

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

Box 93, Dresden, Ontario NOP 1M0

519-683-2442 standrewspcdresden@gmail.com Rev. Andy Cornell

Worship This Week Sept. 10, 2023

Piano – Dorothy O’Neill

Sound/powerpoint/livestream –

WELCOME & Prayer –

Two SONGS – Create in me a clean heart, there is a redeemer

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART – Rita

Kid’s PRAYER –

SONG –

RECEIVE OFFERING –

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Bible Study starts Sept. 20. Our new admin person Lily Carrol starts this week. Send your bulletin announcements to her via standrewspcdresden.com

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS –

PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAYER –

SCRIPTURE – Genesis 12: 10-20

At that time a severe famine struck the land of Canaan, forcing Abram to go down to Egypt, where he lived as a foreigner. 11 As he was approaching the border of Egypt, Abram said to his wife, Sarai, “Look, you are a very beautiful woman. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife. Let’s kill him; then we can have her!’ 13 So please tell them you are my sister. Then they will spare my life and treat me well because of their interest in you.” 14 And sure enough, when Abram arrived in Egypt, everyone noticed Sarai’s beauty. 15 When the palace officials saw her, they sang her praises to Pharaoh, their king, and Sarai was taken into his palace. 16 Then Pharaoh gave Abram many gifts because of her—sheep, goats, cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels. 17 But the Lord sent terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. 18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram and accused him sharply. “What have you done to me?” he demanded. “Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ and allow me to take her as my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and get out of here!” 20 Pharaoh ordered some of his men to escort them, and he sent Abram out of the country, along with his wife and all his possessions.

MESSAGE –

We continue to journey with Abraham. Let's recap. Before they were renamed, Abraham and Sarah went by Abram and Serai. The Lord told them: "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you." They were the start of the nation of Israel, The nation in which God blessed the world and brought forth His Son. So they hit the road, stopping occasionally to set up camp and worship. They eventually found themselves in a place known as the Negev.

When we are on a mission from God, it's not uncommon for challenges to arise. Hardships arise to test our faith and make us stronger. This is just how God works. For Abram and his family it was a famine. God looks to see how we will respond.

Abram failed – twice. First was not trusting God to provide in the land He led them to. Recall the grand promises. Blessed. Great nation. There was no way God would allow them to die. Abraham appeared to forget that. Or perhaps lose faith. So he took matters into his own hands.

Egypt was the logical place to go. It had water and food. But it was not a good place. It's a land of initial blessings and later curses. Joseph would rise to power and rule Egypt. But his descendents would be persecuted. For Moses, Egypt provided food and even prosperity. But trouble lay ahead.

His second sin was to play games. For some reason he feared for his life. His plan was to use his wife as a shield. Talk about cowardly. Pharaoh would no doubt want Serai in his harem or even take her as a wife. Having Abram killed would be a quick and easy way of procuring her. Abram saw the writing on the wall. As his sister, she was actually fair game for Pharaoh. The grim reality is that Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his own wife to save his life. Thankfully, God intervened.

Abraham is known for his great faith, but he didn't exactly demonstrate it in this sad story. But God continued to work with him. Abram lived and learned to trust God more. Of course, he stumbled again, as we will see later in Genesis when, 10 years after finally settling in Canaan, he and Serai got tired of waiting for God to fulfill the promise of

children. “So Sarai said to Abram, “The Lord has prevented me from having children. Go and sleep with my servant. Perhaps I can have children through her.” And Abram agreed with Sarai’s proposal. So Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian servant and gave her to Abram as a wife.” (Genesis 16:2-3)

Abram and Sarai were just the first of God’s chosen people who lost faith, who forgot God’s promises and took matters into their own hands.

Isaac committed the same sin as his father. Same circumstances. There was a famine and Isaac and his family moved to a new land. “When the men who lived there asked Isaac about his wife, Rebekah, he said, “She is my sister.” He was afraid to say, “She is my wife.” He thought, “They will kill me to get her, because she is so beautiful.” But some time later the king of the Philistines, looked out his window and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah. Immediately, Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed, “She is obviously your wife! Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’?” “Because I was afraid someone would kill me to get her from me,” Isaac replied. (Genesis 26:7-9)

Joseph’s brothers planned to kill him but then sold him into slavery. (Genesis 37). Clearly there was a breakdown in communication. Did Jacob not reveal to his sons that they were the 12 tribes of Israel? Did they forget?

Moses committed murder while in Egypt, killing the Egyptian who was beating up one of the Hebrews. Later, while in the wilderness, we read one of the bloodiest massacres in the Bible (Numbers 31). To punish the Midianites for leading the people of Israel into idol worship, Moses ordered his army to destroy the nation. They attacked and killed all the men. They burned the villages but gathered the plunder and rounded up the women and children and returned. Moses was furious, because it was the women who had led the nation away from God with their idol worship. So he had all of them massacred – all except the young unmarried women. In the modern world, Moses would be considered a war criminal. And yet, he is held up as a great Biblical leader.

King David may have been the greatest king, a brilliant and brave warrior and a man after God’s heart, but he was not a very good person. His greatest sin was stealing another man’s wife, getting her pregnant, trying to cover it up and then when that didn’t work having him deliberately sent to the front lines and be killed in battle. He ends up marrying Bathsheba and among her sons was Solomon, God’s chosen heir to King David.

Solomon may have been known for great God-given wisdom, but his heart turned away from God. His attention was focused on other things. He had 1,000 wives, many of whom worshipped pagan gods. "Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. In this way, Solomon did what was evil in the Lord's sight; he refused to follow the Lord completely, as his father, David, had done. On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, he even built a pagan shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab, and another for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. Solomon built such shrines for all his foreign wives to use for burning incense and sacrificing to their gods. (1 Kings 11:5-8)

And so on. The Bible is filled with less-than-reputable characters. All are under the spell of Satan. Many are not part of God's people. But many are chosen by God to be part of His plan for humankind. To all of that, all I can say is – go figure. From the beginning of the human race, we have been sinners. It is part of our natural condition because we cannot remove the spiritual forces that provide the temptations. What we can do is be aware of it, be wise to it, avoid it and even then we will fail.

But rather than be condemned, if we recognise our sinful state and ask for forgiveness in the name of the One who took our sins on his shoulder on the cross, then it will be granted. Over and over.

If Abraham, Isaac, most of Jacob's sons, Moses, David and Solomon could have been such notorious criminals and yet still be revered as patriarchs and visionary leaders after God's own heart, then should we even care about our own sins? After all, Christ's one act of sacrifice brings us into a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. As Paul wrote in Romans 5, "God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? (5:20-21, 6:1-2)

God did not give up on Abraham, Isaac, most of Jacob's sons, Moses, David and Solomon. He used them. God does not give up on us either.

The key is repentance. King David's remorse was great. He paid the price in that the child conceived in adultery died in infancy. And David would not forget. His repentance for

that and many of his many other crimes can be found throughout the Psalms. “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.” (Psalm 51:1–3, 10–11.)

God works in us despite our sin. God can work in ways we cannot imagine. God can work through people who are part of what we call the church. Don’t dismiss sinners who appear to be working against God’s will and aren’t living virtuous lifestyles. Many criminals found God in prison. Charles Colson was among President Nixon’s men who committed crimes to discredit the Democrats and ensure his re-election. He’s been described as an “evil genius in an evil administration.” After Watergate, and facing arrest, Colson found the Lord. He did time in prison and emerged to a new life. He founded Prison Fellowship which became "the nation's largest outreach to prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families" He worked to promote prisoner rehabilitation and reform of the prison system in the United States, citing his disdain for what he called the "lock 'em and leave 'em" warehousing approach to criminal justice. He helped to create prisons whose populations come from inmates who choose to participate in faith-based programs. The ministry went international and is now found in 120 countries. It’s mission is to proclaim the Gospel to prisoners and reform the system to make it more about rehabilitation than punishment.

Colson is just one modern example. Christianity Today magazine features a new conversion story on the back page of each issue. It’s the first thing I turn to when it arrives in the mail. (I have a stack of copies here if anyone wants to take one and read it. You can return it or pass it on.)

You don’t need to be a saint to serve God.

HYMN – All who hunger gather gladly

LORD’S SUPPER

HYMN – 775 Sent Forth by your blessing

BENEDICTION –

NEW PRAYER

1. For the elders on session (see names below) and for God to nudge those He is calling to eldership and show us who they are.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. Becky Desjardine, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Karen Northcott, Tom O'Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Julie Shaw, Mary Whitson, Sandra Whitson
2. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
3. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression

There are many whose names are not listed here – God knows who they are and what they need.

Seniors and shut ins – Betty Bradley and Albany Retirement Home Petrolia, Dianne Richards at Park Street Place, Jim Lusk at Oaks Wallaceburg, Lane Douglas and Ross Fuchs at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg, Bill Lozon at Copper Terrace, Aubrey Butler at home.

Session – Mark Labadie (clerk and representative elder), Cindy Brewer, Sheila Eves, Andrew Neely, Mark Richards and Julie Shaw.

Board of managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Will Brewer, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Dan Shaw, Bob Vriesema and Mike Wicks.

WHAT'S UP:

New study – Begins Wednesday Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. St. Andrew's to host. Six weeks of "Prayer: does it make any difference?" by Philip Yancy. DVD teaching and a reader's guide. Co-lead by Pastor Andy and Pastor Rob Elka from Evangel.

Elders on session – Mark Labadie 519-359-4842, Cindy Brewer 519-683-4113, Sheila Eves 519-683-4148, Andrew Neely 519-359-8903, Mark Richards 519-809-9175 and Julie Shaw 226-627-1953.

Eldership -- Session is still interested in adding at least two to its ranks. Nominations will be received in September. Eldership is a divine calling. Ruling elders are responsible for the leadership, pastoral care and oversight of the congregation. They are ordained using the same vows as ministers.

Legacy Grandparenting Summit – New Life Assembly in Petrolia is the closest host congregation where this can be viewed on Sat. Oct. 21 from 9-4:30 p.m. Early bird deadline to register is Sept. 18.

<https://brushfire.com/legacycoalition/simulcast/553755>. This website provides all the details:

<https://legacycoalition.com/summit/>

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS

DATES

Sept. 10 – Sunday School resumes. Coffee resumes after worship.

Sept. 11 – Session meets 7 p.m.

Sept. 25 – Gift card order deadline. Cards to be delivered to church Sept. 29

WAYS OF GIVING:

E-transfer st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. If required by your bank, our treasurer's name is Linda Moore. Her number is 226-627-2727. If you are asked for a security question, please contact your local bank branch.

Bring envelope on Sunday or if you have a key, leave it in the treasurer's mailbox.

Mail it to the church, PO Box 93 Dresden. NOP 1M0.

Gift Cards – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. Next deadline Sept. 25. Cards will be delivered to church Sept. 29.