



St John the Divine
Easter Vigil & Service of Light
Holy Saturday
Saturday 11th April 2020

Welcome to our live-streamed service, found on the FaceBook page for 'St John the Divine Croydon'.

The following service and notes are taken directly from the Church of England's Common Worship: Times and Seasons (© 2006 The Archbishops' Council, Church House Publishing)

Tonight's service is in two parts:

1. the Vigil, whereby we recall God's saving actions across time; and
2. the Service of Light, in which we acclaim the resurrection, focused around the Easter light.

THE VIGIL

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.

Genesis 1.1-3

A fire is lit

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

This is the night in which our Lord Jesus Christ passed over from death to life. The Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather wherever they are in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which through word and sacrament we share in his victory over death.

As we await the risen Christ, let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, recalling how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer. Let us pray that through this Easter celebration God may bring to perfection, in each of us, the saving work he has begun.

First Old Testament reading: Moses and the burning bush

A reading from Exodus:

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord

said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey ... The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'

Exodus 3.1-10

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Taizé chant

Within our darkest night, you kindle a fire
that never dies away, never dies away.

Let us pray for a renewed vision for the people of God and a new commitment to break the chains of oppression.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation. You revealed yourself to your servant Moses in the awesome wonder of the burning bush and appointed him to lead your people to freedom in the promised land.

By the fire of your Spirit today reveal yourself afresh and strengthen us to free the enslaved and break the bonds of the captive, that they may openly sing your praise, O Lord, our maker and redeemer. **Amen.**

Second Old Testament reading: The Passover

A reading from Exodus:

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbour in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter

the passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down. You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children.

Exodus 12.1-8, 11-13, 21-24

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Taizé chant

Bless the Lord my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life.

Let us pray that God will feed and sustain his people through the hard journeys of this life.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation.
With the dawning of their deliverance
your people ate the feast of freedom.
As Christ our Passover Lamb
gives hope to the hopeless and frees the ensnared,
Establish the justice for which your heart yearns,
O Lord, our maker and redeemer. **Amen.**

Third Old Testament reading: Crossing the Red Sea

A reading from Exodus:

The Lord went in front of the Israelites in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night.

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.'

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the

darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Exodus 13.21; 14.10-31

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Taizé chant

Within our darkest night, you kindle a fire
that never dies away, never dies away.

Let us pray that God will give freedom to his enslaved people.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation.
You heard the agony of your people
as they cried out from their slavery,
and you gave them Moses
to lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey.
Hear the cry of the enslaved and the homeless today
and lead us through the turbulent sea of life
to our true home with you,
O Lord, our maker and redeemer. **Amen.**

Fourth Old Testament reading: The valley of dry bones

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel:

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord God, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter

you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on 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 had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and 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, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.'

Ezekiel 37.1-14

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Taizé chant

Bless the Lord my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life.

Let us pray that God will breathe new life into his weary creation.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation.
You bring life from the darkest valley of death.
When hope is lost
and our dry bones are scattered in shame,
speak your word to your broken people,
that we may stand confidently before you,
and breathe your Spirit into us that we might live,
O Lord, our maker and redeemer. **Amen.**

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

Prayer over the fire

Eternal God,
who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:
set us aflame with the fire of your love,
and bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Easter Candle is marked in prayer

Christ yesterday and today,
the beginning and the end,
Alpha and Omega,
all time belongs to him,
and all ages;
to him be glory and power,
through every age and for ever. **Amen.**

By his holy and glorious wounds
may Christ our Lord guard us and keep us. **Amen.**

The Easter Candle is lit from the fire

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The Easter Candle is processed into the church

The light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

The Exsultet

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! Exult all creation around God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King, is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation! Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour, radiant in the brightness of your King! Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes for ever! Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory! The risen Saviour shines upon you! Let this place resound with joy, echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

The Lord be with you, **and also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right that with full hearts and minds and voices we should praise you, the unseen God, the Father Almighty, and your only Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has ransomed us by his death, and paid for us the price of Adam's sin. For this is the Passover of that true Lamb of God, by whose blood the homes of all the faithful are hallowed and protected. This is the night when of old you saved our ancestors, delivering the people of Israel from their slavery, and leading them dry-shod through the sea. This is the night when Jesus Christ vanquished hell and rose triumphant from the grave. This is the night when all who believe in him are freed from sin and restored to grace and holiness. Most blessed of all nights, when wickedness is put to flight and sin is washed away, lost innocence regained and mourning turned to joy. Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth and all creation reconciled to God! Therefore, Heavenly Father, in the joy of this night, accept our sacrifice of praise, your Church's solemn offering; and grant that this Easter candle may make our darkness light; for Christ the Morning Star has risen, never again to set, and is alive and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The Easter Acclamation

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Taizé chant - during which the candles are lit

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis deo.
Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia.

Let us pray that we may reign with the risen Christ in glory.

God of glory, by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

New Testament reading

A reading from Paul's letter to the church in Rome:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But 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. 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

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

Taizé chant

O Surrexit Christus, alleluia! (*The Lord is risen, alleluia!*)

O Cantate Domino, alleluia! (*Sing out to the Lord, alleluia!*)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew 28.1-10

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord,
praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said,
'Peace be with you.'
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the risen Christ be always with you.
And also with you. Alleluia.

Hymn: This is the night of new beginnings

by Bernadette Farrell (b.1957), Sing Praise © Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2010

1. This is the night of new beginnings.
This is the night when heaven meets earth.
This is the night filled with God's glory,
promise of our new birth!
Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gather today.
2. This is the night Christ our Redeemer
rose from the grave triumphant and free,
leaving the tomb of evil and darkness
empty for all to see.
3. Now will the fire kindled in darkness
burn to dispel the shadows of night.
Star of the morning, Jesus our Saviour,
you are the world's true light.
4. Sing of the hope deeper than dying.
Sing of the power stronger than death.
Sing of the love endless as heaven,
dawning throughout the earth.
5. Into this world morning is breaking;
all of God's people, lift up your voice.
Cry out with joy, tell out the story;
all of the earth, rejoice!

The blessing and dismissal

God the Father,
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.
Amen.

God the Son,
who in bursting from the grave has won a glorious victory,
give you joy as you share the Easter faith. **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit,
who filled the disciples with the life of the risen Lord,
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

With the risen life of Christ within you,
go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

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Note that the Easter Sunday service will be live-streamed on the parish's FaceBook page at 9.30am tomorrow.