

Heroes of the Faith

***Sarah: Faith that
believes under
unbelievable
circumstances***



+ Advent 4 - Midweek +
Wednesday, December 21, 2022



**Messiah Lutheran
Church**

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Welcome! We are glad you are worshipping the Lord with us tonight!

Midweek Advent Meditative Worship

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

Heroes of the Faith: Sarah

FROM THE LAY ELDER-DEACONS: Welcome to Messiah. We want to make sure your worship experience goes well. So just as a reminder, ***please have cellphones ringers off during worship. Please, no gaming, texting, or social media. If you need to use your phone or have a conversation with someone, please excuse yourself from the sanctuary. Thank you.***

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE: Live audio of the worship service is available in our Crying Room. It is located just off the Narthex in the back of the sanctuary. The room has a bathroom. This room is a safe place for anxious children (or adults) to go and still be a part of the worship service.

Prayer before worship: (Please pray silently): *O Heavenly Father, as we gather in Your house to receive the gift of forgiveness through Your Word, guard us from vain and distracting thoughts. Grant us pause from our busy lives. Open our hearts so that we are receptive to the proclamation of life with Your Son, and do not close our ears to the offering of salvation. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen. (Adapted from **Right Worship of God** prayer in *Portals of Prayer*, April through June, 2011)*

PRELUDE

WORSHIP THEME: Advent advances our faith to remember the past to prepare us for the future. As we wait to celebrate Christ's First Advent when He became incarnate as man, we review the promises of God as we prepare for Christ's Second and Final Advent at the End of Time. We do this to better live our faith today.

This year, our Midweek Advent services have been featuring **Heroes of the Faith** as described in Hebrews 11. We have heard from Abel, Noah, and Abraham. CDs of those services are in the Narthex, and available on our website at mlcbeloit.com, under the Midweek Advent tab. Tonight, we take a look at Sarai whose name was changed to Sarah by the Lord God putting His righteousness in her. Tonight, we see how her testimony of faith shows us to believe in the Lord in unbelievable circumstances. May her faith mentor yours. Thanks to Virginia Heinrich for playing the role of Sarah.

OFFERING: Please put your offering in the plates at the entrance. Thank you for your support.

WELCOME – WORSHIP THEME – GREET ONE ANOTHER IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

(Lighting of the candles...to symbolize the special presence of Christ when we invoke the Name of God in which we were baptized.) Adapted from Evening Prayer from the Lutheran Service Book.

P: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Jesus Christ is the Light of the World.

C: The Light no darkness can overcome.

P: Stay with us Lord, for it is evening.

C: And the day is almost over

P: Let Your light scatter the darkness.

C: And illuminate Your Church.

P: Praise to You, O Christ.

C: The King who comes to save us.

P: Let us pray: Let the incense of our repentant prayer ascend before You, O Lord, and let Your loving-kindness descend on us that, with purified minds, we may sing Your praises with the Church on Earth and the whole heavenly host and may glorify You forever.

C: Amen.

HYMN OF THE NIGHT: “Savior of the Nations Come” LSB 332 Verses 6-7

6. For You are the Father’s Son
Who in flesh the vict’ry won.
By Your mighty pow’r make whole
All our ill of flesh and soul.

7. From the manger newborn light
Shines in glory through the night.
Darkness there no more resides;
In this light faith now abides.

(Congregation may be seated)

SCRIPTURE READING #1: Genesis 12:14-20 NIV

¹⁴ When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵ And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken into his palace. ¹⁶ He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female servants, and camels.

¹⁷ But the Lord inflicted serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's wife Sarai. ¹⁸ So Pharaoh summoned Abram. "What have you done to me?" he said. "Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? ¹⁹ Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take her and go!" ²⁰ Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

SCRIPTURE READING #2: Genesis 16:1-10 NIV

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me."

⁶ "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸ And he said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered.

⁹ Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." ¹⁰ The angel added, "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count."

SCRIPTURE READING #3: Genesis 17:15-19 NIV

¹⁵ God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

¹⁷ Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

¹⁹ Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.

SCRIPTURE READING #4: Genesis 18:1-15 NIV

The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. ² Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

³ He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. ⁵ Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant."

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

⁶ So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread."

⁷ Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. ⁸ He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

⁹ "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him.

"There, in the tent," he said.

¹⁰ Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. ¹¹ Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

¹³ Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' ¹⁴ Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh."

But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."

SCRIPTURE READING #5: Hebrews 11:1-3, 11-12 NIV

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

¹¹ And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹² And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets

C: But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

HOMILY: "Sarah – Faith the believe the unbelievable" Texts (See pages 4-6)

(If you are able, please stand)

MAGNIFICAT (Song of thanksgiving from Mary)

P: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior

C: For He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden. For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.

P: For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His Name;

C: And His mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation.

P: He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

C: He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly.

P: He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich He has sent empty away.

C: He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever.

(Please be seated)

PRAYERS FROM THE PEW *(At the end of each prayer petition)*

P: In peace let us pray to the Lord

C: Lord, have mercy.

(At the conclusion of the prayers, if you are able, please stand)

P: For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord.

C: Alleluia.

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us gracious Lord, rejoicing in the fellowship of the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord.

C: To You, O Lord.

COLLECT FOR PEACE

P: O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: Taught by our Lord and trusting in His promises, we are bold to pray:

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 trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.
Amen.**

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

P: The Almighty and Merciful Lord, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bless and preserve you.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN..... "Come, Thou-Expected Jesus" LSB 338

1. Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.
2. Born Thy people to deliver;
Born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit

P: Go in peace to serve the Lord, imitating the Heroes of the Faith.

C: Thanks be to God.

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NIV: English Standard Version

LSB: Lutheran Service Book