



DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of September 11, 2022 (Genesis 6:5-22; 8:6-14; 9:8-17)

Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Creator God, as we look on the ravages of nature, vast areas destroyed by flood or famine, by hurricane or earthquake, by drought disease, by fire or heat, may we see you huddled down sheltering with your people homeless, bereaved, despairing, questioning. Why?

May we see you in those who seek to help those in need: aid agencies, non-government and government organizations pulling together to bring relief.

May we see you in those who formulate policies to rebuild communities, to strengthen infrastructure, putting people before profit.

May we see you in scientists seeking to bring healing and cure and may we go to be where you are in the midst of your suffering children.

Devotions for Life A LifeGroup & Personal Resource The Story: Genesis 6:5-22; 8:6-14; 9:8-17

Context: Here we are, at the beginning of a new season in the Story of God and God's People. We will be in the Hebrew Bible now through Christmas, so let's get at a couple general ideas about the Hebrew Bible. First of all, it is more respectful to call it the "Hebrew Bible" rather than the "Old Testament", because using "old" indicates that it's outdated and/or has been replaced by the New Covenant. This is not so. If it is, then we are marginalizing our Jewish siblings for whom this story and the covenant within it (covenant being another word for "testament") are still very much alive.

Also remember that with any text, the writers are at the mercy of their own worldview. And that means that we are living in a culture that doesn't understand meteorology, therefore the only way to understand weather is to ascribe its happenings to God or the gods. That has significant implications on this week's story.



There may we learn how to face our fears and stand firm. May we learn from them resilience and faith in the midst of loss and grief, and, as we so graciously receive, may we learn how to serve alongside all those whose names we do not know.

We bring to you those we do know: those who occupy our hearts and minds, those who need to know your love and our love today.

God in the midst of every landscape of devastation give us the wherewithal to rebuild, renew.

May we know the wonder of your re-creation every day
And praise you, creator,
transformer, redeemer God.
Amen.

Compassion & Justice:
Community Outreach Focus:
The SLP High School Bird Feeder This month we're collecting food for the St. Louis Park High School Bird Feeder, a food shelf created by SLP High School students for SLP High School students. Head to aldersgatemn.com for the list of their needs and drop them off at worship or in the office this month!

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Finally remember that The Story of God and God's People is a story about people- people who are flawed. Remember, Rabbi Avi described the Hebrew Bible as a "dysfunctional family tree", where a lot of it is about "what not to do". So with all that, we enter into this wild story, which one scholar described as "part children's story, part apocalyptic nightmare", of Noah, the Flood, and the Rainbow.

Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

- What images, phrases or words from this story captivate your imagination?
- This text describes humankind as "thoroughly evil on the earth" (6:5) because "they have filled the earth with violence" (6:13). What do you think of this assessment of humankind?
- How do you feel about God "being grieved" and "sorry" about making humankind?
- What regrets do you have? How have you moved through those regrets?
- What do you do about things, systems, etc., that are corrupt? How does one fix corruption?
- How do we square God's unrelenting anger (verse 13) here with God's unending grace and mercy (i.e.: a God who is "gracious and compassionate, full steadfast love")?
- Does God cause floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural disasters? If so, why does God do this? How do we reconcile when and where these things happen with when and where they do not?
- Do you think the whole earth literally flooded and wiped out everything but what was in the ark?
- What might be significant about Noah sending a raven and then a dove?
- Who/what does God say are the beneficiaries of the covenant?
- For whom is the rainbow a sign/reminder?

