

# A Prayer Vigil for Holy Saturday

April 8, 2023

Focusing on the lit candle, you may want to pray this prayer or one of your own. What does it mean in this Holy Week that Christ is the light of the world?

How do we praise God for the wonder of creation?

God was disappointed in humanity at this point in scripture. How should we confess the ways we disappoint God?

What in Abraham’s faith or God’s faithfulness to Abraham prompts you to pray?

From what has God saved you? What is your prayer of thanksgiving for that saving?

On this most holy night in which Jesus Christ passed from death to life, we gather as Christ’s Church to pray and watch for the dawning of his triumph and resurrection. We know that when we gather to pray in his name, Christ is present among us, and we join with the whole company of God’s people in heaven and on earth in recalling and celebrating his victory over death, and our deliverance from the bondage of sin to the joy of everlasting light.

## THE SERVICE OF LIGHT: The New Fire

Eternal God of Life, through your Son you bestowed upon the world the fire of your glory. Sanctify this new fire and grant that our hearts and minds may also be kindled with holy desire to shine with the brightness of Christ’s rising and that we may attain to the feast of everlasting light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## THE SERVICE OF THE WORD: The Story of Salvation

*You may choose to read the prayers following each reading, consider the prompts in the margins, or make your own prayer.*

### Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a    The God of All Creation

Almighty God, you wonderfully created and even more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature. Thank you that we may share the divine life of Christ, who humbled himself to share our humanity. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13    The Great Flood and God’s Promise to Noah

God of heaven and earth, you set your bow in the clouds to be a sign of your covenant with every living creature. May we be faithful stewards of the creation you have entrusted to us. Amen.

### Genesis 22:1-18    A Faithful God

Gracious God of all believers, through Abraham’s obedience you made known your faithful love to countless numbers of people. By the grace of Christ’s sacrifice, fulfill in your church and in all creation the joy of your promise and your new covenant. Amen.

### Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21    A Mighty God

God our Savior, as you once delivered your chosen Israel through the waters of the sea by the power of your mighty arm, so now deliver your church and all the peoples of the earth from bondage and oppression to rejoice and serve you in freedom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Isaiah 55:1-11    God Calls Us

Creator of all things, you freely offer water to the thirsty and food to the hungry. Refresh us by the water of baptism and feed us with the bread and cup of your table, that your Word may bear fruit in our lives, and bring all to your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Ezekiel 36:24-28    The Renewal of Israel

God of holiness and light, in the mystery of dying and rising with Christ you have established a new covenant of reconciliation; cleanse our hearts and give a new spirit to all your people, that your saving grace may be professed and made known to the whole world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Ezekiel 37:1-14    God Breathes Life Into Dry Bones

Eternal God, you raised from the dead our Lord Jesus and by your Holy Spirit brought to life your church; breathe upon us again with your Spirit and give new life to your people, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Zephaniah 3:14-20    God Restores the Fortunes of God’s People

God of power and light, look with mercy on your whole church; bring to completion your lasting salvation, that the whole world may see the fallen lifted up, the old made new, and all things brought to perfection in him through whom all things were made, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### Romans 6:3-11    Baptized into Christ, We Share His Resurrection

We thank you, loving God, that you have given us new life in Christ. May we never take the gift for granted, and may we live in ways that proclaim that we are alive to God in Jesus Christ.

## THE SERVICE OF WATER: Renewing Baptismal Promises

Our baptism is the sign and seal of our cleansing from sin, and of our being grafted into Christ. Through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the power of sin was broken and God’s kingdom entered our world. Through our baptism we were made citizens of God’s kingdom, and freed from the bondage of sin. Celebrate that freedom by affirming again the promises made at your baptism.

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world? **I do.**

Who is your Lord and Savior? **Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.**  
Will you be Christ’s faithful disciple, obeying his word and showing his love?  
**I will, with God’s help.**

### Affirmation of Faith: The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into

God promises us food and drink that truly satisfy. What does that tell us about God?

Offer a prayer that you will receive the new heart and new spirit God promises here.

Pray for the parts of your life that need God’s breath to blow new life in them.

Though the people have been disobedient, God has promised to restore them. How should we respond?

What will you say to God after hearing this good news?

Before this part of the service, during it, or as you leave the chapel, you may choose to approach the Communion table and dip your hand in the bowl of water there, remembering your own baptism and the baptisms where you have made promises to the one being baptized.

Remembering God’s saving love, the story told in scripture, and having renewed your baptismal affirmations, and professed the faith of the church and your own faith, what is your prayer to God?

heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

For Reflection and Prayer

On Saturday, they believed Jesus was dead. His disciples, his followers, his family, his friends. Those who loved him, those who hated him, those who feared him. They all believed Jesus was dead. Some had watched him die from a distance, others were much closer, but as he was placed in the tomb, they believed that all that remained was the shell that had once held Jesus’ life.

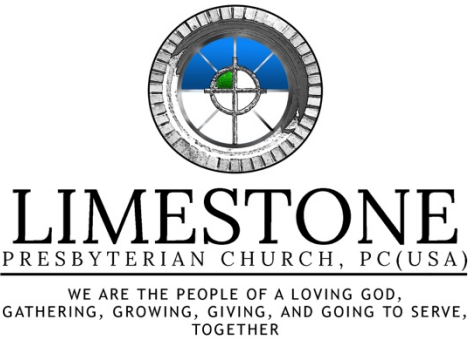
Tonight, communities around the world gather in darkness. Into that darkness a light shines, and the darkness cannot overcome it. That light is the salvation we find in Jesus Christ. We know that God has rescued us from sin and death. We know that death now has no final victory over us. We know that the tomb is empty and will remain empty because our lives will not really end, but only be transformed.

But today, we remember the despair of the Sabbath following Jesus’ death. The Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. As the sky darkens to night here in Gaffney, it is the beginning of a new day. As the sky darkens to night here in Gaffney, the women would have been preparing the spices they took with them. As the sky darkens here, the women would be anxiously awaiting the moment when they could leave their houses and return to Jesus’ tomb. To perform one last act of service for him.

Romans 6:3-11

<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were 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 also might walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we might no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For whoever has died is freed from sin. <sup>8</sup> But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> The death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.



*The Easter Vigil is the first service of Easter, held on the night before Easter or in the earliest morning of Easter day. There are four parts to the Vigil: the Service of Light – in which Christ is celebrated as the New Light, the Service of the Word – in which the story of salvation is recounted, the Service of Water – in which worshippers remember their baptism, and the Service of the Table – in which the Lord’s Supper is received. This service follows the basic structure of the first three sections. The liturgy is in the wide center columns; the sidebars offer prompts for prayer and reflection.*

*If you choose not to observe the whole litany, you will find a brief reflection on the back of the order that may prompt your prayer.*

*Please maintain silence while in the Chapel.*