



**Easter Vigil, Year A – April 23, 2011**  
Confirmation

**A Homily preached by the Rev'd Tara Livingston**

Here we are. Sitting in a circle in the dark, and one might wonder why are we sitting in a circle in the dark listening to stories? Why are we here when "church" is "up there" and why can't we have the lights on?

There is so much about our faith that we really can't know. That's why it is called "faith" and not "knowing". Our scriptures, the stories of our history are passed down to us through generations and we wonder and ponder at what they were trying to tell us. We agonize over passages, seeking deeper meaning trying to find a hidden gem in God's story that is solid. That's what we want, really. We want something solid, substantial, tangible, and testable. We want something that we can hold in our hand and follow its contours with our fingers, something that we can bring out in our times of need and put away when life is good.

The stories, our scriptures use images that are so far beyond our comprehension that they just cannot be believed. A staff parting the water of a sea? A bush that burns and speaks? Oh my. We can't stroke the staff, touch the sea or feel the heat from the burning bush so we remain sceptical. Things that we can't comprehend, we put aside.

And yet here we are, in the dark, in the lower hall, preparing to recreate first light. Here we are in the dark, gathered together and listening to stories just as humanity has done throughout the ages. We are here participating in an attempt – our feeble and very human attempt – to recreate mystery. We are here trying to enter into a mystery that cannot be touched, cannot be felt, cannot be seen, and yet a mystery that calls us again and again to enter in.

We are called to a life of faith, not a life of knowing. We do not need to embrace something tangible because we have faith that Jesus embraced those who loved him on those last days before his death. We do not need to touch or feel the cross at Calvary because we have faith that Jesus felt the pain of each nail as it entered his flesh. We do not need to suspend our disbelief because we have faith that, mere days after his final breath, Jesus rose from the grave to prepare a place for all of us.

In Isaiah, God calls to Abraham and Abraham replies, here I am. No questions, no second thoughts. Abraham had faith that God would not call him to do something unnecessary or pointless. Abraham did not debate with God, he did not demand further explanation. He said simply, here I am. And many of you gathered here tonight, those of you who will either be formally received into the Anglican Church, confirmed into the faith or to publically declare your reaffirmation are doing just that. You are simply saying, here I am. Here I am entering into a mystery that is beyond my human comprehension; here I am, willing to fall with faith into the deep embrace of God.

So as we sit in the dark, listening to stories and readying ourselves to recreate the first light, we all, each one of us, give up our need for tangible, touchable, solid proof and fall into the mystery that is given to us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We all, each one of us, simply replies to God's command, here I am.