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***The Great Vigil of***

**Easter**

***with***

***The Blessing of the New Fire***

**Saint Paul’s Anglican Church**

**The Rev. Steven P. Macias, Rector**

Saint Paul’s Anglican Church welcomes you in the name of Christ. We worship according to the Book of Common Prayer and adhere to the fullness of Scripture, the Historic Creeds, and Thirty-nine Articles of Religion of the English Reformation.

**About the Service**

Since earliest times, the Christian observance of Easter consisted of a vigil

of watching and waiting, fasting and prayer, that lasted through the hours

of darkness. The vigil began after evening prayer on Easter Eve when, as

every night, the evening candle was lit. As a result, in the Western

Church, at this particular service the ‘light ceremony’ came to symbolise

the return of the Light of Christ from the darkness of the tomb, and the

beginning of the Easter celebrations.

The Easter Liturgy begins with the lighting of a new fire from which the

Paschal Candle (from Latin Pascha for ‘Easter’) is then lit. The

resurrection is then proclaimed once everyone has processed into the

church in the Service of Light. The Easter Candle, together with the

candles held by individual worshippers, illuminate the church. This

illustrates the way that Christians understand the Old Testament, and

interpret life itself, in the light of the resurrection of Jesus. The history

of our salvation in the Scriptures is heard in the light of the Easter

mystery.

The lighted Paschal candle contains a twofold symbolism. First, it

represents the pillar of fire that went before the Israelites during their

flight from Egypt. Second, it represents Christ, the light of the world.

The procession into the darkened church likewise has a twofold

meaning. It symbolizes the journey of the Israelites out of Egypt, and also

the arrival of Christ who is the Saviour of the world. The Service of

Light reaches its climax with the singing of the Exsultet iam Angelica, the

ancient plainchant Easter Proclamation. Following this, the gathered

congregation hear the Easter readings, and renew their baptismal promises.

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EARLY beloved in the Lord: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed from death to life, the Church bids thee and the faithful throughout the world to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death.

The Lord be with you  
**and with thy spirit**Let us pray.

O

GOD, through thy Son thou hast bestowed upon thy people the brightness of thy light: Sanctify this new fire, and grant in this Paschal feast our hearts may so burn with heavenly desire, that with pure minds we may attain to the Everlasting Banquet with thy Saints in light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE BLESSING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

Christ yesterday and today (vertical); the Beginning and the End (horizontal); The Alpha and the Omega. All time belongs to him (20) and all the ages. To him be glory and power through every age and for ever. Amen (25) By his holy and glorious wounds, (+) may Christ the Lord guard us and protect us. Amen.

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.  
  
*The Paschal Candle is lit and the people process into the Sanctuary.*

The light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**Lumen Christi. **Deo grátias.** (x3)

*And lights are lit throughout the church, except for the altar candles.*

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THE EXSULTET  
Easter Proclamation

Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout Salvation for the victory of our mighty King.

Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendor, for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King.

Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, and let your holy courts, in radiant light, resound with the praises of your people.

All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame, pray with me to God the Almighty for the grace to sing the worthy praise of this great light; through Jesus Christ his Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*Deacon* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And with your spirit.**

*Deacon* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them up to the Lord.**

*Deacon* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is truly right and good, always and everywhere,

with our whole heart and mind and voice to praise you,

the invisible, almighty, and eternal God,

and your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord;

who paid for us the debt of Adam’s sin,

and by his blood delivered your faithful people;

for he is the true Paschal Lamb, the very Lamb of God,

whose blood marks the doorposts of believers

and makes us holy.

This is the night when you brought our forebears,

the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt,

and led them through the Red Sea on dry land.

This is the night when with a pillar of fire

you banished the darkness of our iniquity.

This is the night when all who believe in Christ

are delivered from the gloom of sin,

and are restored to grace and holiness of life.

This is the night when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell,

and rose victorious from the grave.

Our birth would have been no gain,

had we not been redeemed.

How wonderful and beyond our knowing, O God,

is your mercy and loving kindness to us,

that to redeem a slave, you gave a Son.

O wonderful providence of Adam’s sin

destroyed completely by the death of Christ.

O happy fault, which gained for us

so great and glorious a Redeemer.

This is the night of which it is written:

the night shall be as bright as the day.

How holy is this night when wickedness is put to flight,

and sin is washed away.

It restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to those who mourn.

It casts out pride and hatred, and brings peace and concord.

How blessed is this night when earth and heaven are joined,

and Man is reconciled to God.

Therefore, O holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice,

the offering of this candle in your honor,

the work of bees and of your servants’ hands,

the gift of your most holy Church.

May it mingle with the lights of heaven,

and shine continually to drive away all darkness.

May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting,

find it ever burning—he who gives his light to all creation,

and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Dear brethren, now that we have begun our solemn Vigil, let us listen with quiet hearts to the Word of God. Let us meditate on how God in times past saved his people and in these, the last days, has sent us his Son as our Redeemer. Let us pray that our God may complete this paschal work of salvation by the fullness of redemption.

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**THE LESSONS**

THE CREATION

GENESIS 1:1-2:3   
In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And 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. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And 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 heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on 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 heavens 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. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, 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 the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 104:1-35

R. **Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!

You are clothed with majesty and glory,

robed in light as with a cloak.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

You fixed the earth upon its foundation,

not to be moved forever;

with the ocean, as with a garment, you covered it;

above the mountains the waters stood.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

You send forth springs into the watercourses

that wind among the mountains.

Beside them the birds of heaven dwell;

from among the branches they send forth their song.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

You water the mountains from your palace;

the earth is replete with the fruit of your works.

You raise grass for the cattle,

and vegetation for man's use,

Producing bread from the earth.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

How manifold are your works, O LORD!

In wisdom you have wrought them all—

the earth is full of your creatures.

Bless the LORD, O my soul! Alleluia.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

Let us pray. *Silence*

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

ISRAEL’S DELIVERANCE AT THE RED SEA

Exodus 14:10-15:1

As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn’t we say to you in Egypt, ‘Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians’? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!” Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.” Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel’s army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. During the last watch of the night the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, “Let’s get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.” Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen.” Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived. But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant. Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: “I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ex 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18 **Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.**I will sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant; horse and chariot he has cast into the sea. My strength and my courage is the LORD, and he has been my savior. He is my God, I praise him; the God of my father, I extol him.

**R. Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.**   
The LORD is a warrior, LORD is his name! Pharaoh's chariots and army he hurled into the sea; the elite of his officers were submerged in the Red Sea.

**R. Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory**  
The flood waters covered them, they sank into the depths like a stone. Your right hand, O LORD, magnificent in power,

**R. Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.** You brought in the people you redeemed and planted them on the mountain of your inheritance the place where you made your seat, O LORD, the sanctuary, LORD, which your hands established. The LORD shall reign forever and ever.

**R. Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.**

Let us pray. Silence

O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day, by the power of your mighty arm you once delivered your chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation offered to all nations by the water of Baptism: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

A sheet of music with text

Description automatically generatedTHE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

EZEKIEL 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.” So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”

PSALM 51:12-19 Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.

**R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. Cast me not out from your presence, and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

**R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me. I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall return to you.

**R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

For you are not pleased with sacrifices; should I offer a holocaust, you would not accept it. My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit; a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

**R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

Let us pray. *Silence*

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

THE GLORIA

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father, Amen.**

THE COLLECT   
Let us pray. O God, who make this most sacred night radiant with the glory of the Lord’s Resurrection, stir up in your Church a spirit of adoption, so that, renewed in body and mind, we may render you undivided service. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever

THE EPISTLE Romans 6:3-11  
Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE SERMON

ADMISSION OF CATECHUMENS  
What is thy hope?   
**New life in Christ.**   
What dost thou desire of God and of this congregation?   
**That I may grow in faith, hope, and love.**

If thou dost hope to enter into eternal life, thou must, by his grace, follow in our Lord’s steps, for he said: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

Wilt thou turn unto Jesus Christ and accept him as thy Lord and Savior? **I will do so, God being my help.**

As none can do this without God's grace, found in Word and Sacrament, wilt thou then join with us in our common life of worship, teaching, service, and fellowship? **I will.**

Let us pray. O Lord God of hosts, before the terrors of whose presence the armies of Hell are put to flight: Deliver these thy servants from the powers of the world, the flesh, and the Devil; cast out from them every evil and unclean spirit that dost lurk in the heart, and any spirit of error or wickedness; and make them ready to receive the fullness of thy Holy Ghost; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Celebrant then makes the sign of the Cross upon the forehead of each one (and may use the Oil of Catechumens to do so), saying to each*

Almighty God deliver thee from the powers of darkness and evil, and lead thee into the light and obedience of the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who in his love for you hast called you unto the knowledge of his grace, grant you an entrance into his kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE BLESSING OF THE WATER

May the power of the Holy Spirit, O Lord, we pray, come down through your Son into the fullness of this font,   
*(and, holding the candle in the water)* he continues: so that all who have been buried with Christ by Baptism into death may rise again to life with him. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen**.

*Then the candle is lifted out of the water, as the people acclaim:*

**Springs of water, bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all for ever.**

THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS   
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 his Church. Now that we have completed our observance of Lent, we renew the promises made at our baptism, affirming our allegiance to Christ, and our rejection of all that is evil.

Do you renounce Satan?   
**All**: **I do.**

And all his works?   
**All: I do.**   
  
Priest: Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?   
**All: I do.**

Priest: Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?   
**All: I do.**

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?   
**All: I do.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?   
**All: I do.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?   
**All: I do.**

And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins, keep us by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord, for eternal life.   
**All: Amen.**

THE Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; Grant you to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith, ye may be filled with all the fulness of God. Amen.

*The Priest sprinkles the people with the blessed water, while all sing.*

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THE BLESSING

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, 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, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**