

Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter

4 April 2026

The building being in darkness, the ministers go in silence to the main entrance, one of them carrying the unlit Easter Candle.

All stand, as are able, and face the ministers. Please join in the texts in bold type.

The president says

Dear brothers and sisters 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 new fire is lit.

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 Easter Candle is marked here.

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 president lights the Easter Candle, saying

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

The minister bearing the Candle enters the building, followed by the other ministers, and they pause just inside the entrance.

The minister bearing the Candle raises it and says or sings

The light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

The procession of the Easter Candle moves further into the building and then stops.

The light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

The candles of those around are lit from the Easter Candle.

The procession continues to the chancel steps and stops once more.

The light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

The Easter Candle is placed on a stand.

The Exsultet (we sit)

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! O Universe, dance around God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King, is risen! Sound the victorious trumpet of salvation! Rejoice, O earth, in glory, revealing the splendour of your creation, radiant in the brightness of your triumphant King! Christ has conquered! Now his life and glory fill you! Darkness vanishes for ever! Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory! The risen Saviour, our Lord of life, shines upon you! Let all God's people sing and shout for joy.

The minister continues

The Lord be with you **and also with you.**

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.**

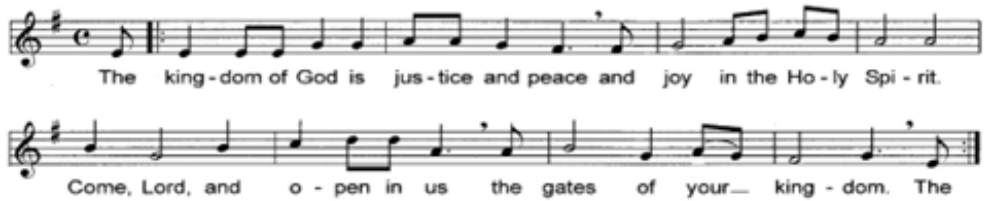
It is right and good that with hearts and minds and voices we should praise you, Father almighty, the unseen God, through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who has saved us by his death, paid the price of Adam's sin, and reconciled us once again to you. For this is the Passover feast, when Christ, the true Lamb of God, is slain whose blood consecrates the homes of all the faithful. This is the night when you first saved our ancestors, freeing Israel from her slavery and leading her safely through the sea. This is the night when Jesus Christ vanquished hell, broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave. This is the night when all who believe in him are freed from sin, restored to grace and holiness, and share the victory of Christ. This is the night that gave us back what we had lost; beyond our deepest dreams you made even our sin a happy fault. Most blessed of all nights! Evil and hatred are put to flight and sin is washed away, lost innocence regained, and mourning turned to joy.

Night truly blessed, when hatred is cast out, peace and justice find a home, and heaven is joined to earth and all creation reconciled to you. Therefore, heavenly Father, in this our Easter joy accept our sacrifice of praise, your Church's solemn offering, this wax, the work of bees and the hands of your ministers. As we gaze upon the splendour of this flame fed by melting wax conceived by mother bee, grant that this Easter Candle may make our darkness light. For Christ the morning star has risen in glory; Christ is risen from the dead and his flame of love still burns within us! Christ sheds his peaceful light on all the world! Christ lives and reigns for ever and ever! **Amen.**

The Vigil (we sit)

First Reading (Genesis 22.1-18)

After the reading we remain seated and sing a chant from Taizé.



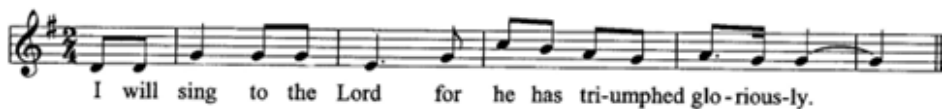
(followed by the Collect)

Almighty God, whose chosen servant Abraham faithfully obeyed your call and rejoiced in your promise that, in him, all the families of the earth should be blessed: give us a faith like his, that, in us, your promises may be fulfilled; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

Second Reading (Exodus 14.10-15.1a)

After the reading we remain seated for a responsorial canticle.

We sing the response after the Cantor, and then after every verse:



(followed by the Collect)

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,

Readings (we sit)

First Reading (Romans 6.3-11)

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

(We stand)

Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia. **Alleluia, alleluia. 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.

Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia.

Please stand for the Gospel reading (Matthew 28.1-10)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Liturgy of Initiation

The candidates for baptism gather with the president around the font.

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.

The president asks the candidates for baptism:

Do you wish to be baptized? **I do.**

The president addresses the congregation:

Faith is the gift of God to his people. In baptism the Lord is adding to our number those whom he is calling. People of God, will you welcome these candidates and uphold them in their new life in Christ? **With the help of God, we will.**

The president addresses the congregation and candidates for baptism

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvelous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:

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.

The president or another minister makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each candidate for baptism, saying:

Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of his cross.

When all the candidates for baptism have been signed:

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

All: Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin, the world and the devil, and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness, restore in you the image of his glory, and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.

All: Amen.

Prayer over the Water

The president stands before the water of baptism and says:

Praise God who made heaven and earth,

who keeps his promise for ever.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ was baptized in the river Jordan, we thank you for the gift of water to cleanse us and revive us. We thank you that through the waters of the Red Sea you led your people out of slavery to freedom in the Promised Land. We thank you that through the deep waters of death you brought your Son, and raised him to life in triumph. Bless this water, that your servants who are washed in it may be made one with Christ in his death and in his resurrection, to be cleansed and delivered from all sin. Send your Holy Spirit upon them, bring them to new birth in the household of faith and raise them with Christ to full and eternal life; for all might, majesty, authority and power are yours, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Profession of Faith

The president addresses the congregation and candidates for baptism:

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at
the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of
saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life
everlasting. Amen.**

Baptism

The president pours water over each candidate, saying:

N, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The president says

May God, who has received you by baptism into his Church, pour upon you the riches of his grace, that within the company of Christ's pilgrim people you may daily be renewed by his anointing Spirit, and come to the inheritance of the saints in glory. **Amen.**

The waters of baptism are sprinkled over the people.

Almighty God, we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith with all 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.**

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.**

The Welcome (We stand)

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism: N by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.

We welcome you into the fellowship of faith; we are children of the same heavenly Father; we welcome you.

The Peace is introduced, followed by:

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Offertory Hymn

**Alleluya! Alleluya! Hearts to heaven and voices raise;
Sing to God a hymn of gladness, Sing to God a hymn of praise;
He who on the cross a victim For the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory, Now is risen from the dead.**

**Christ is risen, Christ, the first-fruits Of the holy harvest field,
Which will all its full abundance At his second coming yield;
Then the golden ears of harvest Will their heads before him wave,
Ripened by his glorious sunshine From the furrows of the grav.**

**Christ is risen, we are risen; Shed upon us heavenly grace,
Rain, and dew, and gleams of glory From the brightness of thy face;
That we, Lord, with hearts in heaven Here on earth may fruitful be,
And by angel-hands be gathered, And be ever safe with thee.**

**Alleluya! Alleluya! Glory be to God on high;
To the Father, and the Saviour, Who has gained the victory;
Glory to the Holy Spirit, Fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluya! Alleluya! To the Triune Majesty.**

Words: Christopher Wordsworth (1807-85)

Music: 'Lux Eoi' Arthur Seymour Sullivan (1842-1900)

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

and also with you.

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.

The seasonal part of the prayer follows and at the end the Congregational Cantors sing:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

[Mass of All Saints—Alan Wilson (born 1947)]

We pray for the Holy Spirit to transform us and the gifts, and then the words of Jesus at the Last Supper are recalled:

The following acclamation is then used:

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

The prayer continues with oblation and intercession, ending:

... all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Rejoicing in God's new creation, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

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.

Jesus says, I am the bread of life, whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

Lord, our hearts hunger for you; give us this bread always.

The Congregational Cantors sing:

Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world: give us your peace.

Alleluia. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

It is our custom not to direct people to the front, so we warmly invite everyone to come forward to the Communion rails when you are ready. If you normally receive Communion in your own church then you are welcome to do so here, or you may prefer the priest to pray for God's blessing on you. Gluten-free hosts are available on the left-hand side.

During Communion:

This joyful Eastertide, away with sin and sorrow.

My Love, the Crucified, hath sprung to life this morrow:

Refrain: Had Christ, that once was slain, ne'er burst his three-day prison,

Our faith had been in vain: but now hath Christ arisen.

My flesh in hope shall rest, and for a season slumber:

Till trump from east to west shall wake the dead in number: Refrain:

Death's flood hath lost his chill, since Jesus crossed the river:

Lover of souls, from ill my passing soul deliver: Refrain:

Words: George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934)

Music: David's Psalmen, Amsterdam, 1685 harm. Charles Wood (1866-1926)

Post-Communion Prayers (We stand at 'Let us pray')

God of Life, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection have delivered us from the power of our enemy: grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Final hymn:

**Good Christians all, rejoice and sing!
Now is the triumph of our King:
To all the world glad news we bring: Alleluya!**

**The Lord of Life is risen for ay:
Bring flowers of song to strew his way;
Let all mankind rejoice and say: Alleluya!**

**Praise we in songs of victory
That Love, that Life, which cannot die,
And sing with hearts uplifted high: Alleluya!**

**Thy name we bless, O risen Lord,
And sing today with one accord
The life laid down, the life restored: Alleluya!**

Words: Cyril Alington (1872-1955)

Music: 'Vulpus' (Gelob't Sei Gott) - Melody from Vulpius's Gesangbuch Jena (1609) Harmony
Henry Ley (1887-1962)



Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is included in this service, is copyright ©
the Archbishops' Council 2000. Hymns and other texts are reproduced under CCL licence number 556443
or One License licence number A-632593.

The Blessing (we stand)

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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

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 from the grave has won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith. **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit, who filled the disciples with the life of the risen Lord, 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.**

With the risen life of Christ within you, go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.



Thanks be to God. Al-le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Organ: Incantation pour un jour Saint – Jean Langlais (1907-1991)

Please join us for a drinks reception immediately after the service.

