



✠ The Easter Vigil ✠
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
March 30, 2024 5:30pm

WELCOME IN JESUS' NAME

Welcome to our guests and members as we gather for worship today. **Please place your names in our red “Record of Fellowship” books.** A blessed Easter to all!

THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

This is the night! This is the night when the Lord brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt and led them through the Red Sea on dry ground. This is the night when all who believe in Christ are delivered from bondage to sin and are restored to life and immortality. This is the night when Christ, the Life, rose from the dead. The seal of the grave is broken and the morning of the new creation breaks forth out of night. This is the holy night in which God reached out His strong arm to save. This is the night when God's people, enlightened by the true Light, set free from slavery by the Conqueror and raised from death by the Life of the world, gather with unrestrained joy to join heaven in proclaiming the triumph of God. This is the feast of feasts!

In the early church, converts to Christianity, who had been instructed during Lent, were baptized during the Easter Vigil. Over time, the Easter Vigil developed into a service with four parts: the Service of Light, the Service of Readings, the Service of Holy Baptism, and the Service of Holy Communion.

✠ Service of Light ✠

THE RINGING OF THE BELL

(As the bell is rung, we stand to face the rear of the church where the liturgy begins. The large candle [Paschal Candle] symbolizes Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, we are gathered here in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of the Lord in which, by hearing His Word and celebrating His sacraments, we share in His victory over death. Let us pray.

C O God, You are like a refiner's fire, and Your Spirit fills the hearts of Your faithful people with the fire of Your love. Bless, we ask You, this new flame and those who keep this joyful Easter festival that, burning with desire for life with You, we may be prepared to share in the Feast of Light which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

P Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever, the Alpha and the Omega. His are time and eternity; His are the glory and dominion, now and forever. By His wounds we have healing both now and forever.

C Amen.

(The Procession toward the altar begins. The bearer of the Paschal Candle stops three times. Each time is said . . .)

P The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

P The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

P The light of Christ.

C Thanks be to God.

THE EASTER PROCLAMATION

(Sung to the tune of LSB 813 "Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng")

Rejoice, angelic choirs!
Creation, join and sing;
Sound forth the trumpet to proclaim
The triumph of our King

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing!

O Church of Christ, rejoice!
God's faithful people, sing;
Clothed in the brightness of this light,
God's house with praises ring! *Refrain*
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(Please be seated)

✠ Service of the Word ✠

The Easter Vigil recounts God's gracious dealings with the people He made from the dust of the earth. He created us to live in a perpetual fellowship of love with Him and with each other. But humanity fell into sin and death. As early as the Book of Genesis, God promised a Savior. Again and again God revealed His saving purposes through the Old Testament prophets. In the fullness of time, He spoke to us through His Son. Jesus laid down His life. He paid for our death-dealing sins on the cross. He rose to life on the third day. His resurrection is the guarantee that we, too, will be raised to eternal life.

All of the saving benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection have been made ours in Holy Baptism. It is to a remembrance of our Baptism that these Bible readings and our Easter celebration lead us.

FIRST READING

God created all things by the power of His Word alone. Adam and Eve were the crown of His creation. Tempted by the devil, Adam and Eve fell into sin. Their descendants continued in sin and iniquity. God, in His justice, condemned the unbelieving world through the Great Flood. Yet, in His grace and mercy, He preserved believing Noah and his family in the ark. God's creation was cleansed through the agency of water, pointing

forward to our cleansing from sin by the agency of water and God's Word in Holy Baptism.

Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13

¹Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. ²Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” ⁵And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him. .

.. ¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. ¹⁵They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters.

⁶At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. ¹¹And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters

had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

¹³In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” ¹⁸So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him.

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹“Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ¹²And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

P Let us pray.

O Lord, You kill and You raise to life; You brought the flood upon a wicked and perverse generation, and yet You saved faithful Noah and his family in the ark. Keep us in safety in the ark of Christ's body, the Church, that Your mercy may come to its fullness and Your salvation be preached to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

SECOND READING

God saves His chosen people through the agency of water. Pharaoh's army, which would have killed them, is itself drowned in the Red Sea. Down to the present day, God's saves us through the agency of water. In Holy Baptism, the Old Adam, our

sinful self that would kill us, was itself drowned and died. A new person came forth from Baptism, cleansed of sin and bound for eternal life. Our Baptism connects us with all the saving benefits of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Exodus 14:10—15:1

¹⁰When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the LORD. ¹¹They said to Moses, "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? ¹²Is not this what we said to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." ¹³And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

¹⁵The LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. ¹⁷And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

¹⁹Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, ²⁰coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. ²²And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. ²⁴And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, ²⁵clogging their chariot wheels so

that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

²⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." ²⁷So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.

²⁸The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained. ²⁹But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

³⁰Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

³¹Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

¹Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,

"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."

P Let us pray.

O God, You once delivered Your people Israel from bondage under Pharaoh and led them in safety through the Red Sea, thereby giving us a picture of our Baptism. Grant that we may ever be faithful to our baptismal promise, live in its grace, and show forth to all people Your desire that all should be made the children of Abraham; through faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

461 I Know That My Redeemer Lives

1 I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever-living head.

2 He lives triumphant from the grave;
He lives eternally to save;

He lives all-glorious in the sky;
He lives exalted there on high.
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✠ Remembering Our Baptism ✠

- P On this holiest of nights the whole Church of our Lord Jesus Christ recalls His death and burial, rejoicing with great joy in the Gospel of His glorious and mighty resurrection from the dead. The apostle Paul says: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." (Ro. 6:3-5)

480 He's Risen, He's Risen

- 4 O, where is your sting, death? We fear you no more;
Christ rose, and now open is fair Eden's door.
For all our transgressions His blood does atone;
Redeemed and forgiven, we now are His own.
- 5 Then sing your hosannas and raise your glad voice;
Proclaim the blest tidings that all may rejoice.
Laud, honor, and praise to the Lamb that was slain:
With Father and Spirit He ever shall reign.

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Stand

Baptismal Remembrance

- P Dearly beloved, Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In the last chapter of Mark our Lord promises, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." And the apostle Peter has written, "Baptism now saves you."

The Word of God also teaches that we are all conceived and born sinful and are under the power of the devil until Christ claims us as His own. We would be lost forever unless delivered from sin, death, and everlasting condemnation. But the Father of all mercy and grace has sent His Son Jesus Christ, who atoned for the sin of the whole world, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

P Do you renounce the devil?

C Yes, I renounce him.

P Do you renounce all his works?

C Yes, I renounce them.

P Do you renounce all his ways?

C Yes, I renounce them.

P Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

C Yes, I believe.

P Do you 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, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead?

C Yes, I believe.

P Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the ✠ life everlasting.

C Yes, I believe.

Confession and Absolution

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us,

**renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will
and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name.
Amen.**

- P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and
for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained
servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all
your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the
Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

*(The pastor changes his stole from purple to white,
symbolizing the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.)*

✠ Service of Holy Communion ✠

P Alleluia. Christ is risen!

C He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

(The altar candles are now lighted from the Paschal Candle.)

477 Alleluia, Alleluia! Hearts to Heaven

1 Alleluia, alleluia!
Hearts to heav'n and voices raise:
Sing to God a hymn of gladness,
Sing to God a hymn of praise;
He who on the cross a victim
For the world's salvation bled—
Jesus Christ, the King of Glory,
Now is risen from the dead.

3 Alleluia, alleluia!
Glory be to God on high:
Alleluia to the Savior
Who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit,
Fount of love and sanctity!
Alleluia, alleluia
To the triune Majesty!

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Collect of the Day

P Let us pray.

O God, who made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the resurrection of our Lord, preserve in all Your people the spirit of adoption which You have given that, made alive in body and soul, they may serve You purely; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 27:57-66

P The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the twenty-seventh chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord!**

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus.

⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

⁶²Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ!**

Sit

461 I Know That My Redeemer Lives

- 5 He lives to silence all my fears;
 He lives to wipe away my tears;
 He lives to calm my troubled heart;
 He lives all blessings to impart.
- 7 He lives and grants me daily breath;
 He lives, and I shall conquer death;
 He lives my mansion to prepare;
 He lives to bring me safely there.
- 8 He lives, all glory to His name!
 He lives, my Jesus, still the same;
 Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives:
 I know that my Redeemer lives!

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SERMON

OFFERING

STAND

THE PRAYERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

- P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is my ✕ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.**

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: Drink of it, all of you; this is my ✠ blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

THE PEACE

- P The ✠ peace of the Lord be with you always.
C **And also with you.**

(Please be seated)

DISTRIBUTION

If you desire to commune, please speak to one of the pastors before the service. Our altar is open to those who confess oneness with us in doctrine, are members of our congregation or sister congregations of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and are not under church discipline in another congregation.

Please note that “gluten free” communion wafers are available for those who need them. Please tell the Communion Assistant “gluten free” when he approaches you at the Communion Rail. Also, for those who desire, highly diluted wine is available in individual cups (one drop of wine in the cup of water). Please tell the Communion Assistant “clear” when he approaches you at the Communion Rail.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

633 At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

- 1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing
Praise to our victorious King,
Who has washed us in the tide
Flowing from His pierced side.
Alleluia!
- 2 Praise we Him, whose love divine
Gives His sacred blood for wine,
Gives His body for the feast—

Christ the victim, Christ the priest.
Alleluia!

3 Where the paschal blood is poured,
Death's dread angel sheathes the sword;
Israel's hosts triumphant go
Through the wave that drowns the foe.
Alleluia!

4 Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed,
Paschal victim, paschal bread;
With sincerity and love
Eat we manna from above.
Alleluia!

5 Mighty Victim from the sky,
Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath You lie;
You have conquered in the fight,
You have brought us life and light.
Alleluia!

6 Now no more can death appall,
Now no more the grave enthrall;
You have opened paradise,
And Your saints in You shall rise.
Alleluia!

7 Easter triumph, Easter joy!
This alone can sin destroy;
From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free,
Newborn souls in You to be.
Alleluia!

Stand

8 Father, who the crown shall give,
Savior, by whose death we live,
Spirit, guide through all our days:
Three in One, Your name we praise.
Alleluia!

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490 Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won

- 1 Jesus lives! The vict'ry's won!
Death no longer can appall me;
Jesus lives! Death's reign is done!
From the grave will Christ recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence;
This shall be my confidence.
- 2 Jesus lives! To Him the throne
High above all things is given.
I shall go where He is gone,
Live and reign with Him in heaven.
God is faithful; doubtings, hence!
This shall be my confidence.
- 3 Jesus lives! For me He died,
Hence will I, to Jesus living,
Pure in heart and act abide,
Praise to Him and glory giving.
All I need God will dispense;
This shall be my confidence.
- 4 Jesus lives! I know full well
Nothing me from Him shall sever.
Neither death nor pow'rs of hell
Part me now from Christ forever.
God will be my sure defense;
This shall be my confidence.
- 5 Jesus lives! And now is death
But the gate of life immortal;
This shall calm my trembling breath
When I pass its gloomy portal.
Faith shall cry, as fails each sense:
Jesus is my confidence!

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473 Our Paschal Lamb, That Sets Us Free

- 1 Our Paschal Lamb, that sets us free,
Is sacrificed. O keep

The feast of freedom gallantly;
Let alleluias leap: Refrain

ref Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Again
Sing alleluia, cry aloud: Alleluia! Amen!

2 Let all our lives now celebrate
The feast; let malice die.
Let love grow strong anew, and great,
Let truth stamp out the lie. Refrain

3 Let all our deeds, unanimous,
Confess Him as our Lord
Who by the Spirit lives in us,
The Father's living Word. Refrain

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PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed
us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your
mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward
You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus
Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine
on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with
favor and give you peace.

C **Amen.**

(Remain standing)

457 Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

- 1 Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once upon the cross, Alleluia!
Suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!
- 2 Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heav'nly king, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
Sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!
- 3 But the pains which He endured, Alleluia!
Our salvation have procured; Alleluia!
Now above the sky He's king, Alleluia!
Where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!
- 4 Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
Praise eternal as His love; Alleluia!
Praise Him, all ye heav'nly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

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ASSISTING AT WORSHIP

Preacher	Rev. Jeremy Hanson
Presiding Minister	Rev. Patrick Niles
Organist	Sandy Kasten
Communion Assistant	Phil Ditter
Student Assistants	(A) Jacob Grunewald (U) Axton Weisfeld

✠ The Great and Holy Week ✠

Easter Sunday worship with Holy Communion

The Resurrection of Our Lord

March 31st, 6:00am, 8:00am and 10:30am (No Bible class)

Easter Breakfast

Served in the Parish Activity Center

7:00am -- 10:00am