



GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

April 3, 2021
6:30 pm

The Exsultet

Cantor **R**ejoice 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

Cantor *People*

... for ev-er and ev - er. A - men.

Cantor

The Lord be with you.

People

And al - so with you.

Cantor

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Genesis 1:1-2:2

The story of Creation

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the 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. Then 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 a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So 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. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

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. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then 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. The 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. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

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, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon 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 bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So 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. 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.

Continued

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. God 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.

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."

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

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."

God 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. And 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. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, 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 their multitude.

And 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.

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

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be the God.**

Psalms 36:5-10

Dixit injustus

- 5 Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, *
and your faithfulness to the clouds.
- 6 Your righteousness is like the strong mountains,
your justice like the great deep; *
you save both man and beast, O Lord.
- 7 How priceless is your love, O God! *
your people take refuge under the
shadow of your wings.
- 8 They feast upon the abundance of your house; *
you give them drink from the river of your delights.
- 9 For with you is the well of life, *
and in your light we see light.
- 10 Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you, *
and your favor to those who are true of heart.

All stand.

Priest 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.**

All are seated.

Exodus 14: 10 – 31

Miriam tells of Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea
adapted by The Rev. Katherine B. Doar

Miriam enters interrupting whoever was speaking. She is dressed in robes and head scarf, playing a tambourine and dancing and singing:

Sing praises to God
for his great victory!
He has thrown pharaoh's horses
and riders into the sea

Stops short when she notices the crowd.

You're not singing? Didn't you see what just happened? I mean one minute we were trapped, hundreds and thousands of us, right up against the Red Sea with Pharaoh's troops closing in and now here we are safe on the other side! You were right here and you missed it!

Well I have to tell you about it because it's so amazing what God did for us that I just can't stop talking and singing about it.

My name is Miriam and my brother Moses (oh you might have heard of him) was sent by God to lead the Israelites, out of Egypt. You see we're not from Egypt but Pharaoh kept us as slaves and wouldn't let us leave, it was terrible.

Anyway, when Moses first showed up saying God had told him tell Pharaoh to let his people go, I thought maybe he'd spent a bit too long out in the desert with his goats.

But it soon became clear to both us and Pharaoh that Moses wasn't crazy and God wasn't kidding.

Well when Pharaoh finally said his slaves could go we didn't wait around, we left faster than it takes for bread to rise. It was quite a sight. All 600,000 of us with our children and animals. We walked right on out of Egypt, God leading the way with a huge pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.

I should have know it was too good to be true for no sooner had we reached the Red Sea than we looked up and saw the Egyptian army coming after us! I was totally afraid. "Oh God help us!" I cried.

People started hassling my brother, "So you had to take us out here in the wilderness to die, weren't the cemeteries large enough in Egypt?"

But none of this phased my brother, no! He said, "Take a good look at those Egyptians today for you're never going to see them again. So keep your mouths shut and wait and see how God will save you."

Then I thought Moses had really lost it because he started walking straight for the water with his hand in the air and his staff held high.

I missed what he did next because all of a sudden there was a flood of light from behind. I turned to see God's pillar of cloud and fire standing between our people and the advancing Egyptian army. God was shielding us!

Then the wind began wailing and I heard a huge roar like the sucking up of water. I swung back around and there was my brother standing on dry land right in the middle of where the water should have been. It was like he had split the sea in two!

I knew right then and there what God was up to. I turned to everyone behind me, "what are you waiting for?" We walked right on through the Red Sea on dry ground with two huge walls of water on either side of us.

Now I'm starting to wonder if those Egyptians weren't very smart because even after all this amazing stuff God was doing they kept on following us. They drove their horses and chariots right into the middle of the sea. Their wheels got stuck in the mud their horses panicked, it was a mess.

Finally they started to get it. Maybe God wants the Israelites to be free. They tried to run back to the shore but they were stuck.

It was a long rough hike across that sea bottom but every last one of our people made it, from the smallest babe to the oldest grandparent. We hit the other side just as the sun came up.

No sooner had the last Israelite touched the shore than I saw my brother turn and hold up his hand again. The waters closed up, drowning our path and the whole Egyptian army in one giant rush of water.

I couldn't believe it, God had done the impossible! We were saved from slavery in Egypt! We were free! All I could do was to start to dance and sing. Everyone joined in the celebration, can't you hear them all singing? And now that I've told you, I'm going back to the party.*Dances off singing her song again...*

Canticle 8: The Song of Moses

Cantemus Domino

Exodus 15:1-6, 11-13, 17-18

I will sing to the Lord, for he is lofty and uplifted; *
the horse and its rider has he hurled into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and my refuge; *
the Lord has become my Savior.

This is my God and I will praise him, *
the God of my people and I will exalt him.

The Lord is a mighty warrior; *
Yahweh is his Name.

The chariots of Pharaoh and his army has he hurled into the sea; *
the finest of those who bear armor have been drowned in the Red Sea.

The fathomless deep has overwhelmed them; *
they sank into the depths like a stone.

Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in might; *
your right hand, O Lord, has overthrown the enemy.

Who can be compared with you, O Lord, among the gods? *
who is like you, glorious in holiness,
awesome in renown, and worker of wonders?

You stretched forth your right hand; *
the earth swallowed them up.

With your constant love you led the people you redeemed; *
with your might you brought them in safety to your holy dwelling.

You will bring them in and plant them *
on the mount of your possession,

The resting-place you have made for yourself, O Lord, *
the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hand has established.

The Lord shall reign *
for ever and for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

All stand.

Priest Let us pray. *Silence.*

O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day, you once delivered by the power of your mighty arm your chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation of 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.**

All are seated.

Ezekiel 36:24-28

A new heart and a new spirit

Say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be the God.

Remain seated.

Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely, it is God who saves me; *

I will trust in him and not be afraid.

For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, *
and he will be my Savior.

Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing *
from the springs of salvation.

And on that day you shall say, *

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;

Make his deeds known among the peoples; *
see that they remember that his Name is exalted.

Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things, *
and this is known in all the world.

Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy, *
for the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

All stand.

Priest Let us pray. *Silence.*

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who are reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All are seated.

Ezekiel 37:1-14

The valley of dry bones

Ezekiel, walks in seeming confused.

Oh Ezekiel, you look cold, come in and join us at our campfire.

You can not imagine what just happened to me. Can you believe it. I was walking along minding my own business (which is usually what I'm trying to do when God gets a hold of me) and all of a sudden I felt God grabbed me from behind and the Spirit picked me up and dropped me in the middle of a dry desert valley. I mean it was so dry there was nothing there except old dry bones, just lying around everywhere.

Well God asked me that kind of question that God likes to ask, you know the ones that seem like they have a simple answer but when it's God asking you they never do. God said, "Ezekiel, can these dead dry bones live again?"

Well I knew the answer was no, dead bones are dead bones after all. But seeing as how it was God, I thought I could avoid getting tricked by answering, "Oh Lord God, you know the answer."

Well I thought I was pretty clever, but then do you know what God asked me to do next? He said, "Ezekiel, tell those bones, that God has a message for them and the message is, 'I, God, will make you live again, I will make you breath, I will make muscles and skin to cover you again and you will be alive again and then will know that I am the Lord God.'"

Well, I was thinking, "God you have got to be crazy." But of course I'm not about to say "no" to God. So I took a deep breath and thought, "what the heck" and gave it a try not really expecting much except to look a bit foolish standing there talking to a bunch of dead bones.

I almost fell over in shock when in the middle of my talking to these dead bones, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones started putting themselves back together. I blinked because I thought I was seeing things, but as I looked again, and there were muscles and skin on them; instead of talking to a pile of bones, I was facing lifeless people, their bodies were there, but there was no breath in them.

Then God said to me, "Call out to the breath that fills us with life, and tell that breath that God has a message for it and the message is, "I, God, command you to Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these bones, so that they will be alive."

Continued

Well I'm starting to see where God is going here but, I'm also a little scared by this point because I'm wondering what is going to happen after God has me talking in his name to a valley full of people brought back to life. Wouldn't you be a bit worried?

But I've given up thinking that I can get out of this by now. This is God telling me what to do, could you say no to God?

So I called out to the breath of life just like God said, and the breath came into that valley full of lifeless people, and they lived, and stood on their feet, I was surrounded by hundreds and hundreds of living people.

Do you know what God said next? He told me, "Ezekiel, these bones are the whole of my people of Israel. They may think that their bones are dried up, and they are completely without hope."

"But Ezekiel, I want you to tell them that their God has a message for them and the message is: I will give your dry bones life! And I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I do these amazing things."

Then, I blinked and it was all gone, I was right back where I was before God got a hold of me. Boy am I glad I found you all to tell this too or else I would just think it was a dream. But it was real it was so real.

Psalm 30 *Exaltabo te, Domine*

1 I will exalt you, O Lord, because you have lifted me up *
and have not let my enemies triumph over me.

2 O Lord my God, I cried out to you, *
and you restored me to health.

3 You brought me up, O Lord, from the dead; *
you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.

4 Sing to the Lord, you servants of his; *
give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness.

5 For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, *
his favor for a lifetime.

6 Weeping may spend the night, *
but joy comes in the morning.

- 7 While I felt secure, I said, "I shall never be disturbed. *
You, Lord, with your favor, made me as strong as the mountains."
- 8 Then you hid your face, *
and I was filled with fear.
- 9 I cried to you, O Lord; *
I pleaded with the Lord, saying,
- 10 "What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the Pit? *
will the dust praise you or declare your faithfulness?"

All stand.

Priest Let us pray. *Silence.*

Almighty God, by the Passover of your Son you have brought us out of sin into righteousness and out of death into life: Grant to those who are sealed by your Holy Spirit the will and the power to proclaim you to all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All are seated.

Reflections

The Rev. Marcia M. Lockwood
The Rev. Laurel Coote

Priest **T**hrough the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, and raised with him to newness of life. I call upon you, therefore, now that our Lenten observance is ended, to renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and all his works, and promised to serve God faithfully in his holy catholic Church. **Amen.**

The Baptismal Covenant *All Stand.*

Priest **D**o you believe in God the Father?

People I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Priest Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.**

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Priest Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**People I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**

Priest Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers ?

People I will, with God's help.

Priest Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin,
repent and return to the Lord?

People I will, with God's help.

Priest Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

People I will, with God's help.

Priest Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People I will, with God's help.

Priest Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity
of every human being?

People I will, with God's help.

The Asperging

The priests sprinkle the people with Holy Water.

Priest Let us pray together. *Silence.*

○ God of unchangeable power and eternal light:

Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Priest **Alleluia! Alleluia!** Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church celebrates God's diverse creation and strives to build an inclusive community that welcomes everyone, no matter age, gender, sexual identity, culture, ethnicity, economic status, or ability.



WE HOPE YOU FIND YOURS HERE

Here is a place that is ancient and new, a faith that we hold going back to Jesus, back to his spiritual ancestors, back to those who walked the earth and found holy ground. And what we do is often based on really ancient patterns—worship and music; loving service to the poor, the hurting, the lonely; working for justice and peace; lively, fearless education and formation of minds and souls. And that faith is also completely contemporary, engaged in the culture and the needs of the moment.

WHAT WE ARE FOR

The dignity and worth of every person. An open minded, passionate commitment to truth. The importance of everyone's own spiritual journey. God's friends wherever we find them. Seeking Christ in every person who comes through the door. The sacredness of life's rites of passage. The value of community. The hard work necessary to make sure that all are welcomed. Telling the truth about life's challenges. A "user-friendly" church experience. Children, youth and families. We believe that God is love, and we pray that God will use us to spread that love.

WHAT WE ARE AGAINST

Claiming to have all the answers. Elitism and exclusivism, especially in church. Bigotry for any reason. Authoritarianism. Indifference to injustice and suffering. Certitude in the face of ambiguity and superficial answers to hard questions. Boring sermons, bad music and general cluelessness. (So, God help us, because we don't always avoid these!)

WHAT WE VALUE

Community, open hearts, open minds, open arms. Faith. Fortitude. Staying current, but equally staying rooted in tradition. Reason and honesty. Civic responsibility. Debate that allows for mutual respect. Music and beauty for their own sake. Joy in God's creation. Anyone who makes an effort to get to know and follow Jesus.

WELCOME!

Originally written by the people of St. Bartholomen's, New York, this statement has been modified for our use with their permission.

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church

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