

***Easter Eve,
3rd April 2021***



**AVON VALLEY
CHURCHES**
LOVING • CONNECTING • SERVING

THE EASTER CEREMONIES



**THE LIGHTING OF THE EASTER
CANDLES**

THE VIGIL

**THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL
VOWS**

You might like to have a candle and matches at hand, if it is safe to do so, or have a torch or other light.

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

As we gather, the day is drawing to its close, and it will soon be dark.

A new Flame is kindled

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Eternal God,
who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:
set us aflame with the fire of your love,
and bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN.**

The Lord is my light, my light and salvation,
He lifts me up, he gives me life.

The President blesses the Candles.

Christ yesterday and today,
the beginning and the end,
Alpha and Omega, all time belongs to him,
and all ages;
to him be glory and power
through every age and for ever. **AMEN.**

The Lord is my light, my light and salvation,
He lifts me up, he gives me life.

The President lights a Candle.

Light a candle at home, or use the torch on your phone.

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

The Lord is my light, my light and salvation,
He lifts me up, he gives me life.

The light of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

THE VIGIL

The Readings for the Vigil tell the history of our Salvation. If the full Vigil Service is celebrated, the Readings last until Dawn, and lead into the First Communion of Easter. We use a short selection of them here.

The Easter Proclamation (Exsultet), an ancient hymn for Easter Eve, is sung before and during the Vigil Readings.

The Proclamation celebrates this night as the night of deliverance from slavery and death.

Exult now all ye heavenly legions of angels; all ye that stand before the throne of God: and for the victory of our king let the trumpet of salvation sound.

Let the earth rejoice in the bright radiance of the light which is shed upon her: and illumined by the splendour of the Everlasting King, let her know that the darkness of the world has been banished.

And let our mother the Church, bathed in the brightness of this light rejoice and sing; and let this building resound with the praises of her people.

Wherefore I pray and beseech you, dearly beloved who here perceive the marvellous brightness of this heavenly light; join with me in supplication to the Almighty and most merciful Father; that we may praise the mysteries which by this light are signified.

Ist READING: *Ezekiel 36:24-28*

The word of the LORD came to me: ²⁴I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. ²⁵I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶A 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. ²⁷I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. ²⁸Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, that we should with all our heart and soul sing praise to God the Invisible and Almighty: and to his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; who by his death hath cancelled the bond that was against us; and hath redeemed us unto God by the shedding of his blood.

For this is the true Passover, wherein the true Lamb of God is slain; by whose blood are hallowed the doorposts of his faithful people.

This is the night, wherein the forefathers, the children of Israel, were brought forth out of Egypt, and passed through the Red Sea as if on dry land.

This is the night which by the light of the pillar of fire, hath purged away the shadows of sin. This is the night wherein all that believe in Christ throughout the world, delivered from the wickedness of this present age and out of the shadow of death are restored to grace and are made partakers of God's holiness.

This is the night wherein the bonds of death were loosed and Christ rose again from the grave in triumph.

2nd READING: *Romans 6:3-11*

³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore 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.

⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We 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. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

O truly blessed night to thee alone was vouchsafed the honour to know the season and the hour of Christ's Resurrection.

This is the night whereof Scripture saith: Behold the night is as clear as the day then shall my night be turned into day.

THE HOLINESS therefore of this wondrous night putteth to flight the deeds of darkness, cleanseth away sin, restoreth innocence to the fallen, and joy unto them that mourn; casteth out hatred, bringeth peace to all the world, and humbleth the power of the mighty.

O night truly blessed, wherein the children of Israel were enriched, and Egypt was despoiled! Night wherein heaven and earth are joined, and we are restored to communion with God!

3rd READING: *Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26*

1. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is gracious,
for his mercy endures for ever.

2. Give thanks to the God of gods,
for his mercy endures for ever.

3. Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his mercy endures for ever.

4. Who alone does great wonders,
for his mercy endures for ever.

5. Who by wisdom made the heavens,
for his mercy endures for ever.

6. Who laid out the earth upon the waters,
for his mercy endures for ever.

7. Who made the great lights,
for his mercy endures for ever.

8. The sun to rule the day,
for his mercy endures for ever.

9. The moon and the stars to govern the night,
for his mercy endures for ever.

23. Who remembered us when we were in trouble,
for his mercy endures for ever.

24. And delivered us from our enemies,
for his mercy endures for ever.

25. Who gives food to all creatures,
for his mercy endures for ever.

26. Give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his mercy endures for ever.

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Therefore O Lord in this joyful night of our salvation, we raise up this candle, made from the oil of the earth, the wax of thy servants the bees, and the labour of human hands: to stand before thee as a sign of our redemption, of the presence among us of the risen Son, and of the gathering into one in Him of all things in heaven and earth.

May it continue to burn brightly and scatter all the darkness of this night: may it shine among the lights with which thou hast adorned the heavens; And let the Day Star when it riseth still find it burning; that Day Star which having risen knoweth no going down: Even Christ our Lord who rising from the grave casteth the bright beams of his light over all the human race.

THROUGH the same Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and for ever and world without end.

THE GOSPEL READING: *Luke 24:1-12*

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹On the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women who had accompanied Jesus came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' ⁸Then they remembered Jesus' words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

HYMN: THIS IS THE NIGHT OF NEW BEGINNINGS

1. This is the night of new beginnings.
This is the night when heaven meets earth.
This is the night filled with God's glory;
Promise of our new birth!

*Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light!
Shine in your Church
Gathered today.*

2. This is the night Christ our redeemer
Rose from the grave triumphant and free,
Leaving the tomb of evil and darkness
Empty for all to see.

3. Sing of the hope deeper than dying.
Sing of the power stronger than death.
Sing of the love endless as heaven,
Dawning throughout the earth.

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THE RE-AFFIRMATION OF OUR BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

At your Baptism and Confirmation you turned to Christ as Lord and Saviour, and came to Christ, the way, the truth and the life.

Do you now re-affirm your allegiance to Christ?

I do, and may God give me grace to follow him, now and always.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father who made all things, in his Son Jesus Christ who redeemed the world, and in the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the people of God?

I do.

**This is the faith of the Church.
We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Will you therefore continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in prayers?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbour as yourself?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you recognise Christ's authority over human society, by prayer for the world and its leaders, by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?

With the help of God, I will.

May God the Creator, the rock of our salvation, who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, keep us faithful to our calling, now and for ever.

AMEN.

THANKSGIVING & BLESSING

Let us bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;

Let us praise and exalt him for ever.

Blessing and honour and thanksgiving and praise more than we can utter, more than we can conceive, be to you, O most adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by all angels, all people, all creatures, for ever and ever.

AMEN and AMEN.

HYMN: THE STRIFE IS O'ER

1. The strife is o'er, the battle
done;
Now is the victor's triumph won;
O let the song of praise be sung:
Alleluya!

2. Death's mightiest powers have
done their worst,
And Jesus hath his foes dispersed;
Let shouts of praise and joy
outburst:
Alleluya!

3. On the third morn he rose
again
Glorious in majesty to reign;
O let us swell the joyful strain:
Alleluya!

4. Lord, by the stripes which
wounded thee
From death's dread sting thy
servants free,
That we may live, and sing to thee:
Alleluya!

God the Father,
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.
AMEN.

God the Son,
who in bursting the grave has won a glorious victory,
give you joy as you share the Easter faith.
AMEN.

God the Holy Spirit,
whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples,
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.
AMEN.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be
among you, and remain with you always.
AMEN.

AFTER THE SERVICE, WHY NOT ENJOY CELEBRATORY REFRESHMENTS AS EASTER HAS NOW BEGUN?

HAPPY EASTER!

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WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE?

LIGHT

The light of Christ
that shines in the
darkness.

FIRE

It represents
Christ's
resurrection.

GRAINS OF INCENSE

They represent
the 5 wounds of
Christ.



ALPHA AND OMEGA

Christ is the
beginning and end
of all things.

CROSS

It represents
Christ and his
eternal light.

YEAR

It reminds us of
God's presence here
and now.