EASTER VIGIL A WORD OF REST

EASTER VIGIL

A WORD OF REST

In the rhythm of creation, the Seventh Day is a day of rest. Having finished the work of creation, God rested on the Seventh Day and hallowed it. Having finished the work of redeeming His creation from bondage to sin, decay, and death, the Son of God rested in the tomb and hallowed the grave. It is a Sabbath to the Lord.

As WE GATHER

♣ SERVICE OF LIGHT **♣**

P Holy Saturday has traditionally been a day of waiting. Historically, because Lent was a time of instruction for catechumens, their waiting for Baptism and then the Lord's Supper ended with the Easter Vigil. Held near midnight, it included the lighting of a new paschal candle and then candles throughout the church; it was actually an Easter celebration! We do not want to take anything from the celebration of Easter joy in the morning, but today we are including some traditional elements: excerpts from the lengthy readings (our Old Testament Reading is the last of the appointed lessons), an affirmation of our baptismal faith, and the preaching of the Word.

Having been given the body of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus do in death what they were afraid to do in life. They adore, venerate, show reverence and respect for the dead Savior. The body is no mere accessory to the soul to be discarded in death. Flesh is not inferior to spirit. Bodies matter. And, though dead, these were the hands that healed, the lips that preached, the feet that walked miles to teach, the eyes that looked and loved, the guts that moved with compassion.

In the place where He was crucified, there was a garden, so they placed His body there, in a new tomb. On the seventh day, His work finished, God rested from all His labor. This is the body of God. As Jesus rests in the cold, compassionless sleep of death, fulfilling the eternal Sabbath, His disciples work. It is their only way to thank Him.

COLLECT

- Let us pray. O God, You are like a refiner's fire, and Your Spirit enkindles the hearts of Your faithful people with the fire of Your love. Bless, we implore You, this new flame and those who keep this joyful Easter festival, that burning with desire for life with You, we may be found rightly prepared to share in the Feast of Light which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.

BLESSING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

- P Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever, the beginning and the ending,
- **P** the Alpha and the Omega.
- P His are time and eternity; His are the glory and dominion, now and forever.
- P By His wounds we have healing both now and forever. Amen.

The Paschal candle is lit.

P May the light of Christ, who is risen in glory from the dead, scatter all the darkness of our hearts and minds.

COLLECT

- Let us pray. Almighty and most merciful God, pour out on us Your abundant blessing that all who in true faith share this night in joyful celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead may be filled with Your heavenly benediction. Once we were in darkness, but now we are in the light, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C Amen.

Lux Christi

- P The light of Christ.
- C Thanks be to God.

EXSULTET

P Rejoice now, all you heavenly choirs of angels; rejoice now, all creation; sound forth, trumpet of salvation, and proclaim the triumph of our King. Rejoice, too, all the earth, in the radiance of the light now poured upon you and made brilliant by the brightness of the everlasting King; know that the ancient darkness has been forever banished. Rejoice, O Church of Christ, clothed in the brightness of this light; let all this house of God ring out with rejoicing, with the praises of all God's faithful people.

PSALMODY

PSALM 30; ANTIPHON: V. 5B

- P Although we know what the morning holds, we are keeping vigil. What happened to Jesus' lifeless body will, by the grace of God, occur to ours. Already this evening, we are able to pray Psalm 30, for we know that joy comes with the morning.
- P Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
- P I will extol You, O LORD, for You have drawn me up
- and have not let my foes rejoice over me.
- P O LORD my God, I cried to You for help,
- and You have healed me.
- P O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol;
- You restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.
- P Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints,
- C and give thanks to His holy name.
- P For His anger is but for a moment,
- and His favor is for a lifetime.
- Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
- P As for me, I said in my prosperity, "I shall never be moved."
- By Your favor, O LORD, You made my mountain stand strong;
- P You hid Your face;
- **C** I was dismayed.

- P To You, O LORD, I cry,
- and to the Lord I plead for mercy:
- P "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit?
- Will the dust praise You? Will it tell of Your faithfulness?
- P Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me!
- O LORD, be my helper!"
- Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
- P You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;
- C You have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,
- P that my glory may sing Your praise and not be silent.
- O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever!
- Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

HYMN

"LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENT"

LIFEWAY CONTEMPORARY

+ SERVICE OF READINGS +

INTRODUCTION TO READINGS

In this most holy night our Savior, Christ the Lord, broke the power of death and by His resurrection brought life and salvation to all creation. Let us praise the Lord, for He truly keeps His Word. The sun of righteousness has dawned upon us who have sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.

P Creation, from Genesis, chapters one through three.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. . . .

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light....

Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. . . .

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."...

(Following the fall into sin)

The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." To the woman He said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you." And to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Silence for Reflection upon the reading

P The flood, from Genesis, chapters seven through nine.

Then the LORD said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate,

and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him....

"Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

Silence for Reflection upon the reading

P God tests Abraham, in Genesis, chapter twenty-two.

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." ...

When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Silence for Reflection upon the reading

P Salvation Offered Freely to All from from Isaiah, chapter 55.

"Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

Service: Easter Vigil

neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

Silence for Reflection upon the reading

P A New Heart and a New Spirit from Ezekiel chapter 36

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 on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my just decrees. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Silence for Reflection upon the reading

P God's Faithfulness to Israel from Deuteronomy, chapter 31

"Now therefore write this song and teach it to the people of Israel. Put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel. For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to give to their fathers, and they have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my covenant. And when many evils and troubles have come upon them, this song shall confront them as a witness (for it will live unforgotten in the mouths of their offspring). For I know what they are inclined to do even today, before I have brought them into the land that I swore to give." So Moses wrote this song the same day and taught it to the people of Israel.

Silence for Reflection upon the reading

P The valley of dry bones, from Ezekiel, chapter 37.

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and

Service: Easter Vigil

flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord."

Silence for Reflection upon the reading

P The Gathering of God's People, in Zephaniah, chapter three.

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; Silence for Reflection upon the reading

+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P Let us pray. 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, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.

EPISTLE

1 PETER 4:1–8

(THE TIME OF SINFUL LIVING IS PAST; KEEP LOVING ONE ANOTHER.)

¹Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ²so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. ³For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. ⁴With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; ⁵but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

⁷The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. ⁸Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

- **P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- © O Lord, have mercy.

HYMN OF THE DAY

"O CHRIST, WHO SHARED OUR MORTAL LIFE"

SUNG TO ALTERNATE TUNE LSB 444

LSB 552, STS 1, 4

- 1 O Christ, who shared our mortal life
 And ended death's long reign,
 Who healed the sick and raised the dead
 And bore our grief and pain:
 We know our years on earth are few,
 That death is always near.
 Come now to us, O Lord of Life;
 Bring hope that conquers fear!
- And bears us toward the tomb.

 Death's dark'ning cloud hangs like a pall
 That threatens earth with doom.

 But You have broken death's embrace
 And torn away its sting.

 Restore to life our mortal race!

 Raise us, O Risen King!

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HOLY GOSPEL

(PILATE ORDERS A SEAL ON JESUS' TOMB.)

- P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-seventh chapter.
- Glory to You, O Lord.

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

⁶²Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

- **P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON

+ SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM +

AFFIRMATION OF OUR BAPTISMAL FAITH

- P Do you this day in the presence of God and of this congregation acknowledge the gifts that God gave you in your Baptism?
- C Yes, I do.
- P Do you renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways?
- C Yes, I renounce them.
- P Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?
- Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

- P Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord?
- Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
- P Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?
- Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.
- P You have been baptized and catechized in the Christian faith according to our Lord's bidding. Jesus said, "Whoever confesses Me before men, I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." Lift up your hearts, therefore, to the God of all grace and joyfully give answer to what I now ask you in the name of the Lord.

Do you this day in the presence of God and of this congregation acknowledge the gifts that God gave you in your Baptism?

- R Yes, I do.
- **P** Do you hold all the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God?
- R I do.
- P Do you confess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, drawn from the Scriptures, as you have learned to know it from the Small Catechism, to be faithful and true?
- R I do.
- P Do you intend to hear the Word of God and receive the Lord's Supper faithfully?
- **R** I do, by the grace of God.
- P Do you intend to live according to the Word of God, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?

- R I do, by the grace of God.
- P Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?
- **R** I do, by the grace of God.
- P We rejoice with thankful hearts that you have been baptized and have received the teaching of the Lord. You have confessed the faith and been absolved of your sins. As you continue to hear the Lord's Word and receive His blessed Sacrament, He who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
- C Amen.
- P The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life

 → everlasting.
- C Amen.

+ SERVICE OF PRAYER +

COLLECT (*LSB*, p. 288)

- P O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. We implore You to have compassion on the frailty of our mortal nature, for we acknowledge that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Mercifully pardon our sins that we may obtain the promises You have laid up for those who are repentant; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- **G** Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

- P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:
- 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.

HYMN "CHRIST JESUS LAY IN DEATH'S STRONG BANDS" KOINE MEDIA

RESPONSES Psalm 130:5–6

- P I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
- and in His word I hope;
- P my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning,
- more than watchmen for the morning.

Please observe silence while departing.

Acknowledgments

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