



Jane Willis

## Easter Day

On Easter Sunday, churches will celebrate because Jesus died for our sins and then rose again

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For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

*John 3.16*

## Easter Vigil

The Easter Vigil is the first service of Easter and begins sometime on the evening of Holy Saturday (the day before Easter Day). It begins with a symbolic expectant waiting (usually outdoors around a fire) for the resurrection of Jesus on Easter morning, and this is represented visually by a large Easter candle, which is lit from the fire and brought into a darkened church. This depiction of new life and light represents Jesus' resurrection on the first Easter morning. The congregation then light their own candles from the Easter candle, representing their own new life as followers of Jesus. The service will contain a number of readings from the Bible, and also an opportunity for all the participants to renew the promises made at their baptism. The Easter Vigil is generally a quiet and thoughtful service, but one full of joy.









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On the third day after being crucified, Jesus' tomb was found to be empty. He had risen from the dead. Life triumphs over death! The joy of  
d it.

James Atkinson

Some churches celebrate Jesus' bringing life from death by making and blessing an Easter garden. Throughout Lent, churches are kept stark and bare but on Easter Sunday, the churches are decorated with flowers and the sombre purple of Lent is replaced with celebratory white or gold. There is a real party feel to many services with uplifting music and repeated alleluias (an exclamation of joyful praise).



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### Easter Eggs

The eggs we give and receive at Easter have many different symbols attached to them. They represent new life and some people suggest that they resemble the stone at the entrance to Jesus' tomb.

Easter Day marks the beginning of fifty days of celebrating Jesus' resurrection. The final ten days begin on Ascension day where we celebrate Jesus' ascension into heaven. Churches around the country mark the day with services, sometimes outside or on church roofs. Finally, at the end of the fifty days, we celebrate Pentecost (sometimes called Whitsun) when Jesus' disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is often referred to as the birthday of the Church and is celebrated with parties and Whit walks (processions through town).

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter/easter-day>