

Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

**A BIBLICAL, CONFESSIONAL AND TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION IN THE CHICAGO REGION
COMMITTED TO MINISTERING TO SINNERS
WITH THE FORGIVING PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

HOLY SATURDAY

APRIL 4, 2026

✠ THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER ✠



Prayer before Worship

Gracious Lord, we give thanks that in Holy Baptism we receive forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and eternal salvation. As we celebrate our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection this evening, bless us continually by Your Word and Spirit that we may faithfully keep the covenant into which we have been called, boldly confess our Savior, and finally share with all Your saints the joys of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Great Vigil of Easter

The Great Vigil of Easter is the culmination of the Holy Triduum. It brings to a festive completion the three-day observance that began on Holy Thursday and continued on Good Friday. In itself, the Easter Vigil is a transitional service. Just as Holy Thursday both concluded Lent and began the Triduum, so the Easter Vigil both completes the Triduum and ushers in the Fifty Days of Eastertide. This transition is poignantly manifested in the course of the vigil, which progresses purposefully from darkness to light. It celebrates the passage of Christ from death into life, and the Church's passage through death into life with Him through Holy Baptism. The night begins with hushed anticipation, proceeds with eager expectation, and finally culminates in the exuberant celebration of the Paschal Feast.

The Easter Vigil is very much a Christian "Passover," that is, a celebration of the great exodus that Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, accomplished by His sacrificial death and revealed in His resurrection from the dead. All that the Lord God did for Israel in bringing His people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land He has perfectly fulfilled for all the baptized. In particular, the Easter Vigil proclaims and confesses that, as we have died with Christ by our Baptism into His death, so we also rise with Him and live with Him in newness of life. It is for us that He died and rose from the dead. The Vigil lays hold of that sure and certain hope of the Gospel—not by any sort of magic, but by the Word and Spirit of God. In the Paschal Feast of Holy Communion on Easter Day, we eat and drink the true Passover Lamb. His blood covers us and protects us from sin, death, and hell; His body feeds and sustains us on our way.

The Easter Vigil is presented in six parts: the Service of Light, the Service of Readings, the Service of Holy Baptism, the Service of Prayer, and—on Easter Sunday—the Service of the Word and the Service of the Sacrament. Each part has its own integrity and contributes to the progression of the whole. In the Service of Light, the Paschal candle is consecrated for use and lighted as a sign of the Lord's resurrection. After the consecration of the Paschal candle, the people follow it into the church, as Israel followed the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night in the exodus from Egypt.

The Service of Light crescendos in the proclamation of the Exsultet. This beautiful hymn of praise announces the paschal mystery and sets the tone for the entire Easter Vigil, celebrating the fulfillment of the Old Testament exodus in the resurrection of Christ. It rings out in the night, just as the candles break into the darkness with their shimmering light.

The Service of Readings forms the distinctive and definitive heart of the Easter Vigil. These readings present a series of Old Testament prophecies and types of Christ, of His cross and resurrection, and of the Church's participation in His dying and rising again. In the Jewish Passover, families would gather and recount these promises of Holy Scripture through storytelling. In the same way, the Church gathers tonight to hear and confess these mighty acts of God.

The Service of Baptism follows the Readings as a return to the death and resurrection of repentance and faith that all the baptized share with Christ through the washing of water with His Word and Spirit. This return to the significance of Holy Baptism—through contrition, repentance, and faith in the forgiveness of sins—is the daily and lifelong discipline of every Christian. It does not replace the daily taking up of the cross to follow Jesus, but it supports and sustains that Christian faith and life. This is the fulfillment of Lent and the rebirth of Easter life.

May the Father, and the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit bless you with His gracious gifts this Holy Night.

Soli Deo Gloria

Service of Light

The Service begins outside under the Porte Cochere

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

G Amen.

Invitation

P Beloved in the Lord, on this most holy night, in which Our Lord Jesus passed over from death into life, we are gathered here in vigil and in 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.

Collect

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

G Amen.

Blessing of the Paschal Candle

P Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever, the beginning and the ending, the Alpha and the Omega. His are time and eternity; His are the glory and dominion, now and forever. By His wounds we have healing both now and forever.

Amen.

Hebrews 13:8; Revelation 22:13, 1:6; Isaiah 53:5

The paschal candle is lit.

P May the light of Christ, who is risen in glory from the dead, scatter all the darkness of our hearts and minds.

John 8:12

Collect

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.

All light their candles from the paschal candle and follow the candle bearer in procession into the darkened church.

The bearer of the paschal candle stops at the entrance to the nave.

Lux Christi

A The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

The bearer of the paschal candle stops in the middle of the nave.

A The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

The bearer of the Paschal Candle arrives at the Baptismal font and the congregation is seated.

A The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

The bearer of the Paschal Candle places it in its holder.

Exsultet

A Rejoice now, all you heav'nly 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.

All extinguish their candles.

Sit

Service of Readings

- ☐ On 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.

The Creation

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3

After the reading: ☐ This is the Word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

- ☐ 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.

- ☑ **Amen.**



Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea

Exodus 14:10–15:1

After the reading: **P** 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.

The Valley of Dry Bones

Ezekiel 37:1-14

After the reading: **P** This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P Let us pray.

O God, Your Son came as the Son of Man to breathe His Word and Spirit upon the dry, dead bones of Adam's children. Grant that we may hear Your holy Word, receive Your Spirit, and rise each day from the death of sin to live in newness of life before You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.



Job Confesses the Redeemer

Job 19:20-27

After the reading: **P** 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.

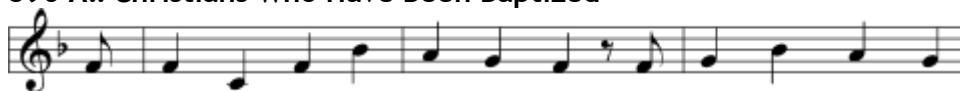
C Amen.



Homily

Stand

596 All Christians Who Have Been Baptized



1 All Chris-tians who have been bap-tized, Who know the God of
2 You were be-fore your day of birth, In-deed, from your con-
3 But all of that was washed a-way— Im-mersed and drowned for-



heav-en, And in whose dai-ly life is prized The name of
cep-tion, Con-demned and lost with all the earth, None good, with-
ev-er. The wa-ter of your Bap-tism day Re-stored a-



Christ once giv-en: Con-sid-er now what God has done, The
out ex-cep-tion. For like your par-ents' flesh and blood, Turned
gain what-ev-er Old Ad-am and his sin de-stroyed And



gifts He gives to ev-'ry-one Bap-tized in-to Christ Je-sus!
in-ward from the high-est good, You con-stant-ly de-nied Him.
all our sin-ful selves em-ployed Ac-cord-ing to our na-ture.

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Service of Holy Baptism

Baptismal Address

- ☐ 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? 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.



The 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 all 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 has 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.

C 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.**

Baptismal Blessing

Blessing

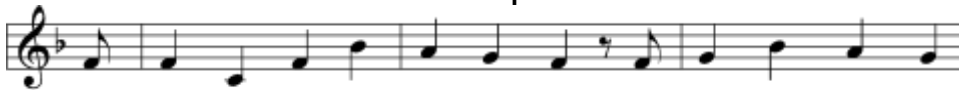
P The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life \times everlasting.

C **Amen.**

Sit

Hymn

596 All Christians Who Have Been Baptized



4 In Bap - tism we now put on Christ— Our shame is ful - ly
5 O Chris - tian, firm - ly hold this gift And give God thanks for -
6 So use it well! You are made new— In Christ a new cre -



cov - ered With all that He once sac - ri - ficed And free - ly
ev - er! It gives the pow - er to up - lift In all that
a - tion! As faith - ful Chris - tians, live and do With - in your



for us suf - fered. For here the flood of His own blood Now
you en - deav - or. When noth - ing else re - vives your soul, Your
own vo - ca - tion, Un - til that day when you pos - sess His



makes us ho - ly, right, and good Be - fore our heav'n - ly Fa - ther.
Bap - tism stands and makes you whole And then in death com - pletes you.
glo - rious robe of righ - teous - ness Be - stowed on you for - ev - er!

Service of Prayer

Stand

Litany of the Resurrection

- A** O Lord,
C have mercy.
- A** O Christ,
C have mercy.
- A** O Lord,
C have mercy.
- A** Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
C hear us.
- A** Paschal Lamb, who was offered for us and has taken away the sin of the world,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who foretold Your passion saying, "The Son of Man must be crucified and on the third day rise again,"
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who destroyed death by dying, and by rising to life again brought life and immortality to light,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Whose resurrection was first announced by an angel to the women,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who appeared to Mary Magdalene and was worshiped by her,
C have mercy on us.
- A** 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,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who appeared to the disciples, bestowing on them Your peace and Your Spirit,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who showed Your wounded hands and side to the apostle Thomas that he too might believe,
C have mercy on us.
- A** Who appeared to seven disciples on the Sea of Tiberias, bringing a miraculous catch of fish,
C have mercy on us.

- A** 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,
- C have mercy on us.**
- A** Who commissioned Your Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them,
- C have mercy on us.**
- A** By Your glorious resurrection from the dead,
- C good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** By Your victory over sin and death,
- C good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** By the majesty of Your risen body,
- C good Lord, deliver us.**
- A** We poor sinners implore You
- C to hear us, Lord Jesus.**
- A** That we may daily die and rise with You in our Baptism and walk in the freedom of Your forgiveness,
- C grant us, good Lord.**
- A** That we may set our minds on things above and not on earthly things, serving as we have been served by You,
- C grant us, good Lord.**
- A** That we may dwell with You forever in the new creation as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, together with all the saints,
- C grant us, good Lord.**
- A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
- C have mercy on us.**
- A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
- C have mercy on us.**
- A** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,
- C grant us Your peace.**
- A** O Lord,
- C have mercy.**
- A** O Christ,
- C have mercy.**
- A** O Lord,
- C have mercy. Amen.**

Salutation and Collect of the Day

Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

G **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

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

G **Amen.**

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 the 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.

G **Amen.**

Please join us tomorrow morning as our Easter celebration continues with the Service of the Word and the Service of the Sacrament.

✠ SOLI DEO GLORIA ✠

The night of the resurrection is a night of illumination. This is the night of the new birth, when the people are brought from darkness to light. The Lamb's blood marks the doors of our souls, and the angel of death passes over us.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313–386 AD)

