

PREPARING AT HOME

February 12-18, 2018

Focus reading: Genesis 9:8–17 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=382095622>)

Other lectionary readings: Psalm 25:1–10; 1 Peter 3:18–22; Mark 1:9–15

Theme: God Loves Us

On this first Sunday of Lent, we remember. Throughout church history, Lent has been a time to remember the brokenness of creation, including our own lives. Remembrance leads to penitence. In this week's reading, we remember God's covenant to never again allow a watery chaos to destroy the earth. The visible reminder of this promise is the rainbow, which came after the great flood. Yet, a careful reading reveals that the rainbow is not there so that we will remember; it is there so that *God* will remember! Is God forgetful? Does God, who is always faithful, actually need a reminder? The Hebrew people knew all too well the power that water had over life. Their own lives were constantly threatened by droughts and storms at sea. Flood stories were common to every culture, and the Hebrew people would have been familiar with their neighbors' stories of great floods. All of the stories were about destruction; yet, this story is about salvation and resurrection. The focus is on hope and a promise for the future. It is a promise that God will not forget. God will see to that. God put a reminder in place, though none is needed. The rainbow is a sign of God's everlasting covenant. The flood waters are powerful but not as powerful as God's faithful love.

GIVING UP SOMETHING FOR LENT

Some people have a practice of giving something up for Lent. As we consider our connection to the earth, what can you give up as a way of remembering your connection to all of creation? For example, how can you reduce the amount of trash your family produces? Can you "give up" use of some disposable items? Can you repair or recycle something, thereby "giving up" the notion that you need to make a particular purchase? Might you give up electronic devices and television for a specified period of time in order to "connect" with one another or to engage in some acts of service and volunteerism?

BROKEN BUT BEAUTIFUL WORLD

Go for a walk and look for signs of beauty as well as brokenness. Celebrate the beauty. Address the brokenness. Pick up trash. How do you as a family contribute to the brokenness? How do you/can you contribute to the beauty?

PRAYER

Creator God,
We give thanks that you are faithful
even when we are not.
Help us to be partners with you, others, and all of creation
that together we might celebrate
the new life that you give.
Amen.

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