



before the service begins...

THE EASTER VIGIL

Like the children of Israel who watched and waited through the night for the Lord of the Exodus, we too come together this night to watch and wait for the Lord of the Resurrection.

We come, as Christians have come since the first century, to keep vigil and to prepare ourselves for the arrival of the Bridegroom who is chief host and guest at the Easter feast to come.

First, we must break the darkness of the night. Like the virgins in the parable, we must light our vigil lights. Our light will be a very special light, for it is the light of Christ which burns atop the Paschal candle and which dispels the darkness - of night, of sin, of death. Our light will be a constant reminder of the Easter victory during the coming season, at every baptism and at every funeral. But for now, it will burn in vigil as we await the Bridegroom.

When we have settled into our pews for the watch, we hear the storytellers among us sharing the stories of our faith - the stories of God's salvation history and the covenants which he made with our people. These are our "family" stories. We listen. We sing. We watch. And we wait for the feast to come.

And so that the whole family is prepared, each of us renews our baptismal vows. As the water touches us, we hear and we feel that grace which was given to us through our baptism.

We are nearly ready. The time is close. Quickly we prepare the room and set the table. Flowers and banners must adorn the space, for it will be a feast to remember.

And then at last He comes! The Easter victory is won!

The Bridegroom has come through the darkness to claim his Bride, the Church, to be his own.

This is the feast of victory!