

The Vigil of Easter

April 4, 2026

The Easter Vigil comes from an ancient Christian service in which the faithful would gather in the churches in the night of Easter awaiting that hour toward sunrise when Christ arose from the tomb. This service is the story of God's dealing with mankind from beginning to end. It takes us back to the creation of the world, to the Exodus of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and then takes us forward to our Lord's Second Coming in glory at the end of the age. It reminds us of God's present activity in the Word and Sacraments. All of these are different chapters of the same story of God's gracious activity and all find their center and deeper meaning in the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we celebrate tonight.

The service consists of the Service of Light, the Service of Readings, the Baptismal Service, and the Services of the Word and Holy Communion.

The Service of Light consists of the procession of the Paschal candle into the sanctuary, and the saying of the Exultet, the hymn in praise of the risen Christ.

The Service of Readings take us back to God's saving activity in Old Testament times which foreshadowed the salvation which would be won by His Son.

The Service of Holy Baptism, is made up of three ceremonies. A) The blessing of the baptismal font, which teaches the significance of Holy Baptism. B) The administration of Holy Baptism (if there are any to be baptized). C) The renewal of baptismal vows, in which all worshippers in church recall their baptisms and are reminded that the light of Christ which lives in them through regeneration in Holy Baptism must constantly be renewed by daily dying to sin and daily rising to newness of life.

The final parts of the Vigil are the celebrations of the Word and Holy Communion. This is the climax of the Easter liturgy, in which the life of Christ into which we were born in Holy Baptism is nourished and sustained.

Service of Light

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.

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.

The procession proceeds down the aisle.

At the entrance of the nave, the pastor stops and says:

P: The light of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

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

P: The light of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

When the candle bearer arrives at the candle stand, he turns to face the congregation. After all have reached their places, the candle bearer lifts the candle high and the pastor says the third time:

P: The light of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

After the candle bearer places the paschal candle in its stand, the minister turns to face the people and speaks the EASTER PROCLAMATION.

P: Rejoice now, all you heavenly 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.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

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

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

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places, with all our heart and mind and voice, praise You, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty everlasting God, and Your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. For He is the very Paschal Lamb who offered Himself for the sin of the world, who has cleansed us by the shedding of His precious blood. 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. This is the night when all who believe in Christ are delivered from bondage to sin and are restored to life and immortality. This is the night when Christ, the Life, arose from the dead.

P: The seal of the grave is broken and the morning of the new creation breaks forth out of night. Oh, how wonderful and beyond all telling is Your mercy toward us, O God, that to redeem a slave You gave Your Son. How holy is this night when all wickedness is put to flight and sin is washed away. How holy is this night when innocence is restored to the fallen and joy is given to those downcast. 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 gave light to all creation, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen**

Service of 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.

For the Bible readings, please use the Bibles in your pew and refer to the page numbers listed)

The Creation (Donna Rae)

L: A reading from Genesis, chapters one and two.

Genesis 1:1—2:2 (page 1-2)

L: 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 (Janice)

L: A reading from Genesis, chapters seven, eight, and nine.

Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13 (page 7-9)

L: 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.

The Testing of Abraham (Janice)

L: A reading from Genesis, chapter 22.

Genesis 22:1–18 (pages 20-21)

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: Let us pray.

O God, since You promised faithful Abraham that he would be the father of a great multitude, You provided a substitute for his son, Isaac. In the fullness of time, You sent Your Son, the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, to lay down His life that we might live as faithful children of Abraham. Grant to all people a living trust in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea (Char)

L: A reading from Exodus, chapters 14 and 15.

Exodus 14:10—15:1 (pages 71-72)

L: 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.

Job Confesses the Redeemer (Donna Rae)

L: A reading from Job, chapter 19.

Job 19:20–27 (page 544)

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: Let us pray.

Almighty God, our great Redeemer, in the sacrifice of Your Son You put to death our wretched flesh, and in His rising restored our life. Grant that we may always cling to Christ by faith in this life that at the last we may rejoice to stand in our own flesh and see You face to face; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

The Fiery Furnace (Char)

L: A reading from Daniel, chapter three.

Daniel 3:1–30 (pages 938-940)

L: 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.

Service of Holy Baptism

The SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM is always used at the Vigil as a remembrance of Baptism. The paschal candle will be moved to the baptismal font.

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?

P: 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. (*Rom. 6:3-11*)

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 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 have 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. Amen.

Renunciation of the Devil and Confession of Faith

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.

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.

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

C: Amen.

P: Peace ✠ be with you.

C: Amen.

Following the Service of Holy Baptism, the paschal candle is placed back in its stand and the minister returns to the chancel.

Service of the Word

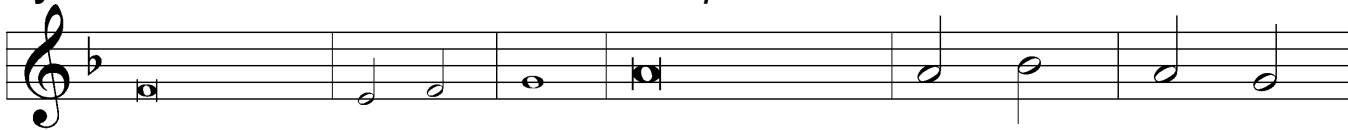
The Vigil continues with a brief service of the Word according to one of the settings of the Divine Service, allowing for the proclamation of the Easter Gospel. It is abbreviated in the following manner.

Easter Acclamation

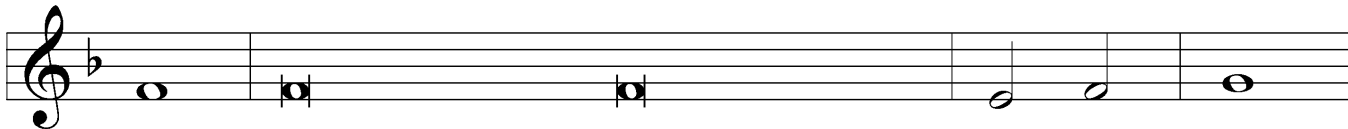
P: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

C: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

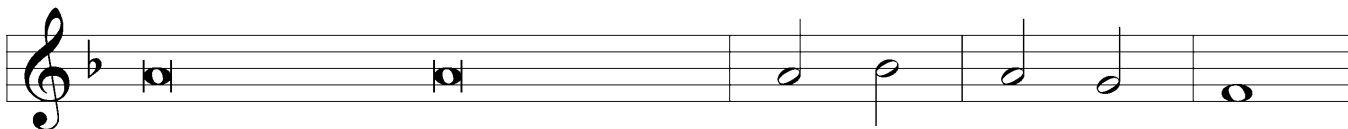
Hymn of Praise: Gloria In Excelsis *LSB p. 187*



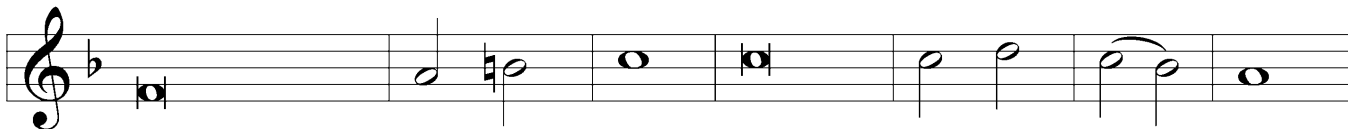
Glory be to God on high: and on earth peace, good - will toward



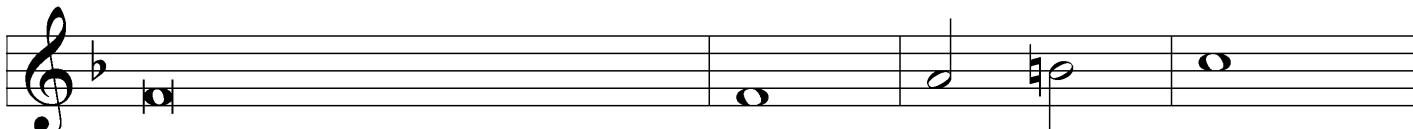
men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor - ship Thee,



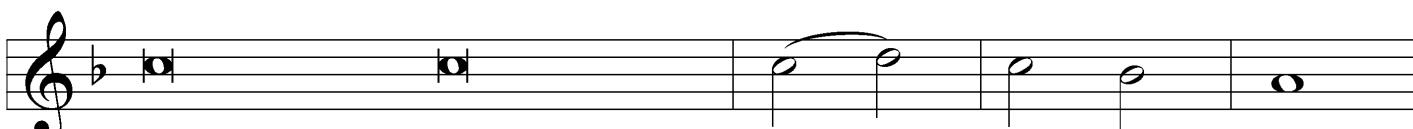
we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.



O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God the Fa-ther Al - mighty.



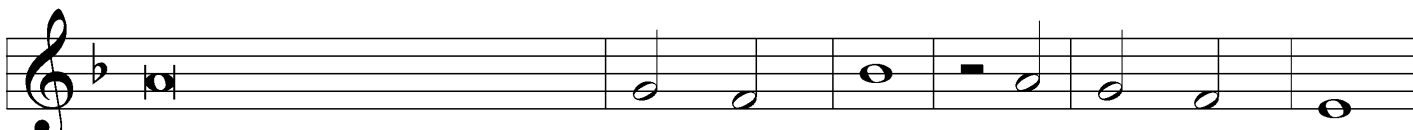
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;



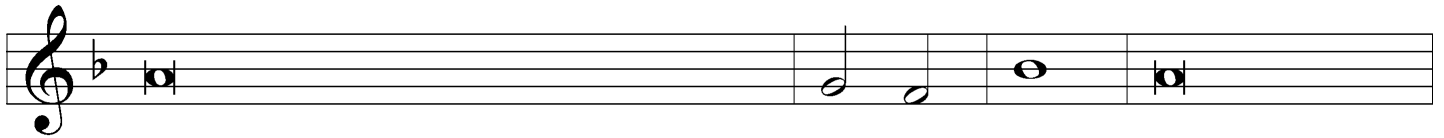
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,



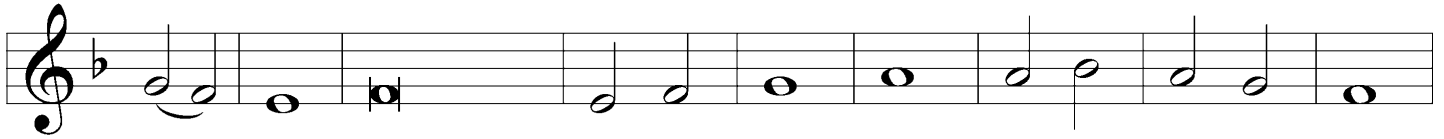
that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy up-on us.



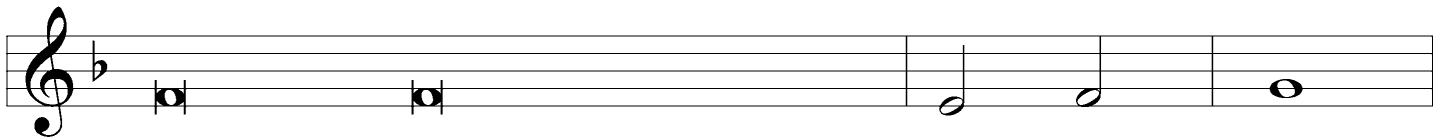
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, re-ceive our prayer.



Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy up-



on us. For Thou only art holy; Thou on - ly art the Lord.



Thou only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Ghost,



art most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

Salutation and Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: 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, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Holy Gospel John 20:1-18 (pages 1153-1154)

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 20th chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

(The Gospel is read)

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon "WHILE IT WAS STILL DARK" (Text: John 20:1)

The Rev. Dr. Brent Klein

Service of Holy Communion

P: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created, and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross. Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer

C: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy 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 forever and ever. Amen.

Words of Our Lord

P: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

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

C: Amen.

Agnus Dei LSB p. 198



C O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the world, have mer-cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the world, have mer-cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak-est a-way the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

Communion Distribution

Hymn: 461, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives"

Following the DISTRIBUTION, the service concludes simply with the following prayer and blessing.

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 our enemy. 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 forever; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: Bless we the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you. **C: Amen.**

Hymn: 601, sts. 1-2, "All Who Believe and Are Baptized"

Easter **SUNDAY**

SERVICES —April 5

**8:00 a.m. - Festival Service with
Holy Communion** (*live streamed and KDHL 920AM*)

**10:30 a.m. - Contemporary Service with Holy
Communion** (*live streamed*)

Easter Breakfast: 9-10:30 a.m.

Serving pancakes, sausage, muffins/cinnamon rolls

Easter Egg/Scavenger Hunt: 10:00 a.m.