



# Celebrate

First Sunday in Lent

February 18, 2024

*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.*

## Prayer of the Day

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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

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*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.*

God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, <sup>10</sup>and 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. <sup>11</sup>I 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.” <sup>12</sup>God 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: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow

in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I 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. <sup>16</sup>When 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.” <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”



Your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithful-ness.

To you, O LORD,

I lift up my soul.

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

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

**Show me your ways, O LORD,  
and teach me your paths. R**

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

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

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

**You are gracious and upright, O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners in your way. R**

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

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

## 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.*

Christ 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, <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who 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. <sup>21</sup>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, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

## Gospel

Mark 1:9-15

*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.*

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

<sup>12</sup>And the Spirit immediately

drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup>He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

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

## Prayers of Intercession

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The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Trusting in God's promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

*A brief silence.*

God our truth, the ark of your church has room for many expressions of faith. We give thanks for voices that challenge and awaken your people (*especially that of Martin Luther, renewer of the church, whom we commemorate today*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God our maker, you remember your covenant with the earth and its inhabitants. Rescue communities and creatures hurting from natural disasters. Preserve species and habitats endangered by human carelessness and disregard. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God our light, you know our weakness. Free all who govern from the temptations of power. Sustain all who work for human rights in every nation (*organizations may be named*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

## Preparing for Next Week

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

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14 of 14  
Tracks 1 and 2

God our help, you care for your beloved children. Comfort all who are grieving, ill, afraid, in pain, or in despair. Feed hungry people living in food deserts. Protect any at risk from exploitation and abuse. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God our home, you gather your people. Grant us health and safety as we assemble. Keep us mindful of any who are homebound, hospitalized, convalescing, or traveling (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God our hope, you promise eternal life to your beloved children. We remember with gratitude those who have lived and died in faith. Grant that we may also dwell with you in everlasting peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**