

The Parish Church of All Saints, Peterborough



The Paschal Vigil

Holy Saturday

3rd April, 2021

Welcome to our celebration of the Easter Vigil. Tonight's service is the climax of the Christian year, as we gather together online and in a darkened church to experience the light of the risen Christ.

The service begins with the lighting of a new fire, from which the Easter (or 'Paschal') Candle is lit. The candle is then set up in the church which waits in darkness for this vital sign of its risen Lord.

A selection of readings follow that are designed to help us understand how God created us as his children, how he formed the people of Israel and brought them salvation through the waters of the Red Sea, and he, in Christ, brings us all salvation through the water of baptism.

In the early church, the Easter Vigil was the one time in the year that converts to Christianity were baptized, celebrating not only Jesus' resurrection from death to life, but also the new life that God has brought through the death and resurrection of Jesus to individual believers.

The Service of Light

Dear friends in Christ, on this most holy night, when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life, the Church invites her children throughout the world to come together in vigil and prayer.

This is the Passover of the Lord.

We remember his death and resurrection by hearing his word and celebrating his mysteries, confident that we shall share his victory over death and live with him for ever in God

The blessing of the fire:

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

The Easter Candle has markings traced by the vicar, saying:

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.**

By his holy and glorious wounds
may Christ our Lord guard and keep us. **Amen.**

The vicar lights the Easter Candles, saying

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

Christ our light

All **Thanks be to God**

*A form of the ancient hymn known as **The Exultet**, giving thanks for the resurrection of Christ, is said or sung*

Solo 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!

All ***Christ be our light!***
 Shine in our hearts,
 shine through the darkness.
 Christ be our light!
 Shine in your church gathered today.

**This is the night Christ our redeemer
rose from the dead triumphant and free,
leaving the tomb of evil and darkness,
empty for all to see.**

Christ be our light...

**Now will the fire kindled in darkness
burn to dispel the shadows of night.
Star of the morning, Jesus our saviour,
you are the world's true light!**

Christ be our light...

**Sing of the hope deeper than dying.
Sing of the pow'r stronger than death.
Sing of the love endless as heaven,
dawning throughout the earth.**

Christ be our light...

Into this world morning is breaking,

**all of God's people, lift up your voice.
Cry out with joy, tell out the story,
all of the earth rejoice.
Christ be our light...**

Bernadette Farrell (b 1957)

At the conclusion of this hymn, the vicar invites the congregation to hear again the stories of God's saving work in history.

As we await the risen Christ, let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, recalling how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer; and let us pray that through this Easter celebration God may bring to perfection in each of us the saving work he has begun.

The Vigil of Readings

A reading from the book Genesis

(1:1-19, 26-2:3)

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. 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. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

The vicar prays

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the Exodus

(14:15–15:1)

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;

The vicar prays

Lord God our redeemer,
who heard the cry of your people
and sent your servant Moses to lead them out of slavery:
free us from the tyranny of sin and death
and, by the leading of your Spirit,
bring us to the promised land;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel (36.24–28)

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.

The vicar prays

Heavenly Father, by the power of your Holy Spirit
you give to your faithful people new life
in the water of baptism.
Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit,
that we who are born again may serve you in faith and love,
and grow into the full stature of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah (3:14-20)

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the

earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

The vicar prays

Almighty God, who called your church to bear witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself, help us to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be drawn to you; through him who was lifted up on the cross, and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Resurrection of Christ is proclaimed in ancient words to which the congregation joyfully responds

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

*The **Gloria** is sung:*

The Collect of Easter

Let us pray that we may reign with the risen Christ in glory.

Lord of all life and power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son,
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him.
Grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity. **Amen.**

Hymn

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

Death's mightiest powers have done their worst,
and Jesus hath his foes dispersed;
let shouts of praise and joy outburst. Alleluia!

On the third morn he rose again
glorious in majesty to reign;
O let us swell the joyful strain. Alleluia!

He brake the age-bound chains of hell;
the bars from heaven's high portals fell;
let hymns of praise his triumph tell. Alleluia!

Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee
from death's dread sting thy servants free,
that we may live, and sing to thee. Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Anon (17th century) tr. Francis Pott (1832-1909)

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord. (28:1-10)

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. ⁶ 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. ⁹ 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."

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

The vicar continues

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we remember that through the paschal mystery we have died and been buried with him in baptism, so that we may rise with him to a new life within the family of the Church. I invite you to reaffirm your allegiance to Christ and your rejection of evil. Therefore I ask these question:

Do you reject the Devil and all rebellion against God?
I reject them

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?
I renounce them

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?
I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?
I turn to Christ

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?
I submit to Christ

Do you come to Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life?
I come to Christ.

May God who has given you the desire to follow Christ give you strength to continue in the Way. **Amen.**

Let us pray

Almighty God,
we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith with all who have been baptised in your name. Keep us faithful to our baptism, and so make us ready for that day when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your son, our saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, that you may be rooted and grounded in love and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.
Amen.

We pray together in the words that our Lord taught us.

Our Father ...

The Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is risen
He is risen indeed. Alleluia

The God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight. and the blessing of God Almighty, + Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon us and with us this day and always. **Amen**

With the risen life of Christ within you,
Go in the peace of Christ, Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

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Our Easter service is a sung eucharist at 10 am tomorrow both in church and online (Facebook)