

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 44

Wednesday 5th August 2020

'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'

Welcome

Welcome to this midweek edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

Scripture Passage

Genesis 8.1-19

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, and the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had abated; and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.

At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew

that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.

In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. Then God said to Noah, “Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh – birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth – so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.

Reflection

The flood recedes

During the pandemic, many people have turned to the Bible for comfort, for guidance, for hope, but also to reflect on what God’s Word might have to say to our current situation. I recently heard someone speaking about the way that the story of Noah and the flood seemed to offer some helpful insight into our current situation. So that will be the focus of today’s reflection.

The story of Noah is found in the book of Genesis, chapters 6-9. At the start of Genesis 6, we hear that the people on earth have become wicked and evil, and God decides that he will put an end to this by sending a great flood. Noah, however, is described as blameless and righteous, as someone who ‘walked with God’ (6.9). So God decides to save Noah and his family, and two of every living creature, and instructs Noah to build a large boat – an ark – in which to house them all when the flood comes. Noah and his family

and all the creatures then enter the ark, and it rains for forty days and forty nights, and the waters flood the earth.

Some have likened the initial stage of the pandemic to the flood – not because God sent it, but, because like Noah and his family who shut themselves up in the ark, we shut ourselves up at home. We stayed inside most of the time; some of us had to stay inside all of the time – and a few of us still do.

The next part of Noah's story is detailed in the passage above: the flood waters begin to recede. However, this is not immediate; it takes 150 days for the waters to start to recede, and another three months before the waters have receded enough for the tops of the mountains to appear. Similarly, the lockdown restrictions are being eased; people may have begun meeting with another household, or started visiting non-essential shops, or gone out for a meal. But the restrictions have not been fully lifted – the flood waters have not fully receded. Indeed, it was still a number of months after the flood waters began to recede that Noah saw dry ground. There is not a quick fix.

The final part of Noah's story is his exit from the ark, when he immediately builds an altar in order to worship God. God makes a new covenant with Noah and his family, and sends a rainbow as a sign of this promise.

Rainbows have been used as a symbol throughout the pandemic, and as a sign of hope; this pandemic will not last forever and there is new life to come.

If we were asked which stage of Noah's story we identified with at the moment, we might say that we are seeing the floods recede, though of course, different people may resonate with different parts of the story. But at a national level, it seems we are at the stage of sending out the raven and the dove, of tentatively lifting restrictions in order to see what happens – to see if it is safe to return to some of the things we did, and took for granted, before the lockdown. And this also applies to our churches, as we begin to

reopen for private prayer and worship, and step into the next stage, with the hope that the flood waters will continue to recede. John Goldingay refers to the flood as ‘an act of un-creation’ but that what follows is ‘a process of re-creation’ (*Genesis for Everyone*). It seems we are now moving into a time of re-creation, and just like after the flood, some things will return to as they were before, but others may not.



By Amy Rose Moore

I wonder which part of Noah’s story you feel you can relate to most? Do you feel as if the flood is still rising, or are you starting to see the waters recede? Perhaps you are even starting to take some tentative steps onto dry ground?

Today’s passage began with the words, ‘But God *remembered* Noah’. The word translated ‘remembered’ can also be translated as ‘mindful’: God was mindful of Noah. God hadn’t had forgotten him, but was especially aware or mindful of him at this time. And God is just as mindful of us as he was of Noah. However you might be feeling today, or whatever stage you feel you are at, God remembers you. God is mindful of you.

Anna

Points for Prayers

- For our spiritual growth and discipleship as we respond to the good news of Jesus Christ, for knowing that God is mindful of us
- Thanksgiving for our initial services in the Group following the easing of lockdown and prayers for the other ones planned in August

- Thanksgiving for care, skill and courage of NHS workers and those in care homes
- Those suffering from coronavirus in hospitals, care homes and at home
- Need for further largescale testing and research into and development of a vaccine as soon as this can be achieved
- For small weddings taking place in the benefice on 5th, 8th and 12th August
- Our Bishops (please see notice below)
- Prayers for those affected economically by the lockdown, for businesses and those who have become unemployed
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Our Bishops

Bishop Peter is stepping back from his duties for the moment in order to undergo treatment for leukaemia. Please pray for him and his family in this challenging time. Please pray also for Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Bishop's Staff as they take on the oversight of the diocese in his absence.

The Lord's Larder

At the end of Ron's reflection on Sunday on the miracle of the loaves and the fishes he mentions how we can come alongside Jesus in helping to supply the everyday food that people around us need. Supporting foodbanks is one way in which we can practically do this.

If you live in North Cadbury you may have noticed the collection boxes at various points asking for food donations for The Lord's Larder, one of our local foodbanks in Yeovil. The Lord's Larder and other foodbanks such as

the Gillingham and Wincanton foodbank are also supported by different villages in the Camelot Group.

These physical donations of food are of course enormously important especially as the longer-term impact of the coronavirus crisis and its effects on employment become more evident. But also important to the foodbanks are financial donations which help them in a more targeted way to buy food and help those in need. If you would like to help the Lord's Larder in this way, the payee is the Yeovil Christian Support Trust, Account Number 20211112, Sort Code 60 – 83 – 01.

Services of public worship in August

Please see the following schedule of services of public worship planned for the rest of August. This does not include all of the monthly services across the Group held pre-lockdown. So if a service in the Group which you regularly attended is not included in the schedule you are of course most welcome to attend any other service within the Group. However, because of the limitations on capacity in the various churches through the need for social distancing it would be appreciated if you could in these circumstances let the relevant churchwarden know in advance of your intention to do this.

Any additions to this schedule will be notified as and when they arise.

Sunday 9th August

9.30 am, Communion, Galhampton

9.30 am, Communion, St John the Baptist North Cheriton

Sunday 16th August

9.30 am, Communion, St Mary's Compton Pauncefoot

11 am, Sunday Worship, St Michael's North Cadbury

11 am, Communion, St Peter and St Paul, Maperton

Sunday 23rd August

9.30 am, Communion, St Thomas a Becket, South Cadbury

9.30 am, Communion, St John the Baptist, North Cheriton

11 am, Communion, St Michael's North Cadbury

Sunday 30th August

6.30 pm, Evensong, Galhampton

Reopening churches for private prayer

The commencement of a number of services across the Group means that the arrangements for private prayer will now change. The arrangements for August are as follows:-

Sunday morning openings

Sunday 2nd August

North Cheriton open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am

Sunday 9th August

South Cadbury open from 10 am to 11.30 am

Compton Pauncefoot open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am.

Sunday 30th August

North Cheriton open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am

Compton Pauncefoot open from 9.30 am to 10.30 am.

Midweek openings

Wednesday afternoons, August 5th, 19th, 26th

North Cadbury, open from 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm (please note there is no opening on Wednesday 12th August because of a wedding on that day.)

Galhampton

Wednesday afternoons, 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm followed by Celtic Worship led by Alison at 7.00 pm.

Excalibur and the Parish Office

Because of concerns relating to the hand delivery of parish magazines and also the relative lack of available content an electronic rather than a printed version of Excalibur will be produced during the period of the restrictions. This will be available on the website, www.camelotparishes.co.uk, and will include Camelot People giving details of occasional offices in the benefice (this for the moment is confined to funerals during the suspension of both weddings and baptisms). The August Excalibur is now online and can be downloaded from the homepage of the website.

Rob is on holiday at the moment and the Parish Office is closed.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)