



The Great Vigil of Easter and the Feast of the Risen Christ

March 30, 2024

8:00 p.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church

142 Market St., Williamsport, PA

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*This holy night is the most solemn festival in the entire year,
since it deals with the central mystery of our redemption ~
Christ's saving death and his glorious resurrection.*

Light face print is read by the leader. **Bold face print is read by the congregation.**

The congregation is asked to please stand for all hymns and remain standing until the conclusion of each corresponding prayer.

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

The first part of the Vigil centers on fire and light, the visible symbol of Christ, who proclaimed himself "The Light of the World". On Easter morning Christ arose, resplendent as the dawning sun, thereby conquering death forever. With this thought in mind we assist at the lighting of the Easter Candle, the carrying and distribution of this burning candle through the church, and the Easter Announcement, "Rejoice now..." We anticipate our joyful sharing of Christ's triumph in resurrection.

THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

The second part of the Vigil has as its center the mystery of Baptism, by which the light of Christ was first given to each of us. Through Holy Baptism we died to sin to rise with Christ - going down into the font in death in order to come up cleansed from sin and alive to God. The readings show this transformation by recounting Old Testament events that foreshadowed it. The blessing of the baptismal water leads up to renewal of the resolve of the whole congregation to live with the Baptismal promise of the Risen Christ. Then the Litany is prayed, as we ask God to help us keep our baptismal vows.

THE FIRST COMMUNION OF EASTER

*With the grand ringing of bells, the chancel becomes a proper setting for Easter joy. We have reached the climax of the Easter Vigil - the **feast of the risen Christ**. As baptized members of Christ's Body, we share the feast of Christ's presence and then leave the church to go and tell the Good News.*

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

In the courtyard, weather permitting

***Gathering**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. O God, you are like a refiner's fire, and your Spirit kindles the hearts of your faithful people. Bless this flame and those who keep this Easter Festival that, burning with desire for life with you, they may be found ready to take part in that festival of light which has no end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the darkness of our hearts and minds be dispelled by the light of the Christ who rises this night in glory.

Amen.

O God, bless this lighted candle and those upon whom it may shine, that all who this night shall take part in your holy Mysteries may be filled with your blessing; that as we were once in darkness but are now in the light of the Lord, we may walk as children of light.

Amen.

Individuals candles are lit from the one candle as the congregation moves toward the nave.

***The Procession (Sung)**

The Light of Christ

Thanks be to God.

The congregation moves toward the nave arriving at the door to the nave.

The Light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

The congregation follows into the church.

The Light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

***The Easter Announcement - The Exsultet**

Rejoice, now, all heavenly powers! Sing choirs of angels!

Exult, all creation around God's throne! Jesus Christ is risen!

Celebrate the divine mysteries with exultation;

and for so great a victory, sound the trumpet of salvation.

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,

radiant of the brightness of your King!

Christ has triumphed! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes forever.

know that the darkness of old has been banished forever.

Rejoice, O holy church! Exult in glory! The risen Savior shines upon you!

Let this place resound with joy,

echoing the mighty song of all God's people.

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 with full devotion of heart and mind and voice
we should praise the invisible God, and the only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;
who, by his precious blood, redeemed us from 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 [**This is the night**]

in which, in ancient times,
you delivered our forebears, the children of Israel,
and led them, dry-shod, through the sea.

This is the night [**This is the night**]

in which the darkness of sin has been purged away by the rising brightness.

This is the night [**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 are restored to holiness.

This is the night [**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 hour in which Christ arose again from hell!

This is the night [**This is the night**]

of which it is written: "The night is as clear as the day,"
and, "then shall my night be turned into day."

The holiness of this night puts to flight the deeds of wickedness;
washes away sin; restores innocence to the fallen,
and joy to those who mourn; casts out hate; brings peace;
and humbles earthly pride.

Therefore, in this night of grace,
receive, O God, our praise and thanksgiving
for the light of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, reflected in the burning of
this candle.

We sing the glories of this candle and pillar of fire,
the brightness of which is not diminished

even when its light is divided and borrowed.

For it is fed by the melting wax which the bees, your servants,
have made for the substance of this candle.

This is the night [**This is the night**]

in which heaven and earth are joined—things human and things divine.

We, therefore, pray to you, O God,
that this candle, burning to the honor of your name,
will continue to vanquish the darkness of night
and be mingled with the lights of heaven.

May Christ the Morning Star find it burning,
that Morning Star who never sets,
that Morning Star who, rising from the grave,
faithfully sheds light on the whole human race.

And we pray, O God,
Rule, govern, and preserve
with your continual protection your whole church,
giving us peace in this time of our paschal rejoicing;
through the same Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Candles are extinguished.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

A Reading from Genesis: Genesis 1:1- 2:4 (*God creates all things good*)

***Hymn LBW, “Green”, 463 Stanzas 1 and 3**

Let us pray. Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature
and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of
him who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

A Reading from Exodus: Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21 (*Deliverance at the Red Sea*)

***Hymn LBW, “Green”, 132 Stanzas 1 and 2**

Let us pray. O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own
day: By the power of your mighty arm you once delivered your people from
slavery under Pharaoh, a sign for us of the salvation of all nations by the water of
Baptism. Grant that all the people of earth may be numbered among the offspring
of Abraham and may rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through your Son, Jesus
Christ our Lord.

Amen.

A Reading from Isaiah: Isaiah 55:1-11 (*Salvation freely offered to all*)

***Hymn LBW, "Green", 343 Stanzas 1 and 2**

Let us pray. Holy God, you created all things by the power of your Word, and you renew the whole earth by your Spirit. Give now the water of life to all who thirst for you, that, rejoicing in your covenant of mercy, we may bring forth abundant fruit, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

(From the Font the Congregation standing)

It is truly right and proper that we should at all times and places give thanks to you, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty and everlasting God.

- You make the Sacraments effective in a wonderful way; (*Pastor touches water*)
- Your Spirit in the beginning moved over the face of the waters and even now brings about a new creation in the font of rebirth;
- You fashion from our old nature an offspring of heaven;
- You have commanded your disciples to "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (*Water sprinkled*)
- You promise to be present with us so that this clear water may provide a cleansing of body and spirit.

(The Pastor divides the water in the shape of the cross.)

Let the power of the Holy Spirit come down and regenerate by water and word each time we baptize. In this font every stain of sin will be washed away, as new life begins new through Christ our Lord.

All who be- lieve__ and are bap- tized__ shall
see the Lord's_sal -va- tion; Bap- tized in- to the death of Christ_We

are a new cre - a - tion. In Je - sus we will stand A -
 mong the glor - i - ous heav'n ly band. Raise us in grace each day to
 fol - low in your way.

Family of God: On this most holy night, we recall God's saving actions and keep vigil in celebration of the joyful resurrection. The Apostle Paul says, "We were buried therefore with Christ by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life."

Therefore people of God:

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

We 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, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into Heaven. And is seated at the right hand of the Father. 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. Amen.

Do you, Cynthia, Robert and Theresa renew your promise to live in this faith and in the covenant of your Baptism, and as a

members of the Church and this congregation be diligent in the use of the Means of Grace and in prayer?

New Members: I do so promise.

Faithful to God, do you promise to live in this faith and in the covenant of your Baptism, and as a members of the Church and this congregation be diligent in the use of the Means of Grace and in prayer?

We do so promise.

May the Almighty and Everlasting God, who has caused all of us to be reborn by Water and the Spirit, and has forgiven us all our sins, strengthen and preserve us in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION** (*after each petition: Merciful God/Receive our prayer*).

SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

THE LITANY (*Sung using the same inflections as the leader.*)

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

O Christ, hear us.

God, the Father in heaven,

God, the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God, the Holy Spirit,

Be gracious to us,

From all sin, evil, and everlasting death,

By the mystery of your incarnation,

by your Passion and Resurrection,

by the gift of the Holy Spirit,

Though unworthy, we implore you,

To rule your Church, to guide all servants of your church,

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Hear us, good Lord.

Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us.

Have mercy on us.

Spare us, good Lord.

Spare us, good Lord.

Help us, good Lord.

To hear us, Lord God.

Hear us, good Lord.

To raise up those who fall, to comfort the faint-hearted,

This is the feast of vic-tory for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
 al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. I Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was
 slain, whose blood set us free to be peo-ple of God.
 This is the feast of vic-tory for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
 al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. II Pow-er, rich-es, wis-dom, and
 strength, and hon-or, bless-ing, and glo-ry are his.
 This is the feast of vic-tory for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
 al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. III Sing with all the peo-ple of God, and
 join in the hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing, hon-or, glo-ry, and
 might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.
 This is the feast of vic-tory for our God. Al-le-lu-ia,
 al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia. IV For the Lamb who was
 slain has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia.
 This is the feast of vic-tory for our God.
 Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

To help all in danger
and need,

to bring
reconciliation in every
family, **Hear us,
good Lord.**

Lamb of God you take
away the sin of the
world,

Lamb of God, you take
away the sin of the
world,

Lamb of God, you take
away the sin of the
world, **Give us your
peace. Amen.**

*(We wait in silent
anticipation.)*

THE FIRST COMMUNION OF EASTER

*(There are three loud
knocks at the church
door.)*

Alleluia! Christ is
risen! **Christ is risen
indeed! Alleluia!**
(Three Times)

*(As the Hymn of Praise
is sung, the
congregation returns to
their pews)*

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. O God, who made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord's resurrection: stir up in your church that spirit of adoption which is given to us in Holy Baptism, that we, being wed

both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The congregation is seated

THE LESSON Romans 6:1-11

Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But 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. 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 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.

***HOLY GOSPEL John 20:1-18**

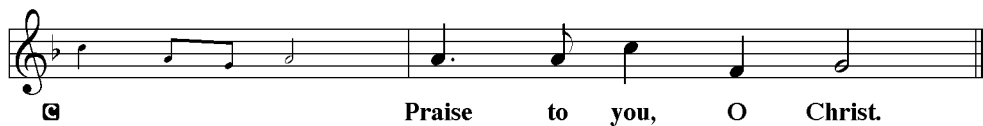
The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the twentieth chapter.

Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where

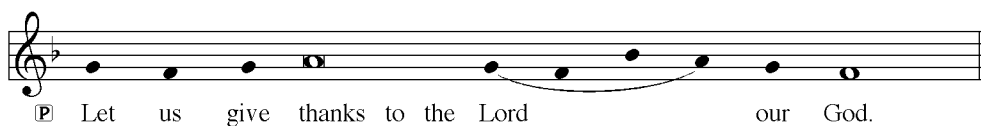
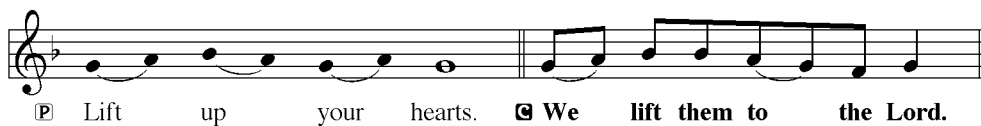
they have laid him.’ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”’ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Gospel of the Lord.



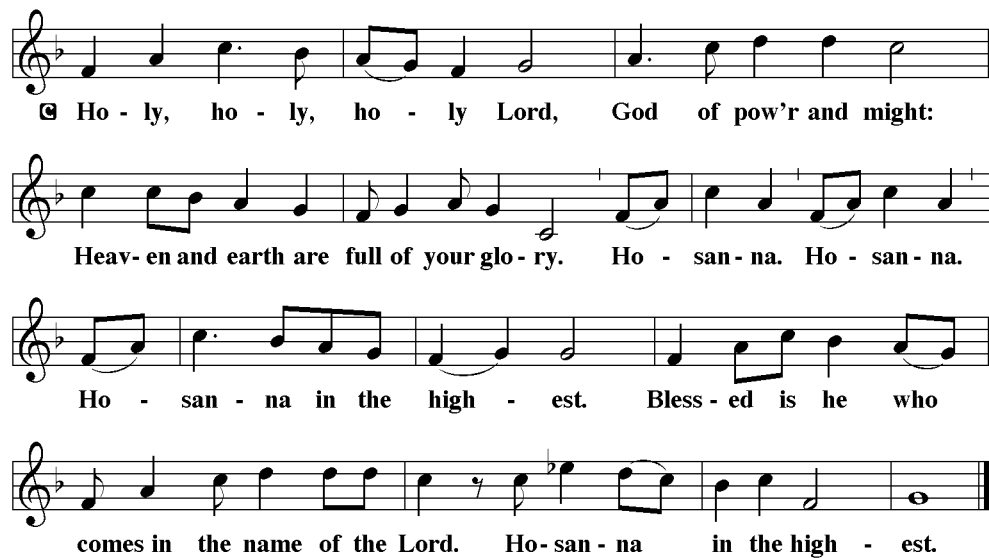
SERMON

ANTHEM



***GREAT
THANKSGIVING**

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 everliving God. But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Lord; for he is the true Passover Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who by his death has destroyed death, and by his rising has brought us eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels, and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, 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.

Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father: endless is your mercy and eternal your reign. You have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations and made for yourself a chosen people. Through the prophets you renewed your promise; and, at this end of all the ages, you set your Son, who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Again after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to all to drink saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

For as often as we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, gracious Father, with this bread and cup we remember the life our Lord offered for us. And believing the witness of his resurrection, we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, the spirit of our Lord and of his resurrection, that we who receive the Lord's body and blood may live to the praise of your glory and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Join our prayers with those of your saints of every time and place, and unite them with ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

Through him, with him, in him, in the u - ni - ty of the
Ho - ly Spir - it, all hon - or and glo - ry is yours, al -
might - y Fa - ther, now and for - ev - er. A - men

***OUR 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.

***LAMB OF GOD**

☞ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

THE LORD'S SUPPER All are welcome at the Lord's Table. Use the center aisle, pick up a small glass on the way. Receive the bread and then proceed to receive the wine by way of a pouring chalice. After communing return to your pew using a side aisle. Those not communing may come forward for a blessing.

Know that the crucified and risen Christ gives himself to you in his supper. If you cannot eat bread, drink only the wine. If you cannot drink wine, eat only the bread.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

Let us pray. We give you thanks, generous God,
for in this bread and cup

we have tasted the new heaven and earth

where hunger and thirst are no more.

Send us from this table as witnesses to the resurrection,
that through our lives, all may know life in Jesus' name.

Amen.

***BLESSING**

God the Father, God the Son, and + God the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

***HYMN**

The Strife Is O'er

LBW, "Green", 135

***DISMISSAL**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace. Tell what God has done.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

+++++





Leading Us in Worship:

Lector and Communion Assistant

Ralph Zeigler

Organist

Sam Robinson

Preacher/Celebrant

Pastor Vasey

Ushers

Matt and Wanda Fortin