



THE THREE DAYS
The Great Vigil
of Easter

Saturday, April 8, 2023
6:00 P.M.

FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER



SERVICE OF LIGHT

PRELUDE

GATHERING AT THE NEW FIRE

Grace and peace from Jesus Christ our Lord.

And also with you.

Beloved people of God, 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 our Lord Jesus Christ. Through light and the word, through water, bread, and wine, we proclaim Christ's death and resurrection, we share Christ's triumph over sin and death and we await Christ's coming again in glory.

In the beginning was the Word,

John 1:1, 4-5

And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In the life of Christ is the light of all people

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.

OPENING PRAYER

Eternal God, in Jesus Christ you have given the light of life to all the world. Bless this new fire, and kindle in us the desire to shine with the brightness of Christ's rising, until we feast at the banquet of eternal light; through the Sun of Righteousness, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The light of Christ rises in glory,
Casting out the shadow of sin and death.

The light of Christ.
Thanks be to God!

THE EASTER PROCLAMATION

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

Let every place resound with joy,
Echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

You are invited to echo the phrase "This is the night" whenever it is spoken as the prayer continues.

This is the night* of our Passover feast when the blood of Christ, the true Lamb, consecrates the homes of all believers.

This is the night* when you saved our ancestors, delivering the children of Israel from slavery and leading them through the sea on dry land.

This is the night* when Christians everywhere, washed clean from sin and set free from evil, are restored to grace and renewed in holiness.

This is the night* when Jesus Christ broke free from the prison of death and rose triumphant from the grave.

This is the night* that is as bright as the day, shining with your glory, O God, and with the light of the Lamb.

This is the night* that dispels all wickedness, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, and brings joy to those who mourn.

This is the night* that casts out hatred, brings peace to all people, and humbles earthly pride.

This is the night* of the great marriage feast when heaven is wedded to earth and we are reconciled to you, O God!

Gracious God, in the joy of this night, receive our evening sacrifice of praise for the light of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Let this flame be our pillar of fire in the

darkness: a flame that is divided as we share its light, but never diminished or extinguished.

May Christ, the Morning Star that never sets, find the flame of faith still burning in our hearts, for our Lord and Savior has risen from the dead! Now the light of Christ will shine throughout creation, for he is alive and will reign with you forever.

Rejoice, heavenly powers!

Sing choirs of angels!

Jesus Christ our King is risen!



SERVICE OF STORY

Our Old Testament stories tonight will be read from the
Children of God Storybook Bible by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

OPENING WORDS

Jeff Moles

Now, let us listen to the word of God, remembering God's mighty acts throughout history and how, in the fullness of time, the Word of God became flesh to dwell among us: Jesus Christ, our redeemer!

GOD GIVES LIFE: THE CREATION | Genesis 1

Marilyn Van Winkle

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 and ever. **Amen.**

Sung Response (Hymn 14):

**For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies:
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.**

Faithful God, you placed the rainbow in the skies as the sign of your covenant with all living things. May we who are saved through water and the Spirit, worthily offer to you our sacrifice of thanksgiving. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sung Response (Hymn 22):

**God of the sparrow, God of the whale,
God of the swirling stars,
How does the creature say Awe?
How does the creature say Praise?**

**God of the rainbow, God of the cross,
God of the empty grave,
How does the creature say Love?
How does the creature say Peace?**

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 the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sung Response (Hymn 65):

**When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to thee; I will ever give to thee.**

O God, our guide and help in alien and contentious places: as Esther prayed faithfully and worked courageously for the deliverance of your people,

strengthen us to confront the oppressor and free the oppressed, so that all people may know the justice and unity of your realm; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sung Response (Hymn 772):

**Live into hope of captives freed, of sight regained, the end of greed.
The oppressed shall be the first to see the year of God's own jubilee!**

**Live into hope of captives freed from chains of fear or want or greed.
God now proclaims our full release to faith and hope and joy and peace.**

GOD CALLS A YOUNG MAN: JEREMIAH THE PROPHET | Jeremiah 1, 18

Linda Morris

O God of all the prophets, you knew us and chose us before you formed us in the womb. Fill us with faith that speaks your word, hope that does not disappoint, and love that bears all things for your sake, until that day when we shall know you fully, even as we are known by you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sung Response (Hymn 691):

**Lord, when I came into this life you called me by my name;
Today I come, commit myself, responding to your claim.**

**Within the circle of the faith, as member of your cast,
I take my place with all the saints of future, present, past.**

GOD IS ALWAYS WITH US: DANIEL AND THE LIONS | Daniel 6

Creda Heffelfinger

Timeless One, you create all moments of our lives, giving each its meaning and purpose. Strengthen us to witness continually to your saving love, that we may hold fast in times of trial, even to the end of the age; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sung Response (Hymn 619):

**Praise God for the grace and favor shown our fore-bears in distress;
God is still the same forever, slow to chide and swift to bless.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Sing our Maker's faithfulness.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

*THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD | John 20:1-18

Rev. Matt Curry

The Gospel of the Lord. **May Jesus Christ be praised.**
Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed!**

*HYMN 232

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

EASTER HYMN

1. **Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!**
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!
2. **Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!**
unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
sinner to redeem and save. Alleluia!
3. **But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!**
our salvation have procured. Alleluia!
Now above the sky he's King, Alleluia!
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!
4. **Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!**
praise eternal as God's love. Alleluia!
Praise our God, ye heavenly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!



SERVICE OF BAPTISM

Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant

SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ.

In the one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. We are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Beloved people of God, through baptism we are washed clean from sin and made one as members of Christ's body. By the mystery of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection, the power of sin was broken and God's realm entered our world. In baptism we become citizens of God's new creation, forever set free from the bondage of sin and death. Tonight we celebrate our freedom and redemption through the renewal of the promises made at our baptism. I ask all of you, therefore, to reject sin, to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, and to confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we are baptized.

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 renounce them.

Who is your Lord and Savior?

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

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

I will, with God's help.

With the whole church, let us confess our faith:

Do you believe in God?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; He ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Water is sprinkled on worshippers as all sing together (Hymn 482):

- 1. Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting the promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.**
- 2. Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
dead in the tomb with Christ our King;
one with his rising, freed and forgiven,
thankfully now God's praises we sing.**
- 3. Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of the Spirit, we are God's children;
joyfully now God's praises we sing.**

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**



SERVICE OF EUCHARIST

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art 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. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God, you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. We have remembered 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 out now with the good news of salvation and a message of joy for all the world, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1. **Sing with all the saints in glory, sing the resurrection song!
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story, to the former days belong.
All around the clouds are breaking, soon the storms of time shall cease;
in God's likeness we, awaken, knowing everlasting peace.**

2. **Oh, what glory, far exceeding all that eye has yet perceived!
Holiest hearts, for ages pleading never that full joy conceived.
God has promised, Christ prepares it, there on high our welcome waits.
Ev'ry humble spirit shares it, Christ has passed the eternal gates.**

3. **Life eternal! heav'n rejoices: Jesus lives who once was dead.
Shout with joy, O deathless voices! Child of God, lift up your head!
Life eternal! Oh, what wonders crowd on faith; what joy unknown,
when, amid earth's closing thunders, saints shall stand before the throne!**

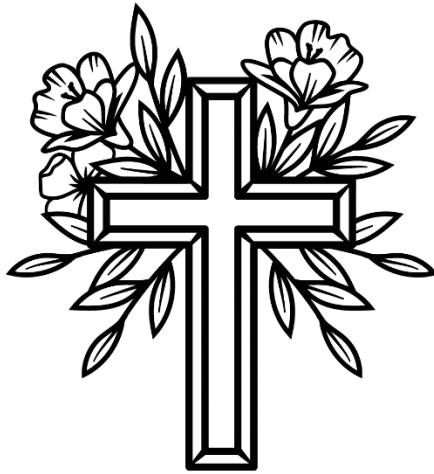
*BLESSING AND CHARGE

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

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord in the power of his resurrection. **Amen.**

Christ is risen! **Christ is risen!**
Christ is risen! **Christ is risen!**
Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed!**
Alleluia! **Amen.**

*POSTLUDE



The Great Vigil of Easter proclaims God's victory over sin and death through Christ's resurrection. Traditionally, the Easter Vigil begins at sunset, in keeping with the ancient Jewish/Christian understanding as evening as the start of a new day. Although this service is one more recently re-discovered by US Presbyterians, it is a liturgy that dates back to the earliest days of Christianity