

St. Andrew's 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 Nov. 12, 2023

Piano – Dorothy O'Neill

Sound/powerpoint/livestream –

WELCOME & Prayer –

Two SONGS – Be Still for the Presence of the Lord, Jesus is the Name We Honour

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART –

Kid's PRAYER –

SONG – Thank you Lord for giving us life.

RECEIVE OFFERING –

ANNOUNCEMENTS –

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS –

PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAYER –

SCRIPTURE – Genesis 21:1-7

The Lord kept his word and did for Sarah exactly what he had promised. 2 She became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. This happened at just the time God had said it would. 3 And Abraham named their son Isaac. 4 Eight days after Isaac was born, Abraham circumcised him as God had commanded. 5 Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. 6 And Sarah declared, "God has brought me laughter. All who hear about this will laugh with me. 7 Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse a baby? Yet I have given Abraham a son in his old age!"

MESSAGE – This is much more than just a miraculous birth. That alone is a powerful example of God's hands working in this world. God is beyond the working of nature. He is nature; he designed it and is in control of the laws of physics and biology. That's how miracles happen. Healing and divine intervention in the face of calamity – superhuman strength when we need it – not just physical but emotional. The list is endless.

Just with miraculous births to two human parents, this may have been among the first but it was not the last. There's the mighty warrior Samson. "In those days a

man named Manoah from the tribe of Dan lived in the town of Zorah. His wife was unable to become pregnant, and they had no children. The angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife and said, 'Even though you have been unable to have children, you will soon become pregnant and give birth to a son.' " (Judges 13:2-3). There's the great Judge and prophet Samuel, born to Hannah, who was ridiculed for being unable to conceive. Samuel was the wise ruler and the final judge to lead Israel and anointed Saul and David as kings. There's John the Baptist, born to another elderly couple, Zechariah and Elizabeth. Jesus said this of John the Baptist: "I tell you the truth, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he is!" Matthew 11:11. (The greatest miracle was the conception and birth of the Son of God. This was different, because Jesus did not have a human father.) Throughout history, I have no doubt the hand of God has touched many men and women and allowed them to conceive.

In all of these examples of two human parents who tried and were unable to produce a child, they came to the end of themselves. There was nothing more they could do. Often, they came to the end of their faith. But God reached down and sent either an angel (in the cases of Samson and John) or anointed a priest (Samuel) to pronounce that the Lord heard their prayers. Each of these births changed the course of history.

In the case of Isaac, no longer would Sarah be the childless wife of Abraham. Instead, she would be honoured as the mother of God's people, the matriarch of Israel. From Isaac would come Jacob and the 12 tribes of Israel. From one of those tribes, Judah, came Kings David and Solomon. Several hundred years later, the Messiah would be born of parents directly descended from Abraham. From Abraham to Jesus there were a total of 42 generations. That's a powerful family tree.

The birth of Isaac many years after the Lord's initial promise to Abraham and Sarah sets the wheels in motion for salvation through faith in Christ -- which is by far the most significant event in human history. As a result, it remains the most powerful

gift from the Creator. As such, it is the only hope for the world. All because God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation.

Did you notice Sarah's physical reaction to the birth of Isaac? Laughter. It sprung from joy. It was the same emotion and feeling which Elizabeth experienced when Mary visited shortly after the angel appeared to her. "A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honoured that the mother of my Lord should visit me?" Luke 1:39-43

The name Isaac actually means "he laughs." This is not just a piece of trivia. Names are important. Laughter is how we express joy. Joy in itself is the highest calling of humankind. The Westminster Catechism begins by asking "1. What is the chief end of man? A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, [a] and to enjoy him forever. (Ps. 16:5-11; 144:15; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil. 4:4; Rev. 21:3-4). The chief aim of humankind is to know the Lord and enjoy him forever.

In my opening line of this message I stated that this was more than just a miraculous birth. The "more" is that by bringing life from Sarah's lifeless womb and in making our dead souls alive in regeneration, the Lord does for His people what they cannot do for themselves. Abraham and Sarah (and all those other childless couples) could not conceive on their own without God's hands touching them. We cannot save ourselves from our sinful states without God's hands touching our souls and healing our spirits.

The best things in life happen when we sit back, get out of the way, and allow God's hands to work. Wait upon the Lord. God deliberately performs miracles as a way of demonstrating that we are incapable. God's Kingdom will come not because of what we do, but because we have stepped out of the way.

We are invited to keep faith. God's hands are working all the time. We may not see a miraculous conception and birth every day. But the Lord's hands are

constantly at work. God's promise to Abraham and Sarah way back in Genesis 12 was finally being fulfilled. But it was a rocky road at times. It was marked by a journey. It included times when they doubted the promise and they took matters in their own hands. God responded with forgiveness and a fresh start. All was good again. But they fell short again and God restored them. The cycle continued.

"And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you." Galatians 3:29

This is a powerful reminder. Would the promise of a son to two older adults have been fulfilled sooner if Abraham and Sarah remained true to God and refused to waver? Quite possibly. Again, we are invited to step out of the way and allow God to work. Press the pause button on the progress machine and ask whether God is in this. Abraham and Sarah regularly took matters into their own hands, only to fall flat and be in need of God's hands to help them get back up again. We don't have to take matters in our own hands. We are invited to let God do His thing.

HYMN – Hymn 769. Lord of light, whose name and splendour

BENEDICTION –

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. For all those recovering from surgical procedures.
2. Pat McKinnon's friend Linda, Becky Desjardine, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Karen Northcott, Tom O'Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Julie Shaw, Sandra Whitson
3. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
4. 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, Aubrey Butler at home.

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

WHAT'S UP:

We're hiring – a new Sunday School co-ordinator to replace Amanda – who's stepping down due to the demands of her day job. Feel free to share the link to the job description, which has all the information you need. <https://standrewsdresden.ca/employment/> Amanda has graciously offered to stay until we can find someone – but this offer expires at the end of December! Please pray that the person called to this position will enter our midst.

We need help – We’re decorating the church for Christmas the week of Nov. 27. Contact Cindy Brewer 519-683-4113.

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.

Board of Managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Jodi Rich, Linda Malott, Will Brewer, Von Parking, Jen Mason, Mark Richards, Mike Wicks, Bob Vriesema.

Weekly email – Send announcements and new info to our administrative assistant Lily Carroll Ldcarroll02@gmail.com

DATES

Nov. 15 – Midweek discussion continues every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in November at Evangel Pentecostal Tabernacle. On Nov. 1, we began Grace is Greater by Kyle Idleman. “No sin is so great, no bitterness so deep that God’s grace cannot transform the heart.” Drop in anytime! Co-lead by Pastor Andy and Pastor Rob Elka from Evangel.

Nov. 22 – Midweek discussion continues every Wednesday in November at 7 p.m.

Nov. 25 – Presbytery consultant Grant Fairley at St. Andrew’s this morning to meet separately with the Board of Managers and Session. This is in response to the Presbytery visitation last spring, which recommended that presbytery “send someone to St. Andrew’s, Dresden to meet with the leadership team (board, session and minister) to assist with conflict management.”

Nov. 27 – Board of managers

Dec. 4 – Session

BIRTHDAYS

Nov. 9 Max Taylor

Nov. 10 Connie McDonald

Nov. 12 Lilly Clark

Nov. 13 Sophie Ann Desjardins

Nov. 15 Marilyn Fuchs

Nov. 15 Glenda Ellis

ANNIVERSARIES

Nov. 9 Bill & Jodie Rich

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 Nov. 30. Cards will be delivered to the church. Gift card orders are on the website. <https://standrewsdresden.ca/> under the “giving” tab Send e-transfer AND order forms to st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. Deadline is typically the last Monday of the month.