



EASTER VIGIL OR THE FIRST SERVICE OF EASTER

During the Great Three Days, from sunset Holy Thursday to sunset Easter Day, we have celebrated the saving events of Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. In the development of Christian worship, each event came to be remembered on a separate day.

The Easter (Paschal) Vigil has both historic and symbolic roots in the Jewish Passover. That is why so many images are from the Old Testament and why so many analogies are experienced in Christ. In this service we experience the passage from slavery to freedom, from sin to salvation, from death to life. Thank you for coming, we encourage you to allow the Holy Spirit to be alive and present in you, by praying and singing with purpose and passion.

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT GATHERING

The service begins in darkness. The people will gather outside the building around the firepit. The central sign is our paschal candle, which is our large freestanding white candle signifying the triumph of the Resurrection over the darkness of death. Each person will be given a candle. Silence is kept until all have assembled.

GREETING AND INTRODUCTION

(Pastor addresses the people)

Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ our Lord.
My brothers and sisters in Christ: On this most holy night (morning) in which Jesus Christ passed over from death to life, we gather as the Church to watch and pray. This is the Passover of Christ, in which we share in Christ's victory over death.

OPENING PRAYER*

God of life, through Jesus Christ you have bestowed upon the world the light of life. Sanctify this new fire, and grant that our hearts and minds may also be kindled with holy desire to shine forth with the brightness of Christ's rising, that we may attain to the feast of everlasting light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Mt. Olivet UM Charge Connect Card

*Drop this in the offering plate or give to a greeter if you have a prayer
Concern or want us to connect with you.*

Name (include children) _____

Contact Updates:

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

First time guest —

Returning Visitor —

I would like to learn more about:

Sunday School —

Kids Activities —

Ways to Serve —

Communication Corner

Check here to sign up for: —

Weekly bulletin e-mail —

Monthly newsletter —

Prayer chain text cell # —

Connect me with . . .

Connecting with God

___ Coffee with Pastor Harold Long

___ I am interested in being part of the Choir and/or Praise Band

LIGHTING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

(Candles are handed out to parishioners before start of service)

Pastor lights the paschal candle from the fire, saying:

The light of Christ rises in glory, overcoming the darkness of sin and death.

The paschal candle is lifted so that all may see it, and the pastor says:

Christ is our light!

A procession then forms.

PROCESSION INTO THE CHURCH *

The candles will be lighted from others that have been lighted from the paschal candle. As the room fills, the stationary candles in the sanctuary will be lighted.

As we process into the darkened sanctuary, let us all join in the following hymn

HYMN* "Amazing Grace" #378 UMH

EASTER PROCLAMATION

The Great Vigil of Easter

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.*

Pastor The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Pastor Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **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 Pass-over 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. 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.

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. 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.**

SONG OF SENDING: Video/Praise Song "Halleluiah"

Mt. Olivet Choir

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING *

We are sent forth in the power of Christ's resurrection.

(Everyone Shout "Hallelujah" 3 Times!)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**

GOING FORTH*

Please Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord!

Eternal God, you raised from the dead our Lord Jesus and by your Holy Spirit brought to life your Church. Breathe upon us again with your spirit and give new life to your people, through the same Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

BURIED AND RAISED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM

The apostle Paul reminds us that in Christ we have already died, drowned in baptism. Yet we who have died are raised to newness of life.

Romans 6:3 –11

Silence, then join in the following Hymn

PRAISE VIDEO: "Glorious Day" Special By Stephanie Degee

GOSPEL LESSON*

(Please stand or rise in posture for the reading of Scripture)

SCRIPTURE READING - Mark 16:1 –8 Shelley Lewis

(Please Be Seated)

MESSAGE - "Why the Crucifixion?" - Pastor Harold Long

THE SERVICE OF THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

We will be using the Baptismal Covenant IV (UMH) for Baptism's and/or reaffirmation of Baptism. Pages 50-53

THE SERVICE OF THE TABLE

We will be using the Service of Word and Table III (UMH) Page 15 & 16

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER *

COMMUNION & ANOINTING OF OIL

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

INTRODUCTION

Let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, and pray that each of us may receive the fullness of this grace.

THE CREATION

With a word God creates order out of the primeval, watery chaos. God's good creation reaches its pinnacle in humankind, the bearer of God's image.

Reading One: Genesis 1:1 –2:4a Sandee Lucas

Silence, then join in the following hymn

HYMN* "How Great Thou Art" vs 1 & 4 (#77 UMH)

Almighty God, you wonderfully created, yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature. Grant that we may share the divine life of the One who shared our humanity, Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND THE EARTH

God causes the earth, overcome by sin, to be drowned in a watery deluge. Yet in Noah and his family, God saves a remnant and binds all together in a covenant with the sign of a rainbow.

Reading Two: Genesis 7:1 –5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13

Brenda Shade

Silence, then join in the following Hymn

HYMN* "The Greatest Love Song" Jerry Lucas

Almighty God of heaven and earth, you set in the clouds a rainbow to be a sign of your covenant with every living creature. Grant that we may be faithful stewards of the dominion you have entrusted to us on earth, according to your grace given to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Reader Five: Isaiah 55:1 –11 (Durham UMC) Sandee Lucas

Silence, then join in the following Hymn

HYMN* "Holy, Holy, Holy" vs 1 & 4 (#64 UMH)

Creator of all things, you freely offer water to the thirsty and food to the hungry. Refresh us by the water of baptism and feed us with the bread and wine of your table, that your Word may bear fruit in our lives, and bring us all to your heavenly banquet; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT

The prophet promises that God will renew God's people. God will replace their heart of stone with a new heart.

Reader Six: Ezekiel 36:24 –28 Brenda Shade

Silence, then join in the following Hymn

***PRAISE VIDEO "It Was Jesus" Johnny Cash**

God of holiness and light, in the mystery of dying and rising with Christ you have established a new covenant of reconciliation. Cleanse our hearts and give a new spirit to all your people, that your saving grace may be made known to the whole world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

NEW LIFE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

The prophet Ezekiel sees a vision: God will take the dry bones of God's people, reconnect them, breathe into them, and restore them to life.

Reader Six: Ezekiel 37:1 –14 Rusty Schultz

Silence, then join in the following Hymn

***HYMN "He Lives" #310**

ABRAHAM'S TRUST IN GOD

Abraham is tested when God commands him to sacrifice his own son, the embodiment of God's promise to him. Through God's own provision on the mountain, the promise holds.

Reader Three: Genesis 22:1 –18 Rusty Schultz

Silence, then join in the following Hymn

HYMN* "Trust and Obey" vs 1 & 4 (#467 UMH)

Gracious God of all believers, through Abraham's trust in your promise you made known your faithful love to countless numbers. By the grace of Christ's sacrifice fulfill in your Church and in all creation the joy of your promise and new covenant. *Amen.*

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE AT THE RED SEA

The ruler who kept God's people in slavery pursues them to the Red Sea as they try to escape. Despite a hopeless situation, God rescues God's people, leading them on dry land through the parted sea and closing the waters on their former masters. Miriam then sings a song about God's marvelous deliverance.

Reading Four: Exodus 14:10 –31 & Exodus 15:20-21

Shelley Lewis

Silence, then join in the following Hymn

PRAISE VIDEO* "Go Down Moses" Louie Armstrong

God our Savior, as once you delivered by the power of your mighty arm your chosen Israel through the waters of the sea, so now deliver your Church and all the peoples of the earth from bondage and oppression, to rejoice and serve you in freedom, through Jesus Christ our Deliverer. *Amen.*

SALVATION OFFERED FREELY TO ALL

The prophet Isaiah issues an invitation of abundant life to the hungry and thirsty.