



Parish of the Lower Laurentians Newsletter – Special Easter Edition 2016



The Great Vigil of Easter

The evening service begins at dusk, with the setting of the sun, and like so many other powerful rites around the world, it begins with fire. The bonfire is a sign of the divine fire of love which has come down to us in the person of Jesus Christ. It burns brightly in the beginning and it continues to burn on special occasions throughout the year in the light of the paschal candle. The entrance of the flame into the darkness of the church is accompanied by the singing of the Exsultet, the Church's principal hymn which traces the saving history of God in the world.

The readings from scripture follow. There are a number of them. They continue the story of God's work and they lead us into the mystery, reminding us that the story lives on in us. Next comes the baptism (or renewal of baptismal vows). This is the bridge that connects opposite shores. It's the place where fire meets water, where past meets future, where earth meets heaven, where death meets life, where Lent meets Easter. In the distant past, this holy night was the night when the catechumens, who had been preparing themselves all through Lent, were welcomed into the family of God. And as the waters of the baptismal font settle, all of a sudden, the Alleluias ring out for the first time since Ash Wednesday, marking the end of Lent and the transition to Easter. The wait is finally over!

The service culminates in the first Eucharist of Easter where we break bread together as the one, holy people of God. And it's only right that a celebration should follow!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia!

Nick+

"He is not here. He has been raised."



A joyous Easter to you all.

It is funny how perceptions can change. As we started Lent this year I was a bit in shock at how suddenly it had sprung upon us. This year the date of Easter is very early, so Lent and Vestry meetings got mixed into one season together. As I watched Lent roll along, I found myself getting more and more anxious for Easter, early or not. My shock of an early Easter changed into anticipation of the Resurrection Day.

Easter itself, of course, is all about massive perception changes. The disciples, who were first surprised that Jesus had even been arrested in the first place, now were in total shock as they witnessed his crucifixion and death. Yet from that shock, that unbelief, as the three days went by, suddenly they were jolted back to life as they came to realize that Jesus was raised from the dead. The angel, speaking to the women at Jesus' grave, was the first to begin this change in perception as he announced to them, "*He is not here. He has been risen.*" With Jesus now resurrected, the disciples had new hope, new life and new purpose. They were now anxious and ready to spread the word. Their shock changed to excitement as they headed out in the name of Christ.

How have your perceptions of life changed during Lent and Easter this year? Have things changed for you as you moved through the last 40 days and nights? This Easter let the discipline of Lent give way to the freedom of Easter. May any spiritual blindness in your life give way to new vision and deeper faith. May your perceptions continue to change as the light of our resurrected Lord dwells in you deeply.

Christ is risen! He has risen indeed! Alleluia!

Ralph+

EASTER SERVICES

(MAUNDY THURSDAY, March 24th at 5:30 PM – ST. SIMEON'S CHURCH, LACHUTE)

GOOD FRIDAY, March 25th at 11 AM – Stations of the Cross - HOLY TRINITY, LAKEFIELD

EASTER VIGIL, Saturday March 26th at 7 PM - HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, LAKEFIELD

EASTER SUNDAY, March 27th at 4 PM –ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, DUNANY

THE GREAT EASTER VIGIL begins with darkness. The darkness itself is the first movement of the liturgy, so we begin our preparations with that darkness. It represents *all* darkness, and all the meanings of darkness.



Then a light is struck. It breaks into the darkness.

From this Easter fire the Paschal candle is blessed and then lit.

Once the candle has been lit, it is carried through the nave of the church, which is in complete darkness.



A series of scripture passages, canticles and poems follow - some read, some sung, some merely through listening – in the darkened church, save the candle light.

All present (i.e. those who have received the "Light of Christ") receive candles which are lit from the Paschal candle. As this symbolic "Light of Christ" spreads throughout those gathered, the darkness is decreased.



The congregation is invited to renew baptismal vows and receive the sprinkling of [baptismal water](#).

This is followed by the Eucharist. – the First Holy Communion of Easter.



This service is filled with the drama of the season, literally and figuratively and rightly so, given that it is the most important service in the Christian calendar.

COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US, BOTH DURING AND AFTER!