

EASTER VIGIL TO REMEMBER

Beer Parish Church East Devon Easter Eve 2006 By Rev Anne Thorne

(from News of Worship Exeter Diocese newsletter Autumn 2006)

Everyone gathered on the beach round a brazier, singing "As we are gathered" (we couldn't find any musicians to join us so it was unaccompanied). I explained what the "Easter Vigil" service was about.

Then we had the opening prayer and the lighting of the Paschal candle. Some holiday makers saw the fire and came over to see what was going on, they then joined in.



Easter Vigil Bognor Regis 2018

The procession then moved off as we sang "We are marching in the light of Christ". We stopped at the top of the road leading up from the beach, and gave out musical instruments for those who hadn't brought any with them (drum, symbols, tambourines etc. Someone had bought cow bells with them and one child a trumpet!) .

We then processed up through the village making as much noise as we could using the instruments - with the Paschal candle leading the way.

As we entered the church everyone was given a candle which they lit from the paschal candle, candles were also lit on all the window sills. Everyone said it was very moving to see the church in darkness and then have candlelight gradually lighting up the building.

The rest of the service was equally informal, we used the piano instead of the organ. We had the first gospel reading then sang "Peace is flowing like a river", then there was a poem, an affirmation of faith, then the exchange of Peace - which we did by everyone making the sign of the cross on each others palms.

We then moved to the font for the renewal of baptismal vows and everyone was splashed with water.

We then sang "Rejoice in the Lord always" as people returned to their pews.

We had another Gospel reading then everyone gathered round the altar for a Celtic communion.

We used fresh bread and each person gave communion to the person next to them while we sang "Let us break bread together".

After the blessing we sang "Father God I wonder". We then served wine and chocolate cake to everyone.

It was a very moving service. Partly because it was informal and people felt much more involved, but also because of all the symbolism which the congregation had not experienced before.

It was well worth starting on the beach as we attracted quite a few holiday makers, and the noisy procession up through the village made people ask what was going on - it gave us a chance to talk to people and invite them to join us.

Interestingly we had a number of locals come to that service who wouldn't usually come to church.