



Easter Vigil

30 March 2024

Information for the Tomé Hill Pilgrimage Hike, 9am

You may carpool from the church, leaving at 9am. Or you may meet at the hill (approximately 9:45am). The hike is just over a mile loop and is considered "moderately challenging" according to Google. So please be prepared by wearing good shoes, hat, and sunscreen, and bringing plenty of water. You may even consider a walking stick. If you wish, we'll stop for a meal together on the way home. We'll return no later than 2 pm.

This is a contemplative hike so we'll set a slow pace. Although stations are not designated along the path, *Stations of the Cross* booklets will be available should you desire to intentionally pause for each station.

Resources for Worship @ Home

Traditionally, at the Vigil of Easter, we gather at church around fire, word, water, bread, and wine, proclaiming through story and song that ours is a God who continuously brings life out of death.

This service moves us from Good Friday into Easter, meaning it is the most solemn and joyous of celebrations. Typically, it is composed of four parts: the lighting of the paschal fire, baptisms and baptismal renewal, communion, and the service of readings.

The pandemic encouraged us to do new things. So, like the last couple of years, you are invited to worship in a more intimate setting such as at your home, perhaps around a bonfire, to read the scripture passages of the *Vigil of Easter Service*. We'll make the reflective to joyous transition at the beginning of our **Easter Worship Service**, Sunday, 31 March at 10am. Before then you are invited into the:

Vigil of Easter Service

Each of our readings offers images with which to picture salvation. For example, in **Genesis**, the earth is God's perfect creation. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the world has been created anew, and humans are restored to their divine image.

We are saved in the ark during the flood. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the world has been saved from destruction, as pictured in a worldwide flood. The church has likened itself to the ark, its wood to the cross, the flood to baptism, and the dove to the Holy Spirit bringing divine peace.

In **Exodus** we escape the enemy army. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we see ourselves as brought through the waters of baptism and saved from the enemy that is death.

In **Jonah** when we are swallowed by the fish, we do not drown but are coughed up on dry ground. In Matthew 12:40, Jesus likens his death and resurrection to the story of Jonah, who is saved from death after three days in the belly of the fish. We too are hauled up through the waters of baptism to answer the call from God.

In **Daniel**, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are thrown into a fiery furnace and saved by the presence of God. We see in this captivating account both an image of Jesus saved from death and our own victory over death, for we too are saved by the presence of the divine.

And in **John**, from Jesus' death comes life. We treasure this resurrection account for the tenderness between Christ and the woman who at first mistakes Jesus for the gardener. Until he calls her name. We also mistake Christ, seeking life from that which does not give life. But by calling our name in baptism, Christ comes to us, enlivens our faith, and we too are risen with Christ!

Easter Vigil readings:

<p>1. Genesis 1:1--2:4a <i>Creation</i> Response: <i>Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26</i></p> <p>2. Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13 <i>Flood</i> Response: <i>Psalm 46</i></p> <p>3. Genesis 22:1-18 <i>Testing of Abraham</i> Response: <i>Psalm 16</i></p> <p>4. Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21 <i>Deliverance at the Red Sea</i> Response: <i>Exodus 15:1b-13, 17-18</i></p> <p>5. Isaiah 55:1-11 <i>Salvation freely offered to all</i> Response: <i>Isaiah 12:2-6</i></p> <p>6. Proverbs 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6 <i>The wisdom of God</i> Response: <i>Psalm 19</i></p> <p>7. Ezekiel 36:24-28 <i>A new heart and a new spirit</i> Response: <i>Psalm 42 and 43</i></p>	<p>8. Ezekiel 37:1-14 <i>Valley of the dry bones</i> Response: <i>Psalm 143</i></p> <p>9. Zephaniah 3:14-20 <i>The gathering of God's people</i> Response: <i>Psalm 98</i></p> <p>10. Jonah 1:1--2:1 <i>The deliverance of Jonah</i> Response: <i>Jonah 2:2-3 [4-6] 7-9</i></p> <p>11. Isaiah 61:1-4, 9-11 <i>Clothed in the garments of salvation</i> Response: <i>Deuteronomy 32:1-4, 7, 36a, 43a</i></p> <p>12. Daniel 3:1-29 <i>Deliverance from the fiery furnace</i> Response: <i>Song of the Three 35-65</i> <i>Included in the Apocrypha</i></p> <p>13. Romans 6:3-11 <i>Dying and rising with Christ</i></p> <p>14. John 20:1-18 <i>Seeing the risen Christ</i></p>
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On this night, as we hold vigil, we experience again the heart of God's baptismal promise and the center of our faith: we are claimed and cleansed, renewed in the death and resurrection of Christ. We gather with all the saints of every time and place to celebrate the good news: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!