



**"THUS IT IS WRITTEN,  
THAT THE MESSIAH  
IS TO SUFFER AND TO  
RISE FROM THE DEAD  
ON THE THIRD DAY."**

**LUKE 24:46, NRSV**

**SOUTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER**  
**First Service of Easter**  
**April 8, 2023, 7:30 pm**

**SERVICE OF LIGHT**

(The congregation gathers outdoors around a new fire and rehearses the chants of the day.)

SALUTATION AND INTRODUCTION

PRAYER OF THE DAY

LIGHTING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

L: The light of Christ

**P: Thanks be to God**

PROCESSION INTO THE CHURCH HOUSE

L: The light of Christ

**P: Thanks be to God**

PROCESSION INTO THE HERITAGE HALL

L: The light of Christ

**P: Thanks be to God**

EASTER PROCLAMATION – THE *EXULTET*

**Rejoice heavenly powers!**

**Sing, choirs of angels!**

**Jesus Christ our King is risen!**

**SERVICE OF READINGS**

STORY OF CREATION

*Genesis 1:1-2:4a*

Response: Solo: *Many and Great, O God Are Thy Works*

(Dakota Tune)

Prayer: Almighty and eternal God,

you created all things in wonderful beauty and order.

**Help us now to perceive how still more wonderful is the new creation,  
by which in the fullness of time you redeemed your people through the  
sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

## THE FLOOD

*Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13*

Response: Hymn: *God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength* (Music on Page 5)

Prayer: Faithful God, you placed the rainbow in the skies  
as the sign of your covenant with all living things.

**May we who are saved through water and the Spirit,  
worthily offer to you our sacrifice of thanksgiving. Amen.**

## THE BINDING OF ISAAC

*Genesis 22:1-18*

Response: Congregational Refrain: ***Protect me, God: I trust in you.***

Prayer: Gracious God of all believers, through Abraham's obedience,  
you made known your faithful love to countless numbers.

**By the grace of Christ's sacrifice, fulfill in your church and in all creation  
your promise of a new covenant. Amen.**

## ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE

*Exodus 14:10-31*

Response: Solo: *In the Presence of Your People*

Congregation joins on 3<sup>rd</sup> stanza:

**All who seek your rule will praise you and be satisfied;  
for alone you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.**

**All the peoples of the nations will bow down to you;  
may your name be exalted here on earth and in heaven above.**

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; 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 offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## JONAH INSIDE THE FISH

*Jonah 1 & 2*

Response:

*Matthew 12:40*

Prayer: Holy One of Israel, our Redeemer, your love is unending  
and your covenant is not shaken, even when our sin carries us away from you.

**Have mercy upon us, establish us in righteousness,  
and through our baptism lead us to safety in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## SALVATION OFFERED FREELY TO ALL

*Isaiah 55:1-11*

Response:

*Isaiah 12:1-6*

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 bread and wine all who hunger for you,  
that our lives may bear the abundant fruit of your heavenly reign. Amen.**

## THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

*Ezekiel 37:1-14*

Response: Congregational Refrain:

**Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.**

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,  
and all things brought to perfection by Him through whom all things  
were made, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## SERVICE OF BAPTISM

### REAFFIRMATION OF THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

L: The Lord be with you.

**P: And also with you.**

L: Living together in trust and hope let us affirm our faith and the new covenant  
of grace that God has sealed with us in Holy Baptism.

### RENUNCIATION AND REJECTION

L: I ask you to reject sin, to profess your faith in Christ, and to confess the faith of  
the Church. Do you renounce sin and all that turns us away from God?

**P: I do renounce it.**

L: Do you renounce all the evil powers that defy God?

**P: I do renounce them.**

L: Do you renounce the forces of this world that rebel against God?

**P: I do renounce them.**

### TURNING TO CHRIST AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

L: Do you turn to Christ as your Lord and Savior?

**P: In faith I turn to Christ.**

L: Do you believe in God, the Father?

**P: I believe in God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.**

L: Do you believe in God, the Son?

**P: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, 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 heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God  
the Father Almighty.**

**From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.**

L: Do you believe in God, the Holy Spirit?

**P: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## COMMITMENT

L: Will you continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism?

**P: We will**

L: Will you continue in the one holy catholic and apostolic Church?

**P: We will.**

L: Will you continue to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper,  
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,  
to serve others in Christ's name, and to work and pray for justice  
and peace on earth?

**P: We will, and we ask God to help us.**

PSALM 105:

*The Steadfast Love of the Lord*

(Music on Page 6)

The Vigil typically concludes with the service of Bread and Cup, which we will celebrate on Sunday morning at the Easter service.

We gratefully acknowledge the new fire prepared by Lora and Joe Schade, the beautiful murals created by Diane Nafash, the refreshments prepared by Yvonne Campbell, and all of our readers and musicians.

THE LIFE OF THE NATIONS

# 329 God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength

(Psalm 46)



1 God is our refuge and our strength, our  
2 Though hills a - mid the seas be cast, though  
3 Where God a - bides a riv - er flows; that  
4 Since God is in the midst of it, the



ev - er - pres - ent aid, and there - fore, though the  
foam - ing wa - ters roar, yea, though the might - y  
cit - y will re - joice. But na - tions fear and  
cit - y walls shall stand, se - cure and safe with



earth be moved, we will not be a - fraid;  
bil - lows shake the moun - tains on the shore.  
king - doms shake be - fore God's thun - dering voice.  
God's sure help, when trou - ble is at hand.

The first two stanzas of this very condensed paraphrase of Psalm 46 were created early in the 20th century, and the last two stanzas were prepared near its end. The text is set to a late 16th-century psalm tune that comes from the first such collection to give tunes names.

# 59 The Steadfast Love of the Lord

(Psalm 105)

Capo 1: (D) (D/F#) (G) (A7sus) (A)  
 E<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup>/G A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>7sus B<sup>b</sup>

*Refrain*

The stead - fast love of the Lord nev - er ceas - es; God's  
 mer - cies nev - er come to an end. They are  
 new ev - ery morn - ing, new ev - ery morn - ing; great is your  
 faith - ful - ness, O Lord, great is your faith - ful - ness.

PSALM 105

*Refrain*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Give thanks to the LORD<br/>and call upon God's name;<br/>make known the deeds of the LORD<br/>among the peoples.</p> <p>2 <b>Sing to the LORD, sing praises,<br/>and speak of all God's<br/>marvelous works.</b></p> <p>3 Glory in God's holy name;<br/>let the hearts of those<br/>who seek the LORD rejoice.</p> <p>4 <b>Search for the LORD<br/>and the strength of the LORD;<br/>continually seek the face of God.</b></p> <p>5 Remember the marvels God has done,<br/>the wonders and the judgments<br/>of God's mouth,</p> <p>6 <b>O offspring of Abraham, God's servant,<br/>O children of Jacob, God's chosen.</b><br/><i>Refrain</i></p> | <p>7 The LORD is our God,<br/>whose judgments prevail<br/>in all the world.</p> <p>8 <b>The LORD has always been mindful<br/>of the covenant,<br/>the promise made<br/>for a thousand generations:</b></p> <p>9 The covenant made with Abraham,<br/>the oath sworn to Isaac,</p> <p>10 <b>which God established<br/>as a statute for Jacob,<br/>an everlasting covenant for Israel.</b></p> <p>42 For God remembered<br/>the holy promise<br/>and Abraham, chosen to serve.</p> <p>43 <b>So God led forth the people<br/>with gladness,<br/>the chosen ones with shouts of joy.</b><br/><i>Refrain</i></p> |
|---|--|

This psalm refrain quotes (with a few modifications) Lamentations 3:22-23, and the double singing of the final two phrases accentuates a sense of wonder. Finding ways to put Scripture, especially psalms, to music has long been a characteristic of the Reformed tradition.

## BACKGROUND TO TODAY'S SERVICES:

The Great Vigil of Easter is the brightest jewel of Christian liturgy traced to early Christian times. It proclaims the universal significance of God's saving acts in history through four related services.

**THE SERVICE OF LIGHT:** The service begins after sunset (or right before sunrise). In kindling new fire and lighting the paschal candle, we are reminded that Christ came as a light shining in darkness (John 1:5). Through the use of fire, candles, words, movement, and music, the worshiping community becomes the pilgrim people of God following the "pillar of fire" given to us in Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.

**THE SERVICE OF READINGS:** The second part of the Vigil consists of a series of readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, which provide a panoramic view of what God has done for humanity. Using different sections of Heritage Hall, we will retell our "holy history" and the "history of salvation" demonstrating the unifying thread of God's love through the centuries.

**THE SERVICE OF BAPTISM:** In the earliest years of the Christian Church, Baptism commonly took place at the Vigil. As this Vigil includes the renewal of the baptismal covenant it is appropriate to publicly receive new members reminding us that Baptism unites believers to Christ's death and resurrection.

**THE SERVICE OF THE EUCHARIST:** The high point of this day is the joyous celebration of the feast of the people of God, which we will wait to observe at the 10 am service on Easter Sunday. Communion on this day reminds us that the risen Lord invites all to participate in the new life Christ brings. We thus look forward to the great Messianic Feast of the Kingdom of God when the redeemed from every time and place "will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:29). These services will help us to understand and celebrate what God has done, is doing, and promises to do still.