

Easter Prayer Vigil



Will you watch with me one hour?

**Saturday, April 4, 6:00pm
through Sunday, April 5, 6:00am**

Easter Vigil

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matt. 26:40-41

Will You Watch With Me One Hour?

The Easter Vigil is another meaningful way to celebrate WHAT JESUS DID FOR US ON THE CROSS. What is a vigil anyway? According to Mr. Webster, a vigil is a WATCH kept on the night before a religious feast, usually with prayer and devotions.

Traditionally, churches hold prayer vigils between SUNSET the Saturday before Easter and SUNRISE, Easter Sunday. LPC's Easter Vigil will be held in the Sanctuary or at home beginning at 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 4th through 6 a.m. on Easter Sunday, April 5th. Prayer and reflection may also be done at home; pick up materials (if desired).

The Vigil is open to all members and friends of the congregation and community.

A commitment sheet will be available in the Welcome Center. The 12 hour Vigil is divided into one hour intervals, with at least two prayer warriors needed for each hour.

Scriptures and reading material will be available in the Welcome Center and/or Sanctuary.

Will YOU watch with me one hour? (See Matthew 26:40)

EASTER VIGIL READINGS

the Holy Night of Easter

2026

Will you watch with me one hour? Take this special hour, on this special vigil, and consider what YOUR reaction would be if YOU doubted the promise of the Resurrection!

Could you face a future without your Savior?
The disciples weren't sure.

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

³⁹ Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." Luke 22:39-40

Gethsemane

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." Matthew 26:36

The garden is in shadows. The olive trees are knotted and gnarled. The spring moon casts the garden in silver.

That's him. Jesus. In the grove. On the ground. The young man. The one in the sweat soaked garment. Kneeling. Imploring. He agonizes. Jesus looks across the garden at the dearest friends he has – **THEY ARE ALL ASLEEP**. They lean against the broad trunks and slumber. His distress doesn't move them. They are tired.

He stands and walks through the shadowed trees and squats before them. "**PLEASE**," he asks, "**PLEASE JUST STAY AWAKE WITH ME**." Jesus knew that before the light of Sunday would come the blackness of Friday (and, for his disciples, desolation and fear on Saturday). As Jesus stepped into the garden, YOU were in his prayers. As Jesus looked to heaven, YOU were in his vision.

The battle is won. You may have thought it was won on Golgotha. It wasn't. You may have thought the sign of victory is the empty tomb. It isn't.

THE FINAL BATTLE WAS WON IN GETHSEMANE. For it was in the garden that Jesus made his decision. He would rather go to hell FOR YOU than go to heaven WITHOUT YOU. Max Lucado, *And the Angels Were Silent*

GO TO DARK GETHSEMANE

Words by James Montgomery, 1820

Go to dark Gethsemane, all who feel the tempter's power;
Your redeemer's conflict see, watch with him one bitter hour;
Turn not from his griefs away, learn from Jesus Christ to pray

Follow to the judgment hall; view the Lord of life arraigned;
O the wormwood and the gall! O the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; learn from Christ to bear the cross

Calvary's mournful mountain climb; There, adoring at His feet,
Mark the miracle of time, God's own sacrifice complete;
"It is finished!" hear Him cry; learn from Jesus Christ to die.

Early hasten to the tomb where they laid His breathless clay;
All is solitude and gloom. Who has taken Him away?
Christ is risen! He meets our eyes. Savior, teach us so to rise.

Gethsemane lies in the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem. It is on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives. We are often tempted to refuse the cup of suffering that FAITHFULNESS TO GOD requires we drink. Jesus tells the disciples they will all fall away.

- What have you ever done under the cover of darkness or anonymity, or in a crowd, that would have hurt Jesus?
- Was it YOUR SILENT CONSENT to some evil scheme? Perhaps because you DID NOT PROTEST?
- Was it your DISTRUST in the ETHICS OF JESUS when some hard choice came upon you?
- Was it your TIMIDITY to STAND UP and be COUNTED for fear of what people would say?

We are guilty and He is innocent, We are filthy and He is pure
We are wrong and He is right

SILENT PRAYER

THURSDAY NIGHT – A FATHER’S HEART

“Does it have to be this way?”

“It does.”

“Is there no one else who can do it?”

God swallowed, “None but you.”

“Do I have to drink from this cup?”

“Yes, my child,”

God looked at his Son. “The darkness will be great. The pain will be awful. But there is no other way.” The Son looked at the stars as he heard the answer. “Then let it be done.”

IT IS YOUR SOUL HE SAVES

“The living must die so that the dying may live.”

“Here is the cup, my Son. Drink it alone.”

God must have wept as he performed his talk. Every lie, every lure, every act done in the shadows was in that cup. The spotless Lamb was blemished.

“My god, my god..... why?”

Heaven waits. The angels are silent. There is a transcended figure gleaming in the doorway in the doorway.

“It is finished,” “Father, I have come home.”

Max Lucado

REFLECTIONS

All the disciples’ boasts of bravado and declarations of devotion lay broken and shattered at the gate of Gethsemane’s garden.

What emotional impact did these “insights” have on you? Pray that God will make you more sensitive to spiritual warfare and the power of prayer to defeat Satan.

SILENT PRAYER

DO YOU EVER WONDER

Would you do what Jesus did? He exchanged worship of angels for the company of killers. If you were God, would you? I wouldn't, but Christ did.

Your soul is more important than His blood. Your place in heaven was more important to Him than His place in heaven.

Love goes the distance. He didn't have to. Any step along the way He could have called it quits. At any point, Jesus could have said, "That's enough! I'm going home." But he didn't.

REFLECTON

Jesus knew before the light of Sunday would come the blackness of Friday.

- * How does it make you feel to know that Jesus was afraid? Why?
- * What effect does it have upon you to realize that even as Jesus prepared to go on the cross, he had YOU in mind?
- * How should this knowledge affect the way you live? Does it? If so, in what way? If not, why not?

²²For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."

²³ But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will. Luke 23:22-25

SILENT PRAYER

Gethsemane

Gethsemane Gethsemane
There in the garden my Lord was betrayed
Gethsemane Gethsemane
There in the garden His love was portrayed
Gethsemane Gethsemane
There in the garden
Jesus surrendered to the will of the Father
Submitting to the cross
He would die for the wretched
The lowly and the lost

Can you imagine how He felt in the garden that day
When He knelt before His Father
The day He was betrayed
Can you imagine His tears His anguish and pain
Have you come to the garden the garden that day

Gethsemane Gethsemane
Have you wept with my Lord at Gethsemane
Gethsemane Gethsemane
Have you come to the garden at Gethsemane
Will Goldstein

SILENT PRAYER

FRIDAY

⁴⁷ The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." ⁴⁸ When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. ⁴⁹ But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. Luke 23:47-49

All the Roman centurion did was see Jesus suffer. He never heard him preach or saw him heal or followed him through the crowds. He never witnessed him still the wind; he only witnessed the way he died. But that was all it took to cause this weather-worn soldier to take a giant step in faith.

There was something about the crucifixion that made every witness either step toward or away from it..... Two thousand years later, the same is true. We can do what we want with the cross. We can examine its history. We can study its theology Yet the one thing we can't do is walk away neutral.

God is on the cross. The creator of the universe is being executed. Spit and Blood are caked to his cheeks and his lips are cracked and swollen. Thorns rip his scalp. His lungs scream with pain. His legs know with cramps.....and there is no one to save him, for he is sacrificing himself.

It is no normal six hours..... It is no normal Friday.

How Jesus, with a body wracked with pain, eyes blinded by his own blood, and lungs yearning for air, could speak on behalf of some heartless thugs is beyond our comprehension. Never, never have I seen such love. If ever a person deserved a shot at revenge, Jesus did. But he didn't take it. Instead, he died for them. How could he do it? I don't know, but I do know that all of a sudden my wounds, grudges and hard feelings are very childish.

Max Lucado

SILENT PRAYER

Were You There

Were you there when they crucified my Lord
Were you there when they crucified my Lord
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble
Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree

Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb
O sometimes it causes me to tremble tremble tremble
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb

Were you there when He rose up from the dead
Were you there when He rose up from the dead
O sometimes I feel like shouting glory glory glory
Were you there when He rose up from the dead
Frederick J. Work | John W. Work Jr.

REFLECTION

Have you even been called to go out on a limb for Jesus? You can bet it won't be easy. Limb-climbing has never been easy. Ask Jesus. He knows better than anyone else the cost of hanging on a tree.

Max Lucado, *God Came Near*

SILENT PRAYER

SATURDAY

- It is Saturday night – it is dark.
- The trial is over.
- The crucifixion has ended
- The tomb is sealed
- The doubts which Satan has planted are creeping into the minds and hearts of the Disciples.

What were these beloved followers of Jesus THINKING, FEARING AND FEELING in the cold empty darkness of that Saturday night?

Was Jesus really THE Savior?
Would he truly defeat evil and death?
Where was God, anyway?

Ah, Holy Jesus
Johann Heermann, 1630

Ah, holy Jesus, how has thou offended, that we to judge thee have in hate pretended? By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted!

Who as the guilty? Who brought this upon thee? Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee! 'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee; I crucified thee.

Lo, the Good Shepherd for the sheep is offered; the slave hath sinned, and the Son hath suffered. For our atonement, while we nothing heeded, God interceded.

For me, kind Jesus, was thy incarnation, thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation; thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion, for my salvation.

Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay thee, I do adore thee, and will ever pray thee, think on thy pity and thy love unswerving, not my deserving.

This Prayer is Ours

The man they mocked was half dead. The man they mocked was beaten. But the man they mocked was at peace. *Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."* Luke 23:34

After Jesus' prayer, one of the criminals began to shout insults at him; "Aren't you the Christ? Then save yourself and us." The heart of this thief remains hard. The presence of Christ crucified meant nothing to him. Jesus is worthy of ridicule, so the thief ridicules. He expects his chorus to be harmonized from the other cross. It isn't. Instead, it is challenged.

But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹ We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Luke 23:40-41
Unbelievable. The same mouth that cursed Christ now defends Christ. What has happened? What has he seen since he has been on the cross? Did he witness a miracle? Did he hear a lecture? Was he read a treatise on the Trinity?

No, of course not. According to Luke, all he heard was a prayer, a prayer of grace....But this man has done nothing wrong. The core of the Gospel is one sentence. The essence of eternity through the mouth of a crook.

I am wrong.....Jesus is right.

I have failed.....Jesus has not.

I deserve to die.....Jesus deserves to live.

The thief knew precious little about Christ, but what he knew was precious indeed. He knew an innocent man was dying an unjust death with no complaint on his lips. And if Jesus can do that, he just might be who he says he is.

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:42-43

Who is he to beg for forgiveness? What right does he have to pray this prayer? Do you really want to know? **The same right you have to pray yours.** You see, that is you and me on the cross. We, like the thief, hear the voice of Grace.

Max Lucado *They Still Move Stones*

SILENT PRAYER

SUNDAY

THE RESURRECTION – THE EMPTY TOMB

Jesus Has Risen

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

Matthew 28:1-10

The Empty Tomb

Where is dark, Where is death, Where is sadness grief fear
Where is doubt, Where is loss, Where is deepest despair

The empty tomb fills life with hope, My Savior lives Jesus my Lord
Resurrection pow'r no grave could hold
The Son of God bursts forth, Behold (the empty tomb)

Here is light, Here is life, Here is truth to proclaim
Here is joy, Here is might, Here is love that overcame
Donna Norton | Phil Mehrens

Jesus Has Risen

24 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. Luke 24:1-10.

Up From the Grave He Arose

Low in the grave he lay, Jesus , my Savior
Waiting the coming day, Jesus, my Lord

Chorus:

Up from the grave he arose, he arose!
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes, he arose!
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
and he lives forever with his saints to reign.

He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!

Vainly they watch his bed, Jesus, my Savior
vainly they seal the dead, Jesus, my Lord

Chorus

Death cannot keep his prey, Jesus, my Savior
he tore the bars away, Jesus, my Lord.

Chorus

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her. John 20:10-18

He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside. He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.

Albert Schweitzer

Now let the heavens be joyful, Let earth the song begin,
Let the round world keep triumph, and all that is therein;
Let all things seen and unseen their note of gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord is risen, our joy that hath no end.

John of Damascus c. 675-749

SILENT PRAYER

HAPPY EASTER!!

NOTES