



| ABOUT THE LITURGY

We all have our own traditions around Easter—egg hunts, family lunches, Easter lilies, and meaningful worship. This year, those traditions will not be the same, and yet, we believe that just like every Easter before, the sun will rise, and something will be different.

This year, despite our physical distance, we invite you to carve out some sacred space in the comfort of your own home to recognize the holiness of this day.

This is a simple liturgy for your own personal Easter Sunrise service. Why sunrise? Every year, thousands of people celebrate Easter at sunrise because the women discovered the empty tomb early in the morning, “as the first day of the week was dawning” (Matthew 28:1). Therefore, we invite and challenge you to be like these brave biblical women, to rise in the dark, to stand before the tombs of your life and our world, and to watch the sun rise over them.

May your morning be holy. May it be authentic. May it be joyful. May it be messy. May it be whatever it is you need on this day. For even though we cannot be near one another at this time, God always draws near to us. Even at the tomb, God is there. Let us worship Holy God.

| SUPPLIES

- A candle
- Matches or a lighter
- Comfy clothes (pajamas preferable)
- A blanket (if it's chilly)
- Something warm to drink (this is optional, but if you're getting up for sunrise, you deserve coffee!)

| LITURGY

OPENING | Light a Candle & Settle In

As you start your morning, head outside! Find a comfortable place to settle in and watch the sunrise. Watch from a front porch, a porch swing, a picnic table in your backyard, or a big front window if it's too cold out.

Once there, light a candle. Allow this candle lighting to be a spiritual reminder that this place is a place set apart. This is a moment set apart, for even though the sun will rise, we, like the women at the tomb, begin our journey in the dark. Allow the flame to remind you that even in the darkest times, love and light find a way.

TIP FOR YOUNG FAMILIES: Invite children to play a role by either lighting the candle or deciding where you will sit. If you have multiple children, allow one child to light the candle, one to decide where it is going to be placed, and one to blow the candle out. Alternatively, you might light one stable and sturdy candle for each kid.

WORDS TO INSPIRE | Read the following words a few times through as a centering prayer. As you pray them, place in Christ's hands - your yesterdays, your tomorrows, your cares, your worries, your pain - as you prepare to lift your eyes to the light of the rising sun - to the light of the Son's love.

Held in Your Hands
by Rush of Fools

Look up, another day before me
Look back, another day is gone
Should my heart begin to worry
Lift my eyes to find again the promise of Your love
Lift my eyes to find again that You will be enough

All our yesterdays and all of our tomorrows
Held in Your hands
All we know to pray and all we've yet to face
Is held in Your hands

I know Jesus I can trust You
I know in all things You are good
I'm casting every care upon You
You knew my name, my every pain, before this breath was mine
You made a way, You overcame with love that outlives time

All our yesterdays and all of our tomorrows
Held in Your hands
All we know to pray and all we've yet to face
Is held in Your hands

These hands that carried the cross
Carry us now
Every moment, every hour
These hands that carried the cross
Carry us now
Never failing, only good

All our yesterdays and all of our tomorrows
Held in Your hands
All we know to pray and all we've yet to face
Is held in Your hands

READ | Matthew 28:1-10

Read Matthew 28:1-10 out loud. As you read, pick out a word or phrase that stands out to you. Share that word or phrase with those around you, or jot it down in the margins of your bible or a journal.

¹ After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² 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. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ 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." ⁸ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped 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."

TIP FOR YOUNG FAMILIES: Invite your children to imagine the story as they hear it. You might encourage them to draw a picture of what they imagine as they listen to the story. Read the story a couple of times or give them some extra time and space to draw.

REFLECT | Discussion or Journaling

Reflect on the following prompts. You can either jot these down in a journal, mull them over in your mind as the sun rises, or discuss them with family members present.

- 1) What are your Easter morning traditions? Why is this morning special to you? What feels different about this morning this year?
- 2) There are many emotions present in this story—fear, hope, grief, disbelief, awe. What emotions are you feeling today? Put words to those emotions. Share with your family or write them down.
- 3) The women go to the tomb, as the angel says it, "looking for Jesus who has been crucified." As you have made your own early morning journey today, think about what you are looking for. What is something you are looking for in your faith journey, in your life, in your relationships, or in your own self-growth?
- 4) Jesus tells the women to tell the disciples "to go to Galilee; there they will see me." Where do you see God? Where have you seen God in years past, and where do you see God this very morning?

Additional questions for children:

- 1) Why do we celebrate Easter? What is special about this day? What are some of your favorite Easter traditions?
- 2) On Easter morning, Jesus returned to his disciples, to people he loved. Who are some of the people you love? Who are the people you would like to see soon?
- 3) Both the angel and Jesus tell the women, "Do not be afraid!" Is there anything you are worried about or afraid of this morning? God tells us not to fear so many times in scripture, and one of the ways we can calm our fears is to pray about them. Pray with your family about your fears and ask God to help you feel peace just like the angel and Jesus helped the women feel peace on the first Easter.

PRAY | Gratitude Prayer

Easter is a day of new beginnings and new life. It is a day for hope and love that overflows. It is a day of gratitude for the days we've had and the days to come. It is a day where we remember that love is stronger than hate, and death does not have the last word. Therefore, it only seems appropriate to take a moment to practice gratitude.

Listen to the birds chirping. Take a moment to appreciate the rising sun, and as you do, write down a list of ten things you are grateful for. Allow this practice to be a prayer.

TIP FOR YOUNG FAMILIES: If your children aren't yet able to write on their own, consider making a gratitude list as a family. Feel free to extend beyond 10 things and instead try to write down as many things as you can think of that you are grateful for, making sure each person in the family has an opportunity to share. Another option would be to turn this exercise into a game by going around in a circle and inviting each person to add one thing to the list. The trick is, you can't say something that has already been said!

SENDING | Memory-Making and Passing of the Peace

Memory Making: This Easter Sunday is unlike any we have ever seen. We are not in the company of our church family, and yet we trust that God is still here. So take a photo of your space—of the candle, the sunrise, your journal, your children's drawings, the people with you. Document this moment. Cherish this holy morning, for each new day is a gift.

Passing of the Peace: We cannot be physically close to one another in this time, but we can be relationally close. So on this Easter morning, you are invited to pass the peace with your church family and loved ones by taking a moment to text or call people and let them know you are thinking about them. Send your Easter photo, or post it on social media and tag @sanctifiedart or your church to maintain your connectional nature, even in physical distancing. You will be amazed how much a text or call can brighten someone's day.

This at home liturgy was adapted from a resource by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org