

## Second Sunday in Lent – Year B

### Sunday 25 February 2024

The Faith Action Programme would like to thank Rev Laura Digan, Minister of Glasgow Whiteinch Church, and member of the production team at Sanctuary First, for her thoughts on the second Sunday in Lent.

The resources for the World Day of Prayer (Friday 3 March) have been prepared by an ecumenical group of Palestinian Christian women.

Weekly Worship, based on the Revised Common Lectionary, is for everyone – in any capacity – who is involved in creating and leading worship.

It provides liturgical material that can be used for worship in all settings. Our writers are asked to share their approaches to creating and delivering this material to equip leaders with a greater confidence and ability to reflect on their own worship practice and experience and encourage them to consider how this material might be adapted for their own context.

We would encourage continual reflection on the changing patterns of worship and spiritual practice that are emerging from disruption and how this might help identify pathways towards development and worship renewal.

An archive of resources for daily worship can be found on the Sanctuary First website: <https://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/daily-worship>

We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship.

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Psalm 22:23-31.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Romans 4:13-25 .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mark 8:31-38 .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sermon ideas .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Prayers .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>World Day of Prayer – Friday 1 March .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Musical suggestions .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Reflecting on our worship practice .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Useful links .....</b>	<b>10</b>

## Introduction

In Whiteinch during Lent we will have a weekly Bible Study for our life groups. In addition to these groups, our plan is to begin Lent 2024 with a retreat day for ourselves and the churches within our cluster and the local independent church we partner with. We are a church focused on prayer and have a weekly prayer walk, focusing on what God's vision is for the church and our community. This prayer walk will continue with an additional Lenten focus.

### [Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16](#)

The full chapter is described as the Covenant of Circumcision. God's promises are central to the story of Abraham. Here we have an extension, so to speak, of promises that God has already made. Abram is given the new name of Abraham and God promises to make him a father of many nations. Abraham might have thought his son by Hagar was the fulfillment of God's promises but this isn't God's plan. For God now includes Abraham's wife – the newly named Sarah, within this promise in verses 15-16.

### [Psalms 22:23-31](#)

Here the Psalmist is encouraging the whole community to praise God. For God heard the cries of the Psalmist. Throughout the verses the community is further expanded to the nation, then the whole world and to future generations, and even to those not yet born.

### [Romans 4:13-25](#)

Paul uses Abraham as a human example for living in the right covenantal relationship with God. The fulfillment of God's promise isn't because of a lawful guarantee, but through Abraham's faith and trust in God.

### [Mark 8:31-38](#)

You have to feel for Peter, in the previous section of this chapter, he understands and knows that Jesus is the Messiah (v29). But in this section he fails to comprehend just what Jesus will have to do next. And Jesus speaks plainly and clearly. All Peter can hear is that Jesus will be rejected and put to death. He isn't hearing that three days later Jesus will rise again.

## Sermon ideas

**Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16:** This is a great text for a creative monologue. I have previously written monologues from the perspective of both Abraham and Sarah. You can find an example of this in Sanctuary First Daily Worship, [Sarah's longing | Sanctuary First](#). The creative monologue brings the characters to life and helps us to see them as real people. Through the creative monologues you can explore the patience needed to wait and the human pain and frailty as they struggle with the when and if God's promises will be fulfilled. This could open up a time of café-style group discussions about times we have had to wait for God to answer prayer, fulfill promises. Followed by a time of small group prayer.

**Romans 4: 13-25:** Explore how God may have given us a prophetic word, vision, call or purpose for our lives, our church or our community, and consider what part are we playing in bringing this word or vision to life? Are we staying faithful and trusting? Or are we expecting God to do all the work himself?

An activity to do beforehand is to read the scripture *lectio divina* style and ask the members of the congregation to close their eyes and focus on a word or phrase that stands out for them. After reading a second time to chew over and digest this word or phrase, allow time for silent prayer when individuals can reflect with God what this word or phrase means to them. Ask people to remember their word and then after the sermon have the congregation decorate a stone, or a small piece of wood or simply a card with their word or phrase to take away with them and remember.

**Mark 8: 28-38:** Explore the morale within the wider church just now. How many of us are actually believing that the church is dying? Consider this passage with promises that God has made about the Church e.g. Matthew 16:18, "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

After the sermon you might like to have a time of discussion when people can offer ideas on how to offer church differently to the local community/ opportunities for mission.

## Prayers

In Whiteinch one of our congregation prepares people to open their hearts ready to meet our Lord with an extended call to worship. This is driven by the Holy Spirit. I can see Psalm 22:23-31 being used for this. We would also sing a song. A song that would fit here is "Good, Good Father", by Pat Barrett/Chris Tomlin, or "God of the Promise", by Elevation Worship. This would be followed by extemporary prayer.

### **Call to worship**

All you who love the Lord, Praise God  
**Praise God!**

Those who seek the Lord, Praise God  
**Praise God!**

All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn to the Lord  
**Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!**

And all the families of the nations  
will bow down before God  
**Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!**

For He is our Lord  
**Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!**

Who keeps His promises  
**Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!**

### **Prayers of confession**

Only occasionally do we offer prayers of confession. I feel that people within our community are already well aware of their shortcomings and struggles. Instead after our period of extended sung worship (around five songs) we offer a prayer of adoration, thanksgiving and praise. Later in the service after the sermon we offer a more reflective prayer and then our prayers for others. These prayers are all usually written on the week of the service, guided by the Holy Spirit. The prayer of intercession is usually focused on the news and our communities' needs. However here are some prayers to get you started that I wrote for the Sanctuary First Daily Worship, based on the story of Abraham and Sarah.

Almighty God,  
creator of heaven and earth,  
nothing is impossible for You.

Help us to trust in the promises that You have made to us.

Give us patience to keep faithful when Your time is not our time,  
knowing that You will act in us and through us when the time is right.

Amen

Lord God

You are a mystery.

Your greatness is beyond what we can fathom,

Your power beyond our understanding.

Help us to walk in Your way,

to trust and obey

where You are leading us,

even when it is uncomfortable.

Give us the courage to keep going,

the understanding to let some things go,

the humility to accept that we don't know all the answers,

but that You do.

For You, Lord, exist outside time and space,

You are the beginning and the end.

In You we place our hope,

in You we trust.

Amen

Lord God,

We live in challenging times –

Families throughout our land are under financial pressure,

meaning we focus on the here and now and our own households and families.

Help us, Lord, to see beyond this moment and the immediate future

and to consider the legacy we are leaving to our descendants.

You created this beautiful planet, Lord, and all life upon it.

Give us insight, Lord,

inspire us, Lord,

so that we desire to care for Your planet,

ensuring we leave behind a world that is habitable

for future generations of humanity,

all wildlife and plant life.

Help us to cherish Your creation.

Amen

Father God,

You hear the cries of Your children.

Protect those who suffer around the world,

soften hardened hearts of decision makers,

soften hearts hardened by 24-hour news reels.

Use us to feed the hungry,  
quench the thirst of the thirsty,  
deliver the forgotten,  
and care for the orphans.

Make us Your hope,  
in the name of Your son Jesus.

Amen

## **World Day of Prayer – Friday 1 March**

The World Day of Prayer is an international, ecumenical, prayer movement initiated and carried forward by Christian women in more than 180 countries and over 1,000 languages. Every year Christians of many traditions and all ages celebrate a common day of prayer on the first Friday in March. Services are held all around the world, beginning in Tonga and New Zealand in the east and continuing throughout the day to Samoa and Alaska in the west. We bring the needs of the world, and of the writing country in particular, before Almighty God knowing that He will hear and answer us, as we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. God invites us to have a prayer relationship with Himself, but He also expects us to have concerned relationships with our neighbours, throughout the world. Prayer must be accompanied by action, as God moves our hearts and directs our thoughts.

This years' service and resources have been written by women in Palestine, based on Ephesians 4:1-3, "I beg you... bear with one another in love" and calls us to bear with each other in love, despite all difficulties and oppression. Visit the Scottish WDP website for the order of worship and other resources: <http://www.wdpScotland.org.uk/resources/>

### **Prayer**

God of Unity, Your child, Jesus, prayed that Your disciples and followers would be one, as You are one.

Teach us, Your servants, to treat others justly, fairly and with love, even though we may speak, live, and pray differently.

Bless the global church and bless the faithful women everywhere who share Your Good News with others.

Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

## Musical suggestions

Our [online music resource](#) is on the Church of Scotland website; you can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship. You will also find playlists for this week and liturgical seasons and themes on the *Weekly Worship* and *Inspire Me* tabs.

You can find further musical suggestions for this week in a range of styles on the [Songs for Sunday blog](#) from Trinity College Glasgow.

A suggested playlist of [songs from CH4 for use during Lent](#) can be found on the Church of Scotland website.

At Whiteinch our style is to use modern worship songs, which are all readily available online. Songs that we would likely sing with these readings are:

- “Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)” – Chris Tomlin CCLI number 4768151
- “Forever (We Sing Hallelujah)” – Kari Jobe CCLI number 7001228
- “God of the Promise” – Elevation Worship CCLI number 7111935
- “Good, Good Father” – Pat Barrett / Chris Tomlin CCLI number 7036612
- “Goodness of God” – Bethel Music CCLI number 7117726
- “Living Hope” – Phil Wickham CCLI number 7106807
- “Our God Saves – Paul Baloche CCLI number 4972837
- “Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus” – Shane & Shane  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1qgyLTH6Xg>
- “Waymaker” – Leeland [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJCV\\_2H9xD0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJCV_2H9xD0)
- “Yes and Amen” – Chris Tomlin CCLI number 7048885
- “You Make Me Brave” – Bethel Music CCLI number 7003306

## Reflecting on our worship practice

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, the way we worship has changed and we need to reflect on the changing or newly established patterns that emerged and continue to emerge as a result of the disruption.



We can facilitate worship for all by exploring imaginative approaches to inclusion, participation and our use of technologies in ways that suit our contexts. This is not an exhaustive list, but some things we could consider are:

- Framing various parts of the worship service in accessible language to help worshippers understand the character and purpose of each part. This is essential for creating worship for all (intergenerational worship) that reflects your community of faith.
- Holding spaces for reflection and encouraging prayer to be articulated in verbal and non-verbal ways, individually and in online breakout rooms.
- In online formats the effective use of the chat function and microphone settings encourages active participation in prayer, e.g. saying the Lord's Prayer together unmuted, in a moment of 'holy chaos'.
- If singing in our congregations is restricted, we can worship corporately by using antiphonal psalm readings, creeds and participative prayers.
- Using music and the arts as part of the worship encourages the use of imagination in place of sung or spoken words.
- Use of silence, sensory and kinaesthetic practices allow for experience and expression beyond regular audio and visual mediums.

The following questions might help you develop a habit of reflecting on how we create and deliver content and its effectiveness and impact, and then applying what we learn to develop our practice.

- How inclusive was the worship?  
Could the worship delivery and content be described as worship for all/  
intergenerational? Was it sensitive to different "Spiritual Styles"?
- How was the balance between passive and active participation?
- How were people empowered to connect with or encounter God?  
What helped this? What hindered this?
- How cohesive was the worship?  
Did it function well as a whole?  
How effective was each of the individual elements in fulfilling its purpose?
- How balanced was the worship?  
What themes/topics/doctrines/areas of Christian life were included?
- How did the worship connect with your context/contemporary issues?

Was it relevant in the everyday lives of those attending and in the wider parish/  
community?

How well did the worship connect with local and national issues?

How well did the worship connect with world events/issues?

- What have I learned that can help me next time I plan and deliver worship?

## Useful links

Up to date information for churches around Covid-19 can be found [here](#)

You can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and  
download a selection of recordings for use in worship [here](#)

You can find an introduction to spiritual styles online [here](#)

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