

The Great Vigil of Easter

What was done: The first year this was done, members of Emmanuel, High Point and the associate pastor planned and led the Easter Vigil for Holy Saturday evening concluding with Holy Communion at the Easter Sunrise service.

The second year, pastors and congregations from the High Point area were invited to join together and planned an ecumenical Vigil worship. Traditions represented were: Lutheran, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Reformed and Baptist; lay and ordained people were worship leaders, including youth and adults.

What prompted this activity? A desire on the part of the clergy to worship together and share our traditions in a single worship.

What was actually accomplished: A joint celebration of the Resurrections; opening the Christian community to worshipping with other Christians; sharing the worship resources of other denominations and ethnic backgrounds and the desire to do more jointly.

What resources were developed? Included in this file are some planning and information sheets as well as the final drafts of brochures about Lent and the Vigil Service.

What costs were involved? There were minimal costs. There was some expense for reproduction and photocopying the planning sheets, bulletins, etc.

Suggestions for other congregations: Have one person who can serve as the coordinator, but have plenty of input by all worship planners and leaders. Be prepared for last minute changes.

Other comments: We tried to have representation of a broad range of traditions. For example, the main outline for the worship order was from mainline catholic, e.g. Lutheran Minister's Desk Edition, The Book of Common Prayer (Episcopal), and the Reformed worship book. James Weldon Johnson's "Creation" was read by an African-American pastor who also sang a hymn from his tradition.

Organ, flute and handbells accompanied the hymns, etc.

For further information, contact: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 1401 Heathcliff, High Point NC 27262.

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