

Easter Vigil

Holy Saturday, April 4, 2026

7 p.m.

Gathering

The service begins in darkness. The people gather outside the building other than the sanctuary. A fire, built on the ground or in a large brazier and symbolizing the Resurrection, is kindled while the people gather. The central sign is the paschal candle, signifying the triumph of the Resurrection over the darkness of death. Each person may also be given a candle. Silence is kept until all have assembled.

Greeting

Rev. DaeHwa Park

Opening Prayer

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

Lighting of the Paschal Candle

The leader lights the paschal candle from the fire, saying:

Leader: The Light of Christ rises in glory, overcoming the darkness of sin and death.

The paschal candle is lifted so that all may see it, and the leader says:

L: Christ is our light!

A procession then forms.

Procession Into the Church

The candles given to the worshipers are lighted from the one candle that has been lighted from the Paschal candle. As the congregation processes into the darkened sanctuary, the following hymn is sung.

UMH No. 173

“Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies”

RATISBON

The Exsultet (Easter Proclamation)

Leader (Female): Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! Exult, all creation around God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King, is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation!

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

Leader (Male): Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of our King! Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes for ever!

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

Leader (Female): Rejoice, O holy Church! Exult in glory! The risen Savior shines upon you! Let this place resound with joy, echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

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

Leader (Male): It is truly right that we should praise you, invisible, almighty, and eternal God, and your Son, Jesus Christ. For Christ has ransomed us with his blood, and paid the debt of Adam's sin to deliver your faithful people.

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

Leader (Female): This is our Passover feast, when Christ, the true Lamb, is slain. This is the night when first you saved our forebears, you freed the people of Israel from their slavery and led them with dry feet through the sea.

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

Leader (Male): This is the night when the pillar of fire destroyed the darkness of sin! This is the night when Christian everywhere, washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement, and restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

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

Leader (Female): This is the night when Jesus Christ broke the chain of death and rose triumphant from the grave. Night truly blessed, when heaven is wedded to earth, and we are reconciled to you!

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

Leader (Male): Accept this Easter candle, a flame divided but undimmed, a pillar of fire that glows to your honor. Let it mingle with the light of heaven, and continue bravely burning to dispel the darkness of the night!

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

Worship Chair: May the Morning Star, which never sets, find this flame still burning. Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all creation, your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

People: Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!
All: Amen.

*The congregation extinguishes their candles. The lights in the church are turned on.
The paschal candle remains lit and it is to be lighted at all services
from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost.*

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Hebrew Scripture

“Ezekiel 36:24-28”
A New Heart and A New Spirit

New International Version

Epistle Lesson

“Romans 6:3-11”
Buried and Raised with Christ in Baptism

New International Version

Gospel Lesson

“John 20:1-9”
The Empty Tomb

New International Version

Homily

“Becoming Disciples More Faithful Than Teachers”
Part 9. Little Light of God, Shine!

Rev. DaeHwa Park

Response to the Word – UMH 888

“Affirmation from 1 Corinthians 15:1-6 and Colossians 1:15-20”

Liturgist: This is the good news which we have received, in which we stand, and by which we are saved:

People: Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised on the third day, and appeared first to the women, then to Peter and the Twelve, and then to many faithful witnesses.

We believe Jesus is the Christ, the Anointed One of God, the first-born of all creation, the first-born from the dead, in whom all things hold together, in whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell by the power of the Spirit. Christ is the head of the body, the church, and by the blood of the cross reconciles all things to God.

All: Amen.

Acknowledgements

*UMH No. 572

“Pass It On”

PASS IT ON

Dismissal with Blessing

Pastor: We are sent forth in the power of Christ’s resurrection.

People: Alleluia!

Pastor: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (+), and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: Amen.

Going Forth

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!

Special thanks to Margaret Chinn, Christine Fattore, Paul Rabenhorst, Camille Bohanon, Kevin Connolly, readers; Ken Hart, fire pit; YoungHoon Park, organ play, Cynthia Bowman-Gholston, worship chair.

Covenant United Methodist Church

20301 Pleasant Ridge Drive, Montgomery Village, MD 2086
(301) 926-8920

website: www.Covenant-umc.org | email: office@covenant-umc.org