

**St Andrew's and St George's West
Order of Service 21 February 2021**

The First Sunday of Lent



Rainbow-coloured Promises

Music Improvisation on *Somewhere over the Rainbow*

Andrew Carvel

Welcome

Call to Worship

Let us think of all who walk in God's way.
and all who have responded to the promise of the rainbow.
It is the sign of God's covenant with future generations,
the earth and every living creature.

During this time of Lent may we remember God's promises,
recommit to the covenant with God,
and journey along the path to which we have been called.
May we trust and live the multi-coloured promises of the rainbow.

Hymn 212 Morning has broken

Morning has broken like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning,
praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass.

Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight; mine is the morning,
born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's re-creation of the new day!

Eleanor Farjeon (1881–1965)

Opening Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Let us pray.
We give thanks for every bright day,
for the colours of the rainbow and for the clouds.

We give thanks for the eye contact above the coloured masks,
and we give thanks for the dark night before the dawn.

Sometimes God, we do not recognize the signs that you are with us.
We may be overstretched and not make time for connecting with you.
We may not see the colours of the rainbow or even look for them.
That's when things can become difficult, can get on top of us,
turning to grey the precious colours of life.

Sometimes we may smother the signs with unnecessary things so that we can't even see them. In our impatience for tomorrow we may miss the beauty of today and so miss the colours of the rainbow and your promises. Forgive us when we miss the mark.

Words of affirmation

Please join in the words of affirmation

**A rainbow will always remind me of God's promises.
God loves all creation with a love that is steadfast and true.
God forgives us and sets us free to live.**

Thanks be to God.

And now we say together....

**Our Father in heaven.
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

First Scripture Reading - Genesis Chapter 9: 8-11 (NRSV)

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, 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. 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.'

Reflection Covenant Colours

Hymn 5 O Lord our Lord throughout the earth (Psalm 8)

O Lord, our Lord, throughout the earth how glorious is your name,
and glorious too where unseen heavens your majesty proclaim.
On infant lips, in children's song a strong defence you raise
to counter enemy and threat, and foil the rebel's ways.

When I look up and see the stars which your own fingers made,
and wonder at the moon and stars, each perfectly displayed;
then I must ask, 'Why do you care? Why love humanity?
And why keep every mortal name fixed in your memory?

Yet such as us you made and meant just less than gods to be;
with honour and with glory, Lord, you crowned humanity.
And then dominion you bestowed for all made by your hand,
all sheep and cattle, birds and fish that move through sea or land.

Coda: O Lord, our Lord, throughout the earth how glorious is your name!

John L. Bell (b. 1949)

Second Scripture Reading - Genesis Chapter 9: 12-17

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: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, 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. 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.' 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.'

Guided Lenten meditation

Hymn 237 Look forward in faith (verses 1 and 2)

Look forward in faith, all time is in God's hand.
Walk humbly with him and trust his future plan.
God has wisely led his people by his power.
Look forward in hope, he gives us each new hour.

Look forward in faith, the world is in God's care.
His purpose of love he calls on us to share.
In our neighbour's need the Lord is present still.
He blesses the meek! The earth will know God's will.

Prayers of the People

Let us pray.

Rainbow God, during these exceptionally difficult times, help us to switch off the endless questions in our minds and the challenges of the pandemic and climate change as we wander through the wilderness. Let us find signs of hope in everyday rainbow-coloured promises.

May we live out your covenant to care for all creation, as you care for us.

Don't be afraid

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid,
my love is stronger and I have promised,
promised to be always near.

Words and music by John Bell

Rainbow God, as each colour is beautiful, so every person is special. We pray for all those struggling with their mental or physical health bereaved, grieving, suffering from racial, domestic or child abuse ... those who have adopted the rainbow as their symbol and are finding courage to be proud of who they are.

May they know that you stay with them suffering ... waiting watching and loving them as they are.

Don't be afraid ...

Rainbow God, as we think of places where there is discord ... conflict ... forced migration ... exploitation ... we struggle to make sense of where you are and why it is this way.

May we know your wisdom as we seek to understand and respond to these issues.

Don't be afraid ...

Rainbow God, with the uplifting memory of thousands of rainbows in our windows last year, we give thanks for health and social care workers, scientists and volunteers, carers and all other key workers.

May we all play our part in caring for one another, and may there be rainbow coloured promises when we need them, sent to cheer our hearts and revive our souls.

Sustain and encourage us to be your messengers and to focus on the rainbow, sign of hope, symbol of your presence and your promise, for the coming of your kingdom of unity and joy. Amen.

Hymn 237 Look Forward in Faith (*verse 3*)

Look forward in faith, God gives us life each day.
Go onward with Christ, his Spirit guides our way.
Now God lets us live within the sphere of grace.
Trust ever in him, he rules o'er earth and space!

Andrew J. Scobie (b. 1935)

Blessing

May you experience a Lent
that reflects the colours of the rainbow
not just the colour of ash.

May you experience a Lent
that involves taking stock
and healthy repentance.

May you experience the exhilaration that comes
from defying temptations,
turning your face to the narrow path of Christ Jesus
and enjoying small victories day by day.

And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
abide with you this day and evermore. Amen.

The Bells of St Andrew's and St George's West

Organ

Toccata e Fuga

Italian Anon. (18th cent.)



Worship Leaders: Rosie Magee, Sally Evans, Nick Evans

Scripture Reader: Annie Brechin

Director of Music: Brigitte Harris

Vocal ensemble: Frances Cooper, Eleanor Cozens, Eleanor Wilson, Caitlin McGillivray,
Tim Cooper, Drew Crichton, Andrew Carvel

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Don't be Afraid Words and music by John Bell.

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