

The Great Vigil of Easter

March 30, 2024

7:00 PM



St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

32 N. Front St.

Sunbury, PA 17801

570-286-7002

The Reverend Dina Carter Ishler,

Priest in Charge

"How blessed is this night, when earth and heaven are joined and man is reconciled to God!" - from the Exsultet

The Great Vigil and the First Eucharist of Easter

This is simply the most important liturgy of the entire year. St. Augustine, in the fourth century, said that this rite is so central to all other celebrations of the Eucharist that they may be said to be repeatable parts of this rite. This is the Passover of the Lord, the Paschal feast of the people of God. We gather near the same darkened church that was stripped, silent, bereft of fire and water, of light and of hope. Light appears in a flash as the newly kindled fire lights the Paschal Candle and then the candles of the people. “The Light of Christ,” is sung as the Paschal Candle is brought into the darkened church, and the people respond, “Thanks be to God”. Then, in candlelight, we hear the church’s great hymn of Easter praise, the **Exsultet** (which means “Rejoice!”).

We hear the history of our salvation in readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, readings which touch on the themes of creation, water, and the Spirit by which the people of God gain their identity. Through hearing these sacred stories we too will find ourselves deep within them and know that we belong, always and completely, to God.

As the Celebrant proclaims “Alleluia, Christ is risen!” the ancient Paschal greeting, the first Eucharist of Easter begins. The Great Paschal Alleluia is sung and this is the first Alleluia in the liturgy since the Feast of the Transfiguration at the end of the season of Epiphany. The altar candles are lit and bells are rung, celebrating that Light has broken through the darkness and, in a flash of incredulous recognition, we know the Risen Lord. Death and time have both been broken, and it is **and will always be the night**, the time when the truth of the Resurrection is alive and at work in the world. We are most grateful for your presence and participation in our service on this most holy night, so that we too may blaze with the light of Christ and share in the holy work of illuminating any darkness we may encounter.

Faithfully, Mother Dina

The Great Vigil of Easter

The Lighting of the Paschal Candle And The Blessing of the New Fire

(Directions to stand, kneel, etc., in our services should always be considered an invitation. If you find any of these to be challenging, please worship in whatever pose may work for you, knowing you are fully in God's presence.)

Please join us outside the church (near the front doors) as the service begins with the lighting of the Paschal Fire.

The Celebrant says:

Dear friends in Christ: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death.

The Celebrant then blesses the New Fire, saying

Let us pray.

O God, through your Son you have bestowed upon your people the brightness of your light: Sanctify this new fire, and grant that in this Paschal feast we may so burn with heavenly desires, that with pure minds we may attain to the festival of everlasting light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A taper is lighted from the New Fire and the Officiant lights the Paschal Candle, saying:

May the light of Christ gloriously rising dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds. **Amen.**

The procession into the darkened church will now begin. The order of procession is Thurifer, Crucifer, Celebrant with Paschal Candle, Congregation, then the rest of the altar party. The Celebrant will pause three times, singing, "The light of Christ" and we will offer our response, "Thanks be to God!"



The light of Christ. Thanks be to God.

At the second and third pause, the Versicle and Response is sung successively a step higher.
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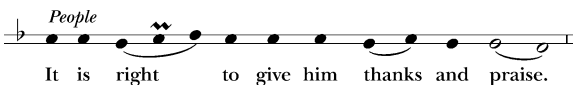
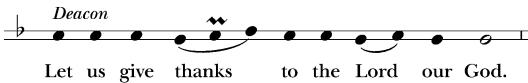
When the Paschal Candle is placed in its stand, the altar party will light their candles and then distribute the light of Christ among the congregation.

THE EXSULTET

Mother Dina

Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout Salvation for the victory of our mighty King. Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendor, for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King.

Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, and let your holy courts, in radiant light, resound with the praises of your people. All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame, pray with me to God the Almighty for the grace to sing the worthy praise of this great light; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**
(Below, the Celebrant chants the parts that say "Deacon.")



Celebrant It is truly right and good, always and everywhere, with our whole heart and mind and voice, to praise you, the invisible, almighty, and eternal God, and your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who at the feast of the Passover paid for us the debt of Adam's sin, and by his blood delivered your faithful people.

This is the night, when you brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea on dry land.

This is the night, when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom of sin and are restored to grace and holiness of life.

This is the night, when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave.

How wonderful and beyond our knowing, O God, is your mercy and loving-kindness to us, that to redeem a slave, you gave a Son.

How holy is this night, when wickedness is put to flight, and sin is washed away. It restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to those who mourn. It casts out pride and hatred, and brings peace and concord.

How blessed is this night, when earth and heaven are joined and man is reconciled to God.

Holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice, the offering of this candle in your honor. May it shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find it ever burning--he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Celebrant Let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, how God saved God's people in ages past; and let us pray that our God will bring each of us to the fullness of redemption.

The people sit.

The Story of Creation Genesis 1:1 - 2:2

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of

the sky.” So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humankind in God’s image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it,

because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Celebrant Let us pray. (*Silence is held*)

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers."

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front

of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses. Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea."

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

“Surely it is God who saves me”

Celebrant Let us pray. *(Silence is held)*

O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day, you once delivered by the power of your mighty arm your chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation of all nations by the water of Baptism: Grant that all 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.**

A New Heart and A New Spirit Ezekiel 36:24-28

Say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Celebrant Let us pray. *(Silence is held)*

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who are reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many

lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord GOD, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn #508

The Hymnal 1982

“Breathe on me, breath of God”

Celebrant Let us pray. (*Silence is held*)

Almighty God, by the Passover of your Son you have brought us out of sin into righteousness and out of death into life: Grant to those who are sealed by your Holy Spirit the will and the power to proclaim you to all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Gathering of God's People: Zephaniah 3:12-20

For I will leave in the midst of you
a people humble and lowly.
They shall seek refuge in the name of the LORD—
the remnant of Israel;
they shall do no wrong
and utter no lies,
nor shall a deceitful tongue
be found in their mouths.
Then they will pasture and lie down,
and no one shall make them afraid.
Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!
The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.
The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.
I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.
I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
At that time, I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the LORD.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn #413, vs. 1

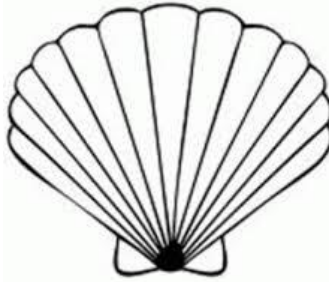
The Hymnal 1982

“New songs of celebration render”

Celebrant Let us pray. (*Silence is held*)

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Celebrant continues Through the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death and raised with him to newness of life. I call upon you, therefore, now that our Lenten observance is ended, to renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and all his works and promised to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church.



We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

At the following words, the Celebrant touches the water

Now sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Hymn 297 “Descend, O Spirit, purging flame” The Hymnal 1982
During the hymn the Celebrant sprinkles the congregation with the holy water of baptism, reminding them that they belong to God.

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT

Celebrant Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

People **I do.**

Celebrant Do you believe in God the Father?

People **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Celebrant Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People **I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Celebrant Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People **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.**

Celebrant Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

People **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever
you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant Will you proclaim by word and example the Good
News of God in Christ?

People **I will, with God's help.**

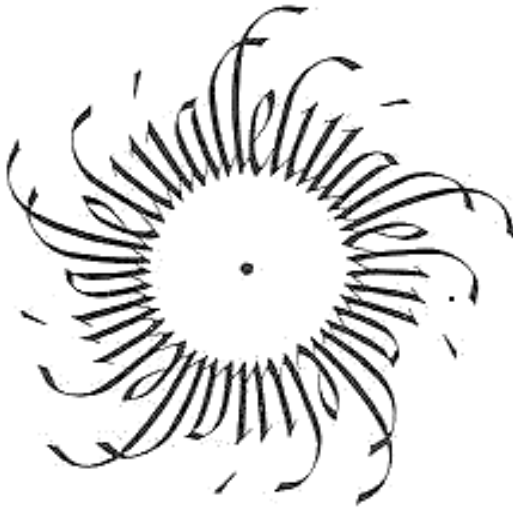
Celebrant Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People **I will, with God's help.**

Celebrant May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**



THE FIRST EUCHARIST OF EASTER

The candles at the High Altar are now lighted from the Paschal Candle.

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ is risen!

People **The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Bells, instruments, etc. are sounded with joy and exuberance to honor this moment.

The Gloria in Excelsis

S-280, The Hymnal 1982

“Glory to God in the Highest!”

The Collect of The Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

O God, who made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord's resurrection: Stir up in your Church that Spirit of adoption which is given to us in Baptism, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The people sit.

A Reading from Paul's Letter to the Church at Rome

Romans 6:3-11

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 114 (*Said in unison*)

- 1 Hallelujah!
When Israel came out of Egypt, *
the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,
- 2 Judah became God's sanctuary *
and Israel his dominion.
- 3 The sea beheld it and fled; *
Jordan turned and went back.
- 4 The mountains skipped like rams, *
and the little hills like young sheep.
- 5 What ailed you, O sea, that you fled? *
O Jordan, that you turned back?
- 6 You mountains, that you skipped like rams? *
you little hills like young sheep?
- 7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, *
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
- 8 Who turned the hard rock into a pool of water *
and flint-stone into a flowing spring.

Sequence Hymn

#188, The Hymnal 1982

“Love’s redeeming work is done”

The Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
according to Mark.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Jesus. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which

was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Celebrant The Gospel of our Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Homily

Mother Dina

(A time for silent reflection)

The Prayers of the People, Form II

BCP 385

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for Justin, Archbishop; Michael, our Presiding Bishop; and Audrey, our Bishop; for this gathering; and for all ministers and people. Today, in the Anglican cycle of prayer, we pray for and with St. Matthew's, Sunbury. In our Diocesan/Anglican Cycle of Prayer, we pray for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Wellsboro The Church of the Province of West Africa.

Pray for the Church.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations, especially: our President Joe Biden; our Governor Josh Shapiro, our Mayor Josh Brosnahan, and our Senator Lynda Schlegel-Culver; and for the well-being of all people.

Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison, and for our homebound members.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of God. Pray that they may find and be found by God.

Silence

I ask your prayers for Mother Dina and family, Father Fred and family, Frances (Fran), Angela, Tanya, Weston, Mike B., Anita, Carole, Nancy S., Richard S., the Sterner family, Dawson, Ellen and family, Erika, Stan R., Nancy R., Carlos K., Frank L., Tammy R., Barbara and family, Becky, Robert, Sue, Dorothy W., Kelli, and Suzanne I. Please pray for all healthcare workers, especially Dan D., Kara, Melissa, Janice and their co-workers. Also, please pray for all serving in our military and law enforcement. I ask your prayers for all the departed [especially Joyce, Patrick, and Ron I.]

Pray for the Church.

Silence

I ask your thanksgivings either silently or aloud.

Silence

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored. Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

Silence

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

Celebrant Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

Offertory Hymn

#174, The Hymnal 1982

“At the Lamb’s high feast we sing”

The Presentation of the Offerings

#380, v. 3 The Hymnal 1982

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow!”

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Eucharistic Prayer A

BCP 361

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

The Celebrant continues It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. But chiefly are we bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for us, and has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he has destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us everlasting life.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

The Sanctus

S-129, The Hymnal 1982

“Holy, holy, holy”

Then the Celebrant continues

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, “Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many

for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me.”

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Celebrant and People **Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

The Celebrant continues

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **AMEN.**

The Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say, **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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

“Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us”

Celebrant The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion Hymn

#199, The Hymnal 1982

“Come, ye faithful, raise the strain”

The Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EASTER BLESSING

May Almighty God, who has redeemed us and made us children through the resurrection of God’s Son our Lord, bestow upon you the riches of God’s blessing. **Amen.**

May God, who through the water of baptism has raised us from sin into newness of life, make you holy and worthy to be united with Christ forever. **Amen.**

May God, who has brought us out of bondage to sin into true and lasting freedom in the Redeemer, bring you to your eternal inheritance. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn

#182, The Hymnal 1982

“Christ is alive! Let Christians sing”

The Dismissal

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!

People Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Postlude

Serving today's liturgy

The Reverend Dina Carter Ishler, *Celebrant and Preacher*

Patrick Ishler, *Music Minister*, Fran Zartman, *flute*

St. Matthew's Choir

Mary Ann Loftus, *Thurifer*; Roy Casey, *Eucharistic Minister*

Nate Blanchard, Bill Bohner, Carol Lamparter,

Kristen Lenig, Tina McGee, *Lectors*

Barry Treon, *Greeter and Usher*

