



# CHUNG DONG

## FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

ENGLISH MINISTRY



### ONLINE HOME WORSHIP: April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020



This week's preacher is  
Rev. Johan Reiners

Dear Chungdong family,

Welcome to our online worship service. Along with our brothers and sisters all around the world, we're now coming to terms with the 'new normal' brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. Due to the spread of COVID-19, *Chungdong First Methodist Church, English Ministry* will continue worshiping online until further notice.

We hope and pray that things will get back to normal soon. In the meantime, please join us with your family and friends for online worship. You can follow the liturgy here along with the video sermon. Click on the links provided for hymns. The order of service has been simplified to include a prayer and two hymns.

We will keep you updated about services during the following weeks. Please remember to pray for the country, the leaders and those affected by this crisis.

### VIDEO LINK TO FULL SERVICE

<https://youtu.be/70kw3SsakDw>

### PROGRAM

1. Home Worship  
*Call to Worship*  
*Song of Praise*  
*I Am the Bread of Life*
2. Opening Prayer
3. Confession of Faith
4. Prayer for Illumination
5. Reading of the Scriptures
6. Sermon
7. The Lord's Prayer
8. Closing Hymn
9. Benediction

# 1. HOME WORSHIP

## Call to Worship

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For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.  
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.  
This is the day that the LORD has made.  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.  
Amen

## Song of Praise

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Singing is an ancient Christian tradition.

By singing from home, we are telling the world that no matter what it throws at us, we will be faithful to the God who casts out fear.

### *I Am the Bread of Life*

<https://youtu.be/dX4uC3a7RC8>

*I am the Bread of life,  
You who come to Me shall not hunger,  
And who believes in Me shall not thirst.  
No one can come to Me  
Unless the Father beckons.  
And I will raise You up,  
And I will raise You up,  
And I will raise You up on the last day.*

*Yes, Lord, I believe  
That You are the Christ,  
The Son of God  
Who has come  
Into the world.  
And I will raise You up,  
And I will raise You up,  
And I will raise You up on the last day.*

*And I will raise You up,  
And I will raise You up,  
And I will raise You up on the last day.*

## 2. OPENING PRAYER

Almighty Creator, God Surpassing All: You are Glorious!

The wondrous things You continue to create make us stop in awe to marvel at the simple intricacies of Your unfathomable beauty and immeasurable depth reflected in Your Creation.

This week we celebrated Earth and Earth Day, a day to celebrate the planet you entrusted us with when you planted Adam and Eve into the Garden eons ago. Though You entrusted us with a garden, God, we have not been good stewards.

We have not learned to live in harmony with Your Creation: we exploit the planet for the wealth of a select few. We eradicate forests and blast mountains, bury our non-degradable waste in landfill and oceans, and pump poison into the atmosphere.

Likewise, God we have not learned to live in love with each other. Brother kills brother. Women are targeted, orphans are ignored, workers are enslaved and the hungry and sick are left to fend for themselves while we the Privileged, thrive off the iniquities our broken systems and our leaders maintain.

God, today Creation breathes more deeply because we, its stewards-turned-exploiters are frozen under Covid-19 lockdown. God, so many people around the world are suffering from Covid-19 and we lift them up to you. We raise up also the people who are suffering from other diseases, unable to get treatment because of overcrowded hospitals or lack of access to health care. We pray for the 325 million people estimated to die of hunger this year due to lockdowns that stop them from being able to feed themselves and their families. We look to You and Your Word for hope and direction out of this brokenness and into Your healing.

We pray for guidance, Lord. Guidance in our lives and inspiration to live out the commandments You call us into: Worshipping You and loving our neighbors. We pray for humility, Lord, for our leaders to accept wisdom from prophets speaking Truth to power. We also pray for protection of those prophets and advocates who are under threat daily by those in power.

We also pray for ourselves, God, that we quieten our lives to listen for what You are asking of us, and we pray for persevering courage to act in faith, in hope, and in love.

All this we ask in Jesus' name,  
Amen

~ Adam Shaw

## 3. CONFESSION OF FAITH

We believe in God, the Creator of all that we see and all that we do not see.

We believe in Jesus Christ, God becomes flesh;  
in death the Forgiver of sinners, in rising the Healer of the broken.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, God within us,  
Comforter, Strengthener and Friend.

Amen.

## 4. PRAYER FOR 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.

## 5. READING OF THE SCRIPTURES

**Reader: Mark Gilly**

**Old Testament Lesson: Gen 9:12-16**

*<sup>12</sup>God continued, “My covenant is between me and you and every living creature with you. It is a covenant for all time to come. Here is the sign of the covenant I am making. <sup>13</sup>I have put my rainbow in the clouds. It will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>Sometimes when I bring clouds over the earth, a rainbow will appear in them. <sup>15</sup>Then I will remember my covenant between me and you and every kind of living creature. The waters will never again become a flood to destroy all life. <sup>16</sup>When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it. I will remember that my covenant will last forever. It is a covenant between me and every kind of living creature on earth.”*

Leader: This is the Word of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

## 6. SERMON

### **Rainbow Spotters and Rainbow Pointers**

<https://youtu.be/70kw3SsakDw>

Story-time! Yes, I know, I should have been past that age, but I still love a good story – and the Bible stories were my favorites when I was a child. We had a very old Children’s Bible and I was fascinated by the drawings, the dramatic old-world realism of the stories of old. One of my favorites was, of course, the Noah story. It had every element of a grand opera: thunder and lightning, tragedy and heroism, all in one.

Imagine you were a child, say, a few hundred years BC. Israel is in exile in Babylon. They’ve lost everything and they longed for their land. We know they would return eventually, but they didn’t. They didn’t know the end of their story. This is a time of despair. There is no future in sight, they are oppressed, humiliated and sad. But they kept their hopes alive by telling stories: The stories of a God who created order in chaos, a God who opened the sea. A God who made the walls of Jericho come down.

Back to our story: You were a Jew. Let’s give you a name – a good Jewish name like...Isaac.

“Dad,” little Isaac says, “Tell us a story!” “What story?” his father enquires. “A good one!” Isaac replies. “Good! I’ll tell you the story of Noah. You remember Noah?” Isaac’s father begins. “Who’s Noah?” Isaac asks. “Well, it’s a story about a flood!” “And what is a flood?” Isaac asks innocently. “It’s a lot of water – you have never seen it!” Isaac’s father continues.

And so little Isaac’s father tells him the story.

“But Dad, this is such an old story!” Isaac protests. “Yes,” his father explains. “We know many stories are going around about floods, gods, arks, animals, and so on. But this story is different. This story has a rainbow in it!” “A rainbow?” Isaac’s eyes light up. “Yes, so listen up and let me tell you...”

And so little Isaac’s father sets out to tell the most amazing story – with a twist. You see, the Sumerians, Mesopotamians and the Babylonians all told flood stories. These stories about water and its destructive power to wipe out towns, cities and civilizations were not unusual in the ancient world. There were even stories about people building boats to survive these floods. In these flood stories, all that water coming to destroy humanity was understood to be divine judgment for all of the ways people had made a mess of things. The gods are angry, it was believed, and a flood was their way of clearing the deck to start over.

So when we come to a story about a flood in the book of Genesis, it’s not that unusual. This flood story is like the other flood stories because this God is like the other gods – fed up with the depravity of humanity, unleashing divine wrath in the form of a flood.

Isaac’s dad begins his story. “Long, long ago people were bad... so bad that God decided to wipe them off the face of the earth. But there was a man named Noah. A wise and just man. God told Noah to build a ship. What’s a ship, Isaac?” “Oh, Dad. It’s like a boat; just a biiiiig one.” Isaac answers. And so Isaac’s dad tells him of the drama with the building of the boat, the animals, the invitations to people and then the flood. Isaac’s eyes grow wide and wild as his father’s deep voice color the dramatic moments of the avalanche of waters wiping away, destroying everything.

We also know flood stories. It’s all around us at this moment. We know about the floodgates of the gods opening in judgment over us and the floodgates of hell let loose wrath and destruction. You’ve had times like that when the world just turns upside down. And at this very moment it’s happening to millions all over the world.



*Francis Danby, in his last painting called *The Deluge* (1840) captures something of the horror of the flood. Noah’s ark is in the background, illuminated by a shaft of moonlight. A stormy sea rages around a rocky peak and massive tree branches, to which humans and animals are clinging desperately. A blood-red sun can be seen setting to the left. In the lower right hand corner, an angel weeps over the death of a child. Something of Danby’s painting is happening to so many right now. Hungry people storming and looting just for food. A changing world, and people are hanging on for dear life.*

Maybe you and I are some of the lucky ones. It’s a flood. Is it the strong hand of judgment from an angry God? I don’t know. You would do what we do whenever we suffer – you’d look for causes. And in the ancient world, it was generally agreed upon that the forces that caused these kind of things were the gods who had had it up to here with humans and all their backstabbing, depraved ways and had decided to unleash their wrath. But, it doesn’t change the fact that today, there’s a different kind of flood. Wars sweeping over countries destroying everything. And now, a virus that took us by surprise and is changing livelihoods, and probably the way we will live in future. This flood is killing, destroying and creating havoc on markets. It seems as if a world-wide depression is imminent. – not to speak about what it does to our faith and psyche. Where are you in this storm?

Isaac’s dad tells about the ark. The ark as a token of safety. Yes, there’s an ark, we love the ark. We preach about the ark so many times. It is a symbol of safety and of a saving God. But the ark is also a symbol of the lucky ones

and those who were not so fortunate. After all, how many people would have been able to get into the ark? Yes, it is about choices and chances. God opened the ark for a long time and invited people, but no one listened! It's fairly the same as in the other flood stories. Some make it and some do not. But then there's a twist: in this story there's a rainbow.

"A what?" Isaac asks. "A rainbow!" Isaac's father repeats. Little Isaac's ears perked up. "Tell me more, Dad!"

The Hebrew word for rainbow literally means 'bow of war.' In the ancient world a *rainbow* was seen as God's bow and *lightening* was God's arrows. So the sense here is that God will lay down his weapon. It is about a God who is not angry, but inviting. A God of a new beginning. A God of hope!

"This story does something strange: it ends with a rainbow! And then this God presents a rainbow and a promise and a covenant." Isaac's father concludes. "A what?" Isaac asks. "A covenant. A covenant is an agreement, an oath, a relational bond between two beings who belong to each other." Isaac's father explains.

This was not how the other flood stories ended. In those stories, the gods are angry and everybody dies and the gods are satisfied. End of story. But this God is different. This God commits to living with people in a new way, a way in which life is preserved and respected.

This was not how people used to speak about the gods. The gods were always angry – that's how people understood the gods. But in this story, it is about a God who wants to relate. It's a God who wants to save and who wants to live in covenant.

Francis Danby's painting hangs in the majestic Tate Gallery. It is currently closed because of the lock-down. Interestingly enough though, pictures of rainbows have started springing up spontaneously all over the UK in windows after schools closed in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Now hundreds of schools are encouraging pupils to put up paintings to 'spread hope' after a trend started online. All over the world, children, as if in sync, are drawing rainbows! Isn't it interesting? The children have become the spotters of rainbows – Symbols of hope!



God gave Noah a rainbow. "Noah, look out for the rainbow!" "Noah, spot the rainbow!" "Isaac, spot the rainbows!" God is giving you and me rainbows – the little signs of hope you have to look out for. Become rainbow spotters! Look out for those little signs of hope all around you. They are like Easter eggs – you have to look for them in the promises of God, in nature, in the kindness of people, in daily life. I see many rainbow spotters on Facebook. Somehow in this time of chaos, they spot a beautiful sunset, a flower in growing in the cracks. Rainbows aren't loud and booming as to announce its presence. They're mysterious, they're just there in the small things, the little things. "*Take from a man his wealth, and you hinder him; take from him his purpose, and you slow him down, but take away from a man his hope, and you stop him.*"

Noah saw the rainbow AFTER the storm (Genesis 9);  
Ezekiel saw the rainbow AMID the storm (Ezekiel 1);  
John saw the rainbow BEFORE the storm (Revelation 4:1–3).

"Isaac, you must become a rainbow spotter! But more, you must become a rainbow pointer! Show people the rainbows, not the arrows!"



Noah must have told this rainbow story ad infinitum. Everybody coming over for tea at Noah's house will hear the rainbow story!

Not only are they rainbow spotters, but rainbow pointer. In 1883 *Jules Brenton* painted a remarkable work called *The Rainbow*. In this work, two lonely figures are on their way in a barren landscape heading for more barrenness and God-knows-where. And then, the man stops his friend and points to the rainbow shedding a small circle of light. You too, can only point others to the rainbow when you spot it. Brothers

and sisters, look out for the rainbows. And in God's name, spot the rainbows so you can point others to it.

Amen.

## 7. THE LORD'S PRAYER

<https://youtu.be/rgN0s2xmCuM>

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.*

## 8. CLOSING HYMN

*I, The Lord of Sea and Sky*

<https://youtu.be/gcL9S5a3weU>

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night,  
I will go, Lord, if You lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.*

<sup>1</sup>I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry,  
all who dwell in dark and sin,  
My hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
who will bear my light to them,  
whom shall I send?

*(Refrain)*

<sup>2</sup>I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain,  
I have wept for love of them,  
they turn away.  
I will break the hearts of stone,  
give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak My Word to them,  
whom shall I send?

*(Refrain)*

<sup>3</sup>I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame,  
I will set a feast for them,  
My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide,  
'till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them,  
Whom shall I send?

*(Refrain)*

## 9. BENEDICTION

**Numbers 6:24-26**

<https://youtu.be/Nxn6tmVSljU>

*The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord lift His countenance upon you.  
And give you peace, and give you peace,  
The Lord make His face to shine upon you.  
And be gracious unto you, and be gracious,  
The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you.*

*Amen, amen, amen.*

*Amen, amen, amen.*