

## SINCE YOU ASKED...

Question: What is an Easter Vigil?

Answer: An Easter Vigil is not like a candlelight vigil where people stand outside the courthouse holding “vigil” in order to raise awareness for some good cause.

Instead, the Easter Vigil is an ancient worship service of the church. It was at this service that catechumens were often baptized, sometimes after years of instruction in the Christian faith.

Today, the Easter Vigil is a service that concentrates everything wonderful about Lent AND Easter into one service. It begins outside with the lighting of the new fire and the Paschal Candle. The numbers of the year are traced on the candle as an acknowledgement that the year belongs to our Lord. It is literally Anno Domini – the year of our Lord – 2010 A.D. Worshipers enter the church with their own candles, carrying the light of Christ.

The service continues with scripture readings that are the foundations of our faith. This year, we will experience Genesis and Creation, Exodus and Deliverance, Isaiah and God’s Active Word, Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones, and Daniel and the Fiery Furnace. It is an excellent review of the foundations of our faith, or a great way to introduce these scriptures to ourselves and our children.

Worship moves to the baptismal font and we give thanks again that God has made us children of the promise and heirs of the kingdom through this sacrament. If there is someone prepared for baptism, they are baptized just as was done in the early church. We are baptized into Christ’s death, so this is a movement to the Cross.

We move from the Cross to the altar and the fullness of Easter and the joy of the resurrection. Our physical motions remind us of the theological reality that the only way to the empty tomb and full communion with God is through the Cross. We hear the gospel, we taste the Lord’s Supper, and we sing hymns full of Alleluias!

We leave for the night, having already experienced the joy of Easter morning.

Our service begins at 7pm on Holy Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, in front of the church. It is just under two hours in length, a fraction of the time Jesus hung on the Cross. You are invited to participate in this special service of worship.