Sunrise Service for Easter

**Preparation:**

* Think about the spot that you’d like to have the service where you can see the sunrise, build a fire, or experience the transition from darkness to light.
* You will need:
  + One big candle
  + Items to make a fire (optional)
* Set your alarm! You’ll need to be awake and ready for the service to begin at 6:10 a.m.
* Choose your music. The best songs are the ones that everyone knows. Maybe you choose hymns such as:
  + [All Glory, Laud and Honor](https://hymnary.org/text/all_glory_laud_and_honor) (United Methodist Hymnal 280); [Lord of the Dance](https://hymnary.org/text/i_danced_in_the_morning_when_the) (UMH 261); [Amazing Grace](https://hymnary.org/text/amazing_grace_how_sweet_the_sound); [Morning Has Broken](https://hymnary.org/text/morning_has_broken) (UMH 145); [Christ the Lord Is Risen Today](https://hymnary.org/text/christ_the_lord_is_risen_today_wesley) (UMH 302); [Down to the River to Pray](https://hymnary.org/text/as_i_went_down_to_the_river_to_pray); [Because He Lives](https://hymnary.org/text/god_sent_his_son_they_called_him_jesus) (UMH 310); [In the Garden](https://hymnary.org/text/i_come_to_the_garden_alone) (UMH 314); [Up from the Grave He Arose](https://hymnary.org/text/low_in_the_grave_he_lay_jesus_my_savior) (UMH 322); [He Lives](https://hymnary.org/text/i_serve_a_risen_savior) (UMH 310)
  + Or check out songs on this [Vanderbilt Wesley spotify playlist](ohttps://open.spotify.com/playlist/55tPYFod8mgnk3vn7f9enb?si=1rWQwJ58QBOC8EtVbYuwJw):

The service begins in darkness. If possible, people should gather outside, but if the weather is bad, you can plan the service inside your house. If you would like you could build a fire which symbolizes the resurrection. You can build it on the ground, in a fire pit, or in a fireplace. In addition to the fire (or instead of the fire) have a large (usually white) candle, signifying the light of Christ. Silence is kept until all have assembled.

**THE SERVICE OF LIGHT**[[1]](#footnote-1)

*For each section of the worship service choose one person to lead.*

*Each person will take turns throughout the worship service.*

GREETING AND INTRODUCTION

Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ our Lord.

My brothers and sisters in Christ:

On this most holy morning

in which Jesus Christ passed over from death to life,

we gather to watch and pray.

This is the Passover of Christ,

in which we share in Christ's victory over death.

OPENING PRAYER\*

God of life,

through Jesus Christ you have bestowed upon the world the light of life.

Sanctify this new fire,

and grant that our hearts and minds may also be kindled

with holy desire to shine forth with the brightness of Christ's rising,

that we may attain to the feast of everlasting light;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE \*

*One person lights the candle from the fire, saying:*

The light of Christ rises in glory,

overcoming the darkness of sin and death.

*The Easter candle is lifted so that all may see it, and then says:*

Christ is our light!

Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels,

and let your trumpets shout Salvation

for the victory of our mighty King.

Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth,

bright with a glorious splendor,

for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King.

Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church,

and let your holy courts, in radiant light,

resound with the praises of your people.

*All read together:*

**All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame,**

**pray with me to God the Almighty**

**for the grace to sing the worthy praise of this great light;**

**through Jesus Christ his Son our Lord,**

**who lives and reigns with him,**

**in the unity of the Holy Spirit,**

**one God, for ever and ever. Amen***.*

SING A SONG OF PRAISE

SCRIPTURE READING

A lesson from the Gospel of Matthew 28:1-10 (CEB)  
  
After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb.  Look, there was a great earthquake, for an angel from the Lord came down from heaven. Coming to the stone, he rolled it away and sat on it.  Now his face was like lightning and his clothes as white as snow.  The guards were so terrified of him that they shook with fear and became like dead men.  But the angel said to the women, “Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.  He isn’t here, because he’s been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him.  Now hurry, go and tell his disciples, ‘He’s been raised from the dead. He’s going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.’ I’ve given the message to you.”  
  
 With great fear and excitement, they hurried away from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples.  But Jesus met them and greeted them. They came and grabbed his feet and worshipped him.  Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Go and tell my brothers that I am going into Galilee. They will see me there.”

SING A SONG OF THANKSGIVING

PRAYER

When everything was dark  
and it seemed that the sun would never shine again,  
your love broke through.  
  
Your love was too strong,  
too wide,  
too deep  
for death to hold.  
  
The sparks cast by your love  
dance and spread  
and burst forth  
with resurrection light.

*All read together:*

**Gracious God,  
we praise you for the light of new life  
made possible through Jesus.  
  
We praise you for the light of new life  
that shone on the first witnesses of resurrection.  
  
We praise you for the light of new life  
that continues to shine in our hearts today.  
  
We pray that the Easter light of life, hope and joy,  
will live in us each day;  
and that we will be bearers of that light  
into the lives of others.  
Amen.**[[2]](#footnote-2)

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

We are sent forth in the power of Christ's resurrection. Alleluia!

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

and the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit

be with you all. Amen.

1. This service is adapted from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/book-of-worship/easter-vigil-or-the-first-service-of-easter> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Michaela Youngson, Superintendent Minister of the Ealing Trinity Circuit, posted on The Methodist Church in Britain’s *Open to the World*website. Found 2020: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/04/easter-prayer.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)