

Holy Saturday – *the Easter vigil* Saturday 8th April 2023

We begin our service in darkness.

Gathering

Dear sisters and brothers 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.

A candle is lit.

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

The Light of Christ.

All Thanks be to God.

Musical Meditation – *Beneath the cross*

The Vigil

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.

First Reading – *Genesis 1.1-2.4a (the Creation)*

Christ is the image of the unseen God;
All through him all things were made.

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 your Son our Lord.

All Amen.

Second Reading – Exodus 14.10-15.18 (crossing the Red Sea)

The Lord is my strength and my might.

All He has become my salvation.

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 our promised land;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Third Reading – Ezekiel 37.1-14 (the Valley of Dry Bones)

Christ is the resurrection and the life.

All Those who believe in Christ will never die.

Lord God of our salvation,
you speak the word to your scattered people,
and bring up our life from the valley of death:
breathe your Spirit upon your Church,
that we may live and stand before you
confident in your risen Son,
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All Amen.

Fourth Reading – Zephaniah 3.14-end (Jerusalem praises God)

Where, O death, is your victory?

All Where, O death, is your sting?

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.

All Amen.

Musical Meditation – Station 15

The Sabbath is ending, and the women are approaching the tomb of their crucified teacher and friend. Let us hear what happens next...

Gospel Reading – Matthew 28.1-10

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;

I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

All Alleluia!

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you, O Lord.

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped 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.”

Easter Acclamation

(Whispered)

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

(Louder)

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

(Louder still)

Alleluia. Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

You can celebrate! Ring bells, make noise, cheer, etc. The church lights are turned on.

Collect

**All God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Easter music – Hallelujah, Jesus lives today!

Renewal of Baptismal vows

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we remember that in our own baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light and that we may rise with him to a new life within the family of his Church.

Now we have completed our observance of Lent, we renew the promises made at our baptism, affirming our allegiance to Christ and our rejection of the deceit and corruption of evil.

Therefore, I ask these questions:

Do you repent of your sins?

All I repent of my sins

Do you renounce evil?

All I renounce evil

Do you turn to Christ?

All I turn to Christ

And now I ask you to make the profession of Christian faith into which you were baptized, and in which you live and grow:

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made the world?

All I believe and trust in God.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ,
who redeemed humankind?

All I believe and trust in Jesus.

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God?

All I believe and trust in his Holy Spirit.

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith, we believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

United in our one baptism, let us pray with one voice,

**All 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,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Holy water is sprinkled onto the congregation!

**All Almighty God,
we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all those who have been baptized 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.**

Final Prayer

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.

All Amen.

Dearly beloved sisters and brothers,
go back to your homes and await the hour when the risen Lord shall
make himself known to us in the breaking of bread.

All Thanks be to God.

Alleluia. Christ is Risen!

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Those in church may wish to come up to the font and sign themselves with the sign of the cross.

*We look forward to seeing you tomorrow either in person
or online at 10.30am for our Easter Day Holy Communion
celebration service!*