



Peace Lutheran Church
Holy Saturday
March 30, 2024

Vigil of Easter

The Vigil of Easter, which is celebrated at the end of Holy Saturday as the conclusion to the sacred Triduum, ushers in the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord on Easter Sunday. The Vigil of Easter connects the days of Holy Week, especially Holy Thursday and Good Friday, with the culminating celebration of the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

In some places throughout the early centuries of the Church's life, the people of God would hold vigil, which means "keep watch," through the night in expectation of Christ's return. A vigil in expectation of Christ's return at Easter became a common feature of the celebration of His crucifixion and resurrection. The vigil consisted of prayer, psalms and hymns, and readings, especially from the Old Testament, culminating in the celebration of the resurrection at dawn with the Lord's Supper. As the Church gathered in vigil, she waited in hopeful expectation for the appearance of the resurrected Christ in those most recently born in Him, the newly baptized. During the vigil, those who had prepared throughout Lent to be joined to Christ were baptized. At the dawn of the new day at Easter sunrise, the newly baptized joined the entire Church in the chorus of alleluias at Christ's resurrection from the dead.

While making a vigil through the night may not be common today, Christians nonetheless gather on Holy Saturday to wait in expectation for the news of Christ's resurrection and for His second coming.

(Taken from Lutheran Service Book – Altar Book)

✠ The Service of Light ✠

The people gather outside the entrance of the Church around the newly kindled fire.

P: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Beloved in the Lord, on this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, we are gathered here in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of the Lord in which, by hearing His Word and celebrating his sacraments, we share in His victory over death.

The Blessing of the New Fire

P: Let us pray. O God, You are like a refiner's fire, and Your Spirit enkindles the hearts of Your faithful people with the fire of Your love. ✠ Bless, we implore you this new flame and those who keep this joyful Easter festival that, burning with desire for life with You, we may be found rightly prepared to share in the Feast of Light which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Blessing of the Paschal Candle

As he traces a cross, Alpha, Omega, and the year on the Paschal Candle, the Celebrant says:

P: Christ yesterday and today | the Beginning and the End | the Alpha | and the Omega | His are the seasons | and the ages | to Him glory and empire | through all the ages of eternity.

C: Amen.

The Celebrant now touches each end and center of the Candle's cross, representing the Five Holy Wounds, while saying:

P: Through His Holy wounds | glorious | may He protect | and preserve us | Christ the Lord.

C: Amen.

The Celebrant now lights the Paschal Candle from the new fire and prays a blessing upon it.

P: May the light of the gloriously risen Christ dispel the darkness of hearts and minds.

P: Let us pray. Almighty and most merciful God, pour out on us Your abundant blessing that all who in true faith share this night in joyful celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead may be filled with your heavenly benediction. Once we were in darkness, but now we are in the Light, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

The people light their candles from the Paschal Candle and follow it in procession into the semi-darkened church. The congregation processes together with the Candle, and are asked to sit in the front pews.

The congregation at the rear of the nave

P: The light of Christ!

C: Thanks be to God!

The congregation follows the light to the center of the nave

P: The light of Christ!

C: Thanks be to God!

With the Paschal Candle at the front, the congregation enters into the pews. Then is said:

P: The light of Christ!

C: Thanks be to God!

P: Rejoice now, all you heavenly choirs of angels; rejoice now, all creation; sound forth, trumpet of salvation, and proclaim the triumph of our King. Rejoice too, all the earth, in the radiance of the light now poured upon you and made brilliant by the brightness of the everlasting King; know that the ancient darkness has been forever banished. Rejoice, O Church of Christ, clothed in the brightness of this light; let all this house of God ring out with rejoicing, with the praises of all God's faithful people.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places, with all our heart and mind and voice, praise You, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty everlasting God, and Your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. For He is the very Paschal Lamb who offered Himself for the sin of the world, who has cleansed us by the shedding of His precious blood. This is the night when You brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt and led them through the Red Sea on dry ground. This is the night when all who believe in Christ are delivered from bondage to sin and are restored to life and immortality. This is the night when Christ, the Life, arose from the dead. The seal of the grave is broken and the morning of the new creation breaks forth out of night. Oh, how wonderful and beyond all telling is Your mercy toward us, O God, that to redeem a slave You gave Your Son. How holy is this night when all wickedness is put to flight and sin is washed away. How holy is this night when innocence is restored to the fallen and joy is given to those downcast. How blessed is this night when man is reconciled to God in Christ. Holy Father, accept now the evening sacrifices of our thanksgiving and praise. Let Christ, the true light and morning star, shine in our hearts, He who gave light to all creation, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sit

✠ Service of Readings ✠

The members of the congregation extinguish their candles for the Service of Readings. A few lights in the nave are turned on.

P: In this most holy night our Savior, Christ the Lord, broke the power of death and by his resurrection brought life and salvation to all creation. Let us praise the Lord, for He truly keeps his word. The sun of righteousness has dawned upon us who have sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Each reading is followed by a brief silence. The congregation sits for the service of readings.

The Creation

P: A reading from Genesis, chapters one and two.

Genesis 1:1—2:2

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, through Your Word and Spirit You most wonderfully created all things, and through the Word made flesh You brought new life to fallen humanity. Grant that in Your mercy we may be conformed to the image of Him who shares fully in our humanity, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

The Flood

P: A reading from Genesis, chapters seven, eight, and nine.

Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: Let us pray. O Lord, You kill and You raise to life; You brought the flood upon a wicked and perverse generation, and yet You saved faithful Noah and his family in the ark. Keep us in safety in the ark of Christ's body, the Church, that Your mercy may come to its fullness and Your salvation be preached to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea

P: A reading from Exodus, chapters 14 and 15.

Exodus 14:10—15:1

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: Let us pray. O God, You once delivered Your people Israel from bondage under Pharaoh and led them by a pillar of cloud and fire through the sea to safety. Grant that we may so follow Christ that through the waters of Baptism we may daily die and rise with Him and walk in safety through the wilderness of this life until we see Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

The Gathering of God's People

P: A reading from Zephaniah, chapter 3.

Zephaniah 3:12-20

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: Let us pray. Look in mercy, O Lord, upon Your faithful people, and by Word and Spirit bring to completion that good work which You have begun in us. Gather in Your people that all the world may see and know that what has been cast down is raised up and what has grown old is made new, until the work You have begun in us is brought to its joyful fulfillment in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: Amen.

Christ Saves Daniel and His Friends From The Fiery Furnace

P: A reading from Daniel, chapter 3.

Daniel 3:1-30

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: Let us pray. O God, Your Son protected faithful Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace of the king. Grant us protection in our time of testing that we would boldly confess Your name, reject all false worship, and live and die in confidence, knowing that we are safe in Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Stand

The Canticle: The Song of the Three Young Men
Hymn #930 “All You Works of God, Bless the Lord”

*The congregation is seated for the Renewal of Baptismal Vows.
The candidates for confirmation and new membership come forward.*

Renewal of Baptismal Vows

P: On this holiest of nights . . .

Flood Prayer

P: Let us pray. Almighty and eternal God, according to Your strict judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, Yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all. You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, foreshadowing this washing of Your Holy Baptism. Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin. We pray that You would behold us according to Your boundless mercy and bless us with true faith by the Holy Spirit, that through this saving flood all sin in us, which have been inherited from Adam and which we ourselves have committed since, would be drowned and die. Grant that we be kept safe and secure in the holy Ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, we would be declared worthy of eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Renunciation of the Devil and Confession of Faith

P: Do you renounce the devil?

C: Yes, I renounce him.

P: Do you renounce all his works?

C: Yes, I renounce them.

P: Do you renounce all his ways?

C: Yes, I renounce them.

P: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

C: Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son?

C: Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day, He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

P: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

C: Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life ✠ everlasting.

P: The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life ✠ everlasting.

C: Amen.

P: Peace ✠ be with you.

C: Amen.

Stand

The Litany

P: O Lord,

C: Have mercy.

P: O Christ,

C: Have mercy.

P: O Lord,

C: Have mercy.

P: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C: Hear us.

P: Paschal Lamb, who was offered for us and has taken away the sin of the world,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who foretold Your Passion saying, "The Son of Man must be crucified and on the third day rise again,"

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who destroyed Death by dying, and by rising to life again has brought life and immortality to light,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Whose resurrection was first announced by an angel to the women,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who appeared to Mary Magdalene and was worshiped by her:

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who revealed Yourself to the two disciples on the Emmaus road and made Yourself known to them in the Scriptures and in the breaking of the bread,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who appeared to the disciples, bestowing on them Your peace and Your Spirit,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who showed Your wounded hands and side to the apostle Thomas that he too might believe,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who appeared to seven disciples on the Sea of Tiberias, bringing a miraculous catch of fish,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who appeared to Peter and to the Twelve, to over 500 disciples, to James and to all the apostles, and to Paul on the Damascus road,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Who commissioned Your Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: By Your glorious resurrection from the dead,

C: Good Lord, deliver us.

P: By Your victory over sin and death,

C: Good Lord, deliver us.

P: By the majesty of Your risen body,

C: Good Lord, deliver us.

P: We poor sinners implore You,

C: To hear us, Lord Jesus.

P: That we may daily die and rise with You in our Baptism and walk in the freedom of Your forgiveness,

C: Grant us, good Lord.

P: That we may set our minds on things above and not on earthly things, serving others as we have been served by You,

C: Grant us, good Lord.

P: That we may dwell with You forever in the new creation as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, together with all the saints,

C: Grant us, good Lord.

P: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C: Have mercy on us.

P: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C: Grant us Your peace.

P: O Lord,

C: Have mercy.

P: O Christ,

C: Have mercy.

P: O Lord,

C: Have mercy. Amen.

After the Litany the minister vests in white Eucharistic vestments for the celebration of Holy Communion. After the litany is complete, the lights in the Church are brought to full brightness.

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C: He is risen indeed! Alleluia

The Gloria in Excelsis (sung)

(During the Gloria, the images of Christ are unveiled)

P: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth.

C: Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, we praise You for Your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God: You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

P: O God, You made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord's resurrection. Preserve in us the spirit of adoption which You have given so that, made alive in body and soul, we may serve You purely; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Gospel Procession

The Holy Gospel:

John 20:1-18

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 20th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord!

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood

weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ!

Sit

Hymn of the Day # 483 With High Delight Let Us Unite

Sermon: Table of Duties

Offering

Stand

Offertory

C: What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me? I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of salvation and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

‡ Service of the Sacrament ‡

The Preface (*Sung*)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise

P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary....., evermore praising You and saying:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might:

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna. Hosanna.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

The Words of Institution

The Pax Domini and The Agnus Dei

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

All: Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Sit

The Distribution

If we have enough people, we will sing the following distribution hymns:

464 "The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done"

621 "Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

If there are not enough people to support singing, the congregation is invited to use this as a time for meditation on the Sacrament or upon Psalms 93, 136, and 117.

Stand

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

O God, for our redemption You gave Your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross and by His glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy. Grant that all our sin may be drowned through daily repentance and that day by day we may arise to live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C: Amen

Hymn # 477 “Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven”

Silent Prayer

P: Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

C: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

P: Go in Peace.

C: Thanks be to God!

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That the Word May Work in Us

*O God, almighty and all-merciful,
Once chaos gave way
before Your command,
and Your creation stood forth
structured, wonderful,
to call forth melody
from all the singing stars.*

*Our wild rebellion
shivered and blackened all that,
called a chaos down
more fearful than the first;
and You have spoken
a Word more powerful,
Your Word of love,
Your Son,
and You have made us –
ah, gift intolerable –
the firstfruits
of Your new righteous world.
You have made us sons.*

*Ah, gift intolerable –
how shall we show forth
the splendor of the world to come,
the home of righteousness
which shall one day live here
unbroken and entire?
We cannot – but Your Word can.*

*Oh, let it work in us,
that Word implanted in our midst,
Your creative Word,
And let us bring forth summer fruits for You.*

Martin H. Franzmann