

The Vigil of Easter

April 11, 2020 ✝ Mount Olive Lutheran Church



Focus on the Season: The Vigil of Easter

Since ancient times the Church has gathered on this night to keep watch, a vigil in the dark of Holy Saturday, ready for the first light of dawn to signal Christ's resurrection. We light a new fire, light our new Paschal Candle from that fire, sing the ancient prayer, the Exsultet, to rejoice at the spreading of Christ's light. We read from the Hebrew Scriptures a number of readings, remember our baptism (or have baptisms on this night), announce the resurrection with music and light and color and sound, and celebrate the first Eucharistic feast.

We can't do all that this year as we are apart. But in many ways the whole world waits tonight in the darkness of Holy Saturday, wondering when the light will come again. The vigils we keep in our homes might not be the same as together, but their powerful poignancy and truth will unite us across distances, even as they unite us to all believers around the world tonight.

Keep this document open on the screen, to aid in your prayer today. The links are embedded in this pdf, so you don't have to return to the email. However, you can also print these pages and use the links in the email.

Place in your worship space a new pillar candle if you have one, or one you can set aside for the year for this purpose, other candles you'd like to have lighted, your baptismal candle, if you have it, a small bowl of water, matches, and bells.



Centering and Gathering

Gather in darkness if possible. Don't light the candles yet.

- 📖 Beloved 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.

Light your pillar candle, a new fire in the darkness of this time.

- 📖 Let us pray. Eternal God, in Jesus Christ you have given the light of life to all the world. Bless this new fire, and increase in us a desire to shine forth with the brightness of Christ's rising, until we feast at the banquet of eternal light: through the Sun of righteousness, Jesus Christ our Lord.

🗣 **Amen**

- 📖 The light of Christ!

🗣 **Thanks be to God**

Light any other candles in your home.

EXSULTET – *Click the title to listen*

Sung at Mount Olive at the Great Vigil of Easter, April 20, 2019; Susan Cherwien, soloist

Service of Readings

THE READINGS

These are the five readings we would have read tonight at Mount Olive. Read them aloud to each other if you wish.

Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a, Creation.

Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21; Deliverance at the Red Sea.

Ezekiel 37:1-14, Valley of the dry bones.

Isaiah 61:1-4, 9-11, Clothed in the garments of salvation.

Daniel 3:1-29; Deliverance from the fiery furnace.

Baptismal Remembrance

If you have it, light your baptismal candle from the newly lighted candle. Place it in your worship space.

With the water in the bowl, make a sign of the cross on your forehead, or, if there are more than one present, cross each other's foreheads, saying:

Child of God, remember that you belong to God, are washed in the waters of baptism, sealed with the cross of Christ, and carried in the love of the Triune God forever.

Amen

Christ is Risen!

PROCLAIM THE RESURRECTION

Declare the Good News to each other. Do this three times. Open the window and shout it to the world!

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen, indeed!

Ring bells, turn on lights, make music, dance, and rejoice! While doing this, you can listen to the [Proclamation and Hymn \(ELW 367, "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds"\)](#), from the Vigil of Easter at Mount Olive, 2015 (click the title to watch)

EASTER READINGS

Read the two readings appointed for after the Proclamation of Christ's resurrection.

Romans 6:3-11

John 20:1-18

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Our Assisting Minister for today, Consuelo Gutierrez-Crosby, has prepared intercessory prayers for us to pray this day. As our prayers rise up from all over the metro area and beyond, once more we are joined together in Christ. We add to our prayers the family of LeRoy Erlandson, who died last Sunday, and we offer prayers for healing for Julie Erlandson's mother, Charlotte Koshiol.

Pray these aloud, perhaps with one as leader if there are more than one gathered, and add any you feel drawn to add.

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Silence

God of resurrection, Lord of life and light, this night your holy church gathers at home as they did in times of old. We center our Easter celebration around fire and water symbols of renewal. Fill our cups to the brim with living water so that we may be refreshed. *God, in your mercy . . .*

God of creation, you formed the universe, the earth, its inhabitants and all things and declared all of it good. You filled our world with beauty and wonder. We are grateful for the sights and sounds of spring. Shine your glory upon us with each morning sunrise and with each twinkling star in the night sky. Help us to be good stewards of all that you have bestowed upon us. *God, in your mercy . . .*

God of resurrection, Lord of life and light, our world is facing great uncertainty casting shadows of darkness and doubt. Shine the light of our Risen Lord upon us this Easter so that it breaks through bringing calm and lightening our grieving and heavy hearts. May that same light bring healing and comfort to those who are lonely, sick and troubled. *God, in your mercy . . .*

God of justice, guide leaders of governments, organizations and churches. Grant them wisdom in their decisions and give them courage to lead with integrity, with a focus on equity, and in ways that are right and just. Cast away fear, anger and discrimination that cause us to harm one another. *God, in your mercy . . .*

God of resurrection, in your rising of Christ you have delivered all people. Help us to recognize your face not only in those familiar to us but in the that of the stranger. Give us courage to stand up for all peoples so that all may know freedom from conflict, corruption, discrimination, and inequality. Fill us with passion to proclaim the good news that Christ is alive and death is conquered.

God, in your mercy . . .

God of compassion, provide wisdom to researchers and scientists in their search for cures and remedies to all that ails us. Keep doctors, nurses, and health professionals safe as they provide care for those who are sick. Comfort families grieving the death of loved ones and bring them peace. We pray for Charlotte (Koshiol), for the family of LeRoy who died earlier this week, and for those we name before you now *God, in your mercy . . .*

If there are other petitions you feel drawn to pray, add them now.

God of resurrection and Lord of life, bless all the faithful witnesses past and present whose voices joyously sing “Alleluia, Christ has Risen!” Fill our hearts and homes with joyful praise in celebration that Christ has been raised and that we too will be raised to new life. *God, in your mercy . . .*

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, grant us, O God, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Risen Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

LORD’S PRAYER AND BLESSING

Pray the Lord’s Prayer together.

Someone may offer a blessing on behalf of all:

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard and keep our hearts and minds in + Christ Jesus. Amen.

POSTLUDE: [Fugue in G Major, BWV 577, “Jig”](#) – J. S. Bach

[Click the title to listen](#)

Played by Cantor Cherwien on the Third Sunday of Easter, April 15, 2018