

## **A message from the Minister**

The other day I happened to read the Rev. Inderjit Bhogal's reflections on 'be a sanctuary to yourself' in which he said 'we are in our own Noah's Ark in our own homes' with all that is in our households including pets for those who have them. To make the point about how privileged we are in our lockdown situation, he reminds us that Noah and his family did not have a garden they could walk in, or TV, internet and social media to keep them entertained.

I found this image very helpful. His reflections have encouraged me to look at the place where I and my family live in a new way. I have never looked at our house as a place of refuge, a place where we are sheltered, a place of forced retreat from life out there which carries danger. Our familiar place is becoming a new place for us and a new world for us. As we continue to adjust to life in the lockdown situation, let us take time to reconnect to the place where we live in a new way; not only as a place where we eat our meals, sleep or watch TV; but also as a place that is a gift to us for our refuge and safety.

From Exodus 25:8, Inderjit Bhogal sees an image of the Ark as a 'sanctuary' for God which symbolises God dwelling among his people. It follows from this that within the sanctuaries that in each of our homes, is the dwelling of God. Therefore, let us think of our home as a place of safety and sanctuary for us and those who live with us. Let us think about our homes as places in which God dwells.

Lastly, whenever we feel like the lockdown has gone on for a long time, let us think about how life must feel like for those who have been housebound for years.

I used this prayer for devotions at our Leadership Team meeting last night. I thought you may also find it helpful. You can find it on the Church of England website under Prayers about the outbreak.

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
In Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen**

If you want to write a prayer and share it with your friends in church, please be encouraged to do so. Email it to me to: [paulpetit7@hotmail.com](mailto:paulpetit7@hotmail.com) and I will make sure it is shared on our website.

God bless you with his presence in your sanctuary at home.

**Rev. Paul Nzacahayo**  
**01/04/2020**

