

A large wooden cross stands against a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is a bright orange orb partially obscured by the cross's vertical beam. The sky transitions from deep orange near the horizon to a pale blue at the top. A dark silhouette of a crucifix is mounted on the cross, with a cloth draped from its right arm. The overall mood is solemn and contemplative.

GUIDED *to the* CROSS

Easter Vigil

Saturday 5:30

5:30 p.m. – Service of the Word and Sacrament

Order of Service

Saint Michael Lutheran Church

3595 Broadway, Fort Myers, Florida 33901

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Easter Vigil

March 30, 2024

In this vigil service for Holy Saturday, we ponder Christ's death on the cross as a sacrifice for us all. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of sacrifice guided by Christ and the cross.

As we gather...

Hymn

"Ah, Holy Jesus"

see insert

Invocation & Opening Sentences

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: On this most holy night in which our Lord, Jesus Christ, passed over from death to life, we are gathered here in vigil and in prayer.

People: **This is the Passover of the Lord in which we share in His victory over death.**

Pastor: O God, you are like a refiner's fire, and Your Spirit kindles the hearts of Your faithful people with the fire of Your love. Bless, we ask You, those who keep this joyful Easter festival.

People: **Burning with desire for life with You, may we be found rightly prepared to share in the Feast of Light which has no end**

Pastor: Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Pastor: Almighty and most merciful God, once we were in darkness, but now we are light in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Bless abundantly all who joyfully celebrate this night in faith in the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Fill them with Your heavenly blessing in Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit now and forever.

People: Amen.

Special Music

"What Wondrous Love Is This"

*arr. by Craig Phillips
Ben Ball, organ*

First Reading

Romans 6:1-4 (NIV)

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.

Lector: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 24th chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

Holy Gospel

Luke 24:1-12

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. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵In 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?" ⁶He 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." ⁸Then they remembered his words. ⁹When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹²Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Lector: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

Hymn of the Day

"The Lamb"

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Sermon

"Guided to the Cross: Guided to New Life"

Pastor Dave Bass

The Nicene Creed

inside back cover of hymnal

Offering

Prayers

Pastor: Lord, in Your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Pastor: This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

People: **I bow down to your holy temple and will praise your name for your unfailing love and your faithfulness. (Psalm 138:2a)**

Pastor: Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

People: **My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will. (Matthew 26:39b)**

Pastor: Give us this day our daily bread.

People: **We cast our cares on you, Lord, and we know you will sustain us. You will never let the righteous be shaken. (Psalm 55:22)**

Pastor: And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

People: **Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:12; Matthew 18:21-35)**

Pastor: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

People: **Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)**

Pastor: For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Confession & Absolution

Pastor: Let us confess our sins to God and ask His forgiveness.

People: Almighty God, in Christ Jesus we have been raised to new life, but we often turn back to our old ways. We follow our own selfish desires instead of walking in the ways of our Lord. We listen to the temptations of the world instead of gladly hearing Your Word. Have mercy on us and forgive us. Lead us by Your Spirit to walk in newness of life.

(Silence is kept for meditation and reflection.)

Pastor: Brothers and sisters in Christ, on this most holy night, the church keeps vigil awaiting the glorious resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Apostle teaches us that by Baptism we were buried with Christ and lay dead in order that as Christ was raised from the dead in the splendor of the Father, so we should set our feet on the new path of life. Therefore, now that the struggles of Lent are over, let us renew the promises made at our Baptism. Jesus suffered and died on the cross to take away our sins. He was raised in triumph over death. In Him we have forgiveness and new life. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

People: Amen.

Holy Communion

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise

Pastor: Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father, we give You thanks for in the beginning Your Spirit moved over the waters, and You created heaven and earth. By the gift of water, You nourish and sustain us and all living things. By the waters of the flood, You condemned the wicked and saved those whom You had chosen, Noah and his family. You led Israel by the pillar of cloud and fire through the sea, out of slavery and into the freedom of the promised land. In the waters of the Jordan, Your Son was Baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit. By the Baptism of His own death and resurrection, Your beloved Son has set us free from the bondage to sin and death and has opened the way to the joy and freedom of everlasting life. In obedience to His command, we make disciples of all nations, Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. To You be given praise and honor and worship through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the unity of the Holy Spirit now and forever.

People: Amen.

Distribution Hymns

"Were You There"

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"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

see insert

Blessing

Easter Acclamation

Pastor: Christ is risen!

People: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Closing Hymn

"Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"

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Postlude

"Fanfare on 'Jesus Christ Is Risen Today'"

arr. by P. Lehenbauer