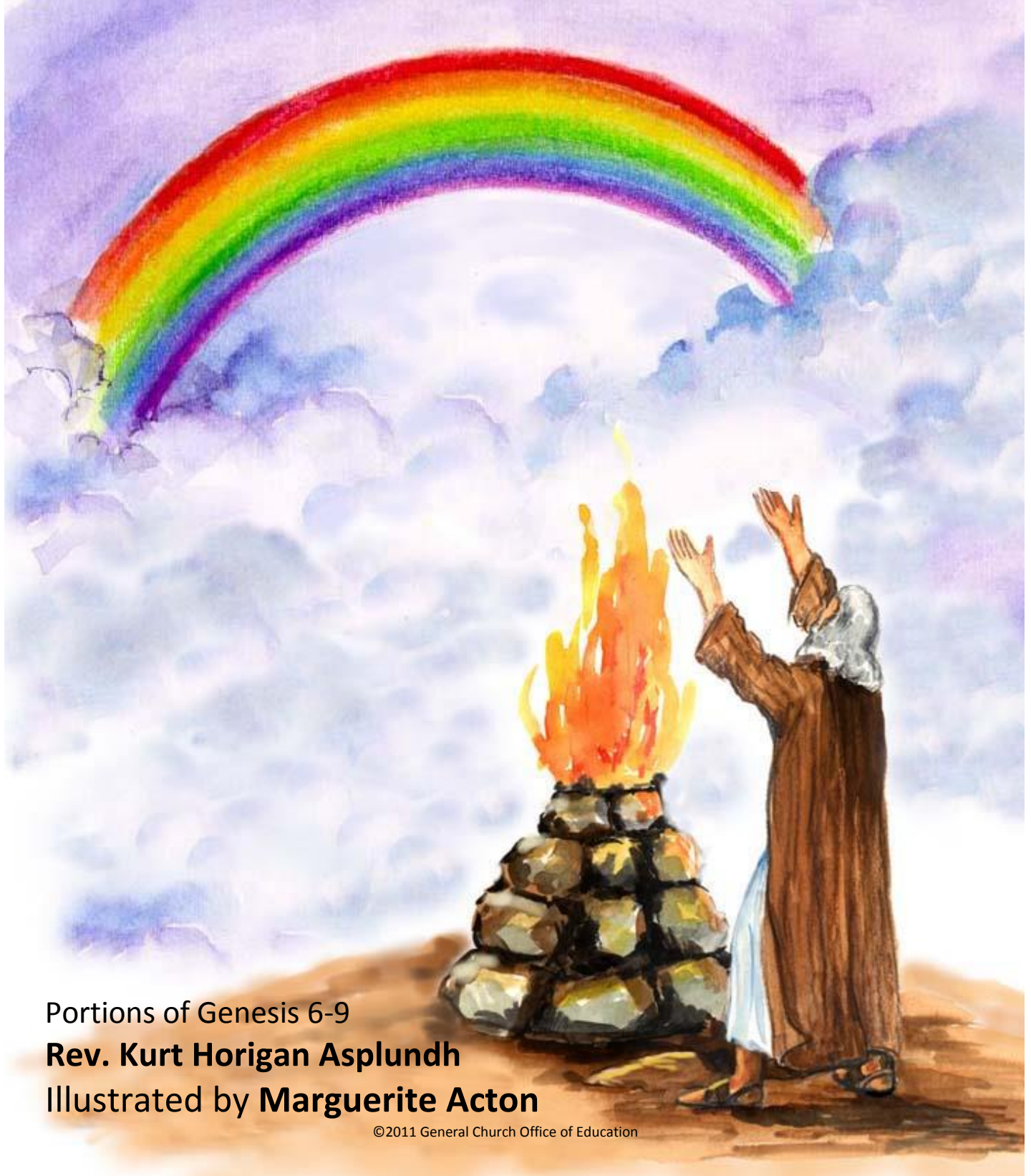


The First Rainbow



Portions of Genesis 6-9

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Illustrated by **Marguerite Acton**

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Have you ever seen a rainbow?

Usually people are excited when they see one. “Look, look!” someone will shout. “There’s a rainbow!” Rainbows don’t last long, and soon they are gone. They shine just long enough to tell us the storm is over. A rainbow is a promise of a clear day ahead.

The Lord first used a rainbow to make a special promise long ago. The Lord put a rainbow in the clouds after the longest and darkest storm we read about in the Word. It was a long time ago.

In those days, people had turned away from the Lord and were doing many bad and wicked things. The people could think only evil thoughts. All of this made the Lord sad. But Noah was a good man, and the Lord wanted to save him. Of all people on the earth only Noah and his family remained faithful, so the Lord warned Noah that there would be a great flood of water that would cover the whole earth.

The Lord wanted to keep Noah and his family safe and also to save pairs of every kind of animal and bird. He told Noah to make an ark, a big boat, that would float on flood waters. Noah was told to take his wife and his sons and their wives into the ark along with every kind of animal. The Lord would keep them safe there during the flood.





Noah finished building the ark and the great flood began.

It rained for forty days and forty nights without stopping. The water rose higher and higher until everything was covered.



When the whole earth was completely covered with water, no evil people could live there, but Noah, his family and the animals in the ark floated safely on top of the water.

Little by little the waters went down while Noah waited. It must have seemed a long time to wait.

Finally, the ark came to rest on the top of a mountain. Noah opened a window in the ark and sent out a raven. It flew away and never came back because it was strong enough to fly until the water dried up.

Then Noah sent out a dove. At first, the dove did not find any dry place to rest. Noah sent out the dove again. This time it returned with the tip of an olive branch in its beak, so Noah knew that the water was going down.





In time, Noah and his family came out of the ark with all the pairs of animals. How wonderful it was to be on dry land again!

Noah wanted to thank the Lord for saving him and his family. He built an altar of stones to make burnt offerings to the Lord.

Then the Lord spoke to Noah. “Here is a promise I will make. I will never again let a flood destroy the whole earth.” He said, “And here is a sign to remind you that I will never forget this promise. When dark clouds come over the earth, I will put a rainbow in the cloud. When you see that rainbow you will know that I have not forgotten you. There may be storms and rain, but they won’t last forever. When you see a rainbow you will know that I am watching over you and protecting you in every storm.”





Whenever we see a rainbow now, we can remember the Lord's promise to Noah, a promise of the Lord's loving care. Perhaps that is why we love to see rainbows. They remind us that the Lord is always near. Only the Lord could make something as beautiful as a rainbow. Only the Lord can always be with us. How thankful we can be that He is always near!

In the Word, a prayer in the book of Psalms reminds us of this. It says, "I will both lie down in peace and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).