

Easter Vigil Worship

April 7, 2012

In the early church the Easter Vigil was when the catechumens were baptized and received their first Communion. Baptism remains a central focus in the Vigil today. Even when there are no baptisms the congregation takes the time to remember their own baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The service traditionally was held late at night so that the pastor's statement, "Alleluia! Christ is Risen" and the people's response would be at midnight.



SERVICE OF LIGHT

The congregation gathers in entry and outside the open doors (weather permitting). Those who do not wish to process into the church may be seated. Those processing are given candles to be lit later from the paschal candle.

The paschal candles is a sign of the presence of the risen Christ among us.

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus Christ 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.

M: O God, you are like a refiner's fire, and your Spirit kindles the hearts of your faithful people with the fire of your love. Bless, we ask you, this new flame and those who keep this joyful Easter festival. Burning with desire for life with you, may we 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 candlebearer presents the paschal candle.

M: Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega. His are time and eternity; his are the glory and dominion now and forever. By his wounds we are healed now and forever.

As the paschal candle is lit from the final candle of the Tenebrae service, the minister says:

M: May the light of Christ, who is risen in glory from the dead, scatter all the darkness of our hearts and minds.

M: Almighty and most merciful Father, once we were darkness, but now we are light in Jesus Christ our Lord. Bless abundantly all who joyfully celebrate this night in faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fill them with your heavenly blessing in him, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C: Amen.

All light their candles from the paschal candle. Then, the paschal candle held by the candlebearer, all follow in procession into the dark church.

As the procession begins, the candlebearer holds the paschal candle aloft, pauses and says:

M: The light of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

Halfway to the altar, the candlebearer pauses and says the second time:

M: The light of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

When the candlebearer arrives before the altar, he faces the congregation, lifts the candle, and says the third time:

M: The light of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

The candlebearer places the paschal candle in its stand in the center of the chancel. Standing in its light the minister or an assistant sings or says:

EXSULTET

solo

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.

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

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

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

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places, with all our hearts and minds and voices, praise you, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, and your one and only Son, Jesus Christ.

C: For he is the true Paschal Lamb, who offered himself for the sin of the world, who cleansed us by the shedding of his precious blood.

M: 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.

C: This is the night when all who believe in Christ are delivered from bondage to sin and are restored to life and immortality.

M: This is the night when Christ, the Life, arose from the dead. The seal of the grace is broken and the morning of the new creation breaks forth out of the night.

C: Oh, how wonderful and beyond all telling is your mercy toward us, O God, that to redeem a slave you gave your Son.

M: How holy is this night when all wickedness is put to flight and sin is washed away.

C: How holy is this day when innocence is restored to the fallen and joy is given to those downcast.

M: 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 gives light to all creation, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

BE SEATED

SERVICE OF LESSONS

The congregation extinguishes its candles. A few lights in the nave may be turned on.

M: On 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 on those sitting in darkness and it the shadow of death.

CREATION

Genesis 1:1-2:3

M: Let us pray.

C: Almighty God, you most wonderfully created human nature and yet more wonderfully redeemed it. By your mercy renew us in the image of him who came to share our humanity, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE AT THE RED SEA

Exodus 14:10-15:1

M: Let us pray.

C: O God, you once delivered your people Israel from slavery under Pharaoh and led them safely through the Red Sea. By this you gave us a picture of Baptism. Lead us always to rejoice in your baptismal promise, that we may live in its grace and declare to all people your desire to make them children of Abraham, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT

Ezekiel 36:24-28

M: Let us pray.

C: Almighty and everlasting God, in the miracle of Easter you raised your Son for our justification and through him have given us a new heart and spirit. Give power to your holy people to show in their lives what they confess with their lips, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Zephaniah 3:12-20

M: Let us pray.

C: O Lord, let all the world see that what has been cast down is raised up, what has grown old is made new, and the work you have begun in your faithful people is being brought to joyful fulfillment in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Stand and sing:

The hymn is sung as the paschal candle is carried to the font.

HYMN

CW 260 Let All Things Now Living

**Let all things now living A song of thanksgiving
To God the Creator triumphantly raise,
Who fashioned and made us, Protected and stayed us,
Who still guides us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us; His light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
Till shadows have vanished And darkness is banished,
As forward we travel from light into light.**

**His law he enforces; The stars in their courses
And sun in its orbit obediently shine.
The hills and the mountains, The rivers and fountains,
The deeps of the ocean proclaim him divine.
We, too, should be voicing Our love and rejoicing.
With glad adoration a song let us raise
Till all things now living Unite in thanksgiving:
"To God in the highest, hosanna and praise!"**

SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

M: On this holiest of days, the whole church of our Lord Jesus Christ recalls his death and burial, rejoicing in the gospel of his glorious resurrection from the dead. Holy Baptism is the precious means of grace by which our Father in heaven connects us with Christ in his life, death, and resurrection. The apostle Paul says,

“Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God, In the same way count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus”

HYMN

CW 299 All Who Believe And Are Baptized

If there are candidates for Holy Baptism, they gather at the font. We continue on p. 12. After the baptisms, the Vigil continues with the Service of Holy Communion.

If there are no candidates for Holy Baptism, the congregation joins in the following renunciation and profession of faith as a remembrance of their baptisms.

STAND

M: In Holy Baptism, God takes away our sins and gives us new life in Christ our Lord. We solemnly renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways; we confess the gift of faith in God the father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I ask you: Do you reject the devil along with all his lies and empty promises?

C: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

M: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?

**C: Yes, I believe in God the father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

M: 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

M: 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. Amen.**

M: Do you intend to continue in this faith, to be diligent in the use of Word and sacrament and in faith and action remain true to God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—as long as you live?

C: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

M: Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven all your sins, strengthen you with his grace to life everlasting.

C: Amen.

The paschal candle is returned to its stand.


SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

The altar candles are lit from the paschal candle. The lights of the church are fully lit, the bells may be rung, and the minister proclaims:

M: ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN!

C: HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!


Refrain



C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

M: For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.
This is the day the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Refrain



C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

GOSPEL: Matthew 28:1-10

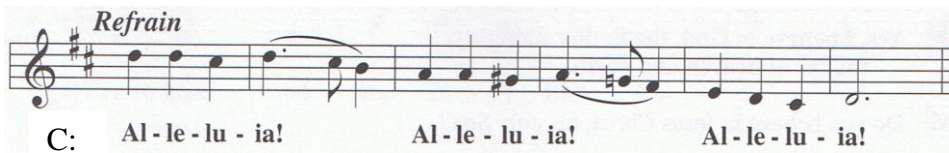
After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like

lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”



PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: O God, who made this most holy night shine with the glory of the resurrection of our Lord, preserve in all your people the Spirit of adoption which you have given, that they may serve you in faith and joy, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms and placed all things under his feet for the benefit of the Church. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (sung)

**C: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory.
You are my God and I will exalt you. I will give you thanks, for you have become my salvation.**

Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of your glory.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, “Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

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

C: (sung) **Amen.**

BE SEATED

DISTRIBUTION

Because God speaks of communing together as an expression of unity in faith we practice close communion. All WELS members are welcome to commune with us.

Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain (CW 142)

The Day of Resurrection (CW 166)

THANKSGIVING

STAND

THANK THE LORD (sung)

C: Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev’ryone what he has done.

Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.

He renews his promises and leads the people forth in joy with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia! Alleluia!

M: Almighty God, you give us the joy of celebrating our Lord’s resurrection. Give us also the joys of life in your service, and bring us at last to the full joy of life eternal, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

C: Amen.

BE SEATED

The Vigil service traditionally does not include a benediction.

CLOSING HYMN

Jesus Lives! The Victory’s Won (CW 145:4,5)

If it is possible and convenient to you, please return the service folder to the ushers as you leave. They will be used on Sunday and may be taken home afterwards.

The Three Holy Days continues on Sunday. Easter Sunrise worship will be at 6:30 a.m. Easter Festival worship will be at 9:00 a.m. Communion will be a part of worship at both services.