

+ VIGIL OF EASTER: MARCH 30, 2024 +

Easter Vigil Worship Notes

Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book lays out the Easter Vigil in six parts: the Service of Light, the Service of Readings, the Service of Holy Baptism, the Service of Prayer, the Service of the Word, and the Service of the Sacrament. Each part has its own integrity and contributes to the progression of the whole. The Service of Light, in which the paschal candle is consecrated for use and lighted as a sign of the Lord's resurrection, may take place at a bonfire outside the church building. To accentuate the continuity of this night with the Passion of our Lord, the gathering may occur where the congregation assembled for the procession with palms on Passion Sunday. After the consecration of the paschal candle, the people follow it into the church, as Israel followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night in the exodus from Egypt. During this procession, "The Light of Christ" ("Thanks be to God") is chanted at three points, which may replicate the points at which the sentence "Behold, the life-giving cross" was stated during the adoration of the cross in the Good Friday service. These ceremonial associations contribute to the way in which the Easter Vigil holds together the cross and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the New Testament Passover.

The Service of Light crescendos in the chanting of the Exsultet (which ideally is sung rather than spoken). This beautiful proclamation of the paschal mystery sets the tone of the entire Easter Vigil, celebrating the fulfillment of the Old Testament exodus in the resurrection of the Christ. It rings out in the night in much the same way that the candles break into the darkness with their shimmering light. There is the tension of waiting, a pregnant expectation of that which has already been accomplished but has yet to be openly announced. It is no secret that Christ has risen from the dead—no more so now than on Ash Wednesday or at any other time throughout Lent. Yet the Church on earth lives in, with, and under the cross of Christ; thus, she experiences the now-and-not-yet aspect of the resurrection in the Word of the Lord.

Although the handheld candles of the congregation should be carefully extinguished at the end of the Exsultet, the Service of Readings should proceed in semidarkness with only as much light as necessary for the reading of the Holy Scriptures and for the prayers and canticles of the people. The readings are the distinctive and definitive heart of the Easter Vigil. They set forth a series of Old Testament prophecies and types of the Christ, of His cross and resurrection, and of the Church's participation in His dying and rising again.

Whether or not there are catechumens to be baptized at the Easter Vigil, the Service of Baptism follows the Service of Readings as a return to the death and resurrection of repentance and faith that all the baptized share with Christ by the washing of water with His Word and Spirit. Here is the crossing of the Red Sea with the One who is greater than Moses; this already anticipates the crossing of the Jordan with the New Testament Joshua (Jesus, the Christ).

This returning to the significance of Holy Baptism through contrition, repentance, and faith in the forgiveness of sins is to be the daily and lifelong discipline of every Christian. It is here embraced at the very heart of the Easter Vigil, in remembrance and celebration of the cross and resurrection of Christ. It is not meant to replace the daily taking up of the cross to follow Jesus as His disciples, but it is observed in service and support of that Christian faith and life. This is the fulfillment of Lent and the rebirth of an Easter life.

It is in that newness of life in Christ that the Church proceeds with the Divine Service that throughout the year constitutes her weekly proclamation of His death and celebration of His resurrection. The Divine Service of the Easter Vigil is somewhat simpler than the usual Sunday observance, yet it is not as full and festive as the chief Divine Service on Easter Sunday will be. The same basic movement takes place: from the Word of the Gospel to the Word made flesh in Holy Communion, received in faith and with thanksgiving. In this case, the Prayer of the Church (in the Litany of the Resurrection) precedes the basic pattern of the Word preached and the Sacrament administered, which serves to further heighten the unity of the Holy Gospel and Holy Communion.

Indeed, the Service of the Word at the Easter Vigil is really as much or more a part of the entire Eucharistic Rite rather than a separate component. In contrast to the deliberate and steady pacing of the Readings, the Service of the Word proceeds forward swiftly. Ideally, this would occur around midnight, as there is now a striking transition from darkness to light, from the sobriety of Holy Week to the sights and sounds and celebration of the Easter feast. That is signaled by the Easter acclamation: "Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!" The altar candles are now lighted from the paschal candle, the lights in the church are turned on, bells are rung, the organ opens in jubilation, the Gloria in Excelsis is sung, and the Lord's altar is prepared for the Sacrament (there is no offering or offertory in the usual manner).

The proclamation of the Easter Gospel testifies that the Jesus who died and was buried is not only no longer in the tomb, but has been raised bodily from the dead. And now the crucified and risen One appears among His own. It is by and with His Gospel Word and Holy Sacrament that Christ abides among the people of this congregation in this time and place. The preaching of this Gospel should be straightforward and direct, brief and to the point. All of Holy Week and the entire Easter Vigil have been an extended proclamation and catechesis of the Word, the Law and the Gospel, to repentant faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

+ SERVICE OF LIGHT +

Invocation

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:

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:

P His are time and eternity; His are the glory and dominion, now and forever.

He puts the five wax nails into the candle, saying:

P By His wounds we have healing both now and forever. Amen.

Then, lighting the candle from the newly kindled fire, he says:

P 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 says:

A The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

When the candle bearer reaches the middle of the nave, he says for the second time:

A The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

When the candle bearer arrives at the front, he turns to face the congregation.

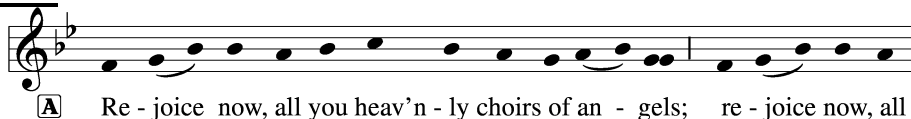
After all have reached their places, the candle bearer lifts the candle high and says the third time:

A The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

After the candle bearer places the paschal candle in its place, the service continues with the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet).

Exsultet



A Re - joice now, all you heav'n - ly choirs of an - gels; re - joice now, all

cre - a - tion; sound forth, trum-pet of sal - va - tion, and pro-claim
the tri - umph of our King. Re - joice too, all the earth,
in the radiance of the light now poured up - on you
and made brilliant by the brightness of the ev - er-last-ing King;
know that the an - cient dark - ness has been for - ev -
er ban - ished. Re - joice, O Church of Christ, clothed in the
bright-ness of this light; let all this house of God ring out with re -
joic - ing, with the prais - es of all God's faith-ful peo - ple.

Preface

LSB 194

P The Lord be with you.
C And with thy spir - it.
P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them up un - to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.
C It is meet and right so to do.

Easter Proclamation

P It is truly good, right, and sal - u - tar - y that we should at all
times and in all plac - es, with all our heart and mind and
voice, praise You, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty ev - er -
last - ing God, and Your only - be - got - ten Son, Je -
sus Christ. For He is the very Pas - chal Lamb who offered
Himself for the sin of the world, who has cleansed us by the
shed - ding of His pre - cious blood. This is the
night when You brought our fathers, the chil - dren of Is - ra - el,
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 bond - age to sin and are restored to life and im - mor - tal - i - ty. This is the night when Christ, the Life, a - rose from the dead. The seal of the grave is broken and the morning of the new cre - a - tion breaks forth out of night. Oh, how wonderful and beyond all telling is Your mercy toward us, O God, that to re - deem a slave You gave Your Son. How holy is this night when all wicked - ness is put to flight and sin is washed a - way. How holy is this night when innocence is re - stored to the fall - en and joy is giv - en to those down - cast. How blessed is the night when man is reconciled to God in Christ. Ho - ly Father, accept now the evening sacrifices of our thanks - giv - ing and praise. Let Christ, the true light and morning star, shine in our hearts, He who gives light to all cre - a - tion, who

lives and reigns with You and the Ho - ly Spir - it, one God,
 now and for - ev - er.
 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.

Please be seated.

+ 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 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 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

Exodus 14:10-15:1

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.

The Fiery Furnace

Daniel 3:1-30

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 'Tell Out, My Soul, the Greatness of the Lord'

LSB 935

+ SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM +

Baptismal Address

P On this holiest of nights, the whole Church of our Lord Jesus Christ recalls His death and burial, rejoicing with great joy in the Gospel of His glorious and mighty resurrection from the dead. The apostle Paul says:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

The 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 all 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 has 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

- 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.

Profession of Faith

- 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.

Blessing

- 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.

The Peace

- P Peace † be with you.
C Amen.

+ 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 +

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, and the altar may be prepared for the Sacrament while the congregation sings the Hymn of Praise.

This Is the Feast (Setting One)

LSB 155



☐ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



1 — Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
2 Pow - er, rich - es, wis - dom, and strength, and
3 Sing with all the peo - ple of God, and
4 Bless - ing, hon - or, glo - ry, and might be to
5 For the Lamb who was slain has be -



blood set us free to be peo - ple of God. *Refrain*
hon - or, bless - ing, and glo - ry are His. *Refrain*
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion: *Stanza 4*
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men. *Refrain*
gun His reign. Al - le - lu - ia. *Final Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

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 28:1–10

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-eighth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." ⁸So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

"Living in the Now, Longing for the Not Yet"

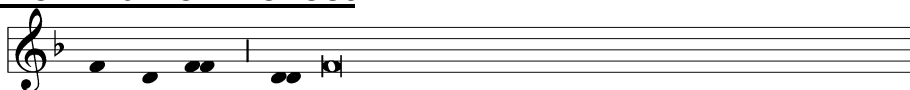
Service of the Sacrament

LSB 194

Distribution Hymn 'I Know That My Redeemer Lives'

LSB 461

Post Communion Collect



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 the en - e - my. 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 for - ev - er; through Je - sus
 Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for - ev - er.
A A - men.

Benedicamus

A Let us bless the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

LSB 202

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make
 His face shine upon you and be gra - cious un - to you.
 The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.



■ A-men, a-men, a - men.

Hymn 'Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle'

LSB 454

Acknowledgments

Vigil of Easter from Lutheran Service Book

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