



INCARNATION
ANGLICAN CHURCH

Home Easter Vigil

INTRODUCTION

About the Easter Vigil

The Great Vigil of Easter is celebrated between sunset on Holy Saturday and sunrise on Easter morning. It is especially appropriate that the service begin in darkness. Normally, this liturgy normally consists of four parts:

1. The Service of Light: a new fire is kindled, and from it a candle is lit to symbolize Christ, the light of the world. The Exsultet, an ancient song of praise, is sung or said as the climax of this part of the liturgy.
2. The Service of Lessons: key passages from Scripture tell the story of God's mighty acts.
3. Holy Baptism: On this most holy night, the church traditionally baptized people into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4).
4. The Holy Eucharist: Communion is the culmination of the Easter Liturgy. As we keep this holy feast, we share the joy of our Savior's triumph and are strengthened by his grace to walk in newness of life.

This is a simplified liturgy designed to be practiced at home with family and friends. Therefore, this liturgy *only includes the first two parts*. The church will gather on Easter morning to celebrate Jesus' resurrection with baptisms and Eucharist.

Adapting the Service

Adapt this service as needed for the attention span and comprehension level of those present.

- Before the service, you may wish to say something like, "These are words that Christians have been saying on the night before Easter for hundreds of years. They are very old and beautiful, and many of them are written in the form of a poem. You might not know what all of them mean, and that's okay. You may want to color, write, draw, or simply watch the fire burn while you listen to these words."
- Before the service, you may want to invite the children present to listen for all the times that light or water are mentioned.
- You may wish to omit the Exsultet, or choose just one portion to pray.
- You may wish to cut one or more readings, as well as the prayers after each reading. It is traditional to include at least 3 readings, including the story of Israel's Deliverance through the Red Sea. Readings #5, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are especially engaging for children.
- Readings may come from a children's bible, such as the Jesus Storybook Bible, or from a young readers' edition such as the New International Readers' Version (this is the version linked below).

Before you begin:

- Invite those who will be present to spend a few moments meditating on their sins, writing them on small pieces of paper if desired. You may wish to invite people to do this throughout the day on Holy Saturday and bring those to this vigil service.
- Gather materials: a candle, bible(s), copies of this liturgy, paper and colored pencils.
- Select someone to serve as the leader of the service.
- Select one or more individuals to read the scriptures and portions of the Exsultet.
- Start a fire in a fire pit.

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

The service begins with a time of quiet meditation. If people have written sins on paper before the service, they may now place those into the fire.

Leader Dear friends in Christ: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death.

The Leader lights the candle from the fire, and says

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

The light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

The light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

THE EXSULTET

Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout Salvation for the victory of our mighty King.

**Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendor,
for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King.**

Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, and let your holy courts, in radiant light, resound with the praises of your people.

All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame, pray with me to God the Almighty for the grace to sing the worthy praise of this great light; through Jesus Christ his Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly right and good, always and everywhere,
with our whole heart and mind and voice to praise you,
the invisible, almighty, and eternal God,
and your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
who paid for us the debt of Adam's sin,
and by his blood delivered your faithful people;
for he is the true Paschal Lamb, the very Lamb of God,
whose blood marks the doorposts of believers
and makes us holy.

This is the night when you brought our forebears,
the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt,
and led them through the Red Sea on dry land.

**This is the night when with a pillar of fire
you banished the darkness of our iniquity.**

This is the night when all who believe in Christ
are delivered from the gloom of sin,
and are restored to grace and holiness of life.

**This is the night when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell,
and rose victorious from the grave.**

Our birth would have been no gain,
had we not been redeemed.
How wonderful and beyond our knowing, O God,
is your mercy and loving kindness to us,
that to redeem a slave, you gave a Son.

O wonderful providence of Adam's sin
destroyed completely by the death of Christ.
O happy fault, which gained for us
so great and glorious a Redeemer.

**This is the night of which it is written:
the night shall be as bright as the day.**

How holy is this night when wickedness is put to flight,
and sin is washed away.

It restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to those who mourn.

It casts out pride and hatred, and brings peace and concord.

**How blessed is this night when earth and heaven are joined,
and Man is reconciled to God.**

Therefore, O holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice,
the offering of this candle in your honor,
the work of bees and of your servants' hands,
the gift of your most holy Church.

**May it mingle with the lights of heaven,
and shine continually to drive away all darkness.**

**May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting,
find it ever burning—he who gives his light to all creation,
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE LESSONS

The Leader introduces the scriptures, saying

Let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, remembering how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer; and let us pray that God may bring to completion in each of us the saving work he has begun.

1. The Creation

[Genesis 1:1–2:3](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2. The Fall

[Genesis 3](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

O God, you sent your blessed Son, the seed of the woman, that he might crush the serpent's head and make all creation new: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

3. The Flood

[Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-20; 9:8-13](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

Grant, Lord, that we who are baptized into the death of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ may continually put to death our evil desires and be buried with him; and that through the grave and gate of death we may pass to our joyful resurrection; through the merits of him who died and was buried and rose again for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac

[Genesis 22:1-18](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

Almighty God, whose servant Abraham faithfully obeyed your call, and rejoiced to see the day of your Son: Multiply the number of your children by the grace of the Lamb who was slain; that your Church may also rejoice to see your promise to our father Abraham fulfilled; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

5. Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea

[Exodus 14:10—15:1](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

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 chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation offered to all nations by the water of Baptism: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

6. God's Presence in a New Israel

[Isaiah 4:2-6](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

O God, you led your ancient people by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night: Grant that we, who serve you now on earth, may come to the joy of that heavenly Jerusalem, where all tears are wiped away and where your saints for ever sing your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

7. Salvation Offered Freely to All

[Isaiah 55:1-11](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

O God, you have created all things by the power of your Word, and you renew the earth by your Spirit: Give the water of life to all who thirst for you, that they may bring forth abundant fruit in your glorious kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

8. A New Heart and A New Spirit

[Ezekiel 36:24-28](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

Heavenly Father, by the power of your Holy Spirit you promise your faithful people new life in the water of Baptism: Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit, that we who are born again may serve you in faith and love, and grow into the full stature of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

9. The Valley of Dry Bones

[Ezekiel 37:1-14](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

Lord God of our salvation, you speak the word to your scattered people, and raise us up from the valley of death: Breathe your Spirit upon your Church, that we may live and stand before you confident in your risen Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

10. The Three Young Men in the Furnace

[Daniel 3:1-28](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

O God, you know that we are set in the midst of many grave dangers, and because of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: Grant that your strength and protection may support us in all dangers and carry us through every temptation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

11. Jonah and the Fish

[Jonah 1:1—2:10](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

Almighty God, by the resurrection of your Son you have brought us out of sin into righteousness and out of death into life: Grant to those who are sealed by your Holy Spirit the will and the power to proclaim you to all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

12. The Gathering of God's People

[Zephaniah 3:12-20](#)

Let us pray. *Silence*

Almighty God, you called your Church to bear witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself: Give us boldness to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be drawn to you; through him who was lifted high upon the Cross, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Close by remembering that tomorrow is Easter morning. We will bring flowers, bells, and food for a feast to church as we celebrate Christ's resurrection together!