qui venisti redimere perditos, noli damnare redemptos:
Quia per crucem tuam redemisti mundum. Amen.

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.
Now, O Christ, we ask thee, we beseech thee, have mercy.
Thou who came to redeem the lost, do not condemn the redeemed:
For by thy cross thou hast redeemed the world. Amen.