



# MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

April 19, 2014  
Easter Vigil

Pastor Randy Ott

*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 LESSONS

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 in the shadow of death.

### CREATION: *Genesis 1:1-2:3*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the

water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

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***

As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn’t we say to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians’? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”

Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.”

Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. During the last watch of the night the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, “Let’s get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.”

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.” Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

“I will sing to the Lord,  
for he is highly exalted.  
Both horse and driver  
he has hurled into the sea.”

**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***

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove

from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.”

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***

But I will leave within you  
the meek and humble.  
The remnant of Israel  
will trust in the name of the Lord.  
They will do no wrong;  
they will tell no lies.  
A deceitful tongue  
will not be found in their mouths.  
They will eat and lie down  
and no one will make them afraid.”

Sing, Daughter Zion;  
shout aloud, Israel!  
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,  
Daughter Jerusalem!  
The Lord has taken away your punishment,  
he has turned back your enemy.  
The Lord, the King of Israel, is with you;  
never again will you fear any harm.  
On that day  
they will say to Jerusalem,  
“Do not fear, Zion;  
do not let your hands hang limp.  
The Lord your God is with you,  
the Mighty Warrior who saves.  
He will take great delight in you;  
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,  
but will rejoice over you with singing.”

“I will remove from you  
all who mourn over the loss of your appointed festivals,  
which is a burden and reproach for you.  
At that time I will deal  
with all who oppressed you.  
I will rescue the lame;  
I will gather the exiles.

I will give them praise and honor  
in every land where they have suffered shame.  
At that time I will gather you;  
at that time I will bring you home.  
I will give you honor and praise  
among all the peoples of the earth  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your very eyes,”  
says the Lord.

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.**