

**EASTER VIGIL**

April 4, 2026



*In the  
morning  
I will sing  
of your love.*

*Psalm 59:16, NIV*



# The Vigil of Easter

April 4, 2026

*Tonight's service is an Easter celebration. Sometime after sundown, during these dark hours of the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the dead. But tonight's service is also a vigil. We "stay awake" – spiritually – in honor of our Lord, waiting for his resurrection and reminding ourselves of God's saving acts in the midst of our darkness. Since our Sunday morning gathering is filled with such joy, tonight's service will focus more on being a people in vigil, concluding with the "first light" of Easter.*

## ✠ The Service of Light ✠

In the name of the Father, and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

Beloved in the Lord, on this most holy night, on which the 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. 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 our Lord. Amen.**

### *Lighting and Inscription of the Paschal Candle*

*At the cross:* Jesus Christ, yesterday and today,

*At the alpha (α) and omega (Ω):* The beginning and the end,

*At the year:* His are the seasons – His are the ages – to Him be glory and dominion – through ages eternal. **Amen.**

*At the nails of the cross:* By His wounds, holy and glorious, may He protect us and preserve us Who is Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

*All light their candles from the Paschal candle.  
We begin to process into the church.*

*(Three times we will stop while the pastor chants  
and the congregation responds)*

The Light of Christ  
**Thanks be to God**

*EXSULTET (Easter Proclamation)*

**Rejoice, angelic choirs, rejoice!  
Rejoice now, all creation!  
Let trumpets loudly raise their voice  
To hail the Lord's salvation;  
Let all Christ's holy priesthood sing  
The triumph of their mighty king  
In festive celebration!**

**O earth, exult in radiance bright,  
Illumined by Christ's splendor!  
Your darkness now is put to flight;  
To him due praises render!  
Be glad, O Church! Sing out your songs!  
Your temples fill with shouting throngs  
To hail the glorious victor!**

**Let all who gather round this flame,  
The sign of Christ's arising,  
The deathless light of Christ acclaim,  
His saving mercy prizing;  
That all may live by faith in him  
Who conquered death, despair, and sin  
To make us his forever.**

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you**

Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,  
**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

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 and 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. The seal of the grave is broken and the morning of the new creation breaks forth out of the 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.

*(Brief silence)*

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, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## ✠ The Service of the Word ✠

*God's Saving Action in the Old Testament*

*FIRST READING:* Genesis 1:1-2:3

*VERSE (From Isaiah 12) – Sung twice, first by the Kantor*

**Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he will be my Savior.**

*PRAYER*

*SECOND READING:* Exodus 14:5-31

*VERSE – Sung once by all*

**Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he will be my Savior.**

*PRAYER*

*THIRD READING:* 1 Samuel 17:1-51

*VERSE – Sung once by all*

**Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he will be my Savior.**

*PRAYER*

*FOURTH READING:* Daniel 6:1-28

*VERSE – Sung once by all*

**Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he will be my Savior.**

*PRAYER*

- 1 All you works of God, bless the Lord!  
All you angels, now bless the Lord;  
Come, you heavens and pow'rs that be,  
Praise the Lord and His majesty: *Refrain***

***Refrain***

**Raise your voices high, praise and magnify,  
All you works of God, bless the Lord!  
Raise your voices high, praise and magnify,  
All you works of God, bless the Lord!**

- 2 Sing, you sun and you moon above,  
Stars of heaven, now sing His love;  
Dew and showers, you winds that blow,  
Heat and fire, you ice and snow: *Refrain***
- 3 Frost of winter with song so cold,  
Dews of summer, your song unfold;  
Light and darkness, you day and night,  
Clouds of thunder, you lightnings bright: *Refrain***
- 4 Hills and mountains, now sing His worth,  
All you green things that grow on earth;  
Seas and rivers, you springs and wells,  
Beasts and cattle, you birds and whales: *Refrain***
- 5 Come, humanity, sing along,  
Sing, you people of God, a song;  
Priests and servants, your Lord now bless,  
Join, you spirits and souls at rest: *Refrain***
- 6 Bless the Lord, all you pure of heart;  
All you humble, His praise impart;  
God the Father and Son adore,  
Bless the Spirit forevermore! *Refrain***

## ✠ The Service of Baptism and Baptismal Renewal ✠

On this holiest of nights the whole Church of our Lord Jesus 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, in Romans, the sixth chapter, "Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with Him in His death, we will certainly also be united with Him in His resurrection.

"For we know that our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin -- because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, He cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

### *CONFESSION OF FAITH*

As at your baptism, I now ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the Church, the faith in which we baptize.

*(Stand)*

Do you renounce the forces of evil, the devil and all his empty promises?

**I do.**

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

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

**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.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**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. Amen.**

### *PRAYER*

Let us pray: Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: We give You thanks, for in the beginning Your Spirit moved over the waters and You created heaven and earth. By the gift of water You nourish and sustain us and all living things.

**By the waters of the flood You condemned the wicked and saved those whom You had chosen, Noah and his family. You led Israel by the pillar of cloud and a fire through the sea, out of slavery into the freedom of the promised land.**

In the waters of the Jordan Your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the spirit. By the baptism of His own death and resurrection Your beloved Son has set us free from the bondage to sin and death and has opened the way to the joy and freedom of everlasting life.

**He made water a sign of the kingdom and of cleansing and rebirth. In obedience to His command, we make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

Pour out Your Holy Spirit on us so that through baptism we may be given new life. Wash away the sin of all those who are cleansed by this water and bring us forth as inheritors of Your glorious kingdom.

To you be given praise and honor and worship through Your Son, Jesus our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE HYMN

*Water, Blood and Spirit Crying*

LSB 597

- 1 Water, blood, and Spirit crying,  
By their witness testifying  
To the One whose death-defying  
Life has come, with life for all.
- 2 In a wat'ry grave are buried  
All our sins that Jesus carried;  
Christ, the Ark of Life, has ferried  
Us across death's raging flood.
- 3 Dark the way, yet Christ precedes us,  
Past the scowl of death He leads us;  
Spreads a table where He feeds us  
With His body and His blood.
- 4 Though around us death is seething,  
God, His two-edged sword unsheathing,  
By His Spirit life is breathing  
Through the living, active Word.
- 5 Spirit, water, blood entreating,  
Working faith and its completing  
In the One whose death-defeating  
Life has come, with life for all.

THE LITANY (*Kneel*)

O Lord,  
Have mercy.

O Christ,  
Have mercy.

O Lord,  
Have mercy.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

**Hear us.**

Paschal Lamb, who was offered for us and has taken away the  
sin of the world,

**Have mercy on us.**

Who was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our  
justification,

**Have mercy on us.**

Who foretold Your Passion saying, "The Son of Man must be  
crucified and on the third day rise again,"

**Have mercy on us.**

Who destroyed Death by dying, and by rising to life again has  
brought life and immortality to light,

**Have mercy on us.**

Whose resurrection was first announced by an angel to the  
women,

**Have mercy on us.**

Who appeared to Mary Magdalene and was worshiped by her:

**Have mercy on us.**

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,

**Have mercy on us.**

Who appeared to the disciples, bestowing on them Your peace  
and Your Spirit,

**Have mercy on us.**

Who showed Your wounded hands and side to the apostle  
Thomas that he too might believe,

**Have mercy on us.**

Who appeared to seven disciples on the Sea of Tiberias,  
bringing a miraculous catch of fish,

**Have mercy on us.**

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,

**Have mercy on us.**

Who commissioned Your Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them,

**Have mercy on us.**

By Your glorious resurrection from the dead,

**Good Lord, deliver us.**

By Your victory over sin and death,

**Good Lord, deliver us.**

By the majesty of Your risen body,

**Good Lord, deliver us.**

We poor sinners implore You,

**To hear us, Lord Jesus.**

That we may daily die and rise with You in our Baptism and walk in the freedom of Your forgiveness,

**Grant us, good Lord.**

That we may set our minds on things above and not on earthly things, serving others as we have been served by You,

**Grant us, good Lord.**

That we may dwell with You forever in the new creation as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, together with all the saints,

**Grant us, good Lord.**

Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**Have mercy on us.**

Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**Have mercy on us.**

Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**Grant us Your peace.**

*Silence for meditation*

O Lord,  
**Have mercy.**

O Christ,  
**Have mercy.**

O Lord,  
**Have mercy. Amen.**

*THE EASTER GOSPEL (Stand)*

Matthew 28:1-10

Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 28<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord!**

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And 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. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then 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." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

**He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

- 1 **Christ is arisen  
From the grave's dark prison.  
So let our joy rise full and free;  
Christ our comfort true will be. Alleluia!**
- 2 **Were Christ not arisen,  
Then death were still our prison.  
Now, with Him to life restored,  
We praise the Father of our Lord. Alleluia!**
- 3 **Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Now let our joy rise full and free;  
Christ our comfort true will be. Alleluia!**

**✠ The Service of Holy Communion ✠**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and ever-living God. But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Lord; for He is the Passover Lamb who gave Himself up to take away our sin; who by His death has destroyed death, and by His rising has brought us to eternal life.

**Amen.**

*THE WORDS OF OUR LORD*

*THE LORD'S PRAYER*

Our Father,  
    **who art in heaven,  
    hallowed be 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.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**Amen.**

*THE COMMUNION*

*PRAYER*

*BENEDICTION*

*HYMN*    *I Know that My Redeemer Lives*    *Sts. 1, 2, 3, 5, 8*    *LSB 461*

- 1**    **I know that my Redeemer lives;  
        What comfort this sweet sentence gives!  
        He lives, He lives, who once was dead;  
        He lives, my ever-living head.**
  
- 2**    **He lives triumphant from the grave;  
        He lives eternally to save;  
        He lives all-glorious in the sky;  
        He lives exalted there on high.**

- 3** He lives to bless me with His love;  
He lives to plead for me above;  
He lives my hungry soul to feed;  
He lives to help in time of need.
- 5** He lives to silence all my fears;  
He lives to wipe away my tears;  
He lives to calm my troubled heart;  
He lives all blessings to impart.
- 8** He lives, all glory to His name!  
He lives, my Jesus, still the same;  
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:  
I know that my Redeemer lives!

*POSTLUDE*

*I Know My Redeemer Lives*  
Setting: David W. Music

**THOSE SERVING IN OUR MIDST THIS EVENING:**

Greeter: Aaron Siebrass  
Communion Asst.: Dave Oaks  
Reader: Aaron Siebrass



Sunday, April 5                      Easter Worship – 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Special for Easter:              Easter Breakfast between 9 and 10:30 a.m.  
Children’s Easter Egg Hunt – 10:00 a.m.

## Acknowledgements

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**597 *Water, Blood, and Spirit Crying*** Text: Stephen P. Starke, 1955

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**459 *Christ Is Arisen*** Text: German, 12th–15th cent.; tr. Martin L. Seltz, 1909–67, alt. Tune: Latin, c. 1100; Geistliche Lieder aufs new gebessert, 1533, Wittenberg, ed. Joseph Klug Text: © 1969 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005326 Tune: Public domain

**461 *I Know That My Redeemer Lives*** Text: Samuel Medley, 1738–99, abr. Tune: attr. John C. Hatton, d. 1793 Text and tune: Public domain

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22043**

A member congregation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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