

Liturgy
The First Sunday in Lent
Year B

GATHERING

We are gathered to worship our God, the God of Covenant,
who set His rainbow in the heavens!

**Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.**

After the flood, the voice of God brought this promise to Noah and his family:
“I now establish My covenant with you and your descendants after you, and
with every living creature that is with you, as many as came out of the ark.”

**Your righteousness, O LORD, is like the mountains of God;
Your judgments are like the great deep;
You preserve man and beast.**

And God said, “I establish My covenant with you,
that never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood;
never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

**How precious is Your steadfast love, O God!
The children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.
They feast on the abundance of Your house,
And You give them drink from the river of Your delights.**

And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between Me
and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to
come: I have set My rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the
covenant between Me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth
and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember My ever-
lasting covenant between Me and you and all the living creatures of every
kind on the earth.”

**With You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.
Oh, continue Your steadfast love to those who know You,
And Your righteousness to the upright in heart!**

He has remembered His covenant forever,
the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.
Come, let us worship Him!

— based on Genesis 9:8-17 and Psalm 36:5-10

Unchanging

Great is Your faithfulness, great is Your faithfulness.
You never change, You never fail, O God.

True are Your promises, true are Your promises.
You never change, You never fail, O God.

Chorus:

So, we raise up holy hands to praise the Holy One
Who was, and is, and is to come.
Yeah, we raise up holy hands to praise the Holy One
Who was, and is, and is to come.

Wide is Your love and grace, wide is Your love and grace.
You never change, You never fail, O God.

CCLI Song #4016669. ©2002 worshiptogether.com songs. Chris Tomlin.

*LECTIONARY for the first Sunday in
Lent, Year B:*

*Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15*

Traditionally, Lent has been a time of focus and reflection on the atoning and reconciling work of Christ. For centuries, Christians have observed this six-week period preceding the commemoration of the Savior’s death on the cross as a special season of fasting, repentance and prayer. For many, Lent has taken on the special characteristic and practice of spiritual discipline—a time of putting something off (a habit perhaps, an attitude, or an indulgence) in order to make time and room in our lives for those activities and attitudes that draw us closer to God and allow us to serve others. In this season, in some ways more consciously than in others, we seek to become ever more like Christ—in His devotion to the Father’s will, in His acts of love and service, and also in His sufferings—that we may be increasingly formed into His image and filled with His heart and mind.

In Year B, the Revised Common Lectionary focuses our attention on Old Testament covenants between God and His people, and invites us to ponder how they are fulfilled in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. This first Sunday, our sample liturgy looks at God’s covenant with Noah and consider what that promise continues to mean in our lives of faith as we grow more like Christ.

The Gathering reading, for one reader and the congregation, weaves together the lection from Genesis with Psalm 36. Though this psalm is not included in this week’s lectionary, the text wonderfully responds to the words and promises of God after the waters of the flood had receded.

INVOCATION

Prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving for God's presence

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest;
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Chorus:

Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided –
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Thomas O. Chisholm, William M. Runyan. ©1923, 1951 by Hope Publishing Company.

We start with the second verse of this beloved hymn of God's faithfulness, because the lyrics of the first are reflected in our Gathering song.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Let us together profess the faith of the church at all times and in all places in these words from the first Epistle of Peter:

Christ 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,
in which also He went a
nd made a proclamation
to the spirits in prison.**

In former times they did not obey,
when God waited patiently in the days of Noah,
during the building of the ark.

**In the ark, a few, that is, eight persons,
were saved through water.**

And 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.

**He has gone into heaven
and is at the right hand of God,
with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to Him.**

– from 1 Peter 3:18-22

The Profession of Faith sets the epistle reading for today.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Psalm 25

Refrain (sung):

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in You I put my trust.

(Spoken)

Do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.
*Do not let those who wait for You be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.*

**Make me to know Your ways, O LORD;
teach me Your paths.**

**Lead me in Your truth, and teach me, f
or You are the God of my salvation;
for You I wait all day long.**

Refrain (sung):

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in You I put my trust.

(Spoken)

Be mindful of Your mercy, O LORD,
and of Your steadfast love.
For they have been from of old.
**Do not remember the sins of my youth
or my transgressions.
According to Your steadfast love remember me,
for Your goodness' sake, O LORD!**

[Silent confessions]

Refrain (sung):

To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in You I put my trust.

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ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore He instructs sinners in the way.*
He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble His way.
*All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
For those who keep His covenant and His decrees.*

– Psalm 25:8-10

**O LORD, there is no God like You
in heaven above or on earth beneath,
keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness
to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart.**

– 2 Chronicles 6:14

We use today's Psalm lection throughout the time of Confession and Assurance. The sung refrain is both the call to Confession and a sung refrain, with other verses of the Psalm forming and founding our prayers.

Music for Ellen's setting of Psalm 25 is available in the music catalog as a lead sheet (refrain), 4-part notated chant section, and scored piano accompaniment with vocal line (refrain).

<https://clerestorynotes.com/live/sheetmusic/psalm-25>

TIME OF OFFERING

Words and prayers of thanksgiving and devotion

Desert Song

This is my prayer in the desert,
When all that's within me feels dry.
This is my prayer in my hunger and need.
My God is the God who provides.

This is my prayer in the fire,
In weakness or trial or pain.
There is a faith proved of more worth than gold.
So refine me, Lord, through the flame.

Chorus:

I will bring praise. I will bring praise.
No weapon formed against me shall remain.
I will rejoice. I will declare:
God is my victory, and He is here.

This is my prayer in the battle,
When triumph is still on its way.
I am a conqueror, of more worth than gold.
So firm on His promise I'll stand.

Chorus

Bridge:

All of my life, in every season,
You are still God.
I have a reason to sing,
I have a reason to worship.

Chorus

This is my prayer in the harvest,
When favour and providence flow.
I know I'm filled to be emptied again.
The seed I've received I will sow.

CCLI Song #5060793 ©2008 Hillsong Music Publishing.
Brooke Ligertwood.

THE WORD

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalms 25:1-10

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

THE TABLE

Remembering the Body of Christ

The Lord be with you! **And also with you!**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!

The Lord's Prayer (spoken)

**Our Father, Who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our debts
As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
And the power, and the glory,
Forever. Amen**

Here is Love

Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Lovingkindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life, our Ransom,
Shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten,
Throughout Heav'n's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion,
Fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's mercy
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers,
Poured incessant from above,
And Heav'n's peace and perfect justice
Kissed a guilty world in love.

Of Your fullness You are pouring
Your great pow'r and love anew,
Without measure, full and boundless,
Drawing out our hearts to You.
You alone will be our glory,
Nothing in the world we see.
You have cleansed and sanctified us,
You Yourself have set us free.

Let us all, Your love accepting,
Love You ever, all our days;
Let us seek Your kingdom only,
And our lives be to Your praise.

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William Rees (vs. 1-2); transl. from Welsh by William Edwards (1900)
verses 3-4 attributed to William Williams (adapted by Ellen Koehler);
Tune: Robert Lowry, 1876.

*Ellen's setting of Here Is Love is
available on request as a lead sheet.
You may write us at:
clerestorynotes@gmail.com*

SENDING FORTH
The Life of the Body

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Hymn tune: OLD 100TH (attributed to Louis Bourgeois), 1551.
Words: Thomas Ken, 1674.

Benediction:

Now brothers and sisters, as you go forth into the world
to live out your baptisms, loving and serving the Lord,
be encouraged to observe a holy Lent,
walking in Christ's own footsteps and taking on His likeness.
And whether the Spirit asks you to put something off,
or take something on,
do it in the name of the Lord Jesus—
as we, His covenant people,
follow Him on the way to the cross.

Amen. Thanks be to God!

A thought about worship from the Ancient Fathers –

“Let us dwell on the fact that while the Lord is with us, our enemies can't hurt us. When they approach us, they conform to the state they find us in. They adapt their delusions to the condition of our minds. Therefore, if they find us timid and confused, they will attack us like robbers, finding our minds unguarded. They think of us as we think about ourselves. For if they find us to be weak and cowardly, they increase our terror by delusions and threats; the unhappy souls are then tormented by these things. But if they see us rejoicing in the Lord, contemplating future bliss, mindful of the Lord, regarding all things to be in His hand, and knowing that no evil spirit has any strength against Christians, nor power over anyone—our enemies are defeated and turned backwards by the strength of these thoughts. Seeing Job fortified in this way, the enemy withdrew from him. But finding Judas unguarded, the enemy took him captive. Therefore, if we want to look down on the enemy, we must always think about the things of the Lord. Our souls must always rejoice in hope. Then we will see that the devil's snares are like smoke and the evil ones will flee rather than pursue us.”

– Athanasius

Lectionary for next week: Genesis 17:1-1, 15-16;
Psalm 22:23-31;
Romans 4:13-25;
Mark 8:31-38

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You will notice that our usual closing of the benediction, “Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!” is missing. That is because it’s customary during Lent to refrain from saying “Alleluia!” In a sense, we fast from this exuberant expression of praise, which makes it all the more meaningful and glorious when we declare on Resurrection Sunday, “Christ is risen, Alleluia!”