

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

Love God, Love People, Form Faith.

The Vigil of Easter

April 8, 2023

About the Easter Vigil

In its present structure the Vigil dates to the early 2nd century. The Vigil is filled with primordial symbols - light and darkness, fire and water, bread and wine - and with dramatic transitions - from darkness to light, from death to new life, from bondage to liberation, from fasting to great Eucharistic feasting. (“Eucharist” from the Greek for *thanksgiving*.)

Throughout the Vigil, we celebrate Christ’s passage from death to resurrection as a new moment in salvation history, a moment in which Christians are active participants through Word and Baptism and Holy Communion (what Lutherans call “word and sacrament”).

The Vigil consists of four parts: Light, Readings, Baptism and Holy Communion.

1. The ***Service of Light*** focuses on the paschal candle (from *pascha*, Passover), an ancient symbol of the Risen Christ. Fire has long been perceived as a sign of God’s presence. The Service of Light derived from the ancient Jewish custom of lamp-lighting at the beginning of the Sabbath. The early Christians continued ritual lamp-lighting, understanding it as a symbol of the resurrected Christ.
2. The Service of Light culminates with the singing of the Easter Proclamation. “This is the night,” the prayer calls out over and over. For Christians, Easter is the night of the Passover lamb, the escape through the sea, the end of darkness, the rescue from evil, Christ’s triumph over hell, even the marriage of heaven and earth.” The text derives from at least the 4th century; its present form can be traced to the 7th century.
3. How can we understand that gospel message of Christ’s resurrection? In the ***Service of Readings***, “we look to other parts of the Scriptures to see how God brings life out of death.” We read stories of God’s mighty acts in history, understanding them by the light of Christ.
4. The ***Service of Holy Baptism*** follows. Twenty-first century liturgical churches are in the process of recovering the ancient practice (since at least the beginning of the 3rd century) of the Vigil as the primary time to celebrate baptism. That is because baptism is the sacrament of being joined to Christ’s death and resurrection, as we hear in tonight’s reading from Romans. Baptism is the Christian’s passage from darkness to light, from guilt to grace, from burial with Christ to new life in his resurrection. We enact all of this tonight!

5. The Vigil comes to its climax, in the power of Christ's death and resurrection, as we share in *the first Eucharist of Easter*. In this sacrament, we eat and drink the real presence of the Risen Christ in the bread and wine, the body and blood.

Service of Light

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Sisters and brothers in Christ, on this most holy night when our Savior Jesus Christ passed from death to life, we gather with the church throughout the world in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of Jesus Christ. Through light and the word, through water, bread and wine, we proclaim Christ's death and resurrection, share Christ's triumph over sin and death, and await Christ's coming again in glory. May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

Candles are lit. We process bringing Christ's light into the Church.

The light of Christ!
Thanks be to God!

The light of Christ!
Thanks be to God!

The light of Christ!
Thanks be to God!

Rejoice now, all heavenly choirs of angels,
and celebrate the divine mysteries with exultation;
and, for the victory of so great a King, sound the trumpet of salvation.

Exult, also O earth,
enlightened with such radiance;
and made brilliant by the splendor of the eternal King
know that the ancient darkness has been banished from all the world.

Be glad also, O mother Church,
clothed with the brightness of such a light,
And let this house resound with the triumphant voices of the peoples.

The Great Thanksgiving

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 our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and salutary that we should with full devotion of heart and mind and voice praise the invisible God, the Father Almighty, and his only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ;

Who paid for us the debt of Adam to the eternal Father, and who, by his precious blood, redeemed us from the bondage to the ancient sin.

For this indeed is the Paschal Feast in which the true Lamb is slain, by whose blood the doorposts of the faithful are made holy.

This is the night in which, in ancient times, you delivered our forbearers, the children of Israel, from the land of Egypt; and led them, dry-shod, through the Red Sea.

This is the night in which all who believe in Christ are rescued from evil and the gloom of sin, are renewed in grace and holiness, by the rising brightness.

This is the night in which, breaking the chains of death, Christ arises from hell in triumph.

O night truly blessed which alone was worthy to know the time and the hour wherein Christ arose again from hell!

O night truly blessed in which heaven and earth are joined – things human and things divine.

We therefore pray to you, O Lord, that He, in whose honor this candle burns, will continue to vanquish the darkness of this night and faithfully shed light on all the human race;

Through the same Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and rules with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Eternal giver of life and light, this holy night shines with the radiance of the risen Christ. Renew your church with the Spirit given us in baptism, that we may worship you in sincerity and truth and may shine as a light in the world, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please extinguish your candle when the pastor extinguishes his.

Service of Readings

Reading: Genesis 1:1—2:4a God Creates The World

Response: *Earth Is Full of Wit and Wisdom*

Hymn 1064

Bulletin page 11

(Silence for Prayer)

Prayer

Reading: Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21

God Delivers Us From Bondage

Response: *Take up the Tambourine*

Lloyd Larson

Women's Choir

(Silence for Prayer)

Prayer

Reading: Isaiah 55:1-11

God Offers Salvation Freely to All

Response: *Surely God Is My Salvation*

Hymn 926

Bulletin page 12

(Silence for Prayer)

Prayer

Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

A Vision of New Life Coming Into Us As a People

Response: *Dem Bones*

arrangement Audrey Snyder

Women's Choir

(Silence for Prayer)

Prayer

Reading: Jonah 1:1—2:1

A Story of Deliverance

Response: *Jonah Prayed*

Carolyn Jennings

Women's Choir

(Silence for Prayer)

Prayer


Reading: Daniel 3:1-29 A Story of Deliverance

Response: *Canticle of Creation*
Women's Choir

A. Gregory Murry

Canticle of Creation

Refrain



To God be high - est glo - ry and praise for - ev - er.

Text: Song of the Three 35-65, tr. The Grail

Music: A. Gregory Murray

Text © The Grail, admin. GIA Publications, Inc. Music © 1986 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

(Silence for Prayer)

Prayer

New Testament Reading Romans 6:3-11

Dying and Rising with Christ

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the



words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Gospel Reading John 20:1-18

Seeing the Risen Christ

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Affirmation of Baptism

Profession of Faith

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

I renounce them.

Do you believe in God the Father?

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

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and 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 catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

People of God, do you promise to support and pray for one another in your life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life. Stir up in your people the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence both now and forever. **Amen.**

The First Holy Communion of Easter

Offering

Offering of Music *Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain* arr. Horn/ Bender

Offertory Prayer

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

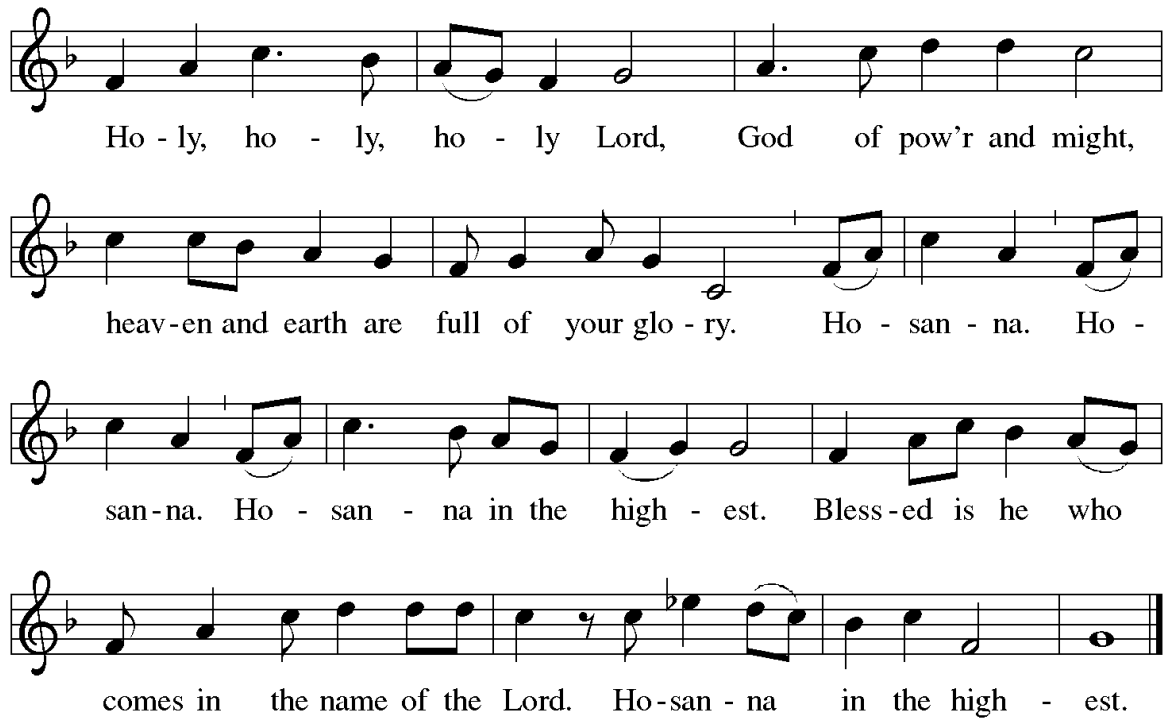
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
 san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Communion

Communion Hymn *Joyful Is the Dark*

Hymn 1096
 Bulletin page 13

Table Blessing

Prayer After Communion

Blessing

**The God of all,
 who raised † Jesus from the dead,
 bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit
 to live in the new creation. Amen.**

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Postlude

Day of Delight and Beauty Unbounded

Setting, Anne Krentz

Organ



Tonight we begin in the darkness of the tomb and conclude with the Alleluias of Easter! Stay after worship to celebrate Easter with champagne and sparkling cider, strawberries, chocolate and s'mores!

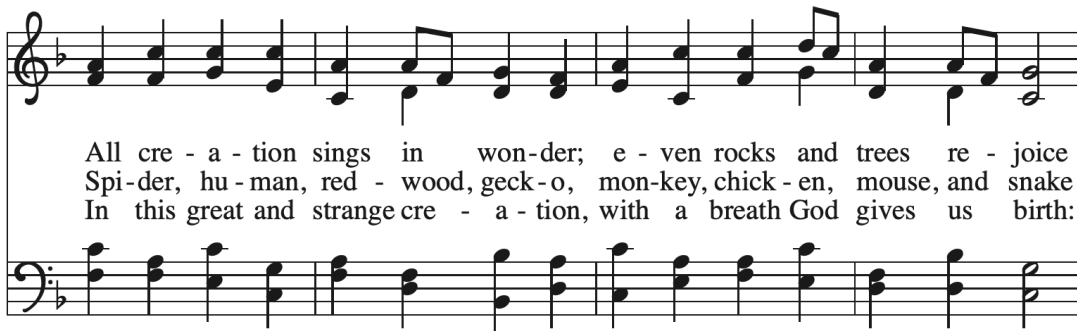
Earth Is Full of Wit and Wisdom



1 Earth is full of wit and wis - dom, sound - ing God's de - light - ed laugh,
 2 Earth is full of wit and wis - dom, wo - ven in - to har - mo - ny.
 3 Earth is full of wit and wis - dom: pen - guin, pla - ty - pus, and snail,



from the ti - ny ro - ly - po - ly to the tree - top - tall gi - raffé.
 Ev - 'ry crea - ture has a pur - pose, ev - 'ry flow'r and bum - ble - bee.
 cac - tus, sea slug, oak, and al - gae, from the mi - crobe to the whale.



All cre - a - tion sings in won - der; e - ven rocks and trees re - joice
 Spi - der, hu - man, red - wood, geck - o, mon - key, chick - en, mouse, and snake
 In this great and strange cre - a - tion, with a breath God gives us birth:



as they join the ring - ing cho - rus: ech - oes of our Mak - er's voice.
 live with - in a sin - gle fab - ric: cloth that on - ly God could make.
 born of soil to live as stew - ards, called to love and serve the earth.

Text: Adam M. L. Tice, b. 1979

Music: HOLY MANNA, W. Moore, *Columbian Harmony*, 1825; arr. hymnal version

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Arr. © 2003 Augsburg Fortress

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Surely God Is My Salvation



1 Sure - ly God is my sal - va - tion,
 2 Thus with joy you shall draw wa - ter
 3 Tell the na - tions of God's glo - ry,



I will trust and shall not fear. God the Lord is
 from sal - va - tion's wells and springs. Sing your thanks to
 make this known in all the earth. Praise the Lord, the



strong and might - y, my sal - va - tion true.
 God Al - might - y for these won - drous deeds.
 God of Is - rael, call up - on God's name.

Refrain



Shout a-loud and sing for joy, O daugh-ter Zi - on!



Great in your midst is the Lord, the Ho - ly One!



Shout a-loud and sing for joy, O daugh-ter Zi - on!



Great in your midst is the Lord, the Ho - ly One!

Text: Zebulon M. Highben, b. 1979, based on Isaiah 12:2-6
 Music: YISREAL V'ORAITA, Hasidic melody
 Text © 2009 Augsburg Fortress

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Joyful Is the Dark



1 Joy - ful is the dark, ho - ly, hid - den God,
 2 Joy - ful is the dark, Spir - it of the deep,
 3 Joy - ful is the dark, shad - owed sta - ble floor;
 4 Joy - ful is the dark, cool - ness of the tomb,
 5 Joy - ful is the dark, depth of love di - vine,



roll - ing cloud of night be - yond all nam - ing:
 wing - ing wild - ly o'er the world's cre - a - tion,
 an - gels flick - er, God on earth con - fess - ing,
 wait - ing for the won - der of the morn - ing;
 roar - ing, loom - ing thun - der - cloud of glo - ry,



maj - es - ty in dark - ness, en - er - gy of love,
 silk - en sheen of mid - night plum - age black and bright,
 as with ex - ul - ta - tion, Mar - y, giv - ing birth,
 nev - er was that mid - night touched by dread and gloom:
 ho - ly, haunt - ing beau - ty, liv - ing, lov - ing God.



Word - in - flesh, the mys - ter - y pro - claim - ing.
 swoop - ing with the beau - ty of a ra - ven.
 hails the in - fant cry of need and bless - ing.
 dark - ness was the cra - dle of the dawn - ing.
 Hal - le - lu - jah! Sing and tell the sto - ry!

Text: Brian Wren, b. 1936

Music: LINDNER, Carlton R. Young, b. 1926

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Day of Delight and Beauty Unbounded



1 Day of de - light and beau-ty un - bound-ed, tell the news, the gos - pel
2 Day of de - light and beau-ty un - bound-ed, tell the news, the gos - pel



spread! Day of all won - der, day of all splen - dor, praise Christ
spread! Day of all won - der, day of all splen - dor, praise Christ



ris - en from the dead! Sing of the sun from dark - ness ap -
ris - en from the dead! Sing now of mourn - ing turned in - to



pear - ing; sing of the seed from bar - ren earth green - ing;
danc - ing; sing now the mys - t'ry, hope of our glo - ry;



sing of cre - a - tion, al - le - lu - ia! Sing of the
sing with thanks - giv - ing, al - le - lu - ia! Sing now of



stream from Je - sus' side flow - ing; sing of the saints in
fast - ing turned in - to feast - ing; sing the Lord's fa - vor



wa - ter made ho - ly; sing of sal - va - tion, al - le - lu - ia!
last - ing for - ev - er; sing, all things liv - ing, al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Music: IN DIR IST FREUDE, Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi, 1556-1622

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Leading our Worship and Hospitality Tonight

- Acolyte/Crucifer..... Carol Weirs
- Altar Guild
-
- Audio-Visual Team.....
- Bread Baker..... Janice Svendsen
- Communion Assistants (8:00) Susan Bosworth and Carol Wiers
-
- Lectors.....Jane DeSolms ,Keith Egloff, Nancy Egloff, Sandy Croushore, Marj Gottschalk-Trone, Jim Larsen and Terri Larsen
- Tellers.....Jane deSolms, Susan Britcher, Jim Larsen
- Ushers..... Glenn Joppa

St. Stephen Lutheran Church

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Love God, Love People, Form Faith.

(St. Stephen Lutheran Church Vision Statement)

All of Us, Called Through Our Baptisms

Pastor Jon Nelson (320-295-8861)

Karen Ives – Director of Music (757-229-6688)

Hollie Jones – Parish Administrator (229-6688)

Diana Tiller-Dichtel – Parish Nurse (232-5924)

Kristie Kelley – Preschool Director (229-6688)

Peninsula Pastoral Counseling Center (873-2273; counselors are in Williamsburg on Thursdays)

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