



BAT VESPERS with Salal + Cedar

Vespers is the Latin word for “evening.” It is one of the prayers of hours that the early church marked the passage of the day from as early as the 3rd C.

Lucernarium (lamp or lamp-lighting time) was an early name for vespers and it has roots in the Jewish custom of prayer at the time when daylight faded and the lamps were lit. In the tradition of Evensong -which is an Anglican bringing together of Evening Prayer (vespers) and Night prayer (compline meaning completion), Bat Vespers is a Christian night prayer of psalms and canticles that attends to the sacred Mystery in our midst, and to the, sometimes lost, discipline of timing our own bodies to the natural world.

PHOS HILARON

An ancient Christian hymn in continual use since the 3rd Century. A hymn for lamplighting in the evening. (You may light your lamps)

Oh Gladsome Light Pure brightness of the everliving God in heaven,
Oh Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!
Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
And our eyes behold the vesper light,
We sing your praises oh God Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit
You are worth at all times to be praised by happy voices
O Child of God, O Giver of life And to be glorified through all the worlds.

PSALM 41:1-3, 7-8

As a deer longs for flowing streams,
 so my soul longs for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God,
 for the living God.

**When shall I come and behold
 the face of God?**

**My tears have been my food
 day and night,
while people say to me continually,
 ‘Where is your God?’**

Deep calls to deep
 at the thunder of your cataracts;
all your waves and your billows
 have gone over me.

**By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
 and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.**

READINGS

There is one possible biblical reference to bats, in Leviticus 11:19 it is listed among the eagles, ostriches and seagulls -birds that should not be eaten because they are detestable and an abomination. -but those of us who have also been called detestable and an abomination know our value and the value and beauty of those that fly unseen.

Magnificat Luke 1:46-55

‘My soul magnifies your greatness of God,
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
because you have looked with favour on the lowliness of your servant.

 Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
 and holy is God’s name.

God’s mercy is for those who walk in awe
 from generation to generation.

Whose strong arm is powerful;
 who has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
Who has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
 and lifted up the lowly;
God has filled the hungry with good things,
 and sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of your people
 in remembrance of your mercy,
according to the promise made to our ancestors,
 to Abraham, Sarah, Hagar and their descendants for ever.'

Aberdeen Bestiary circa 1200

The bat (vespertilione), a lowly animal, gets its name from vesper, the evening, when it emerges. It is a winged creature but also a four-footed one, and it has teeth, which you would not usually find in birds. It gives birth like a quadruped, not to eggs but to live young. It flies, but not on wings; it supports itself by making a rowing motion with its skin, and, suspended just as on wings, it darts around. There is one thing which these mean creatures do, however: they cling to each other and hang together from one place looking like a cluster of grapes, and if the last lets go, the whole group disintegrate; it [is] a kind of act of love of a sort which is difficult to find among men.

Modern Bat Reading

NUNC DIMITTIS.

Let now your servant depart in peace, according to your word.

For my eyes have seen you salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

GLORY be to the Creator, and to the Christ and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

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

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Hear o Israel

The Lord our God, the Lord is one

**Love the Lord your God
With all our heart
With all your soul
With all your mind
And with all your strength**

**This is the first and great commandment.
The second is like it:
Love your neighbour as yourself.
There is no commandment greater than these.**

COLLECT

Keep watch, dear God, **with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. O Christ our Redeemer. Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

In the language closest to your heart

DISMISSAL

God all-loving grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.

Amen.

Our help is in the name of God

Who made heaven and earth. Amen

