



## **An Easter Vigil**

Northminster Presbyterian Church  
Holy Saturday, April 11, 2020

Whether you participate in the vigil privately or with your family, it is appropriate to light a candle to begin. We are reminded that Christ came as a light shining in the darkness (John 1:5). You may wish to play appropriate music as you read and pray and meditate.

### **Service of Readings**

These lessons demonstrate the active love of God in the Divine relationship with humanity. Beginning with creation, we are reminded of our delivery from bondage in the Exodus, of God's calling us to faithfulness through the cry of the prophets, of God dwelling among us in Jesus Christ, and of Christ's rising in victory from the tomb. These readings, traditionally included in many vigils, recount our "holy history" as God's children, summarizing the faith into which Jesus came for all the world. You will need a Bible handy or look up the verses on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

*Friends in Christ, let us attentively approach the written Word of God, recalling God's saving deeds throughout history and how, in the fullness of time, God's Word became flesh and dwelt among us in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer!*

**FIRST READING**    **Creation: the Love Story Begins**                    **Genesis 1:1-2:4a**

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

**PRAYER:**

*Almighty and eternal God, you created all things in wonderful beauty and order, and created us in your own image. Help us to see your image in all we encounter, and to honor and respect creation as the gift that it is. We thank you that, though we may fail to live as you would have us live, you will not abandon us, but, by grace call us to you once more. Amen.*

**SECOND READING**    **A New Start**                    **Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13**

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

**PRAYER:**

*Faithful God, our tradition tells us you placed the rainbow in the skies as the sign of your covenant with all living things—that life and grace would prevail over human failing. May we who are made one with your grace through water and the Spirit, worthily offer to you our sacrifice of thanksgiving. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**THIRD READING**            **The Binding of Isaac**                    **Genesis 22:1-18**

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

**PRAYER:**

*Gracious God of all believers, we are troubled by this story of old, yet can see that through it you made known your faithful love to us all. By your grace, preserve and protect your church from a surrender to violence of thought, word, or deed. Amen.*

**FOURTH READING**            **Israel's Deliverance**                    **Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21**

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

**PRAYER:**

*God of steadfast love, your wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day. Through the waters of the sea you once delivered your chosen people from slavery, which later became a sign for us of the salvation of all nations through the grace of Baptism.*

*Grant that all of the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the beloved offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel, through your unending grace, further revealed in Jesus Christ. Amen.*

FIFTH READING      Salvation Offered Freely to All      Isaiah 55:1-11

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

PRAYER:

*Eternal God, by the power of your Word you created all things, and by your Spirit you renew the earth. Give now the water of life to all who thirst for you, and nourish with the spiritual food of worship, creating community, service, and study of your Word, that our lives may bear the abundant fruit of your heavenly reign; through Jesus Christ, Amen.*

SIXTH READING      The Wisdom of God      Proverbs 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

PRAYER:

*Fountain of wisdom, by your word you set the universe in space and time, and with your hands you molded us in your image. Everywhere we see signs of your loving care. Guide us always into your ways, that in your wisdom we may find life abundant, and live forever in the splendor of your glory. Amen.*

SEVENTH READING      A New Heart and a New Spirit      Ezekiel 36:24-28

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

PRAYER:

*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 proclaimed to the whole world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

EIGHTH READING      The Valley of the Dry Bones      Ezekiel 37:1-14

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

PRAYER:

*Living God, in those moments when we have felt lost, abandoned, even life-less, your steadfast love has never abandoned us. You speak through your Word and those you send our way to be reminders of who we are and who you are. By your Spirit, we re-member, rebuilding ourselves and our lives through your grace. Amen.*

NINTH READING The Gathering of God's People Zephaniah 3:14-20

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

PRAYER:

*Eternal God of unchanging power and light, look with mercy on your whole church. Bring to completion your saving work, so that the whole world may see the fallen lifted up, the old made new, the oppressed set free, the widow and orphan cared for, and all things brought to perfection by the One through whom all things were made, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

EPISTLE READING 1 Peter 4: 1-8

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

GOSPEL READING Matthew 27:57-66

*(A brief period of silence may be observed)*

PRAYER:

*Eternal Giver of life and light, we await the promise of your bright tomorrow, even in the midst of this dark day of loss. Renew your Church with the spirit given to us in Baptism, with the hope that you offer at the Table—that in the midst of a world in shadow, we may worship you in sincerity and truth, and shine as a light in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*