



An At Home Easter Vigil

for use in the Diocese of Brandon



‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’

At Home Easter Vigil

Concerning the Service

This Vigil service was designed for saying at home — either as an individual or a gathering of friends and families. This is the night when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave. This Vigil is offered in the hopes of being the first celebration of the Great Fifty Days by individuals or families, speaking or reading aloud or incorporating technology.

The service has been written so that various parts can be shared out among those present; don't be afraid to let children read and lead! Each part is either meant to be read by a single person, or by all. And this is indicated with “One” or “All.” The “One” parts may be shared and a single leader is not required. While this service assumes a small gathering it can, when necessary, be done by an individual who while physically alone is nevertheless gathered in spirit with the rest of the church this day, night, or remembrance. This service is meant to be used as a last resort when for times of safety the Church cannot assemble in person to mark this night.

This service could take place after dinner, but before dessert. Extra goodies — baked goods, celebratory beverages, treats to mark this night — should be prepared in advance for the conclusion of this service.

A special candle should be set aside for this service, ideally a pillar candle that can burn throughout Easter in a space of comfort and respite. Comfortable seating is encouraged for this service.

Preparation in times of pandemic/epidemic

All **In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.**

We begin by washing, as we were washed in our baptism. We cleanse our hands as we were cleansed in the waters of new birth. We do this not because we are afraid, but because we were commanded to love: and to cleanse our hands, and

gather in spirit, is how we love the vulnerable, whom Jesus loved. May we be instruments of love. May the sacrifices we make be for the good of our human family near and far.

Each person present then washes their hands thoroughly with soap and water. Once washed each should help with setting the table as they are able.

Lighting an Easter Light

If possible, the home should be in darkness. Perhaps the service doesn't begin until after sunset. Someone responsible lights the designated candle.

One This is the light of Christ!

All **Thanks be to God!**

Then the Exsultet, the Easter Proclamation is said or sung. One person may say the whole thing, or it may be shared among leaders. If you are feeling adventurous, you can sing or chant the words!

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! Exult, all creation around God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King, is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour, radiant in the brightness of your King! Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory! The risen Saviour shines upon you! Let this place resound with joy, echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

One The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

One Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is truly right that with full hearts and minds and voices we should praise the unseen God, the all-powerful Father, and his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For Christ had ransomed us with his blood, and paid for us the price of Adam's sin to our eternal Father!

This is our Passover feast, when Christ, the true Lamb is slain, whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers.

This is the night when first you saved our forebears: you freed the people of Israel from their slavery and led them dry-shod through the sea.

This is the night when Christians everywhere, washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement, are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

This is the night when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave.

Father, how wonderful your care for us! How boundless your merciful love! To ransom a slave you gave away your Son.

The power of this holy night dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy.

Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth and we are reconciled with God!

Therefore, heavenly Father, in the joy of this night, receive our evening sacrifice of praise, your Church's solemn offering. Accept this

Easter candle. May it always dispel the darkness of this night!

May the Morning Star which never sets find this flame still burning: Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all creation, your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

This candle can be burned for the remainder of the Great Fifty Days whenever a family gathers to eat or someone sits for quiet.

Hearing the Story of our Salvation

The following stories are read aloud. After each story, those who have memories connected to the stories or want to share something about the reading can share. This is a night for telling stories of good news. After the story, someone says the prayer.

I. God creates the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights – the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night – and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the

earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.

Genesis 1.1-2.2 (NRSV)

One This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Stories about the Creation story — and stories about creation, the land, elder’s teachings, and God’s work — may be shared.

One Almighty and eternal God, you created all things in wonderful beauty and order. Help us now to perceive how more wonderful is the new creation by which in the fullness of time you redeemed your people through the sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

II. God saves the People by taking them through the sea.

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the

Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, ‘Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” But Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.” The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning

watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.”

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.” So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: “I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.”

Exodus 14.10-15.1 (NRSV)

One This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Stories about getting away safe, God delivering the people, or unexpected blessings may be shared.

One: God of steadfast love, your wonderful deeds of old shine forth through all eternity. 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 of 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.**

III. God Promises Us a New Heart

I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 36:24-28 (NRSV)

Stories about forgiveness, reconciliation, personal encounters with God, may be shared.

One: Almighty and Everlasting God, in the paschal mystery you established the new covenant of reconciliation. Grant that all who are born again in baptism may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith. Grant this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

IV. We too have passed through the waters, like Israel.

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.

Romans 6.3-11 (NRSV)

One This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Tell the story of your own baptism, or the day of your confirmation.

One: Let's hear the most important story - the story of an empty tomb.

V. Mary Magdalene meets the Angel at the empty tomb.

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to

tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Matthew 28.1-10 (NRSV)

What do you feel Jesus is saying to you through this story of the resurrection? Share what you feel the story is saying to you at this time. After the sharing, everyone can take turns proclaiming the resurrection. You are encouraged to ring bells, play instruments, drums, even pots and pans – now it the time to make a joyful noise to the Lord!

One: Alleluia! Christ is risen!

All: **The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

One Eternal Giver of life and light, this holy night shines with the radiance of the risen Christ. Renew your Church with the Spirit given to us in baptism, that we may worship you in sincerity and truth, and shine as a light in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Remembering Promises, Giving Thanks and Telling the Story

One: Let us pray for those whose baptisms are delayed because of the pandemic, let us remember those who have been preparing for confirmation and will be waiting as well. Let us hear God's acts of salvation through water and Spirit.

One Having remembered those who will be baptized, and hearing how we have been joined to Christ in baptism, let us reaffirm our baptismal promises.

All **I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

creator of heaven and earth;
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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He 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.

With God's help, I will continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers.

With God's help, I will persevere in resisting evil, and whenever I fall into sin, return to the Lord.

With God's help, I will proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ.

With God's help, I will seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving my neighbor as myself.

With God's help, I will strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.

With God's help, I will strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation , and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the Earth.

One: God the creator, the rock of our salvation, you have given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By the power of your Holy Spirit, keep us faithful to our calling, now and forever.
Amen.

Sharing an Easter Feast

Even though we are not able to gather together for the Eucharist, Christ is present whenever two or three are gathered in his name, and the disciples knew him in the breaking of the bread.

One Alleluia! Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us!
All **Therefore let us keep the feast! Alleluia!**
One When we share our bread with one another
All **The Lamb of God will make us one.**

An in-home party commences. Dancing, excited music, hymn singing, and playlists full of alleluias are encouraged. Christ is risen and alive – so, let's celebrate!



*This service has been adapted by Rev. Dr. Kara Mandryk and Bishop William Cliff from: "Keeping Vigil for the Resurrection at Home" and the BCP (1979) by the Rev. Joseph Peters-Mathews, St. Hilda St. Patrick, Edmonds, WA.
<https://www.barefoottheology.com/2020/03/19/at-home-worship/>
and the Book of Alternative Services (1985), The Anglican Church of Canada*