

# We Gather to Worship God

## ~ LITURGY OF THE 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 and oil, through 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.

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 Vigil so that, burning with desire for life with you, they may be found fit to take part in that festival of Light which has no ending, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

~ The inscription on the Paschal Candle  
is traced by the Presiding Minister, while saying: ~

Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, the beginning and the ending, Alpha and Omega; all time belongs to him, and all ages; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. **Amen.**

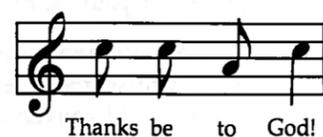
~ The Paschal Candle is lighted. ~

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

Let us pray. Almighty God, pour out your abundant blessing on this lighted candle, so that all who share this night in your holy mysteries may be filled with your grace and spiritual blessings. Once we were in darkness, but since we have become the Lord's people, we are in the light. Help us to live as people who belong to the light, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## ~ THE PROCESSION ~

The Paschal Candle is placed at the doors of the darkened church, as we join in singing the response below .



## ~ THE EASTER PROCLAMATION ~

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.

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

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; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who at the feast of the Passover paid for us the debt of Adam's sin, and by his blood delivered your faithful people. This is the night, when you brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea on dry land. 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.

Holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice, the offering of this candle in your honor. May it 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.**

## ~ STORIES OF A SALVATION PEOPLE ~

While we wait in vigil for the resurrection Lord, we tell the stories of our "family" history, recalling how God loved and saved his people throughout history.

THE STORY OF CREATION	Genesis 1:1-2:4a
THE STORY OF THE FLOOD	Genesis 7:1-5, 11:18, 8:8-19, 9:8:13
THE TESTING OF ABRAHAM	Genesis 22:1-18
THE DELIVERANCE AT THE RED SEA	Exodus 14:10-15:1
SALVATION OFFERED FREE TO ALL	Isaiah 55:1-11
A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT	Ezekiel 36:24-28
THE VALLEY OF THE DRY BONES	Ezekiel 37:1-14
THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE	Zephaniah 3:12-20

## ~ RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS ~

Sisters and brothers, on this most holy night, the Church keeps vigil, awaiting the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul teaches us that by baptism, we were buried with Christ and lay dead in order that as Christ was raised from the dead in the splendor of the Father, so we should set our feet on the new path of life. Therefore, now that the struggle of Lent is over, let us renew the promises made at our baptism through The Apostles' Creed.

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
born of the virgin Mary,  
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,  
is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**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.**

People of God, you had made your profession of faith and renewed the vows of your baptism. By water, you were cleansed and brought to newness of life in the Spirit. May God grant that, as this water of remembrance touches you this night, you may feel and know the grace and favor which God has given you through your baptism. **Amen.**

## ~ LITANY OF THANKSGIVING ~

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

Who has loved us from all eternity:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

And remembered us when we were in trouble:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

Who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

And was made flesh of the Virgin Mary and became human:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

Who by his cross and suffering has redeemed the world:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

And washed us from our sins in his own blood:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

Who on the third day rose from the dead:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

And has given us the victory:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

Who ascended on high:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

And opened wide for us the everlasting doors:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

Who is seated at the right hand of God:  
**For his mercy endures forever.**

*And ever lives to make intercession for us:  
For his mercy endures forever.*

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen*

*For the gift of his Spirit:  
Blessed be Christ.*

*For the holy catholic Church.  
Blessed be Christ.*

*For the means of grace.  
Blessed be Christ.*

*For the hope of glory:  
Blessed be Christ.*

*For the triumphs of his gospel:  
Blessed be Christ.*

*For the lives of his saints:  
Blessed be Christ.*

*In joy and in sorrow:  
Blessed be Christ.*

*In life and in death:  
Blessed be Christ.*

*Now and unto endless ages:  
Blessed be Christ. Blessing and honor and thanksgiving and praise, more  
than we can utter, more than we can conceive, be to you, O holy and  
glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by all angels, all humanity,  
and all creatures, forever and ever. Amen*

~ THE GREAT PROCLAMATION ~

\* THE EASTER GOSPEL

John 20:1-18

Now let us keep the Easter Vigil as we proclaim:

**“Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
Christ is risen indeed!  
Alleluia!”**

**Go in peace and serve the Lord!  
Thanks be to God.**

# First United Methodist Church & Saint Anne's Episcopal Church



The Great Easter Vigil  
April 11, 2020  
8:00 p.m.



*Like the children of Israel who watched and waited through the night for the Lord of the Exodus, we too come together this night to watch and wait for the Lord of the Resurrection. We come, as Christians have come since the first century, to keep vigil and to prepare ourselves for the arrival of the Bridegroom who is chief host and guest at the Easter feast to come.*

*First, we must break the darkness of the night. Like the virgins in the parable, we must light our vigil lights. Our light will be a very special light, for it is the light of Christ which burns atop the Paschal candle and which dispels the darkness -- of night, of sin, of death. Our light will be a constant reminder of the Easter victory during the coming season, at every baptism and at every funeral. But for now, it will burn in vigil as we await the Bridegroom.*

*We hear the storytellers among us sharing the stories of our faith -- the stories of God's salvation history and the covenants which he made with our people. These are our "family" stories. We listen. We watch. And we wait for the feast to come.*

*After hearing our stories, we make our last minute preparations to meet our Lord. All must be right for the feast. And so that the whole family is prepared, each of us reaffirm our faith with the Apostles' Creed. We profess the faith we received through grace which was given to us through our baptism.*

*We are nearly ready. The time is close. And then at last He comes! The Easter victory is won! The Bridegroom has come through the darkness to claim his Bride, the Church, to be his own. This is the feast of victory!*

*\*Holy Communion is the high part of the Easter Vigil as we share in the bread and wine through the Feast of Victory. However, Holy Communion is visibly absent this year from the Easter Vigil. At this present moment, we cannot receive sacramentally out of an abundance of caution. Jesus is fully present in our worship and in our hearts. We rejoice in Jesus' love for us.*