

+ Vigil of Easter +

April 4, 2026

The congregation gathers in a convenient place outside the nave of the church. Candles are given to all, later to be lighted from the paschal candle. In the semidarkness a fire may be kindled.

+ Service of Light +

Invocation

Matthew 28:19b; 18:20

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Invitation

- 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.



Collect

- 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 pastor traces the cross on the candle while saying:

Blessing of the Paschal Candle

- P** Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever, the beginning and the ending, *and then traces the Greek letters Alpha and Omega on the candle while saying:* "the Alpha and the Omega." *He traces the year on the candle, saying:* "His are time and eternity; His are the glory and dominion, now and forever." *He puts the five wax nails into the candle, saying:* "By His wounds we have healing both now and forever. Amen."

Then, lighting the candle from the newly kindled fire, he says: "May the light of Christ, who is risen in glory from the dead, scatter all the darkness of our hearts and minds."

Collect

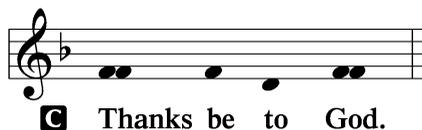
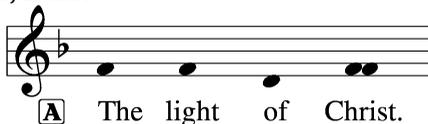
P Let us pray. Almighty and most merciful God, pour out on us Your abundant blessing that all who in true faith share this night in joyful celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead may be filled with Your heavenly benediction. Once we were in darkness, but now we are in the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

C Amen.

All light their candles from the paschal candle and then follow the candle bearer in procession into the darkened church.

At the entrance of the nave, the bearer of the paschal candle stops and chants:

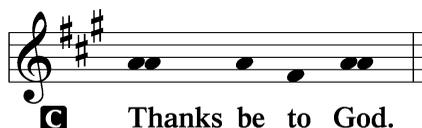
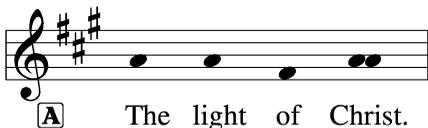
Lux Christi, 2 times



At the middle of the nave, he chants for the second time...(above)

At the candle stand, he turns to face the congregation. After all have reached their places, the candle bearer lifts the candle high and chants the third time (higher chant tone):

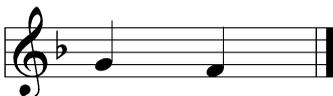
Lux Christi



After the candle bearer places the paschal candle in its stand, the assistant turns to face the people and chants or speaks the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet).

Exsultet

A Rejoice now, all you heav'nly 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.



C A - men.

All may extinguish their candles at this time. The paschal candle remains lighted throughout the service. A few lights in the nave may be turned on.

Sit [Note: during the Service of Readings (about 40 mins in length) you may get up in between readings, but reverently, trying not to disturb your neighbors in the congregation who are in prayer and meditation on the Word. Time of brief music or silence in between select readings will be designated as an especially appropriate time for movement.]

+ Service of Readings +

Introduction to Readings

- 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.

The Creation

Genesis 1:1—2:3

- A** A reading from Genesis, chapters one and two.

In the beginning, God created ... God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

- A** 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

Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13

- A** A reading from Genesis, chapters seven, eight, and nine.

Then the LORD said to Noah, ... I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

A 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.**

Hymn: 891 O Light Whose Splendor

The Testing of Abraham

Genesis 22:1–18

A A reading from Genesis, chapter 22.

After these things God tested Abraham ... in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

P Let us pray. O God, since You promised faithful Abraham that he would be the father of a great multitude, You provided a substitute for his son Isaac. In the fullness of time, You sent Your Son, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, to lay down His life that we might live as faithful children of Abraham. Grant to all people a living trust in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **C** **Amen.**

Hymn: 601 All Who Believe and Are Baptized

Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea

Exodus 14:10–15:1

A A reading from Exodus, chapters 14 and 15.

When Pharaoh drew near ... “...the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.”

A 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.

Salvation Offered Freely to All

Isaiah 55:1–11

A A reading from Isaiah, chapter 55.

“Come, everyone who thirsts, ... but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P Let us pray. Almighty God, by Your Word You created and sustain all things, and by Your Spirit You renew Your creation. Grant now the water of life to all who thirst for You that they may bring forth abundant fruit in Your glorious kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Hymn: 585 Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide (Stanzas 1-4)

A New Heart and a New Spirit

Ezekiel 36:24–28

A A reading from Ezekiel, chapter 36.

I will take you from the nations ... and I will be your God.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, by the death and resurrection of Your Son You cleansed our hearts and put a new Spirit within us. Grant that all who are brought to newness of life in the fellowship of the body of Christ may show forth in their lives what they confess with their lips; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

God’s Faithfulness to Israel

Deuteronomy 31:19–30

A A reading from Deuteronomy, chapter 31.

“Now therefore write this song and teach it ... through the work of your hands.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P Let us pray. O God, the exaltation of the humble and the strength of the righteous, You taught Your people through Your holy servant Moses to sing Your sacred songs and delivered to them the Law that still directs us. Display in all nations the fullness of Your power that, as You blot out all sins through Your forgiveness, terror may turn to joy and fear of punishment may be transformed into the hope of salvation; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **C Amen.**

Hymn: 846 Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old (see hymnal)

The Valley of Dry Bones

Ezekiel 37:1–14

A A reading from Ezekiel, chapter 37.

The hand of the LORD was upon me ... I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P Let us pray. O God, Your Son came as the Son of Man to breathe His Word and Spirit upon the dry, dead bones of Adam’s children. Grant that we may hear Your holy Word, receive Your Spirit, and rise each day from the death of sin to live in newness of life before You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Job Confesses the Redeemer

Job 19:20–27

A A reading from Job, chapter 19.

My bones stick to my skin and to my flesh... and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P Let us pray. Almighty God, our great Redeemer, in the sacrifice of Your Son You put to death our wretched flesh and in His rising restored our life. Grant that we may always cling to Christ by faith in this life that at the last we may rejoice to stand in our own flesh and see You face to face; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Hymn: 938 In Peace and Joy I Now Depart (see hymnal)

Jonah Preaches to Nineveh

Jonah 3:1–10

A A reading from Jonah, chapter three.

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah ... God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

P Let us pray. O God, as the prophet Jonah spent three days in the belly of the great fish, so Your Son Jesus spent three days in the heart of the earth. Grant us repentance to embrace our death in Him through Holy Baptism and to proclaim His victory over sin and death to all the world; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

The Gathering of God's People

Zephaniah 3:12–20

A A reading from Zephaniah, chapter three.

"I will leave in your midst a people humble and lowly. ... when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the LORD.

A 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.**

The Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3:1–30

A A reading from Daniel, chapter three.

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold ... Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

A 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.**

Hymn: 791 All People That on Earth Do Dwell (Stanzas 1, 4 and 5, see hymnal)

+ Service of Prayer +

Litany of the Resurrection

- A** O Lord, **C have mercy.**
- A** O Christ, **C have mercy.**
- A** O Lord, **C have mercy.**
- A** Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, **C hear us.**
- A** Paschal Lamb, who was offered for us and has taken away the sin of the world,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who foretold Your passion saying, “The Son of Man must be crucified and on the third day rise again,” **C have mercy on us.**
- A** Who destroyed death by dying, and by rising to life again brought life and immortality to light, **C have mercy on us.**
- A** Whose resurrection was first announced by an angel to the women, **C have mercy on us.**
- A** Who appeared to Mary Magdalene and was worshiped by her, **C have mercy on us.**
- A** 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.**
- A** Who appeared to the disciples, bestowing on them Your peace and Your Spirit,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who showed Your wounded hands and side to the apostle Thomas that he too might believe, **C have mercy on us.**
- A** Who appeared to seven disciples on the Sea of Tiberias, bringing a miraculous catch of fish, **C have mercy on us.**
- A** 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.**
- A** Who commissioned Your Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them, **C have mercy on us.**
- A** By Your glorious resurrection from the dead, **C good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** By Your victory over sin and death, **C good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** By the majesty of Your risen body, **C good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** We poor sinners implore You **C to hear us, Lord Jesus.**

- A** 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.**
- A** 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.**
- A** 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.**
- A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, **C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, **C** **have mercy on us.**
- A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, **C** **grant us Your peace.**
- A** O Lord, **C** **have mercy.**
- A** O Christ, **C** **have mercy.**
- A** O Lord, **C** **have mercy. Amen.**

+ Service of the Word of Christ's Resurrection +

Easter Acclamation

- P** Alleluia! Christ is risen!
- C** **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

The altar candles may now be lighted from the paschal candle. Lights in the church are turned on, bells may be rung, the chancel may be decorated, and the altar may be prepared for the Sacrament while the congregation sings the Hymn.

464 The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done (see hymnal for musical parts)

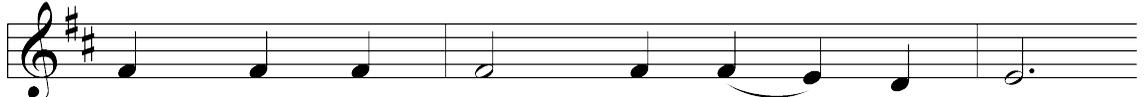
Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!



1 The strife is o'er, the bat - tle done;
 2 The pow'rs of death have done their worst,
 3 The three sad days have quick - ly sped,



Now is the vic - tor's tri - umph won;
 But Christ their le - gions hath dis - persed.
 He ris - es glo - rious from the dead.

The Refrain is repeated after st. 5.



Now be the song of praise be - gun. Al - le - lu - ia!
Let shouts of ho - ly joy out - burst. Al - le - lu - ia!
All glo - ry to our ris - en Head! Al - le - lu - ia!

- 4 He broke the age-bound chains of hell; The bars from heav'n's high portals fell.
Let hymns of praise His triumph tell. Alleluia!
- 5 Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee, From death's dread sting Thy servants free
That we may live and sing to Thee. Alleluia! *Refrain*

Text: Symphonia Sirenum Selectarum, 1695, Köln; tr. Francis Pott, 1832–1909, alt. Tune: Giovanni P. da Palestrina, c. 1525–1594, adapt.
Text and tune: Public domain

Salutation

- P** The Lord be with you.
C And with thy spirit.

Collect of the Day

- P** Let us pray. 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, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C**
Amen.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 27:57–66

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-seventh chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

A brief sermon may be preached.

+ Collect and Benediction +

P (sung) 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 the 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 A - men.

Benedicamus

A (sung) Let us bless the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

P (sung) The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the † Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.



C A - men.

Return in the morning for the Resurrection of Our Lord Divine Service at 8:30 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. with Congregational Bible Study with pastries, fruit, and coffee beginning at 9:45 a.m.

Acknowledgments

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