

**St. Andrews Presbyterian Church**

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

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**Worship This Week Sept. 17, 2023**

**Piano** – Dorothy O’Neill

**Sound/powerpoint/livestream** –

**WELCOME & Prayer** –

**Two SONGS** – Ah Lord God, change my heart O GOD

**YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART** – Rita

**Kid’s PRAYER** –

**SONG** – trust and obey

**RECEIVE OFFERING** –

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Bible Study starts Sept. 20.

**GOOD NEWS MOMENTS** –

**PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAYER** –

**SCRIPTURE** – Genesis 13-14, Hebrews 7

**MESSAGE** –

After Abram betrayed his wife and deceived Pharaoh by telling the Egyptians that Serai was his sister, the Lord sent plagues to Egypt and the family was thrown out of the nation. Back they went to the Promised Land. They moved gradually, setting up camp along the way. The Lord continued to bless them with wealth. Their flocks grew and they prospered – so much that the land could not support them all. So Abraham and his nephew Lot decided to separate.

Here’s where Abraham started to show his faith again. You may recall that Abram refused to trust that God would deliver him and his family from the drought and that God would protect him in Egypt. Now he’s starting to regain the same faith he had when the Lord gave him his marching orders to leave and go to a land I will show you.

Lot, who was traveling with Abram, had also become very wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many tents. But the land

could not support both Abram and Lot with all their flocks and herds living so close together. So disputes broke out between the herdsmen of Abram and Lot. (At that time Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land.) Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. If you want the land to the left, then I’ll take the land on the right. If you prefer the land on the right, then I’ll go to the left.” (Genesis 13:5-9)

Right or left, Abram knew he could trust God – who would provide for his needs. Abram knew whatever Lot chose God would make sure Abram prospered. In Egypt, Abram thought he had to take his fate into his own hands. He had to look out for himself. Now, he was wiser and was willing to let God look out for his interests. Right or left, it didn’t matter to Abram, because God would be there.

Lot took a long look at the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley in the direction of Zoar. The whole area was well watered everywhere, like the garden of the Lord or the beautiful land of Egypt. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) Lot chose for himself the whole Jordan Valley to the east of them. He went there with his flocks and servants and parted company with his uncle Abram. So Abram settled in the land of Canaan, and Lot moved his tents to a place near Sodom and settled among the cities of the plain. But the people of this area were extremely wicked and constantly sinned against the Lord. (13:10-13)

Lot also showed his true colours. He looked to the left and the right and chose the land that was most fertile. He was not operating by faith. Like Abraham when he ran towards the fertile land of Egypt during the famine when he should have stayed put, Lot took the easy way out. Lot made his choice purely based on what he could see with his eyes. He cared only for the material abundance of the land, and cared nothing for how it would impact him and his family spiritually.

As Paul wrote, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Abram walked by faith; Lot walked only by sight.

God responded to Abram's faith by repeating the promise.

After Lot had gone, the LORD said to Abram, "Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a permanent possession. And I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted! Go and walk through the land in every direction, for I am giving it to you." (13:14-17)

So Abram settled and continued to prosper. Lot, meanwhile, got caught up in the conflict between the tribes who were in battle for control over his land. He was eventually captured by a hostile king. Abram was a man of honour and guardian of his family, so he went to the rescue.

When Abram heard that his nephew Lot had been captured, he mobilized the 318 trained men who had been born into his household. Then he pursued Kedorlaomer's army until he caught up with them at Dan. There he divided his men and attacked during the night. Kedorlaomer's army fled, but Abram chased them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. Abram recovered all the goods that had been taken, and he brought back his nephew Lot with his possessions and all the women and other captives. After Abram returned from his victory over Kedorlaomer and all his allies, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). (14:14-17)

Unfortunately, Lot moved right back to where he was before in Sodom. He refused this warning from God and would eventually lose everything when Sodom and Gomorrah were ultimately judged (Genesis 19:24-25).

Here's where we get to the heart of today's story. After Abram returned from his rescue mission and Lot was delivered back to the land of Sodom, we are introduced to one of the most memorable characters in the Old Testament.

And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and

earth. And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you.” Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. (14:18-20)

Melchizedek is a man of mystery. We have no idea of where he came from, how he came to be in Canaan, how he came to be a worshipper and priest of the true God, and how Abram came to know about him. We only know he was there. The author of Hebrews would later say about him: “There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God. (Hebrews 7:3). He was a priest but he was of a different order from Aaron’s, which depended on descent and genealogy, and lasted for a definite period. Christ is the Eternal One. His priesthood begins and ends with Himself.

The name Melchizedek means King of Righteousness. He was the king of Salem, and Salem was the original Jerusalem. One thing that makes him unique was he was both a king and a priest. It’s dangerous to combine the roles. God actually forbade the kings of Israel to be priests and the priests to be kings. In 2 Chronicles 26:16-23, King Uzziah tried to do the work of a priest, and God struck him with leprosy. Melchizedek was an exception.

We’re told in Hebrews that Melchizedek is greater than Abram.

Melchizedek, who was not a descendant of Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham. And Melchizedek placed a blessing upon Abraham, the one who had already received the promises of God. And without question, the person who has the power to give a blessing is greater than the one who is blessed. The priests who collect tithes are men who die, so Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on. (Hebrews 7:6-8)

Understanding how Melchizedek is both priest and king provides the foundation for Christ as priest and king. Add up these interesting facts and some believe Melchizedek might actually have been The Lord. It’s possible, for the simple reason that with God, nothing is impossible.

The priest/king welcomed Abram with bread and wine – which might have been a foreshadowing of the Lord’s Supper. And then, continuing in his role as priest, did two things. He blessed Abram and he blessed God. Melchizedek showed that a priest must connect with both God and man and has a ministry to both God and man.

We can say with confidence that if Melchizedek was not an appearance of Jesus Himself, at the very least he is a remarkable type or picture of Jesus.

Abraham then turns around and gives the priest/king one tenth of what he had. This is where we get the concept of tithing, in which we give to the church the first 10 per cent of our income. Some scholars note, however, that the 10 per cent was not from Abram’s earnings but from his possessions or his total wealth. Point is – it’s a significant number. And the second noteworthy aspect of this is the fact that it’s given off the top – upon his return from battle. Before he did anything else with the plunder – pay his servants, feed his cattle, build new tents or purchase more supplies – he gave to the priest.

We are reminded that we don’t ultimately own anything. Everything is under God’s control. Everything is for His use and for His glory. Abram didn’t actually own what he had.

We are told in Psalm 24 that “The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein” (24:1). God is the author of all things, the Creator of all things, and the owner of all things. Whatever God makes, He owns. We are only stewards or caretakers. God has the ultimate ownership of all of our possessions. He has loaned these things to us and expects us to manage them in a way that will honour and glorify Him.

Abram’s 10 per cent was a tribute to the priest and king after receiving a blessing.

Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing: “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you.” Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. (14:19-20)

It wasn't really Melchizedek the king who gave this blessing; it was Melchizedek the priest who had no human father or mother. It was God's blessing.

We are Abram. We may not have just returned from a battle or a dangerous rescue mission. But we do battle on a spiritual level every day. If you are sitting here today or you are watching this online, then you have won a spiritual battle. The enemy does not want you to be there. Satan does not want you to be watching this. He does not want you to pray, or read the Bible, or gather with other believers in small groups for study. There are many reasons not to be part of a church. Blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your spiritual enemies. He has forgiven our sins. He has brought us out of death and given us a taste of life. He is preparing a place for us in the Kingdom. And He is providing for us and protecting us and giving us strength every step of the way.

I believe that, and that's why my household tithes our income right off the top. We see it as far more than legalistic duty. We see it as an investment. In the same way you might put a portion of your income into retirement savings or another investment, we see the tithe as an investment in something far greater. The church is the only hope for the world. Not the building or the organization or the denomination, In fact, the last thing the Lord wants is a magnificent building that sits empty 95 per cent of the time. The church is believers and followers of Christ working together. And the tithe helps make it happen.

Unlike financial investments, the tithe is completely safe AND it has the promise of high returns. This is impossible in the financial world – you can't have complete safety AND Growth. But this is God's world, which isn't subject to human nature and the laws of physics.

The most important investment we can ever make is in the kingdom of God, because it has eternal returns. These returns are not just for us but also for our family, our children, our grandchildren. We are invited to be inspired by Abram – who was far from perfect but learned from his mistakes and gave glory to God for forgiveness and his victories.

It's about putting into practice the words of the Lord when He commanded us to "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33).

Amen

**HYMN** – 332 How Great Thou Art

**BENEDICTION** –

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Nominations will soon be open for elder. 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. Anyone who has identified themselves publicly as Christian, is on the congregation's membership roll, been nominated by other church members or session and is feeling God calling them to leadership is eligible. From Sept. 17 to Oct. 1, session will be accepting names to be considered for the office of ruling elder. Session members are listed below.

Let's welcome our new administrative person, Lily Carroll. She'll be working remotely, taking care of the weekly email, website maintenance, social media and other tasks which can be done online. Lily was raised in Chatham and is a student at Seneca College in Toronto. If you have any announcements to be added to the weekly email, send them to Lily using this email: [standrewspcdresden@gmail.com](mailto:standrewspcdresden@gmail.com)

### **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, 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 at 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.

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.

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

Sept. 25 – Board of managers meets

### **WAYS OF GIVING:**

E-transfer [st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com](mailto: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.