



Midweek Vespers

A LENTEN JOURNEY TO THE EASTER VIGIL

**Trinity Lutheran Church
Parkland, Washington**

February 24, 2021

We're on a pilgrimage. The forty days of Lent lead us on the journey to Holy Week.

Mundy Thursday gathers us with the disciples around the table in that upper room to share a sacred meal. Afterwards, Jesus takes a towel and kneels before each disciples, assuming the posture of a slave, and washes their feet. Then he tells them that they are to do for one another what he has done for them. "I give you a new commandment," Jesus says, "that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." As this worship ends, we go with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, to experience Judas' betrayal, and to see Jesus arrested and taken away. We worshippers leave in silence, struck mute by the events of the day.

On Good Friday we walk the Via Dolorosa (the Way of Grief) with Jesus as, carrying his cross, he is led to Calvary to publicly hang and die on a Roman cross—an ancient instrument of torture and death. We stand weeping with the women (including Jesus' mother) as the life drains from Jesus' body. We hear his anguished but triumphant final words, "It is finished," as he hangs his head and dies. His body placed within a tomb, we worshippers leave in silent reverence and grief.

The final part of the Triduum (the Three Days) is the Great Vigil of Easter, the climax and crowning moment of the church year, when God raises Jesus from the dead. In the night, a new bonfire is lit, and our Paschal Candle is lit from it. The light of Christ leads worshippers into the church, where we hear the Easter Proclamation, and hear again and remember the great stories of God's salvation history. We celebrate baptisms and renew our own baptismal covenant. And we celebrate the first Eucharist of Easter, as Christ comes to us in his Holy Supper.

This Lent, in these midweek Vespers, we will hear and reflect on five of the twelve Old Testament readings of the Vigil of Easter. The five are:

Week 1 – Creation: Genesis 1:1—2:4a

Week 2 – Flood: Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13

Week 3 – Deliverance at the Red Sea: Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21

Week 4 – Salvation Freely Offered to All: Isaiah 55:1-11

Week 5 – Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace: Daniel 3:1-29

Tonight, our focus is on the story of creation that opens the First Testament, as God speaks order out of chaos, creating the world and all that is in it, declaring it all "very good!" The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the beginning of life for us all. Just as the creator God forms the earth out of chaotic waters and shines light onto primeval darkness, so the resurrection of Christ pulls us from death through baptism into fruitful life with all the good earth and enlightens our life in Christ.

Throughout this bulletin,

the leader's parts are in normal type,

instructions and headings are in italics,

and congregational responses are in bold type.

Welcome! We're glad you've joined us on this first leg of our Journey to the Easter Vigil.

May you be blessed, renewed, and transformed on this pilgrimage.

Liturgy credits:

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OPENING

The love of God poured into our hearts, the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit be with you.

As a candle is lit:

Behold, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.

Turn us again, O God of our salvation that the light of your face may shine on us.

May your justice shine like the sun; and may the poor be lifted up.

HYMN OF LIGHT

O Light Whose Splendor Thrills

ELW hymn 563



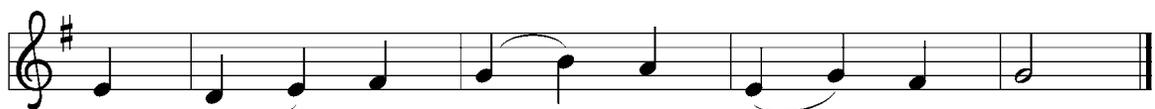
1 O Light whose splen - dor thrills and glad - dens
2 As twi - light hov - ers near at sun - set,
3 In all life's bril - liant, time - less mo - ments,



with ra - diance bright - er than the sun,
and lamps are lit, and chil - dren nod,
let faith - ful voic - es sing your praise,



pure gleam of God's un - end - ing glo - ry,
in eve - ning hymns we lift our voic - es
O Son of God, our life - be - stow - er,



O Je - sus, blest A - noint - ed One:
to Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son, one God.
whose glo - ry light - ens end - less days.

THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you called light into being,
and you set light in the sky to govern night and day.

In a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night you led your people into freedom.

Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ:

may your Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;

for you are merciful, and you love your whole creation,

and with all your creatures we give you glory,

through your Son Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

PSALMODY: Psalm 121:1, 5-8

READING: Genesis 1:1- 2:4a

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the 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. ³Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, ‘Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’ ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, ‘Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.’ And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, ‘Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.’ And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.’ And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, ‘Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.’ ²¹So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. ²²God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ ²³And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.’ And it was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then 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.’

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ 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.’ ²⁹God 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. ³⁰And 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. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

^{2:1} Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. ²And 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. ³So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

REFLECTION

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,
but in these last days God has spoken to us by the Son.

SONG

God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens

ELW Hymn 771



1 God, who stretched the span - gled heav - ens in - fi - nite in time and place,
2 We have ven - tured worlds un - dreamed of since the child-hood of our race;
3 As each far ho - ri - zon beck - ons, may it chal-lenge us a - new:



flung the suns in burn-ing ra - diance through the si - lent fields of space:
known the ec - sta - sy of wing-ing through un - trav-eled realms of space;
chil - dren of cre - a - tive pur - pose, serv - ing oth - ers, hon - 'ring you.



we, your chil - dren in your like-ness, share in - ven - tive pow'rs with you;
probed the se - crets of the at - om, yield-ing un - i - mag - ined pow'r,
May our dreams prove rich with prom-ise; each en-deav-or well be - gun;



great Cre - a - tor, still cre - at - ing, show us what we yet may do.
fac - ing us with life's de - struc - tion or our most tri - um - phant hour.
great Cre - a - tor, give us guid - ance till our goals and yours are one.

PRAYERS

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who offer their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the health of the creation, for abundant harvests that all may share, and for peaceful times,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For public servants, the government, and those who protect us; for those who work to bring peace, justice, healing, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who travel, for those who are sick and suffering, and for those who are in captivity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For deliverance in the time of affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all servants of the church, for those who worship this night,

and for all people who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

A time of silence follows.

Giving thanks for all who have gone before us and are at rest, rejoicing in the communion of all the saints, we commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to you, through Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us.

Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

Christ Jesus dwell in our hearts through faith, as we are being rooted and grounded in love, strengthened by the Spirit, and filled with all the fullness of God.

Amen.

The worship ended, may you be strengthened for the journey. Go in peace and hope.