

## **“In the Palms of God’s Hands”**

**Prayer of Illumination:** Prepare our hearts, O Lord, to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but your own; that, hearing, we may also obey your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (The Worship Book, 1970, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.))

**Scripture Readings:** Genesis 8:6-12; Matthew 21:1-11

### **Devotion:**

This past week, I received a spiritual reflection/story from Carolyn Weston who often sends me something funny or insightful of a spiritual nature. Carolyn sent me the following parable:

#### *“A Family in Lockdown”*

*Forty days, Forty nights in the Ark,  
Noah’s family was confined in a boat.*

*There were no windows, no balconies, no terraces,  
no internet, no phone, no YouTube, no Facebook, or no Netflix.*

*They only heard the rain. They spent their time praying,  
loving each other and caring for animals.*

*God the Father took care of them as Noah was a man of faith  
and obeyed His word.*

*Remember even though there is out there an ocean of  
viruses and life seems like a stormy ride,  
our God is watching over us! Don’t be afraid!*

*Be faithful to Him and wait patiently. The rain will stop and one day.  
A rainbow will shine and all will be well again.*

*(Author Unknown)*

I invite you to read the above parable knowing God has our congregation, our church family, in his loving and caring palms of his hands. God had Noah, his family, and all the animals onboard the Ark in his divine palms of his hands. The Ark floated freely on the deep abyss of water for 40 days and nights. The same length of time as we have observed Lent. I have to say, this year’s Lent has felt something like Noah riding on the Ark, being confined at home during this pandemic. Like Noah we open the Ark’s window with hope that better times and

days await us. The story's raven and dove (carrying an olive branch) coming and going from the Ark depicts this in the biblical story, as well as, on the church's western stained glass window above the sanctuary doors.

God indeed watches over us, and saves us. This was true for both Jesus and his followers when he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The crowds shouted, "Hosanna!" ("God Save Us") to Jesus, and Jesus embraced the crowds with compassion and hope. People waived and placed their palms and cloaks on the roadway for Jesus to ride upon. They recognized Jesus being the true Messiah.

Let us shout today, "Hosanna!" to our one and only Messiah in prayer, and let us pray for all those who are suffering and dying with this disease. Let us pray for all the doctors, nurses, and all medical personnel who are using their arts of healing to bring care and comfort to their patients. Let us pray for all our nation's paramedics, policeman, firemen, and the National Guard who are assisting and protecting the vulnerable. Let us pray for the families who grieve over the deaths of their loved ones.

Let us pray with the palms of our own hands touching together, as we shout out to God and the world, "Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" Amen.

**Prayers of Intercessory and Supplication:** (Ask people what they wish to pray for today, briefly inquire about it, and pray for them. Ask them to join in your prayer.)

**The Lord's Prayer:** (Say the prayer in unison.) Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

**Blessing:** "The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord be kind and gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)