

Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement

As we gather for worship in Jesus' name, we remember that we do so on the traditional and unceded territory of the ləkʷəŋən and the W̱SÁNEĆ. We acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages. As we pray, reflect, and celebrate in this place, we do so as guests lamenting injustice and asking God to lead us along paths of reconciliation – inspiring new relationships of respect and solidarity.

➤ *O let the power fall on me*

Call to Worship

God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love.

God offers compassion to all creation.

With all God's creation, give thanks to the Lord.

With all God's creatures, great and small, we will bless the Lord.

In worship let us speak of God's glory and tell of God's wonder.

We come to praise God and seek God's peace in Jesus' name.

➤ *O Servants of God*

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† Gathering Prayer / Words of Hope

You, O God, are overflowing with love, infinite in kindness, and incomparable in glory. There is no other like you in all our imagining. Your presence breaks into our lives in the beauty of summer and refreshes us like a gentle breeze breath on a still day. You renew us to meet life's changes and challenges. In this time of worship, we offer thanks in our prayers, praise from our hearts, and honor with our lives, to you, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, this day and every day, now and always. Amen

† Prayer for Understanding

Spirit of wisdom, be our guide as we listen for God's Word speaking in the Scriptures.

When we are puzzled, grant us clarity. When we resist hearing, open our hearts.

Renew our understanding through the grace of Christ, God's Living Word. Amen

Scripture **Genesis 24: 34-38, 42-49, 58-67** OT 20

So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female

slaves, camels and donkeys. And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and he has given him all that he has. My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live; but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.'

"I came today to the spring, and said, 'O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink," and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also" – let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

"Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder; and she went down to the spring, and drew. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.'

She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels.

Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her arms. Then I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

And they called Rebekah, and said to her, "Will you go with this man?"

She said, "I will."

So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes."

Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man; thus the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

Now Isaac had come from Beer-lahai-roi, aroi and settled in the Negeb.

Isaac went out in the evening to walk in the field; and looking up, he saw camels coming. And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, and said to the servant, "Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?"

The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Romans 7:15-25a **NT 157**

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.

Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Message ***Her Name is Rebecca***

When Moses is confronted by God in the burning bush, he is told, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" These three were the designated recipients of God's special covenant with humanity.

- It begins when God visits Abraham and Sarah, and promises a child and a land.
- It continues with the birth of Isaac, the designated heir of the promise,
- and is expanded when Jacob's ten sons and two grandsons become the named 12 tribes of Israel, through whom God's loving grace is ultimately offered to all humanity in the person Jesus, a descendent of the tribe of Judah, one of Jacob's ten sons.

Abraham and Jacob have interesting stories. Abraham as the one chosen, along with Sarah to be the first of the covenant. I am especially intrigued by their grandson, Jacob. His is a life of struggle, deception and audacity. At his lowest point ethically, God reaffirms the covenant in angels ascending and descending on a stairway to heaven.

But I puzzle with Isaac. Most of Isaac's life he is the passive subject of other people's actions. When Abraham is told to take Isaac and offer him up to God, the young man seems to have no say in the matter.

When Jacob swindles his brother Esau out of his blessing, not once but twice, Isaac plays the role of the father deceived by both his wife and his loving son. And in the portion of Genesis that was read, once again Isaac has no role in the choosing of a wife.

We know that in that time and that part of the world, arranged marriages were the norm, for a lot of perfectly good reasons. Many parents today might wish to continue the practice, believe they know better who would suit a daughter or a son. In some cultures, this is still the case, and I don't think many of us would argue against its logic or practical success.

It's a wonderful account. Abraham calls in his chief servant and tells him to go to the land called Ur of the Chaldeans, present day Syria or Iraq.

He expressly tells him that Isaac must not go there himself. I wonder about that because that is where Jacob goes on his own and brings back Leah and Rachel. But once again this seems to fit with what we know of Isaac—he didn't make many of the important decisions in his life.

Abraham's servant prays to God to show him who has been chosen as a wife. He asks for her to show her willingness to help a stranger by watering his camels, and to do so with a willing heart. I think, apart from the watering of camels business, finding a mate with a true generous and compassionate heart should rank pretty high on the list of attributes. I wonder if the bachelor ever has those kinds of tests for who will get the rose?

Rebecca passes the test, and the servant gives her a gold ring and bracelet worth a considerable sum of money. This would not go unnoticed by her family when she got back from watering the livestock. In fact, her brother Laban comes hustling out to find out who has given his sister these gifts. Laban plays a very interesting role in Jacob's story as well, and it's interesting to see his role in Rebecca's betrothal. He has a lot to say.

The servant holds up dinner to tell his story. Upon hearing his account, Laban, the brother and Rebecca's father agree. But the next morning Laban and Rebecca's mother say, "don't be in a rush. Stay a while."

But the servant wants to get on their way immediately, so Rebecca is asked what she wants to do. It's interesting that in this case, she has the last say so. I wonder if we've misjudged how a daughter was treated in those times.

So they leave and Rebecca meets Isaac and they seem to be pleased with the arrangement and are married. The happily ever after part, not so much, but I dare say it works out well enough even if it has its rocky parts.

So, here is Isaac, this heir to the incredible covenant of God. And in so many ways it seems he's pretty much along for the ride. By that, what I mean is that we see no point when Isaac is called on to affirm the covenant. He just goes about life, but even in doing so, is very much a part of God's sweeping drama. "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

Maybe we don't have to be so much a part of the drama, to be a part of the plan. Jacob was all drama, Abraham not so much drama as just taken by the surprise of God's grace. Isaac just went about business. I'm happy most days to just go about business and know God's busy about securing the destiny of the world.

But God did fulfill the promise to Isaac. Her name was Rebecca.

I am of the mind that more often than not, the grace and promise of God comes with a face and name.

Whose face comes to your mind? Maybe it's someone who touched your life in passing. Maybe it's someone who you blessed without even knowing it. But I am more certain than not, that the kingdom of God here on this earth is about the people in our lives.

The people we love as well as the people we don't love so much, but who give us the wonderful opportunity to show mercy and kindness, just as did Rebecca, who we can say with high probability had no idea that a wonderful moment of God was unfolding in the watering of some stranger's camels.

Isn't it great! Every day is pregnant with the potential of being a moment of blessing to you and someone else. Even if your name is not Rebecca.

Offering and Prayer

We see God's abundance in growing gardens and fresh produce on our tables. We witness need in God's world when disaster disrupts communities or drought threatens lives. So we give out of gratitude for what we enjoy and compassion for those who are in need deeper than our own.

➤ *Praise God from whom all blessings flow* 306

Gracious God, receive our gifts as tokens of our gratitude for your goodness to us. Bless them so that they become seeds of generosity, bringing needed gifts to others in Jesus' name. Amen

† Pastoral Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

... ***Our Father, who art in heaven – hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come – thy will be done – on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen***

➤ *O love that casts out fear* 297

Blessing

➤ *Jump with joy* 406