

Blessing of the Paschal Candle
for
Easter Even
from
The Book of Occasional Services

I certify this booklet conforms with the office of the “Blessing of the Paschal Candle for Easter Even” from the 2020 edition of the Book of Occasional Services of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

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Blessing of the Paschal Candle for Easter Even

¶ When the People have gathered for a greeting outside or in the Narthex with unlit individual candles around the Paschal Candle, the Minister shall say,

DEARLY beloved in the Lord: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed from death to life, the Church bids thee and the faithful throughout the world to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death.

¶ Then shall the Minister say,

The Lord be with you.

People. And with thy spirit.

Minister. Let us pray.

O GOD, through thy Son thou hast bestowed upon thy people the brightness of thy light: Sanctify this new fire, and grant in this Paschal feast our hearts may so burn with heavenly desire, that with pure minds we may attain to the Everlasting Banquet with thy Saints in light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ The Paschal Candle is lighted from new fire struck from the previous year's palms, and the Deacon (or if there be no Deacon, then the Priest) bearing the Candle, leads the procession to the chancel, pausing three times and singing or saying,

Minister. The light of Christ.

Answer. Thanks be to God.

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¶ *When all the Ministers are in their appointed places, the Paschal Candle is placed in its stand. And from its light all other candles and lights in the church shall be illuminated. With the people all standing the Deacon, or other person appointed, shall stand before the Paschal Candle and sing or say the following,*

The Paschal Song. *Exultet*

REJOICE now, all ye heavenly hosts of angels, for the King who cometh with victory let the trumpet proclaim salvation.

Sing with joy, O earth, illumined with celestial splendour, and the glory of the eternal King, for the darkness of the world has now been put away.

Be joyful, O Church, adorned with the radiancy of so great a light, and let your holy courts resound in praise, with the voices of thy people.

Wherefore, beloved brethren, all ye who seek this heavenly brightness, I beseech you to pray God Almighty, that he would show forth his mercy towards us, through our Lord Jesus Christ, his only Son, who liveth and reigneth with him, in the unity of the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

¶ *The Deacon or Priest shall continue as follows.*

The Lord be with you.

Answer. And with thy spirit.

Deacon. Lift up your hearts

Answer. We lift them up unto the Lord.

Deacon. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

Answer. It is meet and right so to do.

IT is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Father Almighty, invisible God, and to thine only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for the Paschal Feast wherein the true Lamb was slain, who by his death hath destroyed

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death, and by his rising to life again hath restored unto us everlasting life.

This is the night, wherein thou didst lead forth our fathers, the children of Israel, out of Egypt, making them pass over the Red Sea on dry land. This is the night, wherein all who believe in Christ were delivered from the shadow of death, and were renewed unto grace and made partakers of everlasting life. This is the night, wherein Christ loosed the bonds of hell, and from the grave did rise again victorious over sin and death. How wonderful art thou, O God, in thy loving-kindness unto us, that to redeem a servant, thou didst give up thine only Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

WHEREFORE, we beseech thee, O Lord, Holy Father, accept this our evening sacrifice, that this Candle which we consecrate to thine honour, may shine forth continually to dispel the shades of darkness, and may the Day-star that knoweth no setting find it ever burning, the same thy Son Jesus Christ, who giveth his light unto all creation.

We therefore pray thee, O Lord, that thou wouldest direct, sanctify, and govern us thy servants, and all thy faithful family, with thy continual grace, that we may pass our time in peace and gladness, in the festival of our redemption; through Jesus Christ, thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

¶ Then shall the Priest begin the service of Holy Communion for which two Old Testament Lessons are read, in addition to the appointed Epistle and Gospel. The first being Genesis 1:1-2:2 and the second being Exodus 14:10-15:1. Between the Lessons, Psalm 33:1-11, or some other suitable Psalm or Canticle, may be said or sung. Holy Baptism and Confirmation may be administered after the Gospel. The Apostles' Creed is said or sung, rather than the Nicene Creed.

¶ It is customary that the Paschal Candle burn at all services from Easter Day through the reading of the Gospel on Ascension Day and at all Baptisms and services for the Burial of the Dead throughout the year.