

First Service of Easter

The Great Vigil of Easter is the brightest jewel of Christian liturgy traced to early Christian times. It proclaims the universal significance of God's saving acts in history through four related service held on the same occasion and consist of:

SERVICE OF LIGHT

The service begins in the darkness of night. In kindling new fire and lighting the paschal candle, we are reminded that Christ came as a light shining in darkness (John 1:5). Through the use of fire, candles, words, movement, and music the worshiping community becomes the pilgrim of the people of God following the "pillar of fire" given to us in Jesus Christ, the light of the world. The paschal candle is used throughout the service as a symbol for Jesus Christ. This candle is carried, leading every procession during the vigil. Christ, the light of the world, thus provides the unifying thread to the service.

SERVICE OF READINGS

The second part of the vigil consists of a series of readings from the First and Second Testaments. These lessons provide a panoramic view of what God has done for humanity. Beginning with creation, we are reminded of our delivery from bondage in the exodus, of God's calling us to faithfulness through the cry of the prophets, of God dwelling among us in Jesus Christ, and of Christ's rising in victory from the tomb. The readings thus retell our "holy history" as God's children summarizing the faith into which we are baptized.

SERVICE OF BAPTISM

In the earliest years of the Christian church, baptisms commonly took place at the vigil. So this vigil includes baptism and/or the renewal of the baptismal covenant. As with the natural symbol of light, water plays a critical role in the vigil. The image of water giving life – nurturing crops, sustaining life, and cleansing our bodies – cannot be missed in this part of the vigil. Nor is the ability of water to inflict death in drowning overlooked. Water brings both life and death. So also there is death and life in Baptism, for in Baptism we die to sin and are raised to life. Baptism unites believers to Christ's death and resurrection.

SERVICE OF THE EUCHARIST

The vigil climaxes in a joyous celebration of the feast of the people of God. The risen Jesus invites all to participate in the new life he brings by sharing the feast which he has prepared. We thus look forward to the great Messianic feast of the kingdom of God when the redeemed from every time and place "will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God" (Like 13:29). The vigil thus celebrates what God has done, is doing, and will do.



¹ As outlined in the Book of Common Worship, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, KY. 1993.

SERVICE OF LIGHT

The vigil begins in darkness.
All gather in silence at the place where the new fire will be lighted.
A small candle is given to each worshipper.

GREETING AND INTRODUCTION

Grace and peace from Jesus Christ our Lord.

And also with you.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
On this most holy night
when our Savior Jesus Christ passed from death to life,
we gather with the church throughout the world
in vigil and prayer.
This is the Passover of Jesus Christ:
Through light and the Word,
Through water and the bread and wine,
We recall Christ's death and resurrection,
We share Christ's triumph over sin and death,
And with invincible hope
We await Christ's coming again.

Hear the Word of God:
In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God.
In God was life,
And the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
And the darkness has not overcome it.

The new fire is lighted.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Eternal God, in Jesus Christ
you have given the light of life
to all the world.
Sanctify this new fire,
and inflame us with a desire to shine forth
with the brightness of Christ's rising,
until we feast at the banquet of eternal light;
through Jesus Christ, the Son of Righteousness.

Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

The paschal candle is lighted from the new fire, and these words are spoken:

The light of Christ rises in glory,
Overcoming the darkness of sin and death.

EASTER PROCLAMATION

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult, all creation around God's throne!
Jesus Christ our Christ is risen!
Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Jesus Christ our Christ is risen!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,
Radiant in the brightness of your Christ!
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes forever!

Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Jesus Christ our Christ is risen!

Rejoice, O mother church! Exult in glory!
The risen Savior shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
Echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Jesus Christ our Christ is risen!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift tem up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is truly right that with full hearts and minds
and voices we should praise you,
the unseen God, the all-powerful creator
and your only Son, Jesus Christ.
For Christ has ransomed us with his blood,
And paid for us the debt of Adam's sin.

**Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Jesus Christ our Christ is risen!**

This is our Passover feast,
When Christ, the true Lamb, is slain,
Whose blood consecrates the home of all believers.
This is the night when first you saved our forbears:
You freed the people of Israel from their slavery and led the dry-shod through the sea.
This is the night when Christians everywhere,
Washed clean from sin and freed from all defilement,
Are restored to grace and flow together in holiness.
This is the night when Jesus Christ broke the chairs of fear
And rose triumphant from the grave.

**Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Jesus Christ our Christ is risen!**

May the Morning Star which never sets
Find this flame still burning:
Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all creation,
Your Son, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.

**Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Jesus Christ our Christ is risen!**

After the singing of the Easter proclamation, the candles of the worshippers are extinguished.

SERVICE OF READINGS

FIRST TESTAMENT READINGS

Friends in Christ,
let us listen attentively to the word of God,
recalling God's saving deeds throughout history
and how, in the fullness of time,
God's Word became flesh and dwelt among us:
Jesus Christ, our Redeemer!

First Reading: **Story of Creation** Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a

First this: God created the Heavens and Earth—all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

God spoke: "Light!"
And light appeared.
God saw that light was good
and separated light from dark.
God named the light Day,
God named the dark Night.
It was evening, it was morning—
Day One.

God spoke: "Sky! In the middle of the waters;
separate water from water!"
God made sky.
God separated the water under sky
from the water above sky.
And there it was:
God named sky the Heavens;
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Two.

God spoke: "Separate!
Water-beneath-Heaven, gather into one place;
Land, appear!"
And there it was.
God named the land Earth.
God named the pooled water Ocean.
God saw that it was good.

God spoke: "Earth, green up! Grow all varieties
of seed-bearing plants,
Every sort of fruit-bearing tree."
And there it was.
Earth produced green seed-bearing plants, all varieties,
And fruit-bearing trees of all sorts.
God saw that it was good.
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Three.

God spoke: "Lights! Come out!
Shine in Heaven's sky!
Separate Day from Night.
Mark seasons and days and years,
Lights in Heaven's sky to give light to Earth."
And there it was.

God made two big lights, the larger
to take charge of Day,
The smaller to be in charge of Night;
and God made the stars.
God placed them in the heavenly sky
to light up Earth
And oversee Day and Night,
to separate light and dark.
God saw that it was good.
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Four.

God spoke: "Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life!
Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!"
God created the huge whales,
all the swarm of life in the waters,
And every kind and species of flying birds.
God saw that it was good.
God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean!
Birds, reproduce on Earth!"
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Five.

God spoke: "Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind:
cattle and reptiles and wild animals—all kinds."
And there it was:
wild animals of every kind,
Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug.
God saw that it was good.

God spoke: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them
reflecting our nature
So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea,
the birds in the air, the cattle,
And, yes, Earth itself,
and every animal that moves on the face of Earth."
God created human beings;
God created them godlike,
Reflecting God's nature.
God created them male and female.
God blessed them:
"Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge!
Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air,
for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."

Then God said, "I've given you
every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth
And every kind of fruit-bearing tree,
given them to you for food.
To all animals and all birds,
everything that moves and breathes,
I give whatever grows out of the ground for food."
And there it was.

God looked over everything God had made;
it was so good, so very good!
It was evening, it was morning—
Day Six.

Heaven and Earth were finished, down to the last detail.

By the seventh day
God had finished the work.
On the seventh day
God rested from all God's work.
God blessed the seventh day
and made it a Holy Day
Because on that day God rested from God's work,
all the creating God had done.

This is the story of how it all started,
of Heaven and Earth when they were created.

Hymn 244: Psalm 136: Let Us with a Gladsome Mind

Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord who is so kind:
For God's mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful ever sure.

God with all commanding might,
Filled the new-made world with light:
For God's mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful ever sure.

All things living God does feed,
With full measure meets their need:
For God's mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful ever sure.

Let us with a gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord who is so kind:
For God's mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful ever sure.

Let us pray

Almighty and eternal God,
You created all things in wonderful beauty and order.
Help us now to perceive
How still more wonderful is the new creation,
By which in the fullness of time
You redeemed your people
Through the sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ,
Who lives and reigns forever,

Amen

Second Reading: **Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea** Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21

As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and saw them— Egyptians! Coming at them!
They were totally afraid. They cried out in terror to God. They told Moses, "Weren't the cemeteries large enough in Egypt so that you had to take us out here in the wilderness to die? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt? Back in Egypt didn't we tell you this would happen? Didn't we tell you, 'Leave us alone here in Egypt—we're better off as slaves in Egypt than as corpses in the wilderness.'"

Moses spoke to the people: "Don't be afraid. Stand firm and watch God do his work of salvation for you today. Take a good look at the Egyptians today for you're never going to see them again.

God will fight the battle for you.

And you? You keep your mouths shut!"

God said to Moses: "Why cry out to me? Speak to the Israelites. Order them to get moving. Hold your staff high and stretch your hand out over the sea: Split the sea! The Israelites will walk through the sea on dry ground.

"Meanwhile I'll make sure the Egyptians keep up their stubborn chase—I'll use Pharaoh and his entire army, his chariots and horsemen, to put my Glory on display so that the Egyptians will realize that I am God."

The angel of God that had been leading the camp of Israel now shifted and got behind them. And the Pillar of Cloud that had been in front also shifted to the rear. The Cloud was now between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. The Cloud enshrouded one camp in darkness and flooded the other with light. The two camps didn't come near each other all night..

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and God, with a terrific east wind all night long, made the sea go back. He made the sea dry ground. The seawaters split.

The Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground with the waters a wall to the right and to the left. The Egyptians came after them in full pursuit, every horse and chariot and driver of Pharaoh racing into the middle of the sea. It was now the morning watch. God looked down from the Pillar of Fire and Cloud on the Egyptian army and threw them into a panic. He clogged the wheels of their chariots; they were stuck in the mud.

The Egyptians said, "Run from Israel! God is fighting on their side and against Egypt!"

God said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea and the waters will come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots, over their horsemen."

Moses stretched his hand out over the sea: As the day broke and the Egyptians were running, the sea returned to its place as before. God dumped the Egyptians in the middle of the sea. The waters returned, drowning the chariots and riders of Pharaoh's army that had chased after Israel into the sea. Not one of them survived.

But the Israelites walked right through the middle of the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall to the right and to the left. God delivered Israel that day from the oppression of the Egyptians. And Israel looked at the Egyptian dead, washed up on the shore of the sea, and realized the tremendous power that God brought against the Egyptians. The people were in reverent awe before God and trusted in God and his servant Moses.

Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine, and all the women followed her with tambourines, dancing. Miriam led them in singing,

Sing to God—
what a victory!
He pitched horse and rider
into the sea!

Let us Pray

God of steadfast love,
Your wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day.
Through the waters of the sea you once delivered your chosen people from slavery,
a sign for us of the salvation of all nations
Through the grace of Baptism.
Grant that all of the people of the earth
may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham,
And rejoice in the inheritance of Israel;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Third Reading: **A New Heart and a New Spirit** Ezekiel 36: 24-28

"For here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to take you out of these countries, gather you from all over, and bring you back to your own land. I'll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I'll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that's God-willed, not self-willed. I'll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands. You'll once again live in the land I gave your ancestors. You'll be my people! I'll be your God!"

Hymn 189: Psalm 41: 1-7 : As Deer Long for the Streams

As deer long for the streams, O Lord
So my soul also seeks Your face;
When will my soul athirst for God
Appear before the God of grace.

My tears have been my constant food
Poured out before you night and day
While all day long they say to me,
“where is your God now when you pray?”

I pour my soul out when I think
How to God’s house I led the throng,
All those who keep the holy days
With voice of prayer and thankful song.

Why, O my soul, are you so full
Of heaviness, why so downcast?
O put your trust in God, my help;
I will give thanks to God at last.

Let us Pray

God of holiness and light,
In the mystery of dying and rising with Christ
You have established a new covenant of reconciliation.
Cleanse our hearts
And give a new spirit to all your people,
That your saving grace may be professed
And proclaimed to the whole world;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn 576: Gloria Gloria

Gloria, Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, Gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us Pray

Eternal Giver of life and light,
This holy night shines with the radiance of the risen Christ.
Renew your church with the Spirit given to us in Baptism,
That we may worship you in sincerity and truth,
And shine as a light in the world;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, now and forever.

Amen.

EPISTLE READING ROMANS 6:3-11

When we went under the water, we left the old country of sin behind; when we came up out of the water, we entered into the new country of grace—a new life in a new land!

That's what baptism into the life of Jesus means. When we are lowered into the water, it is like the burial of Jesus; when we are raised up out of the water, it is like the resurrection of Jesus. Each of us is raised into a light-filled world by our Father so that we can see where we're going in our new grace-sovereign country.

Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call! What we believe is this: If we get included in Christ's sin-conquering death, we also get included in his life-saving resurrection. We know that when Jesus was raised from the dead it was a signal of the end of death-as-the-end. Never again will death have the last word. When Jesus died, he took sin down with him, but alive he brings God down to us. From now on, think of it this way: Sin speaks a dead language that means nothing to you; God speaks your mother tongue, and you hang on every word. You are dead to sin and alive to God. That's what Jesus did.

GOSPEL READING MATTHEW 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, as the first light of the new week dawned, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to keep vigil at the tomb. Suddenly the earth reeled and rocked under their feet as God's angel came down from heaven, came right up to where they were standing. He rolled back the stone and then sat on it. Shafts of lightning blazed from him. His garments shimmered snow-white. The guards at the tomb were scared to death. They were so frightened, they couldn't move.

The angel spoke to the women: "There is nothing to fear here. I know you're looking for Jesus, the One they nailed to the cross. He is not here. He was raised, just as he said. Come and look at the place where he was placed.

"Now, get on your way quickly and tell his disciples, 'He is risen from the dead. He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.' That's the message."

The women, deep in wonder and full of joy, lost no time in leaving the tomb. They ran to tell the disciples. Then Jesus met them, stopping them in their tracks. "Good morning!" he said. They fell to their knees, embraced his feet, and worshiped him. Jesus said, "You're holding on to me for dear life! Don't be frightened like that. Go tell my brothers that they are to go to Galilee, and that I'll meet them there."

HOMILY

REAFFIRMATION OF THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

SCRIPTURE: EPHESIANS 4: 1-3

Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.

PROFESSION OF FAITH:

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
our baptism is the sign and seal
of our cleansing from sin,
and of our being grafted into Christ.
Through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ,
the power of sin was broken
and God's kingdom entered our world.
Through our baptism we were made citizens of God's kingdom,
and freed from the bondage of sin.
Let us celebrate the freedom and redemption
through the renewal of the promises made at our baptism.

I ask you, therefore,
once again to reject sin,
to profess your faith in Christ Jesus,
and to confess the faith of the church. The faith in which we were baptized.

RENUNCIATIONS:

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God,
do you turn from the ways of sin
and renounce evil and its power in the world?

I do.

Who is your Savior?

Jesus Christ is my Savior.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple,
obeying his Word and showing his love?

I will, with God's help.

PROFESSION:

With the whole church,
let us confess our faith.

We believe in one God,
the Creator, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Creator,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Creator
through whom all things were made.
Who, for us and for our salvation
came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and became one in Being with us.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

We give thanks, Eternal God,
For you nourish and sustain all living things
by the gift of water.
In the beginning of time,
Your Spirit moved over the watery chaos,
calling forth order and life.

In the time of Noah,
you destroyed evil by the waters of the flood,
giving righteousness a new beginning.

You led Israel out of slavery,
through the waters of the sea,
into the freedom of the promised land.

In the waters of Jordan
Jesus was baptized by John
and anointed with your Spirit.

By the baptism of his own death and resurrection,
Christ set us free from sin and death, and opened the way to eternal life.

We thank you, O God, for the water of baptism.
In it we were buried with Christ in his death.
From it we were raised to share in his resurrection,
through it we were reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son,
we celebrate our fellowship in him in faith.
We pray that all who have passed through the water of baptism
May continue forever in the risen life
of Jesus Christ our Savior.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
Be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

Amen.

SERVICE OF THE EUCHARIST

HYMN

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God!
They will come from east and west,
and from north and south,
According to Luke,
when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples,
he took the bread, and blessed and broke it,
and gave it to them.
Then their eyes were opened
and they recognized him.
This is the Lord's table.
Our Savior invites those who trust him
to share the feast which he has prepared.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God!
They will come from east and west,
and from north and south,
and sit at the table in the kingdom of God.

According to Luke,
when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples,
he took the bread, and blessed and broke it,
and gave it to them.
Then their eyes were opened
and they recognized him.

This is that table.
Our Savior invites all
To share in the feast which he has prepared.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy
to give you thanks and praise,
eternal God, our creator and ruler of the universe.
At your word the earth was made
and spun on its course among the planets.
Your hand formed us from the dust of the earth
and set us among all your creatures
to love and serve you.

When we were unfaithful to you
you keep faith with us,
your love remained steadfast.
When we were slaves in Egypt,
you broke the bonds of our oppression,
brought us through the sea to freedom,
and made covenant to be our God.
By pillar of fire
you led us through the desert
to a land flowing with milk and honey,
and set before us the way of life.
You spoke of love and justice in the prophets,
and in the Word made flesh you lived among us,
manifesting your glory.
He died that we might live,
and is risen to raise us to a new life.
Therefore we praise you,
joining our voices with angels and archangels
and with all the faithful of every time and place
who forever sing the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

You are holy, O God of majesty,
And blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,
whom you sent to save us.
He came with healing in his touch,
and was wounded for our sins.
He came with mercy in his voice,
and was mocked as one despised.
He came with peace in his heart,
and met with violence and death.

By your power he broke free from the prison of the tomb,
and at his command the gates of hell were opened.
The one who was dead now lives,
The one who humbled himself is raised to rule over all creation,
the Lamb upon the throne.
The one ascended on high is with us always, as he promised.

THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TAUGHT US

Our Mother/Father who are in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We give you thanks that Jesus,
on the night before he died,
took bread,
and after giving thanks to you,
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat.
This is my body, given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup saying:
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it,
do this in remembrance of me.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

The gifts of God
for the people of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Gracious God, you have made us one
With all your people in heaven and on earth.
We have recalled your mighty acts in holy history.
We have seen your power
In sending light to conquer darkness,
water to give us life;
and the bread of heaven to nourish us in love.
Send us with your salvation and joy to all the world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

HYMN

CHARGE AND BLESSING

Go in peace to love and serve God
in the power of the resurrection. Alleluia!

The grace of Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

Amen.

Christ is risen.

Christ is risen.

Christ is risen.

Christ is risen.

Christ is risen.

Christ is risen.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

12,1,2,11,10,3,4,9,8,5,6,7

JAN HUS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

HOLY SATURDAY, EASTER VIGIL 2011

20,1,2,19,18,3,4,17,16,5,6,15,14,7,8,13,12,9,10,11