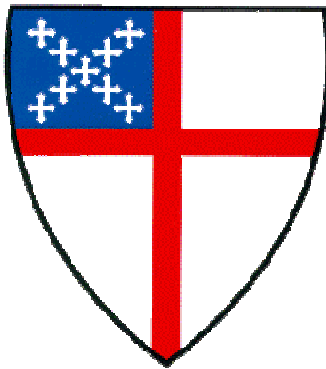


A Service for  
The Great Vigil of Easter



*Episcopal service booklet for lay leaders*

## *Concerning the Vigil*

*It is important to prepare for this service.*

The Great Vigil, when observed, is the first service of Easter Day. It is celebrated at a convenient time between sunset on Holy Saturday and sunrise on Easter Morning. It may also be used as the celebration on Easter Day.

The service normally consists of four parts:

1. The service of Light.
2. The Service of Lessons.
3. Renewal of Baptismal Vows.
4. The Ministry of the Word of the Vigil Eucharist.

The Great Vigil is a major worship service. It may be abbreviated by omitting parts 3 and 4 if desired. The number of readings in Part 2 may also be shortened as indicated in the rubrics. It is customary for many different individuals to take active parts in the service.

It is desirable that each Lesson be read by a different reader.

The following tasks will need to be assigned:

1. Worship Leader: plans and leads the service, says the Collects, leads the prayers or assigns other to lead these parts of the worship service.
2. A person to carry the Paschal Candle into the church.
3. A person to say (or sing) the Exsultet/Prayer at the Paschal Candle.
4. 9 or more Readers for the Lessons. If necessary, a reader may be assigned to more than one lesson. Also, the number of readings may be reduced as indicated in the *rubrics*.

The Worship Leaders may wear a black cassock and white surplice or an alb, and the Worship Leader's Scapular.

It is appropriate when possible that Elders or Members of the St. Simeon & St. Anna society say **The Prayer for the light of the Paschal feast** and to lead the **Renewal of Baptismal Vows**. Elders may also be asked to say the Prayer for God's Grace at the end of the service.

Songs or hymns may be sung before the Renewal of Baptismal Vows and after the Proclamation of Easter.

# The Lighting of the Paschal Candle

*In the darkness, fire is kindled; after which the Worship Leader or person assigned to lead may address the people in these or similar words*

Dear friends in Christ: On this most holy night/morning, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death.

## Prayer for the Light of the Paschal feast

*The Worship Leader or an Elder may say the following prayer*

Let us pray.

O God, through your Son you have bestowed upon your people the brightness of your light: we ask your blessing upon this new fire, and grant that in the Paschal feast we may so burn with heavenly desires, that with pure minds we may attain to the festival of everlasting light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The Paschal Candle is then lighted from the newly-kindled fire, and the person assigned to carry the Candle, leads the procession to the church, pausing three times and singing or saying*

The light of Christ.

*People*            **Thanks be to God.**

*If candles have been distributed to members of the congregation, they are lighted from the Paschal Candle at this time. Other candles and lamps in the church, except for those at the Altar, may also be lighted.*

*The Paschal Candle is placed in its stand.*

*Then the person appointed, standing near the Candle, sings or says the Exsultet, as follows (the sections in brackets may be omitted)*

Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout Salvation for the victory of our mighty King

Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendor, for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King

Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, and let your holy courts, in radiant light, resound with the praises of your people.

| All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame, pray with me to God the Almighty for the grace to sing the  
| worthy praise of this great light; through Jesus Christ his Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with him, in the unity  
| of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

*Answer*            **And also with you.**

*Leader*            Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*Answer*            **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*Leader*

It is truly right and good, always and everywhere, with our whole heart and mind and voice, to praise you, the invisible, almighty, and eternal God, and your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who at the feast of the Passover paid for us the debt of Adam's sin, and by his blood delivered your faithful people.

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 land.

This is the night, when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom of sin, and are restored to grace and holiness of life.

This is the night, when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave.

How wonderful and beyond our knowing, O God, is your mercy and loving-kindness to us, that to redeem a slave, you gave a Son.

How holy is this night, when wickedness is put to flight, and sin is washed away. It restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to those who mourn. It casts out pride and hatred, and brings peace and concord.

How blessed is this night, when earth and heaven are joined and man is reconciled to God.

Holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice, the offering of this candle in your honor. May it shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find it ever burning — he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*It is customary that the Paschal Candle burn at all services from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost.*

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

*The Worship Leader may introduce the Scripture readings in these or similar words*

Let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, how he saved his people in ages past; and let us pray that our God will bring each of us to the fullness of redemption.

*At least two of the following Lessons are read, of which one is always the Lesson from Exodus (Israel's deliverance and the Red Sea). After each Lesson, the Psalm listed, or a hymn or song may be sung. A period of silence may be kept; and the included Collect is then said.*

### **The story of Creation**

Genesis 1:1-2:2

Psalm 33:1-11, *or* Psalm 36:5-10

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Flood**

Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:8-18; 9:8-13

Psalm 46

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty God, you have placed in the skies the sign of your covenant with all living things: Grant that we, who are saved through water and the Spirit, may worthily offer to you our sacrifice of thanksgiving; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac**

Genesis 22:1-18

Psalm 33:12-22, *or* Psalm 16

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

God and Father of all believers, for the glory of your Name multiply, by the grace of the Paschal sacrament, the number of your children; that your Church may rejoice to see fulfilled your promise to our father Abraham; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea**

Exodus 14:10-15:1

Canticle 8, *The Song of Moses (Book of Common Prayer pg. 85)*

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day, you once delivered by the power of your mighty arm your chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation of all nations by the water 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.**

## **God's Presence in a renewed Israel**

Isaiah 4:2-6

Psalm 122

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, you led your ancient people by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night: Grant that we, who serve you now on earth, may come to the joy of that heavenly Jerusalem, where all tears are wiped away and where your saints for ever sing your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Salvation offered freely to all**

Isaiah 55:1-11

Psalm 42:1-7

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God, you have created all things by the power of your Word, and you re-new the earth by your Spirit: Give now the water of life to those who thirst for you, that they may bring forth abundant fruit in your glorious kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

## **A new heart and a new spirit**

Ezekiel 36:24-28

Psalm 42:1-7

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who are reborn into the fellow-ship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

## **The valley of dry bones**

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 30 *or* Psalm 143

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

Almighty God, by the Passover of your Son you have brought us out of sin into righteousness and out of death into life: Grant to those who are sealed by your Holy Spirit the will and the power to proclaim you to all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

## **The gathering of God's people**

Zephaniah 3:12-20

Psalm 98 *or* Psalm 126

Let us pray. *(Silence)*

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

*A song or hymn may be sung before the Renewal of Baptismal Vows*

## The Renewal of Baptismal Vows

*The Worship Leader or an assigned Elder (member of St. Simeon & St. Anna Society) addresses the people in these words, all standing*

Through the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, and raised with him to newness of life. I call upon you, therefore, now that our Lenten observance is ended, to renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and all his works, and promised to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church.

*Leader* Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

*People* **I do.**

*Leader* Do you believe in God the Father?

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

*Leader* Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

*People* **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He 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, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

*Leader* Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

*People* **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.**

*Leader* Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

*People* **I will, with God's help.**

*Leader* Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

*People* **I will, with God's help.**

*Leader* Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

*People* **I will, with God's help.**

*Leader* Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as your-self?

*People* **I will, with God's help.**

*Leader* Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

*People* **I will, with God's help.**

*The Worship Leader or assigned Elder concludes the Renewal of Vows as follows*

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

## Easter is Proclaimed & Ministry of the Word

*The Worship Leader says to the people*

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

*People*            **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*The candles at the Altar may now be lighted from the Paschal Candle. It is also customary to ring bells or to celebrate with joyful noise*

*An Easter hymn or song is sung*

*The Worship Leader then says*

The Lord be with you.

*People*            **And also with you.**

*Leader*            Let us pray.

*The Worship Leader says the following Collect*

Almighty God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## Easter Lessons

*All sit. The following lessons are read. If desired, the first lesson from Romans may be omitted.*

*Epistle*            Romans 6:3-11

*“Alleluia” may be sung and repeated. Or an appropriate song is sung.*

*At this service the Gospel is read like any other lesson. The Reader may introduce the lesson saying: “A reading from Matthew.”*

*Gospel*            Matthew 28:1-10

*After the reading, the Reader may say*

The Word of the Lord

*People*            **Thanks be to God.**



**The Prayers of the People Form III BCP pg. 387**

*The Leader and People pray responsively*

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

*That we all may be one.*

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

*That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

*That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

*That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

*That our works may find favor in your sight.*

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

*That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Give to the departed eternal rest;

*Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

*May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

*Silence*

*The People may add their own petitions.*

*The Worship Leader adds the following Collect.*

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**The Peace**

*All stand. The Worship Leader says to the people*

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

*People*

**And also with you.**

*The peace is exchanged.*

## The Offertory and Lord's Prayer

*An offering is received. The Worship Leader introduces the offering with these or similar words*

With thanksgiving and joy for the gift of Easter, for the love of God in Christ Jesus our resurrected Lord, for new life in our savior, and for the gift of reconciliation, let us offer our gifts.

*A hymn or song is sung during the offering. The gifts are placed on the altar. The Doxology ("Praise God from whom all blessings flow") may be sung.*

*The service concludes with the Lord's Prayer and the Grace.*

*The Worship Leader may introduce the prayer saying: Let us pray the words Jesus taught his disciples;*

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be they 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 trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

*The Worship Leader or Elder says this prayer for God's Grace*

May Almighty God, who has redeemed us and made us his children through the resurrection of his Son our Lord, grace us with the riches of his blessing. **Amen.**

May God, who through the water of baptism has raised us from sin into newness of life, make us holy and worthy to be united with Christ for ever. **Amen.**

May God, who has brought us out of bondage to sin into true and lasting freedom in the Redeemer, bring us to our eternal inheritance. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*People*           **Thanks be to God, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!**