**Times and Seasons**

**Part 2 – Lent, Holy Week and Easter**

**Section 4**

**The Easter Vigil**

***Structure***

*There are four essential elements to this celebration:*

* *Service of Light,*
* *Vigil*
* *Liturgy of Initiation*
* *Holy Eucharist*

*There are three possible patterns, corresponding to the following structures:*

*A: Service of Light, followed by Vigil (and Celebration of Initiation and Holy Eucharist).*

*B: Vigil followed by Service of Light (and Celebration of Initiation and Holy Eucharist).*

*C: Vigil with Blessing of the Fire, followed by Service of Light (and Celebration of Initiation and Holy Eucharist).*

*The Service of Light or Vigil should not begin until after sunset on Saturday.*

**Form A**

***The Service of Light***

*The service begins with the ministers and people gathered outside the church.*

*The fire may be lit before people begin to gather, or it may be lit at this point. One of the ministers (the deacon) carries an unlit Easter candle.*

*The priest says:*

Dear brothers and sisters,

on this most holy night

our Lord Jesus Christ passed over from death to life.

All Christians throughout the world are called to watch and pray,

to celebrate his death and resurrection

by listening to his word and celebrating his mysteries

giving us the confident hope of sharing his victory over death

and living with him for ever.

*The priest says one of the following prayers:*

Eternal God,

you made this most holy night

to shine with the brightness of your one true light:

kindle within us the fire of your love,

and bring us to the feast of eternal light;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**  *(CW revised)*

Lord God,

gathered in your light,

your glory brightens the faces of your faithful people;

Bless this new fire,

and by our Easter celebrations

inflame our hearts with love for you

and purify our minds

that we may come to the light that never ends;

through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***The Marking of the Candle***

*The Easter Candle may be marked (see the explanation in notes below)*

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.**

***Lighting of Candle***

*The priest lights the Easter candle from the new fire, saying*

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,

dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

***Procession into Church***

*A procession is formed by the minister carrying the Easter Candle, followed by the other ministers and people carrying unlit candles. At the door of the church, the minister bearing the candle raises it and sings or says:*

The light of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The procession continues to the centre of the building and stops once more. The versicle and response are again repeated and the candles of the ministers and people are lit from the Easter candle.*

*The procession continues to where the candle is to be placed, in a prominent place towards the front of the church where it remains until Pentecost. The versicle and responses are repeated.*

*(The precise location of these three acclamations and of the Easter candle are dependent upon local custom.) The Easter candle is placed on a stand in the midst of the building, preferably next to or near the lectern from which the Easter Proclamation is sung and the Word proclaimed.*

***The Easter Proclamation***

*The Exsultet (the Easter Song of Praise) may be sung or said by a minister (usually a deacon) standing near the candle.*

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!

*Alternatively, the Exsultet could be sung by the whole congregation to the tune ‘Woodlands’ using the following form:*

**Sing, choirs of heaven! Let saints and angels sing!**

**Around God’s throne exult in harmony!**

**Now Jesus Christ is risen from the grave!**

**Salute your King in glorious symphony!**

**Sing, choirs of earth! Behold, your light has come!**

**The glory of the Lord shines radiantly!**

**Lift up your hearts, for Christ has conquered death!**

**The night is past: the day of life is here!**

**Sing, Church of God! Exult your joy outpoured!**

**The gospel trumpets tell of victory won!**

**Your Saviour lives; he’s with you evermore!**

**Let all God’s people sound the long Amen!**

*The Easter proclamation continues:*

*[Deacon or priest only:*

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 our thanks and praise.]**

It is truly right

that with full hearts and minds and voices

we should praise the unseen God,

the all-powerful Father, and his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ .

For Christ has ransomed us with his blood,

and paid for us the price of Adam’s sin to our eternal Father!

This is our Passover feast,

when Christ, the true Lamb, is slain

whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers.

This is the night when first you saved our ancestors,

you freed the people of Israel from their slavery

and led them dry-shod through the sea.

This is the night when Christians everywhere,

washed clean from sin

and freed from all defilement,

are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

This is the night when Jesus Christ

broke the chains of death

and rose triumphant from the grave.

Father how wonderful your care for us!

How boundless your merciful love!

To ransom a slave

you gave away your Son.

O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam,

which gained for us so great a Redeemer!

The power of this holy night

dispels all evil, washes guilt away,

restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy.

Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth,

and all creation is reconciled to God.

Therefore, heavenly Father, in the joy of this night,

receive our evening sacrifice of praise,

your Church’s solemn offering.

Accept this Easter candle,

may it always dispel the darkness of this night!

May the Morning Star which never sets find this flame still burning:

Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead,

and shed his peaceful light on all the world,

your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Amen.** *(from Roman Missal, revised)*

*The service continues with the Vigil.*

*However, if there is no Vigil, the service continues with the Collect, followed by the Proclamation of the Word and the appointed readings.*

***The Vigil***

*Silence of appropriate length is to be used throughout. If required, the vigil may be reduced by omitting certain readings. The reading from Exodus 14 should always be read.*

***Introduction***

*The president introduces the Vigil with these or other suitable words.*

Dear friends in Christ,

our vigil has begun.

Let us listen attentively to the Word of God

and consider the ways in which God has saved his people in days gone by,

and how, at last, he sent his Son as our Redeemer.

Let us pray that God’s paschal work

will bear fruit in our lives

as we rejoice in his power to save.

*The people sit for each reading, and they may sit or stand for the psalm/hymn, and stand for the prayer*

*At the end of each reading:*

This is word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

*Silence follows each reading.*

***First Reading*** *Creation*

A reading from the book of Genesis *(1:1 – 2:4a, (or 1:1-5 and 26-31a))*

***Psalm***

136: 1-9; 23-26 *(or the hymn ‘Let us with a gladsome mind’)*

***Prayer***

Let us pray.

(*Silence*)

Almighty and eternal God

you created the heavens and the earth

and made us in your own image.

Teach us to discern your hand in all your works

and your likeness in all your children;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.** *(CW, minor amendments)*

***Second Reading***

*The Flood*

A reading from the book of Genesis *(7: 1-5, 11-13 (14) 15-16; 8:6-18; 9:8-13)*

***Psalm***

46 *(or the hymn ‘God is our strength and refuge’)*

***Prayer***

Let us pray.

(*Silence*)

God our Father,

who saved Noah and his family from the flood

grant that we,

who through the waters of baptism have been saved from sin

and received into the ark of Christ’s church,

may be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope and grounded in love,

through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.** *(revised from BCP ‘Flood Prayer’)*

***Third Reading***

*Abraham and Isaac (optional)*

A reading from the book of Genesis *(22.1-18)*

***Psalm***

***16*** *(or the hymn ‘The God of Abraham praise’)*

***Prayer***

Let us pray.

(*Silence*)

God and Father of all believers

multiply by your grace the number of your faithful children,

that your church may rejoice to see the fulfilment

of your promise to our Father Abraham

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.** *(1979 ECUSA modestly revised)*

***Fourth Reading***

*The Exodus*

A reading form the book of Exodus (*14:10-31; 15:20-21)*

***Psalm/Canticle:***

 The Song of Miriam: ‘I will sing to the Lord’ *(or the hymn ‘Come ye faithful rise the strain’):*

***Prayer***

Let us pray.

(*Silence*)

Almighty God,

who heard the cry of your people

and sent your servant Moses to rescue them from slavery.

In baptism you freed us from the tyranny of sin and death;

by the leading of your Spirit bring us to our heavenly home,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.** *(CW/LHWE revised)*

***Fifth Reading***

*Salvation promised to all*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah *(55: 1-11 (1-5))*

***Canticle:***

The Song of Isaiah *(Isaiah 12.2-6 ‘God is my strength and salvation’*

 *( ‘A Song of Deliverance’ no. 14 in Daily Prayer, or ‘The Lord is my light and salvation’ Taize Chant)*

***Prayer***

Let us pray.

(*Silence*)

Almighty God. creator all things,

you renew the earth by your Spirit.

Grant to your people the water of life

that they may thirst no more and live to your glory;

through Christ our Lord,

**Amen.**  *(CinW, 1984 modernised)*

***Sixth Reading***

*Dry bones shall live*

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel *(37: 1-14)*

***Psalm***

***143*** (*or the hymn ‘Breathe on me breath of God’)*

***Prayer***

Let us pray.

(*Silence*)

Almighty God,

who gives life to your people

breathe your Spirit upon the Church

that she may proclaim confidently the resurrection of your Son,

our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

***Seventh Reading***

*Praise God, who gives us the Victory!*

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah *(3: 14-20)*

***Psalm***

98 *(or NEH 535 metrical version, or ‘Sing a new song to the Lord’ by Dudley Smith)*

***Prayer***

Let us pray.

(*Silence*)

God of unchangeable power and eternal light,

look with mercy and favour on your Church,

that wonderful and sacred mystery;

by the effectual working of your providence,

carry out in tranquillity 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 perfection

by him through whom all things were made,

your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** *(CinW 1984/1979 ECUSA modernised)*

*The service may continue with the* ***Proclamation of Easter*** *and the* ***Gloria in Excelsis.***

*However, if the Vigil concludes at this point the Litany (introduction and sections IIa & III), the Lord’s Prayer, and the Grace is said.*

***The Proclamation of Easter***

Alleluia Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

*The lights in the church are lit and it may be appropriate to ring the bells or provide a musical fanfare.*

***The Gloria*** *follows.*

*The Service continues with the Gloria, Collect for the Easter Vigil and the Liturgy of the Word.*

***First Reading***

Romans 6

Psalm 114

***Gospel***

*One of the following or a similar acclamation may be used before the gospel reading:*

Alleluia alleluia!

The stone which the builders rejected

has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord,

a marvel in our eyes.

**Alleluia!**

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the ﬁrst and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;

I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

**Alleluia**

 ***Sermon***

*The Service continues with the* ***Liturgy of Initiation******or Renewal of Baptismal Promises****. If some of the preparatory rites for baptism have been celebrated during Lent (for example, signing of the cross and anointing with the oil of catechumens) then these are omitted.*

***Form B***

**Vigil**

*The people gather in silence, and the priest addresses the people using the following or similar words.*

Dear brothers and sisters,

on this most holy night

our Lord Jesus Christ passed over from death to life.

All Christians throughout the world are called to watch and pray,

to celebrate his death and resurrection

by listening to his word and celebrating his mysteries

giving us the confident hope of sharing his victory over death

and living with him for ever.

So, let us listen attentively to the Word of God

and consider the ways in which God has saved his people in days gone by,

and how, at last, he sent his Son as our Redeemer.

Let us pray that God’s paschal work

will bear fruit in our lives

as we rejoice in his power to save.

*The Vigil of Readings and prayers continue as above, page ##*

***Service of Light***

*A fire is kindled, and the prayer is said, and the candle marked as above. The Service of Light continues as above, with the singing of the Exsultet, culminating in the Gloria, and the Collect and the first reading of the Eucharist.*

***Form C***

*Vigil followed by Service of Light*

*A large fire may be kindled outside, around which the ministers and people gather.*

*The whole of the Vigil may continue gathered around the fire. Alternatively, the fire may be lit and remain burning as a beacon, drawing others into the Vigil.*

Dear friends,

on this holy night,

as we gather to celebrate the rising of Christ our God

and rejoice in his victory over death,

let us take heart from Holy Scripture

and rejoice in the many and varied ways

in which God has come to save his people.

As we receive light and warmth from this fire,

so may our faith also be reignited

and our hearts set ablaze with love of him

whose paschal mystery has given us the hope of heaven.

[Gathered around this flame,]

we will retell the story of creation

hearing how God’s Spirit hovered over the waters of chaos

and, through his Word, created light and fashioned life.

[We will hear how the floods subsided, saving Noah and his family by wood and water. ]

We will hear of the first days God called a people to himself through Abraham our father in faith, and we rejoice in the liberation of Israel through the waters of the Red Sea.

We receive afresh the invitation through the prophet Isaiah to ‘Come to the water and drink.’

And, at last, our hearts shall be filled with Easter joy as we proclaim Christ’s victory over death, praying that he will complete the saving work he has already begun in us,

that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father’s glory, we too might live a new life.

So, dear friends, let us be attentive and still, and listen again to the ancient stories which Sacred Scripture holds for us. Let the power of God’s word inflame our hearts and rekindle a passion for his ways. May God’s Word be a lantern to our feet and a light to our path, scattering the darkness before us, and enlightening our minds.

Let us pray.

*One of the following prayers is used:*

Eternal God,

you made this most holy night

to shine with the brightness of your one true light:

kindle within us the fire of your love,

and bring us to the feast of eternal light;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**  *(CW revised)*

Lord God,

gathered in your light,

your glory brightens the faces of your faithful people

calling our community and all throughout the world

to the beauty of your dawning brightness.

Bless this new fire,

that it may be a beacon of hope to a darkened world,

the hope of life for a people burdened by death.

May our Easter celebrations

inflame our hearts with love for you

and purify our minds

and bring us to the light that never ends;

through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The Vigil continues with the readings as set out above on pages ## followed by the Service of Light.*

*However, if the Vigil concludes at this point the Litany (introduction and sections IIa & III), the Lord’s Prayer, and the Grace is said.*

***The Service of Light***

***The Marking of the Candle***

*If the vigil has taken place indoors, the deacon or priest carrying the unlit Easter candle, ministers and people gather again around the fire. Alternatively, if the vigil has taken place indoors, the candle is prepared in situ. The Easter Candle may be marked (in the way set out below). If a Vigil hasn’t preceded, then the fire is blessed as set out above, and the priest prepares the candle as follows.*

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.**

***Lighting of Candle***

*The priest lights the Easter candle from the new fire, saying*

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,

dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

*The minister bearing the candle raises it and says or sings:*

The light of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

*All light their candles from the Easter Candles, the Exsultet is sung,*

*The Easter Proclamation follows*

***The Easter Acclamation***

*The priest says:*

Alleluia.Christ is risen.

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

***Gloria in Excelsis***

*The Gloria in Excelsis is sung, during which the lights in the church are lit and it may be appropriate to ring the bells or provide a musical fanfare.*

*The Service continues with the Collect for the Easter Vigil and the Liturgy of the Word.*

***First Reading***

Romans 6

Psalm 114

***Gospel***

*One of the following or a similar acclamation may be used before the gospel reading:*

Alleluia, alleluia!

The stone which the builders rejected

has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord,

a marvel in our eyes.

**Alleluia!**

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the ﬁrst and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;

I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

**Alleluia!**

 ***Sermon***

*The Service continues with the* ***Liturgy of Initiation******or Renewal of Baptismal Promises*** *(see….)*

***The service continues with the Liturgy of Initiation***

***Liturgy of Initiation***

*After the sermon, the Liturgy of Initiation follows with*

*the Presentation of Candidates,*

*The Liturgy of Baptism and/or Confirmation, beginning from the Decision (Section 3).*

*If certain preparatory rites have been celebrated during Lent (for example, signing of the cross and anointing with the Oil of Catechumens) then these are omitted, and the Blessing of Water follows.*

*During the Blessing of the Water, the Paschal Candle may be lowered into the water either once or three times during the words:*

Sanctify this water so that your children who are washed in it

may be made one with Christ.

In fulfilment of your promise,

anoint them with your Holy Spirit,

bring them to new birth in the family of your Church

and give them a share in your kingdom;

through Jesus Christ our Lord whom, by the power of the Spirit,

you raised to live with you

for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*When the Rite of Baptism has been completed or, if this has not taken place, after the Blessing of water, all present are invited to renew their baptismal promises, unless this has already been done with those being baptised.*

***Renewal of Baptismal Promises***

Dear brothers and sisters,

in Baptism, we have been buried with Christ

so that we may walk with him in newness of life.

Now that our Lenten observance is over,

let us renew the promises of Holy Baptism,

*Either:*

 Do you turn to Christ?

 **I turn to Christ.**

 Do you repent of your sins?

 **I repent of my sins.**

 Do you renounce evil?

 **I renounce evil.**

*Or:*

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

**I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

**I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

**I repent of them.**

*Or:*

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

**I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

**I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

**I come to Christ.**

***Affirmation of Faith***

Do you believe in God the Father, the Creator of all?

**I believe and trust in God the Father.**

Do you believe in his Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world?

**I believe and trust in God the Son.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life?

**I believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit.**

*Or:*

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,

Source of all being and life,

the One for whom we exist?

**I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,

who took our human nature,

died for us and rose again?

**I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit,

who gives life to the people of God

and makes Christ known in the world?

**I believe and trust in him.**

*One of the following.*

May almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit,

and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins,

keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, we thank you

 for our fellowship in the household of faith

 with all those baptized in your name:

keep us faithful to our baptism,

and make us ready for that day

when the whole creation shall be made perfect

in your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*(See Appendix V: Christian Initiation)*

*The Eucharist continues with the Peace and the Offertory*

*The Proper preface, post-communion prayers and blessings for Easter (Holy Eucharist 04) are used.*

***Intercessions for the Easter Vigil I***

***(when celebrated at dawn)***

# *Introduction*

# On the first day of the week, whilst it was still dark, the women went to the tomb.

As dawn breaks and the sun begins to rise, dispersing the depths of the night, we pray to God who has banished darkness and death through the resurrection of Christ.

# *Petitions*

At the first sign of dawn, we pray for all Christian people throughout the world:

may they be filled with joy in the resurrection of Christ.

This day was made by the Lord: **we rejoice and are glad.**

At the first sign of dawn, we pray for the whole human race:

created in the image and likeness of God, may all peoples be given a new heart and a new spirit.

At the first sign of dawn, we pray for those newly baptised:

may all who have died and risen with Christ

always walk in his light and keep the flame of faith alive in their hearts.

At the first sign of dawn we pray for all in this community:

may they rise with the Lord to a new purpose of life,

knowing Christ as the one who comes to save.

At the first sign of dawn, we pray for the faithful departed

whose life long vigil for the Lord has ended:

may those who have died with Christ also live with Christ forever.

At the first sign of dawn we pray for the church in this place:

may we bring the message of Christ’s resurrection to all in our community.

At the first sign of dawn, we pray for those who are sick or housebound:

may all who are ill or in pain know the power of Christ’s resurrection in their lives.

In the silence of this early hour,

let us offer our personal prayers of need and concern to the Father.

# *Concluding Prayer*

Father, as the sun rises above us

and the darkness of the night gives way to the rising of Christ the Lord,

raise us up with him so that we and all for whom we have prayed

will rejoice forever in the glory of your kingdom.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***Intercessions for the Easter Vigil II***

***(when celebrated during the night)***

*Introduction*

The light of the risen Lord illuminates the darkness of our hearts and minds. On this holy night, let us turn to Christ our light, offering our prayer in his name for the Church and all people.

*Petitions*

For all who live in the dark shadow of war and violence:

may the light of Christ dispel their fears and bring peace and reconciliation.

 God said, 'Let there be light'

 **And there was light.**

For all who live with the deep darkness of loneliness:

may the light of Christ shine in their hearts and bring them comfort and reassurance.

For all who live in the darkness of pain and suffering:

may the light of Christ overcome their fears and bring them healing and wholeness.

For those whose darkness is the fear of death:

may the light of Christ illuminate their hearts and raise their eyes to heaven and the hope to which we are called.

For those whose darkness is filled with tears and mourning:

may the light of Christ glow in their hearts and bring them peace and consolation.

For those who dwell in the darkness of doubt and despair:

may the light of Christ enlighten their minds and bring them guidance and hope

For those who have been raised to light through the waters of baptism:

may the light of Christ be their constant guide and lead them in the way of goodness and mercy.

*Concluding Prayer*

All powerful God,

you raised Jesus from the darkness of death

to the heights of heaven.

May we who rejoice in his resurrection from the dead

bring his light and peace to the world you created.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***Notes***

***Marking of Easter Candle***

*A minister brings the Easter Candle to the president who traces the Greek letter ALPHA above the cross, and the Greek letter OMEGA below. The numbers of the current year are marked in the space between the arms of the cross, as seen in the diagram below.*

*As the vertical of the cross is traced the President says*

 Christ, yesterday and today

*As the horizontal is traced the President says*

 the beginning and the end

*As the ALPHA is traced*

 Alpha

*As the OMEGA is traced*

 Omega

*As the 1st number of the year is traced the president says*

 all time belongs to him

*As the second number is traced*

 and all ages

*As the third number is traced*

 to him be glory and power

*As the fourth number is traced*

 through every age and for ever. **Amen.**

*Five nails or incense studs may then be inserted into the candle reminding us of the five wounds of Christ. Each stud is placed in the Candle at the points marked and as each is inserted the president says*

*1* By his holy

*2* and glorious wounds

*3* may Christ our Lord

*4* guard us

*5* and keep us