Dear friend
I am pleased to enclose this week's virtual service, prepared by Judith.

Judith has suggested the hymn ‘Forty days and forty nights’ (here, with lyrics, sung to Heinlein by choirs of Chet Valley churches):
https://youtu.be/9N29ZnwU4LM

A gentle arrangement, again with lyrics, of the hymn Lord who throughout these forty days (St Flavian):
https://youtu.be/5c2BikzUp6o

The passage from Genesis tells part of the Noah story. Many in the Benefice will remember our brave attempt at putting together a workshop performance of Britten’s ‘Noyes Fludde’ under George Odam's expert direction during the composer's centenary. Here is a fascinating short documentary about its first performance in Orford church (reminds me of hours trying to find mugs at the right pitch):
https://youtu.be/QfRS56VzV58?list=PLHGEvaVluXPDAhmx2P7ZUi9N2f7p0R0xb

A brief animated story of Noah and the flood, for the childlike at heart:
https://youtu.be/qzYjy6lhRag

Finally, from Martin, returning to the Lenten theme, ‘Lead Me to the Cross’ - Francesca Battistelli (with lyrics), a soft-rock song for Lent:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hlh6_5znn7U

The service sheet ‘Ocean of Grace week 2’ is also available to download for those who would like to join our short Lenten meditation and prayer time at 7.30pm on Thursday evenings via Zoom:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88121292403?pwd=WCt3MHlpODg2VVV6cWFMTldBQXRLQT09

Meeting ID: 881 2129 2403
Passcode: 125111

All good wishes
Chris.

Service for Sunday 21st February
1st Sunday of Lent

God wills that we be not carried overly low because of sorrows and temptations that befall us, for it has ever been this way before the coming of miracles.
(Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love).

CONFESSION
My failure to be true even to my own accepted standards: my self-deception in face of temptation; my choosing of the worse when I know the better: O Lord, forgive.
(John Baillie).
*God of grace, we thank you that you give us more than we need, forgive us more than we deserve and offer us more than we can imagine. (*Alison Judd)

COLLECT
Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

READINGS Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-9;
1 Peter 3:18-end; Mark 1:9-15

REFLECTION
Just seven verses in the gospel reading take the story of Jesus from the river Jordan and his baptism by John, through a time of solitude and temptation in the wilderness, and then to the start of his own mission in Galilee. Today's psalm contains the plea of one who needs to be upheld by God through what lies ahead, and who clings on to a trust in his mercy. Peter's letter reminds us that Noah and his family, obeying God in the frightening time of flood, were saved by him.

At Jesus's baptism the opening of heaven signifies God's presence; his closeness to humanity and his saving power. As fully human, Jesus rejects the easy use of divine power to help himself and accepts human temptation. He shows us how to seek help: every time we say the prayer which he later teaches his disciples to use, we ask that God will not 'lead us into temptation', or 'put us to the test'. Jesus, because he was subject to temptation, understands our weakness, and our human frailty, and can provide us with strength, if we only ask him.

PRAYERS
Lord God Almighty, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *(BCP)*

We pray for all who worship you today, especially in parts of the world where it is hard to bear witness to faith. Give strength to all who are persecuted because of their love for you.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**
We pray for the hungry, and those who live in poverty, or struggle because of natural disaster.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**
Lord, we ask your blessing on all who are suffering in body, mind or spirit. Especially, we pray for the sick, naming those we know and love who are in need of healing…….....
We thank you for the good things which come to us each day. Give us grace to share what we have with those who are in need.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We say **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

We share **THE GRACE**

O Lord, never suffer us to think that we can stand by ourselves, and not need thee
(John Donne 1573-1631)