

FOR RELEASE THE WEEK OF MARCH 23 and MARCH 30, 2015

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Grace Lutheran Easter Vigil Celebrated on April 4th

Grace Lutheran Church of Belview, MN is offering an Easter Vigil service on Saturday, April 4th at 6:30 p.m. The Easter Vigil is an ancient Easter Eve service that begins around an outdoor fire and then transitions from darkness to light, illustrating Christ's passage from death to resurrection. During the course of the service, the stories of the history of salvation are read and told in creative ways. Last year's service featured movement and music illustrating the story of creation, a 10-piece wind band, a humorous pantomime of the story of Adam and Eve and other creative presentations of the ancient stories. This year, the congregation's plans are similar, and the event will be followed by a festive champagne reception.

"The Easter Vigil is really an area effort," said Rev. Pari Bailey, the congregation's pastor, "with clergy, readers, actors and musicians coming from Evan, Morgan, Sacred Heart, Echo, Wood Lake, Redwood Falls, Ortonville, Walnut Grove and Porter. This year, we even have a pastor coming all the way from Herman, MN!"

This is the fourth year the congregation has offered an Easter Vigil. Over 50 congregation members take part in preparing for and leading the service. This year, Pastor Bailey will preside, and Mr. John Jahr, Director of Music and Worship at Vinje Lutheran in Willmar, will serve as organist.

Bailey wants people to know that this is a longer service than usual, but points out that there isn't anything *usual* about it. "People didn't even notice last year that we ran almost two hours. There's color and movement, dance and drama, laughter, singing by candlelight and a triumphant transition into Easter that starts in darkness and ends up in brilliant light. We'll have some of the most ancient chants of the church coupled with African-American spirituals side by side with German chorales. It's a timeless service."

Everyone is invited to worship, Bailey said. And you don't want to be late—"if you're late, you miss the fire and the candlelit procession. People should come prepared to get a little wet. And eat chocolate."

The events begins at 6:30 p.m. on April 4th at Grace Lutheran Church in Belview.