

Sunday Worship at Home, 21st February, 1st Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayers:

God meets us in our scattered lives,

let us worship him together

Hear our voice, O Lord, according to your faithful love,

According to your judgement give us life. Amen

A Prayer of Confession:

God shows his love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Let us then show our love for him by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

We have not always worshipped God, our creator. **Lord, have mercy.**

We have not always followed Christ, our saviour. **Christ, have mercy.**

We have not always trusted the Holy Spirit, our guide. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect for the First Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.. **Amen**

Bible Reading: Genesis 9:8-15

After the floodwaters had receded and Noah had released all the animals from the ark:

⁸Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹'As 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.

Reflection on the reading:

In England, we have been in lockdown, on and off, since the 23rd March, almost exactly 11 months, since then we have been allowed out with varying levels of restriction at different times. Sometime this week we will find out how much longer it will be and what happens next. For Noah there was no time off. You will probably remember that it rained for forty days, but their confinement did not end when the rain stopped. The Bible tells us that from the day when the rain began and the door of the Ark was closed and sealed, to the time when the ground had dried and the Ark was opened was 1 Year and 10 days, with no trips out to the shops for essential supplies. This year we will pass through Lent at a time when we have light at the end of our COVID-19 pandemic tunnel. Like Noah after the flood, life for us on the other side will not be the quite the same as it was before. In our reading we heard God making a new covenant with Noah and the earth after flood. I encourage you through this Lent to take the time to reflect on your walk with God, and to discover in your Lenten conversation with him how you will live differently in your relationship with him and world around you when we are finally released into the post COVID normal. So today, on the First Sunday of Lent I repeat our Ash Wednesday invitation: This year we carry with us the lived experience of life's uncertainties and human frailty in this pandemic time. I invite you, in the name of the Lord, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the word of God. Let us enter this season in humility and lean ever closer towards the grace of God. **Amen.**

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.
We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Be still and pray:

In your prayers, include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and our local community. Particularly pray for: Our Prime Minister, the Government and all world leaders they struggle to control COVID-19, manage vaccination programmes and plan the relaxation of lockdowns; for our front-line health workers caring for the sick and vulnerable, and administering vaccinations; for those struggling with isolation or financial hardship because of lockdown; for healing and peace for those who are ill; and for the souls of those who have recently died and comfort for those who are mourning their loss.

Finish with The Lord's Prayer:

Conclusion

May God our Redeemer show us compassion and love,
and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, remain with us always. **Amen**

Reverend Eddie