

**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](mailto:standrewspcdresden@gmail.com) Rev. Andy Cornell

**Worship This Week Feb. 4, 2024**

**SCRIPTURE** – Genesis 24:50-67

**MESSAGE** – The 24th chapter of Genesis is about one thing: finding a wife for Isaac. This is the third and final message on this story. As we talked about on Jan. 21st and 28th, the fundamental principle at play in this story is commitment. After Abraham's faith is tested and refined, he comes to a place where he is fully committed to God's plan and promise. He knows that God will provide not only a son but a wife so that the promise that they will be a great nation will be fulfilled. The servant also displayed great commitment to his master. And now we see same dedication from Rebekah and her family. A couple of things to note from the start. As we observed last week, Rebekah appears to have no say in the matter. After Abraham's servant made the pitch, it was her brother and father who made the decision. The servant wants a yes or a no. He wasn't even inviting questions. He wasn't giving them time to think about it and consult advisors. He wanted an answer on the spot. And he got it. "The Lord has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. Here is Rebekah; take her and go." I wonder what was going through Rebekah's head? For all intents and purposes, she was just sold off to her cousin and his family. Yes, they were wealthy and she would hold a place of great honour. But she would likely never see her own family again. Let's not forget the supporting players in this drama. "Then Rebekah and her servant girls mounted the camels and followed the man." (verse 61) We do not know exactly how many servant girls Rebekah had but because it's plural we know there's at least two. So there are three women who are about to say goodbye to their world and take a month's journey into a new world.

Another thing is that as soon as the deal was made, out came more gifts. It begs the question – if Rebekah going because she's impressed with this display of health or is she responding to a call from God? The gifts given to Rebekah at the well were only the beginning. With an agreement from Rebekah and her family for marriage to Isaac, she received even greater gifts as a sign she would become one with the one who would inherit all Abraham's wealth. The servant also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother. This is in keeping with the

custom for the bridegroom (or his representative) to give the family of the bride gifts as a dowry to demonstrate his financial ability to provide for the bride.

The servant and his entourage enjoyed the hospitality and stayed the night. One would think that after a 900-mile (1,450 kilometer) journey, they'd want to rest up for the return trip. But they were eager to go. No sightseeing was on their agenda. They knew they had to return. The family asked for 10 days – perhaps they hoped the servant would conner with a shorter period and they would settle somewhere in the middle. But Abraham's people were steadfast. Rebekah finally gets a voice in the matter. Not to stay or go but when to depart. On the one hand, she had her family who had the reasonable request to spend just a few more days before saying farewell forever. It seems sort of unfair to put her on the spot. Consider her options. Side with her family and it would appear that she was showing signs of doubt. She could have opted for something shorter to keep both sides happy. But she went with this group of strangers. What could possibly have been going on in her head?

“Yes, I will go.” These were words of great faith. She understood that her loyalty should be with her new family. The key word “commitment” shows up again. By immediately heading back home, the servant demonstrated commitment to his master. By agreeing to go immediately, Rebekah showed commitment to her new family. Fast forward one month and the caravan is arriving home. Being told that Isaac in the distance is coming towards them, Rebekah covered her face with her veil. The veil is an essential part of female dress. In country places it is often thrown aside, but on the appearance of a stranger, it is drawn over the face, as to conceal all but the eyes. In a bride it was a token of her reverence and subjection to her husband. It was a sign of commitment.

Commitment can be in short supply in our world. This is nothing new. Human nature has not changed. The entire story of finding Rebekah is a testimony not just to commitment but to something deeper – submission. To be truly committed to God's holy and perfect will, we need to put Him first and our desires second. Every character in this story demonstrates that.

Abraham – submitted to God's will that a wife for Isaac not come from Canaanite women. The servant – submitted to the direction of his master, even though he appeared to question the instructions. Rebekah's brother and father – submitted to the request of the servant as they trusted that he truly was on a holy mission for his master on behalf of God. Rebekah – submitted to the decision of her father

and brother. Isaac – likely would have wanted to choose his wife in person but submitted to his father’s direction. We are invited to ask the same question of ourselves. When making a decision, how many of us ask whether this is in God’s will? More likely, we ask which option will make us happy. God’s way isn’t always in tune with what the world expects of us. But know this: in the long run, things go better when we are in God’s will.

**HYMN:** God will make a way

**NEW PRAYER**

1. For Ellen Robinson and her family after her husband Doug passed away this morning in the Chatham hospital. May the peace of Christ surround them. We give thanks for Doug’s long life and faithful witness. Funeral details to come from Badder’s.
2. For Dianne Richards as she settles in at Wallaceburg Retirement Residence and other former residents of Park Street Place as they move and adjust to new surroundings. For remaining PSP residents as they prepare to move and decide where to go.

**CONTINUE TO PRAY**

Health and healing –

1. Brue Stephens: blood pressure, meds. But thanks that radiation treatment is going smoothly
2. Pat McKinnon’s friend Linda: discernment and decisions
3. Pat McKinnon’s sister Betty: stage 4 cancer, chemo still seems to be working.
4. Colin Paterson, radiation therapy for prostate cancer
5. Rev. Mary Templar, brain injury: difficulty reading
6. For all those recovering from surgical procedures.
7. Becky Desjardine, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Karen Northcott, Tom O’Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Julie Shaw, Sandra Whitson
8. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
9. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression

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

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, Bob Vriesema 519-401-8056.

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

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:**

Clothing closet – Free clothing distribution at North Dresden Baptist Church every Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. A few **MALE volunteers** would be appreciated. All you'd need to do is be present for whatever time you can spare, even just for an hour.

**WE'RE HIRING:** [A new administrative assistant](#). To start anytime.

## **WHAT'S UP:**

Fundraising – It can be fun and be good for fellowship. Session and the Board are looking for creative new ideas. Write your idea on a post-it note and give it to any board member.

Tax receipts – If you are new to the congregation and would like a donor number/envelopes to receive income tax receipt, please let Wendy Weston know – westond@mnsi.net

Weekly email – Send announcements and new info to [standrewspcdresden@gmail.com](mailto:standrewspcdresden@gmail.com)

Presbytery consultant– Grant Fairley is scheduled to return and meet with session and the board Sat. Feb. 24 at 10 a.m.

Free Community Meals – Please share this info with anyone in need:

North Dresden Community Church – first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

Dresden Christian Reformed Church – second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

## **DATES**

Jan. 30 – 3 p.m. Weekly Bible study & discussion into the Letter to the Ephesians continues. St. Andrew's is hosting. Study guide is attached.

Feb. 11 – Congregation annual meeting following worship.

## **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 Jan. 29. Cards will be available for pickup at the church on Feb. 2nd or will be distributed in church on Feb. 4th. Gift card orders are on the website. <https://standrewsdresden.ca/> under the "giving" tab