

Worship in the Home: February 21, 2021

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Worship in the Home

First Sunday in Lent, Year B

February 21, 2021

In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this church are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.

On Ash Wednesday the church began its journey toward baptismal immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ. This year, the Sundays in Lent lead us to focus on five covenants God makes in the Hebrew Scriptures and to use them as lenses through which to view baptism. First Peter connects the way God saved Noah's family in the flood with the way God saves us through the water of baptism. The baptismal covenant is made with us individually, but the new life we are given in baptism is for the sake of the whole world.

Find a peaceful place to pray, perhaps a table. You may wish to light a candle and place a bowl of water in remembrance of your baptism. One person may lead this acclamation and then pray the Prayer of the Day.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your Son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 9:8-17

Today's reading is the conclusion to the flood story. Because of human sin, God destroys the earth by flood, saving only Noah, his family, and the animals on the ark. Yet divine destruction gives way to divine commitment. As in the first creation, God blesses humanity and establishes a covenant with all creatures.

⁸God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the

domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” ¹²God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 25: 1-10

¹To ¹ you, O LORD,
I lift ¹ up my soul.

²My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be ¹ put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph ¹ over me.

³Let none who look to you be ¹ put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame ¹ who are treacherous.

⁴Show me your ¹ ways, O LORD,
and teach ¹ me your paths.

⁵Lead me in your ¹ truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all ¹ the day long.

⁶Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from ¹ everlasting.

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and ¹ my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

⁸You are gracious and up- ¹ right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners ¹ in your way.

⁹You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

¹⁰All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast ¹ love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your ¹ testimonies.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22

As God acted through Christ's suffering and death to bring us to God, so God acts through baptism to save us from a sinful existence. This spiritual cleansing marks our new life in Christ.

¹⁸Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Spirit that comes upon Jesus at his baptism sustains him when he is tested by Satan so that he might proclaim the good news of God's reign.

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

¹²And the Spirit immediately drove Jesus out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the dominion of God has come near, repent, and believe in the good news."

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Having read these readings, think on this:

Here are metaphors for how we are right now: We are in a flood, drowning. We are wandering in the wilderness, afraid of the wild beasts, and, if we are being tested, we fail. We are surrounded by death and that imprisons us. But Jesus Christ comes preaching and in the power of the Spirit he comes to us now. His coming changes everything. Jesus has seen the dove coming, the end of the flood. Baptized into him, the Spirit comes to us, too. Jesus' resistance to the evil one turns our wildernesses into places of peace with all creation and places where the angels serve. Baptized into him, we see our world with new eyes and are given strength to resist evil and take joy in the creation. Jesus' cross and resurrection break open the captivity of death. Baptized into his death we are raised with him out of fear. The forty days of Lent invite us to remember again that we are baptized, to rejoice in God's rainbow covenant with all creatures, and to be ourselves part of the sign of God's love for the world.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 517), "Thy Holy Wings" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 613), "As Your Spirit in the Desert" (All Creation Sings 923). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word](#)

[As Your Spirit in the Desert](#)

Then pray these intercessions:

On this first Sunday in Lent, let us pray boldly for all in need, responding to each petition with words echoing today's psalm, "In you we put our trust."

Relying on you, O God of our salvation, we pray for the church throughout the world, that strengthened by the promises of baptism, we discern your way of truth and justice, and reject the attractive lures of evil. Sustain those Christians who are beset with temptations or hardship.

A brief silence.

Receive our prayers, O righteous God:

In you we put our trust.

Remembering Deaconess Elizabeth Fedde, we pray for all deacons and deaconesses, that they serve those in need with constancy and joy. Empower our congregation's ministries of care, and provide the funds needed for service.

A brief silence.

Receive our prayers, O generous God:

In you we put our trust.

Grateful for a plenteous creation, we pray that you preserve the wild beasts and keep lands from being flooded by waters. Encourage the work of biologists, conservationists, and science educators, that we all come to appreciate more about the wonders that you create.

A brief silence.

Receive our prayers, O creative God:

In you we put our trust.

Distressed by injustice and violence, we pray for leaders who govern in our nation and around the world, that they strive for equality and concord in all things. Visit the people of Myanmar and Sudan and stem the might of tyrants the world over.

A brief silence.

Receive our prayers, O sovereign God:

In you we put our trust.

Alert to the difficulties of wintertime, we pray for all who are cold, for all the homeless, for refugees awaiting assistance, and for all whose employment requires them to endure brutal weather. Surround them with a community of concern.

A brief silence.

Receive our prayers, O warm-hearted God:

In you we put our trust.

Pained by the suffering of others, we pray for all who are sick, especially those we name here before you: . . . We pray for all who have contracted COVID-19, for those who are bowed down by trials of any kind, for those who face natural disasters, for those whose suffering is known only to you. Comfort those who feel desolate. Give health and wholeness to all who suffer.

A brief silence.

Receive our prayers, O benevolent God:

In you we put our trust.

Praying also for ourselves, we ask your Spirit to accompany us through each wilderness that we must endure. Hear now the desires of our hearts.

A longer period of silence.

Receive our prayers, O tender and mighty God:

In you we put our trust.

We praise you for the Christians of time past, especially Polycarp and all the martyrs who died in their witness to you. Give us the faith that at the end, your rainbow will bring endless beauty to all things.

A brief silence.

Receive our prayers, O splendid God:

In you we put our trust.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

If you have a hymnal, you may now sing or read "I Want Jesus to Walk with Me" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 325), "Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 618). Selected hymns are provided below for those without a hymnal at home.

[Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer](#)

[I Want Jesus to Walk with Me](#)

Then conclude with these prayers:

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Gracious God, who has named and claimed us, calling us your beloved children, you know the secrets of our hearts.

When we sin and stray from your paths, you astound us with your saving grace.

For this Word of life,
we give you thanks.
Loving Jesus, living Word,
in you the Kingdom of God has come near;
through you all that was lost has been found.
Help us to boldly follow wherever you may lead,
trusting your promise that we need not fear,
for you are with us.

For this Word of life,
we give you thanks.
Holy Spirit, the mystery in which we dwell,
into our scarcity, your abundance flows.
Enliven all communities with your good news.
Guide us to love and serve Jesus,
giving ourselves away for the sake of the world.

For this Word of life,
we give you thanks.
All glory to you, holy God, now and forever.
Amen.

Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Offering

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you. (For your information, we have a secure mail box.)

Offering Prayer

O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Then speak the Blessing:

Almighty God, Father, + Son and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.
Amen.

Devotional Music Links: For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[I Want Jesus to Walk with Me](#)"; "[Thy Holy Wings](#)"; "[As Your Spirit in the Desert](#)."

Readings for the Week:

Monday Psalm 77. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyr, 156) 1 Peter 3:8-18a. **Wednesday** Proverbs 30:1-9. **Thursday** (commemoration of Elizabeth Fedde, deaconess, 1921) Psalm 22:23-31. **Friday** Genesis 16:1-6. **Saturday** Mark 8:27-30. **Second Sunday in Lent** Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16; Psalm 22:23-31; Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38.

Daily Prayer Resources are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide downloadable hymns that are in the public domain and selected hymns for limited use. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase copies of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *All Creation Sings* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648. Selected hymns from *All Creation Sings* will be provided for limited use.

Reflection text: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Thank you to those who clean the Church following worship.

Annual Meeting March 14th following worship.

Special Meeting, April 11th following worship.

Synod Assembly, 30 April – 2 May.

Please keep in your prayers this week: Kevin Johnson, Barbara Metzger, Rob Johnson and Steve Lindberg (Streeter Family Friend's & Kin), Noah Klenken (Fred Fixsen's Nephew), Cal Curtis & Patty Thompson (Carole Holten's Son-in-Law & Sister), Bill Warner, David Warner, Emily (Ben & Casey's Daughter), Terry Newgard, Judy Wings, Steve Murdock, Bob Broberg, Carole Holten, Donna Jackson-Hein.

Pastor's mid-week message for February 17

In C.S. Lewis' book, *THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE*, the wicked queen entices the boy, Edmund, with a box of enchanted Turkish Delight. Each piece is sweet and delicious, and Edmond has never tasted anything better. There is only one problem. The more he eats of the enchanted Turkish Delight, the more he wants. He doesn't know this is the wicked queen's plan. The more he eats, the more he will want, and thus he will eat and eat until it kills him. It would never satisfy his hunger; it would never fill him up...it would simply kill him.

Lewis is giving us a metaphor for sin. This is how sin is. It never satisfies, it only enslaves. Stephen Covey deals with this in his book, *THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE*. He notes that just as junk food and lack of exercise can ruin an athlete's condition, those things that are obscene, crude, and pornographic can breed an inner darkness. He quotes the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, "You cannot play with the animal in you without becoming wholly animal, play with falsehood without forfeiting your right to truth, play with cruelty without losing your sensitivity of mind. He who wants to keep his garden tidy, doesn't reserve a plot for weeds."

It's like something that happened when they were renovating the Queen Mary. This gracious old vessel was the largest ship to cross the oceans when it was launched in 1936. Through four decades and a World War, this ocean liner served its owners well. Then it was retired to Long Beach, California, anchored as a floating hotel and museum.

During its conversion, three massive smoke-stacks were taken off to be scraped down and repainted. But on the deck, these massive pieces of steel crumbled. Actually, that is not quite true. There was nothing left to crumble. Nothing was left of the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch steel plate from which the stacks had been formed. All that remained were more than thirty coats of paint that had been applied over the years. The steel had rusted away.

Is that not an analogy of what happens to some people's character? They give into temptation time and time again, until their inner moral fiber is eaten away.

Fortunately, the converse is true. The more times we resist the tempter, the weaker he becomes. Anyone who has ever begun an exercise program, or gone on a diet, or tried to quit smoking,

knows the hardest part is getting started. The longer you wait to begin, the harder to start, and to put it off for so long, that chances for success grow very, very slim. Jesus nipped temptation in the bud. He said no from the very beginning – and so should we.