

## **Great Vigil of Easter**

4 April 2026

### **Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church**

Entire service printed below

## A Word of Welcome

*A warm welcome to you this night as we begin our celebration of our Lord's resurrection! Tonight, is a time of Word and prayer. At death, we often spend time remembering life, and tonight will be a time of remembering the wonderful works of God, how He saved His people through the Old Testament, and how His faithfulness and salvation still continues for us and through all generations! Tonight sets the stage for our celebration tomorrow, and bridges the gap between Good Friday and Easter morning. Tonight we are joyful, yet still subdued . . . but tomorrow we will rejoice and shout forth our Lord's victory! God bless your time in His Word this holy day of His rest in the tomb.*



**(All rise)**

**P** Beloved in the Lord, on this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, we are gathered here in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of the Lord in which, by hearing His Word and celebrating His Sacraments, we share in His victory over death.

**P** Let us pray:

**P** O God, You are like a refiner's fire, and Your Spirit enkindles the hearts of Your faithful people with the fire of Your love. Bless, we implore You, this new flame **[the Paschal candle is now lit]** and those who keep this joyful Easter festival that, burning with desire for life with You, we may be found rightly prepared to share in the Feast of Light which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**P** Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever, the beginning and the ending, the Alpha and Omega. His are time and eternity; His are the glory and dominion, now and forever. By His wounds we have healing both now and forever.

**C** Amen

**P** May the light of Christ, who is risen in glory from the dead, scatter all the darkness of our hearts and minds.

All now light their candles from the Paschal Candle.

**P** Let us pray:

**P** Almighty and most merciful God, pour out on us Your abundant blessing that all who in true faith share this night in joyful celebration of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead may be filled with Your heavenly benediction. Once we were in darkness, but now we are in the Light, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.



## The Exsultet

**P** Rejoice now, all you heav'nly choirs of angels;  
rejoice now, all creation; sound forth, trumpet of salvation,  
and proclaim the triumph of our King.

Rejoice too, all the earth, in the radiance of the light now poured upon you  
and made brilliant by the brightness of the everlasting King;  
know that the ancient darkness has been forever banished.

Rejoice, O Church of Christ, clothed in the brightness of this light;  
let all this house of God ring out with rejoicing,  
with the praises of all God's faithful people.

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And with Thy spirit.

**P** Lift up Your hearts.

**C** We lift them to the Lord.

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

**C** It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

**P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places, with all our heart and mind and voice, praise You, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty everlasting God, and Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

For He is the very Paschal Lamb who offered Himself for the sin of the world, who has cleansed us by the shedding of His precious blood.

This is the night when You brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt and led them through the Red Sea on dry ground.

This is the night when all who believe in Christ are delivered from bondage to sin and are restored to life and immortality.

This is the night when Christ, the Life, arose from the dead. The seal of the grave is broken and the morning of the new creation breaks forth out of night. Oh, how wonderful and beyond all telling is Your mercy toward us, O God, that to redeem a slave You gave Your Son.

How holy is this night when all wickedness is put to flight and sin is washed away.

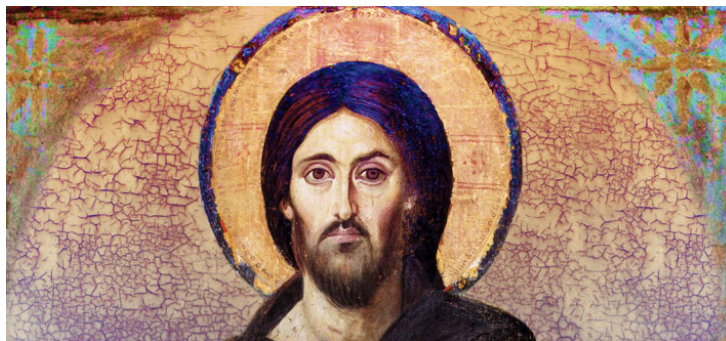
How holy is this night when innocence is restored to the fallen and joy is given to those downcast.

How blessed is this night when man is reconciled to God in Christ.

Holy Father, accept now the evening sacrifices of our thanksgiving and praise. Let Christ, the true light and morning star, shine in our hearts, He who gives light to all creation, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**P** In this most holy night our Saviour, Christ the Lord, broke the power of death and by His resurrection brought life and salvation to all creation. Let us praise the Lord, for He truly keeps His Word. The sun of righteousness has dawned upon us who have sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. Let us hear now the wonderful works of God, fulfilled and brought to completion in Christ, our Lord.

*Sit*



**The individual candles are now extinguished.**

## Service of Readings

### **The First Reading: The Creation (Genesis 1:1 - 2:2)**



*After the reading, the prayer is said:*

**P** Almighty God, through Your Word and Spirit You most wonderfully created all things, and through the Word made flesh You brought new life to fallen humanity. Grant that in Your mercy we may be conformed to the image of Him who shares fully in our humanity, even Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

### **The Second Reading: The Flood (Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13)**



*After the reading, the prayer is said:*

**P** O Lord, You kill and You raise to life; You brought the flood upon a wicked and perverse generation, and yet You saved faithful Noah and his family in the ark. Keep us in safety in the ark of Christ's body, the Church, that Your mercy may come to its fullness and Your salvation be preached to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

### **The Third Reading: Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:10 - 15:1)**

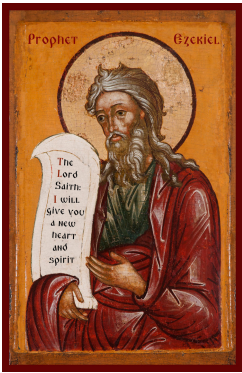


*After the reading, the prayer is said:*

**P** O God, You once delivered Your people Israel from bondage under Pharaoh and led them by a pillar of cloud and fire through the sea to safety. Grant that we may so follow Christ that through the waters of Baptism we may daily die and rise with Him and walk in safety through the wilderness of this life until we see Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

## The Fourth Reading: A New Heart and a New Spirit (Ezekiel 36:24-28)



*After the reading, the prayer is said:*

**P** Almighty and everlasting God, by the death and resurrection of Your Son You cleansed our hearts and put a new Spirit within us. Grant that all who are brought to newness of life in the fellowship of the body of Christ may show forth in their lives what they confess with their lips; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

## The Fifth Reading: Job Confesses the Redeemer (Job 19:20-27)



*After the reading, the prayer is said:*

**P** Almighty God, our great Redeemer, in the sacrifice of Your Son You put to death our wretched flesh and in His rising restored our life. Grant that we may always cling to Christ by faith in this life that at the last we may rejoice to stand in our own flesh and see You face to face; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

## The Sixth Reading: The Gathering of God's People (Zephaniah 3:12-20)



*After the reading, the prayer is said:*

**P** Look in mercy, O Lord, upon Your faithful people, and by Word and Spirit bring to completion that good work which You have begun in us. Gather in Your people that all the world may see and know that what has been cast down is raised up and what has grown old is made new, until the work You have begun in us is brought to its joyful fulfillment in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**C** Amen.

## The Seventh Reading: The Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3:1-30)



*After the reading, the prayer is said:*

**P** O God, Your Son protected faithful Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace of the king. Grant us protection in our time of testing that we would boldly confess Your name, reject all false worship, and live and die in confidence, knowing that we are safe in Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**G** Amen.

## The Homily

### 487 Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain

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1 Come, you faith-ful, raise the strain Of tri - um-phant glad - ness!  
2 'Tis the spring of souls to - day: Christ has burst His pris - on  
3 Now the queen of sea - sons, bright With the day of splen - dor,  
4 For to - day a-mong His own Christ ap-peared, be - stow - ing  
5 Al - le - lu - ia! Now we cry To our King im - mor - tal,



God has brought His Is - ra - el In - to joy from sad - ness,  
And from three days' sleep in death As a sun has ris - en;  
With the roy - al feast of feasts Comes its joy to ren - der;  
His deep peace, which ev - er-more Pass - es hu - man know - ing.  
Who, tri - um - phant, burst the bars Of the tomb's dark por - tal.



Loosed from Pha-raoh's bit - ter yoke Ja - cob's sons and daugh - ters,  
All the win - ter of our sins, Long and dark, is fly - ing  
Comes to glad - den faith-ful hearts Which with true af - fec - tion  
Nei - ther could the gates of death Nor the tomb's dark por - tal  
Come, you faith - ful, raise the strain Of tri - um - phant glad - ness!



Led them with un-moist-ened foot Through the Red Sea wa - ters.  
From His light, to whom is giv'n Laud and praise un - dy - ing.  
Wel - come in un - wea - ried strain Je - sus' res - ur - rec - tion!  
Nor the watch - ers nor the seal Hold Him as a mor - tal.  
God has brought His Is - ra - el In - to joy from sad - ness!



## Service of Baptismal Remembrance

**P** On this holiest of nights, the whole Church of our Lord Jesus Christ recalls His death and burial, rejoicing with great joy in the Gospel of His glorious and mighty resurrection from the dead. The apostle Paul says:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:3-11)

**P** Let us pray:

Almighty and eternal God, according to Your righteous judgment You condemned the unbelieving world through the flood, yet according to Your great mercy You preserved believing Noah and his family, eight souls in all.

You drowned hard-hearted Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, yet led Your people Israel through the water on dry ground, foreshadowing this washing of Your Holy Baptism.

Through the Baptism in the Jordan of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, You sanctified and instituted all waters to be a blessed flood and a lavish washing away of sin.

We pray that You would behold us all according to Your boundless mercy and bless us with true faith by the Holy Spirit, that through this saving flood all sin in us, which has been inherited from Adam and which we ourselves have committed since, would be drowned and die.

Grant that we be kept safe and secure in the holy ark of the Christian Church, being separated from the multitude of unbelievers and serving Your name at all times with a fervent spirit and a joyful hope, so that, with all believers in Your promise, we would be declared worthy of eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

*The congregation stands* for it is no small thing to renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways. We stand behind and in solidarity and unity with one another against the evil one.

**P** Do you renounce the devil?

**C** Yes, I renounce him.

**P** Do you renounce all his works?

**C** Yes, I renounce them.

**P** Do you renounce all his ways?

**C** Yes, I renounce them.

**P** Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

**C** Yes, I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

**P** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son?

**C** Yes, 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

**P** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**C** Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life (†) everlasting. Amen.

P: The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life (†) everlasting.

**C** Amen.

Peace be with you!

**C** Amen.

### The Litany of the Resurrection

*Stand*

**P** O Lord,

**C** Have mercy.

**P** O Christ,

**C** Have mercy.

**P** O Lord,

**C** Have mercy.

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

**C** **Hear us.**

**P** Paschal Lamb, who was offered for us and has taken away the sin of the world,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who was crucified for our transgressions and raised for our justification,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who foretold Your Passion saying, “The Son of Man must be crucified and on the third day rise again,”

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who destroyed Death by dying, and by rising to life again have brought life and immortality to light,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Whose resurrection was first announced by an angel to the women,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who appeared to Mary Magdalene and was worshiped by her:

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who revealed Yourself to the two disciples on the Emmaus road and made Yourself known to them in the Scriptures and in the breaking of the bread,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who appeared to the disciples, bestowing on them Your peace and Your Spirit,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who showed Your wounded hands and side to the apostle Thomas that he too might believe,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who appeared to seven disciples on the Sea of Tiberias, bringing a miraculous catch of fish,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who appeared to Peter and to the Twelve, to over 500 disciples, to James and to all the apostles, and to Paul on the Damascus road,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Who commissioned Your Church to make disciples of all nations by baptizing and teaching them,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** By Your glorious resurrection from the dead,

**C** **Good Lord, deliver us.**

**P** By Your victory over sin and death,

**C** **Good Lord, deliver us.**

**P** By the majesty of Your risen body,

**C** **Good Lord, deliver us.**

**P** We poor sinners implore You,

**C** **To hear us, Lord Jesus.**

**P** That we may daily die and rise with You in our Baptism and walk in the freedom of Your forgiveness,

**C** **Grant us, good Lord.**

**P** That we may set our minds on things above and not on earthly things, serving others as we have been served by You,

**C** **Grant us, good Lord.**

**P** That we may dwell with You forever in the new creation as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, together with all the saints,

**C** **Grant us, good Lord.**

**P** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** **Have mercy on us.**

**P** Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

**C** **Grant us Your peace.**

**P** O Lord,

**C** **Have mercy.**

**P** O Christ,

**C** **Have mercy.**

**P** O Lord,

**C** **Have mercy. Amen.**

### **Easter Acclamation**

**P** Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

**C** **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the sixteenth chapter.

**C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C** Praise to You, O Christ.

### + The Liturgy of Holy Communion +

*(As our joy of Easter is just beginning and not yet here in all its fullness, we speak the liturgy of the Sacrament this night in anticipation of singing it in full joy in the morning.)*

#### Preface

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** We lift them to the Lord.

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

**C** It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

**P** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God. And most especially are we bound to praise You for the glorious resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, the very Pascal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us and bore the sins of the world. By His dying He has destroyed death, and by His rising again He has restored to us everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

#### Sanctus

**C** Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow’r and might:  
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.  
Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

- P** Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

- C** Amen.

## Lord's Prayer

- P** Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

- C** **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  
and the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## The Words of Our Lord

- P** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My  $\text{✠}$  body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My  $\text{✠}$  blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

## Pax Domini

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** Amen.

## Agnus Dei

**C** Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

*Sit*

## The Distribution of Holy Communion

**P** Let us pray:

O God, for our redemption You gave Your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross and by His glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of the enemy. Grant that all our sin may be drowned through daily repentance and that day by day we may arise to live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**P** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**P** The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son (✠), and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

**C** Amen.

## 478 The Day of Resurrection



1 The day of res - ur - rec - tion! Earth, tell it out a - broad,  
2 Let hearts be purged of e - vil That we may see a - right  
3 Now let the heav'ns be joy - ful, Let earth its song be - gin,  
△ 4 All praise to God the Fa - ther, All praise to God the Son,



The pass - o - ver of glad - ness, The pass - o - ver of God.  
The Lord in rays e - ter - nal Of res - ur - rec - tion light  
Let all the world keep tri - umph And all that is there - in.  
All praise to God the Spir - it, E - ter - nal Three in One!



From death to life e - ter - nal, From sin's do - min - ion free,  
And, lis - t'ning to His ac - cents, May hear, so calm and plain,  
Let all things, seen and un - seen, Their notes of glad - ness blend;  
Let all the ran - somed num - ber Fall down be - fore the throne



Our Christ has brought us o - ver With hymns of vic - to - ry.  
His own "All hail!" and, hear - ing, May raise the vic - tor strain.  
For Christ the Lord has ris - en, Our joy that has no end!  
And hon - or, pow'r, and glo - ry As - cribe to God a - lone!

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## Acknowledgments

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