

April 4, 2026

Easter Vigil at Home



God Loves. We Love.
Everyone!
Dios Ama. Amamos.
Todos!

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The Great Vigil of Easter is the most ancient and primary worship service in the life of whole Church. It proclaims the story of God, God's people, and God's love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Throughout the ages, this celebration has been offered in a variety of ways, with four main elements: *Light, Story, Baptism, and Meal*. This is the primary worship service where creation and new light are recalled, where stories of God and God's people in salvation and life are told, where new candidates, having been instructed and supported, are baptized and confirmed, and where the first Easter Eucharist of the Church is celebrated.

This year we offer this **outline** as a way to engage an experience of vigil as we lean into the resurrection story on Easter morning – and for the fifty days after Resurrection Day!

For this Easter Vigil you may need: a Bible, or Bible app, candles, water, something to make or listen to music, some nourishing/delightful food, and something to write or draw upon.

LIGHT

On April 3, 2026, sunset begins at 7:54. You are encouraged to offer prayers and reflections beginning then. Use music that focuses your mind and that you find meaningful. Leave time for quiet through the vigil.

Begin in a darkened space. Light a candle, perhaps a baptismal candle, and offer this prayer:

God of love, who is forever, in Jesus Christ you have given light and life to all the world. Bless this light, a symbol of Jesus, the light of the world. May his love burn bright in our lives as we love and serve him and others. Amen.

It is the tradition of the whole church at Easter, when we gather, we light a large candle, called the Paschal Candle. The word paschal is from a Hebrew word relating to the Jewish festival of the Passover. This candle is a central symbol in the Church's worship life. The Paschal Candle, burning at baptisms, confirmations, funerals, and throughout the fifty days of Easter season, shines with the light of Christ's resurrection. This year, we will bless and light the Paschal Candle on Easter Sunday.

STORY

At the Easter Vigil we share stories of faith and life from the Bible, and from one another.

There are twelve traditional stories from the Hebrew scriptures [listed at the conclusion of this outline](#). Engage as many or few as you desire. As you engage the stories, we encourage you to pray, meditate, draw, or journal in response to each Bible story. Read them quietly, read them aloud, or read them with others. Think and talk about what they mean for you and for others.

THANKSGIVING FOR HOLY BAPTISM

Holy Baptism is the sacrament of new birth into the life of Christ in the community of the Church. Through washing with water and the calling of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) a person is baptized. God's salvation, just shared in the stories of faith and life, is lived out in the life of baptism. For those who are baptized, the Easter Vigil offers a way to affirm the baptismal promises. If you are not a disciple of Jesus, may this affirmation be a sign of blessing and an invitation to deeper relationships with God and the Church.

With these questions and answers, these promises and vows, we affirm faith in God, reject sin, and confess the faith of the whole Church. We encourage you to think or talk about what promises are and why we make a promise.

Questions for Renewal of the Promises of Holy Baptism are:

Do I renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God? **Yes!**

Do I renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God? **Yes!**

Do I renounce the ways of sin that draw me from God? **Yes!**

Will I live in the covenant God made with me in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

I will, and I ask God to help and guide me.

You may touch some water in a container. You may make the sign of the cross, an ancient body prayer of touching your forehead to your heart, and then to each shoulder. As you offer the following prayer of the Holy Spirit, God is with you, even as close as your breathing:

Thank you, God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give new birth, cleanse from sin, and keep us eternal life. May the gift of your Holy Spirit continue in me and all people: that spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and trust in the Lord God, the spirit of joy in your presence. Amen.

Remember and share baptismal stories from your own memories and those that have been told to you.

Pray for our suffering and beautiful world—for creation, nations, the whole church, communities, and individuals in body, mind, spirit, and relationships.

ANNOUNCING JESUS IS ALIVE!

As we live in God's love through light, story, and thanksgiving, we announce that Jesus is risen from the dead, as the Bible teaches.

Turn on all the lights in your space. You are invited to read John 20:1-18 from the Bible. John's gospel describes the confusion and excitement of the first Easter: the stone is moved, disciples race back and forth, and angels speak to a weeping woman. Then, Jesus himself appears in the story.

A phrase used by early Christians to announce the good news of Christ is: **Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!** Alleluia is from a Hebrew word of praise. We remind ourselves and witness in the world that Jesus, God's beloved, is alive in faith and life in and through us.

MEAL

Enjoy a favorite meal, snack, or dessert to celebrate that Jesus is alive. You may conclude this Easter Vigil with this Blessing:

**God, bless me forever with your love and grace. May I be love and grace in the world. Amen.
Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Bible Stories of God, God's People, Salvation, & Life

Genesis 1:1—2:4a *A Creation story*

Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13 *A Flood story*

Genesis 22:1-18 *Testing of Abraham*

Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21 *Deliverance at the Red Sea*

Isaiah 55:1-11 *Love freely offered to all*

Ezekiel 36:24-28 *A new heart and a new spirit are given*

Ezekiel 37:1-14 *Valley of the dry bones*

Zephaniah 3:14-20 *The gathering of God's people*

Jonah 1:1—2:1 *The deliverance of Jonah*

Isaiah 61:1-4, 9-11 *God embraces us with love*

Daniel 3:1-29 *Deliverance from the fiery furnace*

For Easter Sunday worship and events visit: www.felcaustin.org