

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet, 21st February

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Canon Julia Francis.

As we gather; know you are surrounded today by all who pray.

**God knows us;
He knows the temptations we face;
He sees our failings and our efforts to repent and renew.**

Father, as the church begins its season of Lent we ask you to remind us of what is important and that which is not.

**Where we are wandering along the wrong path redirect us.
Renew us and strengthen us for the challenges ahead and the responses we are required to make.**

Amen

Hymn: Forty Days and Forty Nights

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 **Forty days and forty nights
Thou were fasting in the wild;
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled.**

- 2 **Sunbeams scorching all the day;
Chilly dew-drops nightly shed;
Prowling beasts about Thy way;
Stones Thy pillow; earth Thy bed.**

- 3 **Shall not we Thy sorrow share
And from worldly joys abstain,
Fasting with unceasing prayer,
Strong with Thee to suffer pain?**

- 4 **And if Satan vexing sore,
Flesh or spirit should assail,
Thou, his Vanquisher before,
Grant we may not faint or fail.**

5 So shall we have peace divine:
 Holier gladness ours shall be;
 Round us, too, shall angels shine,
 Such as ministered to Thee.

6 Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,
 Ever constant by Thy side;
 That with Thee we may appear
 At the eternal Eastertide.

George Hunt Smyttan (1856)

**Anyone who believes in Jesus can know his power
to set us free.**

Our first reading this morning takes us to another forty days; this time in the life of Noah. We pick up his story as the Ark comes to rest on Mt Ararat.

Genesis 9:8- 17

To listen to the reading of this passage by David Suchet, from BibleGateway, in a new tab, press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

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 remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

I wonder if like us Noah and his family felt the stirrings to go out, impatient to know it was safe, and at each shake of his head the family reluctantly closing the door again for a further confinement. Feeling the pressure of the enclosing walls; remembering the dangers and storms that have been around their heads above the safe haven of the Ark.

The Gospel of Mark, Chapter 1:9 - 15

To listen to the reading of this passage by David Suchet, from BibleGateway, in a new tab, press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

A prayer for thanksgiving for the scriptures.

Almighty God, we thank you for the gift of your holy word. May it be a lantern to our feet, a light upon our paths, and a strength or our lives. Take us and use us to love and serve all people in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

A prayer for Lent.

Compassionate God as you enfold us in your hands, give us your compassion for people in need of your grace, mercy and love. Help us to follow you into places of despair and darkness, carrying your light

and hope. Touch our lips with wisdom and empower us by your Holy Spirit to bring life and healing. Teach us good Lord to see you in the lives of others.

Amen

Hymn: God is Love

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 God is love: his the care, tending each, everywhere.
God is love — all is there!
Jesus came to show him, that we all might know him:**

**Sing aloud, loud, loud! Sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise him.**

- 2 None can see God above; neighbours here we can love;
thus may we Godward move,
finding him in others, sisters all, and brothers:**

**Sing aloud, loud, loud! Sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise him.**

- 3 To our Lord praise we sing — light and life, friend and king,
coming down love to bring,
pattern for our duty, showing God in beauty:**

**Sing aloud, loud, loud! Sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise him.**

Percy Dearmer (1867–1936)

What a lovely refrain on that hymn. Sing aloud the goodness, truth and beauty of God and praise him. from Percy Dearmer written a century ago and one I think many of us have sung many times.

Reflection:

Although the days are still rather dismal and the skies threaten more rain or snow it's lovely to wander outdoors and see little shoots of colour appearing as the early flowers begin to raise their heads above ground.

The hedgerows also; besides happy springing catkins we see the brighter plumage of the birds that visit our gardens. Colours are so important to us aren't they?

One of the first reactions children have is to notice and name colours and even very young children will pick a favourite colour.

Of course, we share with them the story of Noah's ark and at the end of that we see the rainbow in the sky. The rainbow has always been an important symbol and during the first lockdown of March 2020 it became the vehicle of sending hope and thanksgiving to the NHS, to those who became known as keyworkers. I wonder how many of you, like me, saw the irony that a world which so often rejects all the church's teaching was so willing to cling to this symbol . Neighbours and children alike have been encouraged by seeing rainbows on their walks. Whilst now they are hanging in the skies above us as we take a walk which we hope won't be rained off.

The liturgical year has its colours too and for Advent and Lent we have Purple.

Generally speaking, Advent and Lent are seasons for Penitence, for Preparation of ourselves and for Prayer. Purple is the colour for both these seasons.

I was reminded a week or so ago of the book title 'The Color Purple' by Alice Walker.

The title refers to the character being prompted to stop and look around her. We would probably use the phrase "Smell the Roses." In that book one character states that God is probably rather upset that we don't notice the stuff we have been blessed with nor notice the colour purple. An example of something we glance at each day without really looking and taking in its properties.

I rather like the poem by Thomas Hood in which he says 'It was the time of roses we picked them as we passed.' Some time ago I wrote a reply to this in which I said, "It is the Time of Roses". I too asked my readers to stop and look at the world, not let it slip by or even consider that it has already.

I suppose the last 10 months, after a century of life of Capt. Tom, show us that in spades. And many of us look around at the many we know who give us that same encouragement, even though they have become aged or infirm.

I think since lockdown we've all been forced to stop and look around. There were the blossoms of spring, listening to birds singing, taking stock of what we have in our homes that we can spend time with on the quieter days that were forced upon us.

But even greater than these small individual moments of slowing down to look around is the looking out we have had to do in communities, nations and as a global creature.

We have had to stop to look at what was happening in the world. And having looked, repent of how we had allowed so many sins of commission and omission that had caused the neglect and ignorance that is so prevalent in how we treat the natural world. Also, more importantly, how easy it is to treat others with indifference and find evidence of human greed, prejudice, injustice and cruelty. The plight of the poor and homeless was particularly noticeable when the virus began to hit.

We have had an opportunity to stop and look at the blessings and bounties that were given to us in creation and then look again at the problems that have arisen through failings in our care for them.

When we think of the wonder as each new child is born, wherever that may be, and look at how those children will live. How many will be in great need, hunger, want of medication and surgery, living under threat and neglect and in areas of conflict.

Have we stopped to see these needs in our world? Certainly we have found that since our societies have been caught up to be aware of how we behave affects every single one of us and how we all have a

responsibility to abide by those restrictions that are put in place for us to succeed in overcoming the pandemic which has changed our lives. Have we stopped to look at how our childhood so happy and blissfully unaware of how this pandemic would come our way, have we compared the life of young children today.

Its easiest of course, to look at the children in our own nation and even here we see anxieties, enforced loneliness, a lack of fresh air and freedom. Children who can't enjoy being with friends on little adventures; camping out, sleep overs, running and cycling together. Older children unable to complete their exam syllabus and move forward in their education and training or know when they will have the opportunities to plan for apprenticeships or looking to earn a living.

This Lent take those words beginning with **P**:

Penitence This year it sinks in, harsh and resounding.

Preparation of ourselves to acknowledge our need to change and our need to become a more responsive and responsible human being.

Prayer The need to ask for the greater help from beyond ourselves. Seek ways to understand our tasks and how to approach them in a mindful way. Find the peace of God and the answers in our spiritual life that can benefit our communities , nation and the global population as we head into the future with a very changed pattern of society and our place in its revival. Bringing hope to a people who are still in darkness

As I glance up from my screen the purple, winter flowering heather is by my garden gate.

Each time I go in and out I pass it. I look out from each room along the front of my bungalow and I can see it there. It is strong to withstand the weather; sturdy to remain rooted and unbending; cheerful and beautiful where around it is the dullness of winter landscapes. The only splash of none-green or brown in that part of the lawn.

It brings me peace and hope. It was a gift of God in creation for just this part of a rocky environment as it spreads over hills and mountains. Like

all its alpine cousins that don't mind the harsh conditions. They grow in order to bring joy and are followed by the shoots of spring with their promises of renewal and grace.

The rainbow joy of all our colours and landscapes and the promises of God made known to us once again in the Saviour who is our redeemer and friend.

Prayer - Well we can start in on that right away. Let us join in the prayer our saviour gave as his guide for discipleship.

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

*These prayers follow the verses of 1 Peter 3:18-22
another of our readings set for today.*

Christ suffered for our sins; for the just and the unjust that he might bring us to God.

May all that is created worship you. May all your creatures know your greatness and tell out in praise and joy the response to your majesty.

Christ reached out to those in prison and the disobedient .

Almighty God, heavenly Father your great mercy has promised us

forgiveness of our sins and transgressions. Help us to refrain from those things in word, action, impatience and quickness of temper which make us ashamed.

God was longsuffering as in the days of Noah

Remember us with love and compassion when we fail you or fall short of our own good intentions.

Christ is at the right hand of God. With all the authority and powers

Remember our kindnesses and forgive our ignorance and our neglect of the worlds needs and injustices. Remind us gently of the duty we owe and strengthen us for the challenge of our faith.

By our Baptism may we know our closeness to your healing and salvation.

We pray for our damaged world with its weaknesses and longings.

We bring to you all who suffer at this time with the illnesses which inflict our earthly life. May your hand guide all that is being achieved in scientific discovery for the healing of your children during their allotted span. Be alongside those for whom this is a time of waiting , a time of mourning and grief, and a time of anxiety. Lord we give you thanks and praise for the hope you have given us in Jesus Christ .

Almighty God have mercy on us. Forgive us and bring us to eternal life.

Amen

Our third hymn today has a lovely refrain once again. Often sung as a round in our churches, this is a favourite of mine when I lead Signed Worship amongst the deaf and I still love to both sing and sign it

Hymn: Seek ye first the kingdom of God

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press **Shift** and **Ctrl** together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you;
Allelu-, alleluia:
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu-, alleluia!**

2 Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God;

Allelu-, alleluia:

Allelu-, alleluia:

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu-, alleluia!

3 Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
seek and ye shall find;
knock, and the door shall be opened unto you;

Allelu-, alleluia

Allelu-, alleluia:

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
allelu-, alleluia!

Karen Lafferty (b. 1948)

Let us pray.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Through Jesus Christ, his redemption and resurrection we have been given the light of knowledge and received your promises. We have seen your love for us in all the different paths of our lives.

We praise you Lord.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

