



Midweek Vespers

A Lenten Journey to the Easter Vigil

Trinity Lutheran Church
Parkland, Washington

March 3, 2021

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

Maundy 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 Noah and the flood. In the story of the flood, God re-creates the world by sending forty days of rain to destroy all that is evil. In the resurrection of Christ, God is making all things new, and in our baptism, we are cleansed and brought to new life.

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

READING: Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13

¹The LORD said to Noah, ‘Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. ²Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; ³and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.’ ⁵And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

¹¹In the six-hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. ¹²The rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights. ¹³On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons, entered the ark, ¹⁴they and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind—every bird, every winged creature. ¹⁵They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood continued for forty days on the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters.

^{8:6}At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; ⁹but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; ¹¹and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.

¹³In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶‘Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.’ ¹⁸So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives.

^{9:8}Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹‘As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ ¹²God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

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

Remember and Rejoice

ELW Hymn 454



- 1 Re - mem - ber and re - joice, re - newed by floods of grace.
- 2 In life, in death, we trust in God's most ho - ly name,
- 3 We pledge our - selves a - new to flee the lures of hell,
- 4 God, bless us by your grace; re - mind us of your care.
- 5 Re - mem - ber and re - joice, re - newed by floods of grace.



We bear the sign of Je - sus Christ, that time can - not e - rase.
for - ev - er traced by wa - ter sign, and sealed by Spir - it flame.
to cling to Christ's com - mu - ni - ty, in jus - tice, peace to dwell.
Re - new - ing Spir - it, fill us now, in - spire our work, our prayer.
We bear the sign of Je - sus Christ, that time can - not e - rase.

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.

O God, strength of the powerless and light in all darkness: Look in mercy upon your church, a wonderful and sacred mystery, that it may be an ark of peace in the midst of chaos. Let the whole world come to see that what was fallen is being raised up, that what was old is being made new, and that all things are being restored to wholeness through the one from whom they first took being, Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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.