



Weekly Booster

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Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Pastor David

*Our Vision: **Growing** as disciples of Jesus while **connecting** with others and **serving** our community.*

What Happens After We Die?



What Happens After We Die?

The new heaven and the new earth haven't been ushered in yet. So when believers die now, where do they go?

When Jesus was being crucified, one of the criminals being executed with him said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43). Jesus assured the man that he'd be with him in paradise that very same day. So when people who love Jesus die, they go to be with Jesus—immediately.

The heaven they go to isn't the same as the new heaven and the new earth. In his book, *Heaven*, author Randy Alcorn calls it a "present heaven." In John's vision of this present heaven in Revelation 6:9-11, he saw "the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained" (Revelation 6:9). These martyrs were asking God how long it would be until he avenged their deaths. Notably, they were with God, yet aware of what was happening on earth and able to remember their lives there.

This raises the question: Can people truly be in "heaven" if they're aware of bad stuff that's taking place on earth? It's worth noting that God won't wipe away his people's tears until he ushers in the new heaven and the new earth (see Revelation 21:3-4). *Continued on page 2*

*“Don’t be afraid to give up
the good to go for the great.”*
John D. Rockefeller

*“I find that the harder I work,
the more luck I seem to have.”*
Thomas Jefferson

Reminders

May 24th

Sunday Service 9:00 a.m.
No PK-6 S.S. & Jr/Sr High

May 25th

Church Office (open)

May 26th

Mat Making (Loom Room) 1:00 p.m.

May 27th

Praise Team - 4:00 p.m.
Bell Choir – 4:30 p.m.
Chancel Choir – 5:30 p.m.

May 28th

T.O.P.S.

Worship is needed each Sunday,
sign up at the Welcome Center
counter

Meals-On-Wheels Deliveries
Sign up at the Welcome Counter

Fellowship Volunteers and treats
needed, sign up in Fellowship Hall



What happens- continued from page 1.

While the place where believers are now isn't the same as the new heaven and the new earth, it's a place so good that Jesus called it "paradise." There's much we can't know for certain, but one thing we know for sure: believers who have died are with God. They're with Jesus. And that's a beautiful place to be.

Is the New Heaven and New Earth One Place or Two?

While there's a lot of mystery about what comes next, the book of Revelation tells us that after God purifies the earth, he will restore heaven and earth. In the apostle John's vision, he "saw 'a new heaven and a new earth,' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" (Revelation 21:1). Heaven and earth, once separate, will merge into one.

And the new Jerusalem—a city said to be 1,400 miles long, wide and high (see Revelation 21:16)—is a perfect cube, just like the Most Holy Place in the temple (see Exodus 26:2–8; 1 Kings 6:20), the place where God's presence dwelled. This city will come down "out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Revelation 21:2).

The Bride of Christ

This may raise the question for you—how can the new Jerusalem come down from heaven dressed as a bride? Aren't we Jesus' bride?

In ancient times, a new home was an important part of a new couple's married life. After a man and woman became engaged, the groom-to-be would go and prepare a place for them to live, usually an addition built on to his father's house. The groom would make their future home as nice as possible—he'd dress it up—for his bride-to-be. Once the dwelling was finished, the groom would go get the bride, they'd get married, and then he'd bring her back to the place he had built for them.

Jesus used this same kind of imagery in John 14:2–3. We are his bride, and he's preparing a place for us. As Jesus' bride, we'll live with him in the new earth he has taken great care to "dress up" and prepare for us (see Revelation 3:12).

Continued on page 6

Volunteers Needed



**LAST PERSON LEAVING
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS
AND LOCK DOORS**

First United Methodist Church
**Please wear your
name tag on
Sunday mornings**



Church Ad Board Members

- Bob Lynn - Chair*
- Mary Peterson - Secretary*
- Darlene Howard – At-Large*
- Roger Jones - Trustee*
- Dave Christensen - SPRC*
- Dan Weiss –
Finance/Stewardship*
- Dave Lashier - Treasurer*
- Craig Harris - Lay Member to
Annual Conference*
- Connie Anderson - Memorials*
- Linda Haldane - Membership*
- David Clark - Pastor*

Church Office Hours

**** Children & Jr.-Sr. High
Sunday School –
PK-6 & Jr/Sr High
resumes in the fall**

**Wednesday
Praise Team – 4:00 p.m.
Bell Choir – 4:30 p.m.
Chancel Choir – 5:30 p.m.**

The front door to the church will be locked during office hours. Please ring the doorbell to be let into the church.

Monday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Tuesday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Wednesday
Office Closed
Bible Study 11:00
Thursday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Friday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in advance if you need to enter the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine, please leave your name, number, and a brief message, and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned on the next business day.



Where did two angels punish people by blinding them?

- a) Babylon
- b) Shechem
- c) Sodom
- d) Tyrus

According to Obadiah, where shall Benjamin possess?

- a) Negeb
- b) Gilead
- c) Ephraim
- d) Samaria

Who said, "Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book!"?

- a) Job
- b) Jeremiah
- c) Isaiah
- d) Hoshea

Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.



- 24th Nathan Crowdes, Scott & Ashley Lundgren*
- 26th – Brian Langrer*
- 28th – Mike Peterson*
- 29th – Laura Bowen, Earl & Judy North*

****See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added? Please call the office or send an email to office@shen.church**

**Shenandoah First United
Methodist Church**

200 Church St.
Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail
office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our YouTube
channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

***Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford**

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit!

People: Grant us your peace.

L: Come, Holy Spirit!

P: Give us your power.

L: Come, Holy Spirit!

P: Grace us with your presence.

“Living Waters”

Scripture Reading: John 7:37-39

Songs

- O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing #57**
- God of Wonders #3034**
- Spirit of God #2117**
- God Be with You till We Meet Again #672**

Last Week’s Attendance

In-Person Worship – 67

Online Worship – 12

Our Vision:

“Growing as disciples of Jesus while connecting with others and serving our community.”

**Answers for May 17th are c) Amariah c) he was unharmed d) Asaph
Quiz hints – Q1) Genesis Q) Obadiah Q3) Job**



May 2026

Cereal, Mandarin Oranges, Cake, Brownie, and Muffin Mixes, Macaroni & Cheese, Soda & Snack Crackers, Spaghetti Sauce, Spaghetti Noodles, Microwave Popcorn, Rice or Pasta Side Dishes, Brown Rice, Bar Soap, Shampoo

There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals home with their food items. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the Community Food Pantry. We exist totally on donations; we couldn't assist those in need without your help!

If you or anyone who would be interested in volunteering at the Food Pantry, please have them contact Jeannine K. Liljedahl at 712-215-2488.



As our Chancel and Bell Choirs prepare for a well-deserved summer intermission, the stage is open and waiting for **you!**

We are looking for talented individuals or groups to fill our sanctuary with "Special Music" during the summer months. Whether you are a soloist, part of an ensemble, or play an instrument, this is your moment to share your gift with our community.

If you're ready to share your talent or have a recommendation, please **contact the office**. We are currently developing our summer schedule and would love to include you in our lineup.

What Happens- continued from page 2.

Then, like at ancient weddings, there will be a huge party (Revelation 19:9). We'll celebrate with our Groom and the new life we get to live with him in our new home forever.

Face to Face with God

In Old Testament times, people knew that God was so holy and their sin was so evil that no person could see him and live. During tabernacle/temple times, only one Israelite (the high priest) was allowed to pass through the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place and enter God's presence—and only once a year. Generations of Israelites were born and died without ever being directly in God's presence.

But after God resurrects us and rids the universe of evil, he'll fully welcome us to live in his presence. What was once so unreal that it could never happen will become our reality every day.

Job caught a glimpse of this hope long ago and declared: "I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another" (Job 19:25–27).

One day you will see God's face; you will talk to him. Although God is a spirit, he will be fully present with you, and you will see him with your own eyes (see Psalm 17:15; Revelation 22:4). Whatever keeps us from sensing his constant presence on the fallen earth will be absent from the new earth. What we call "prayer" on the fallen earth will be a completely un-hindered two-way conversation with God wherever we are on the new earth—or wherever we are in the entire universe. There will be no more wondering if he's listening to you—you'll know and see that he most definitely is. He'll be as present to you as the air that surrounds you. And he'll be that close forever.

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First United Methodist Church

**Your
Name**



To help us all connect names with faces, please remember to wear your name tag each Sunday. This is also the perfect time to get back into the habit as we prepare to welcome our new pastor, Pastor Oliver Fabros. Wearing your tag will be a huge help to our new pastor as they work to learn everyone's name.

You can find your tag hanging by the three wooden doors or just inside the chapel door.

If you don't have one or need a replacement, please contact the office.



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Abraham



Meaning of name: Abram means “exalted father.” Abraham means “father of a great number.”

Ancestry and family life: Abraham was the tenth generation from Noah. He was descended from Shem and his father was Terah. Abram had two brothers and married his half-sister, Sarai. From Joshua 24:2, we know that Abraham’s father and grandfather worshiped false gods.

Joshua 24:2 – And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.

Abraham was quite wealthy and had many servants. Abraham is the ancestor of the Hebrews, Arabs, Edomites, and many other tribes like the Midianites.

When and where he lived: Originally, Abraham was from Ur of the Chaldeans. This was where God originally called Abram (Acts 7:2-3). This was a prosperous and advanced pagan center of southern Mesopotamia (354 km SE of Baghdad).

Its “golden age” was during the time of Abraham. A great ziggurat was built there, which Abraham probably would have seen. On the way to Canaan (also a center of idolatry), Abraham and his family stopped at Haran for a while. Finally, they arrived in Canaan, where Abraham sojourned the rest of his life. The route from Ur to Canaan was about 2400 km.

Training and occupation: Some scholars believe that Abraham was a merchant. He evidently had great wealth. He was probably familiar with shepherding since he had many flocks and herds (Genesis 13:2). From the biblical account, it seems that Abraham is wise and well-educated.

Place in history: Abraham occupies an extremely important place in history. A large number of the people and people groups in the world are descended directly from him. More importantly, in a very real sense, Abraham is the spiritual father (John 8:39-40 and Romans 4:13-25) of all believers.

The world repeatedly showed itself to be rebellious and sinful. God first sent the flood and then scattered the nations and confused their languages, but people still didn’t repent.

Therefore God chose one man, one family, and one nation out of the world and from that point on (until Christ’s death) dealt primarily with that nation. God established His covenant with Abraham.

This covenant was first given in Genesis 12 and reaffirmed in chapter 18.

Genesis 12:1-3 – Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 18:19 – For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”

Abraham is not only an Old Testament figure since he is also mentioned sixty-seven times in the New Testament. Many of these use Abraham as an example of faith and the fact that God justifies not based on works but based on faith. Abraham is a model of faith for all believers. He is often called the father of the faith.

Weaknesses:

Deceptive (12:12-20, 20) – Abraham was deceptive about his wife, Sarah.

Genesis 12:13 Say you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared for your sake.”

It happened not only once, but twice. On two separate occasions Abraham deceived the people in the country he resided by claiming that Sarah was his sister. Then rather than recognizing his deceit, Abraham doubled-down.

Genesis 20:12 – Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife.

Both of these deceptions demonstrated a lack of love for his wife. In these cases, he was willing to risk her in order to protect himself. He didn’t protect her as well as he should have. Abraham allowed fear of man to keep him from being the protector of his family. A good leader should not lead from behind. He should be willing to take the risks onto himself rather than putting it onto others.

Abraham, like us, was a sinner. We are reminded that even the Biblical heroes of the faith were flesh and blood like us. They were not walking stained glass windows with halos around their heads. Yet Abraham’s story reminds us that God is gracious. The Lord delivered Abraham and Sarah out of these situations. He watched Abraham’s back and came to help him even though Abraham did not deserve it. That is grace. Unless you do a character study on Jesus, you will not find a perfect person in the Bible. We can take comfort in the fact God loves, saves, and uses flawed beings like us.

In Egypt, God afflicted Pharaoh because of Sarai, until Sarai was let go and returned to Abraham.

Genesis 12:17 – But the Lord afflicted Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife.

Later, Abimelech had a dream from God and returned Sarah to Abraham.

God's grace covers a multitude of sins.

Lack of faith at times – Abraham exhibited a lack of trust in God's promise to give him a son through Sarah and was easily talked into something that was not God's will, that is taking Hagar as a wife (Genesis 16).

Genesis 16:2-3 – And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife.

With Hagar, he followed Sarah's advice to do things his own way and "help God out." The result was devastating and consequences still ripple even today.

A key lesson from this event is to be patient and wait for God's timing.

Psalms 27:14 – Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Application – Consider a time when you took matters into your own hands rather than waiting for God's timing. What was the result? What is a situation in your life today that is hard to wait for? What can help you learn to wait for His timing?

Strengths:

Faith (Hebrews 11:8-12, Genesis 12:1-4) – This was Abraham's most outstanding quality. Although he failed at times, he often showed amazing faith.

Reflect – What are some examples from his life where he showed great faith?

Note God's first command recorded to Abram.

Genesis 12:1 – Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."

God said to go to the land that "**I will show you.**" Abram had to leave everything he knew behind including his home. That might not be so difficult if you have a great destination in mind. But Abram didn't even yet know where he would be going. The first step was "go" and there was not yet a "where." If the Lord asked you to move away from your home, your first question would probably be, "Where?"

Abram trusted that the Lord would guide him safely and show him the way. The Lord doesn't always tell us what to do ten steps away, but He does make the next step clear. Abram's faith helped him obey and follow God's leading step-by-step.

Here are two more examples of Abraham's faith.

- He took the leftover land and let Lot have the good land even though he was the elder and had the right to choose.
- Abraham believed God's promise that he would have a son in his old age.
- He also trusted that God would provide a sacrifice in place of Isaac.

Though there were moments of doubt, the general trajectory of his life was belief in the impossible. He was willing to sacrifice Isaac, believing that God would raise him from the dead.

In each case, we see that his faith resulted in obedience. This reminds us of the truth taught in James that faith and works are connected.

James 2:26 – For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

Unselfishness –

Genesis 13:9 – Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.”

How did Abraham show himself to be unselfish? Although he was older than Lot and could have chosen for himself which land to settle in, he gave Lot the first choice. Through this selfless act, God's will was accomplished, and Abraham went to Canaan, where God greatly multiplied him. Later, Abraham risked his life to save Lot. In today's day and age, common wisdom is to "look out for number one." Lot seems to have practiced this. Abraham gave up his "rights" for the good of others.

Worshipful – Abraham continually built alters to God and gave him glory and praise (Genesis 12:8, 22:9). This showed his dependence upon God for everything in his life.

Tithing (Genesis 14:20, Hebrews 7:4, Malachi 3:7-12, 1 John 3:17) – Abraham honored God with his money. He wasn't greedy and didn't want to receive spoils or money from the king of Sodom. He instead gave 10% to Melchizedek. Abraham is the first person in the Bible who is recorded as tithing. God blessed Abraham and multiplied his possessions all the more.

God wants us to be good stewards of what we have. If a person is a good steward of what God has given him to manage, then it is likely the Lord will give him more (Luke 19:7).

Hospitality (Genesis 18)- Abraham was very hospitable to strangers. He invited the three men to eat and killed a calf for them.

Persevering in prayer (Genesis 18, 20:17)- Abraham pleaded earnestly with God for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. His prayer in Genesis 18 shows his close relationship with God. It was almost as if he was

bargaining with God. Yet the Lord did not blame him for it. Abraham did act as a friend of God in his prayers. Abraham's example shows us that God appreciates clear and frank prayers motivated by a love for others.

Most of the people he was interceding for were people he did not know. But his prayer revealed a heart of love and compassion for all people. Not only did he care for them, but he was also zealous in defending God's own honor and justice. He boldly "stood in the gap" as an intercessory. We should also pray for others with the same boldness and intensity.

Important acts and events:

1. Left his country and went to Canaan.
2. Let Lot take the first of the land.
3. Saved Lot and the King of Sodom.
4. Met Melchizedek.
5. Took Hagar as a wife and had Ishmael.
6. The covenant was reaffirmed with him and he received circumcision.
7. Pleaded with God for Sodom and Gomorrah.
8. Obeyed God to sacrifice Isaac, but God spared his son.
9. **How he died:** He died after a long and fulfilling life at the old age of 175 (Genesis 25:7).

Lessons from his life:

1. We should all be willing to leave our "comfort zone" in order to follow God. Abraham left his country, his friends, and many of his relatives in order to follow God's call to him. Note that when God told him to go, He didn't immediately say where. Rather He told Abram to go "to the land I will show you." So Abram was commanded to start a journey to a destination that still wasn't revealed. The most important part of God's command was to go, to start moving. Once Abram was moving it would be easy for him to change direction. But an object that is not moving cannot change directions.

At that time, traveling was not nearly as easy as it is today. The final journey was almost two thousand five hundred kilometers long. And there were many unknowns on the way. It was a world far more dangerous than today where the rule of law was not established. But Abraham was obedient. And because of his obedience the world was changed forever.

Application: God may ask us to leave our comfort zone in order to follow him. This could take many forms. He may ask you to leave your family and country to serve Him. He may ask you to quit your job. He may tell you to share the gospel with somebody when it makes you nervous. He may ask you to befriend another believer or unbeliever and therefore spend less time with your own circle of friends.

Are you ready to make sacrifices, go into the unknown, put complete faith in God, and obey His call? It starts with the small things (Luke 16:10) and as you obey, He will give you more significant responsibilities. What do you think is an area where God is calling you to have faith in Him and leave your comfort zone?

2. God isn't a vengeful God, standing ready to destroy us the minute we make a mistake. Abraham made a big mistake in choosing to procreate with Hagar and attempt to have a child through her. While his motivation was to "help" God, he should have realized that God did not need help. It was sinful to go outside of God's design for marriage to achieve his goals rather than trusting and waiting for His timing. Abraham's sin caused problems in his marriage and family. These problems are still manifesting in the world today in many conflicts in the Middle East.

And yet, even when Abraham failed, God looked out for him and kept His promise. God did not go back on His promise. Instead, He forgave and restored Abraham.

Application: God is merciful. When we sin, He does not cast us out. Rather, He is waiting with open arms to receive us to Himself again and cleanse us from our sins.

3. Abraham did not take the best for himself but instead gave others the first choice. We can learn a lot from this attitude. Are we the type of people who always want to pick first, or do we give others the first pick and look out for their interests? Abraham gave Lot the first pick of the land when he had the right to choose. This was no small decision like giving your friend the first choice of desserts. It affected where they would live and do business, what land they owned, and who their friends would be.

And yet we often quarrel and fight and have wrong motives even over simple things. In what specific areas can you show a generous heart toward others and let them choose? (For example, let your family choose the restaurant or television show. Offer to wash the dishes, take out the trash, do the laundry, etc.)

The point is that we should be more concerned with others' well-being than our own. The best thing about this is that when we are concerned about others, God is concerned about us and multiplies our joy and blessings all the more.

Lot looked at the land and took what he thought was the best. But in his selfishness, he made the wrong choice. He surrounded his family with bad influences. Clearly, he himself was disgusted by some of the practices of the city he chose to live in. Yet the daily exposure to these temptations effected his family. In the end some of his children were killed, his wife was turned to stone, his daughters lost their purity and he himself committed abominations.

Abraham on the other hand was blessed and finally his descendants received the Promised Land.

Application: When a person takes the best for themselves, they are likely missing out on God's best.

4. Abraham gave tithes and offerings to Melchizedek. From his example, we learn that we too need to give tithes and offerings to God. This is commanded throughout the Bible (Hebrews 7:4, Malachi 3:7-12, 1 John 3:17).

Hebrews 7:14 – For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

But if we hold back and prioritize ourselves over God we may find that He is actively working against us. An example of this can be seen in Haggai. When the people refused to build God's temple and renovated their own houses with luxurious additions, God devoured what they earned and blew it away like dust.

When we generously give, God rewards. That sometimes does take the form of financial blessings. After all, God may give more resources to the one who has been faithful to use the one's he has already. But it does not always take this form. Rewards may be other types of blessings and if you are giving to try to receive some monetary reward from God in return, remember that He sees your heart!

When Abraham gave God told him in Genesis 15:1, "I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great."

5. We need to do things God's way instead of our way. When we lack faith and lean on our understanding, we botch things up and make a mess. The result of Abraham's sin still lives today. Don't try to come up with a better plan than what you read in the Bible. Don't try to "help God out." Do things His way.

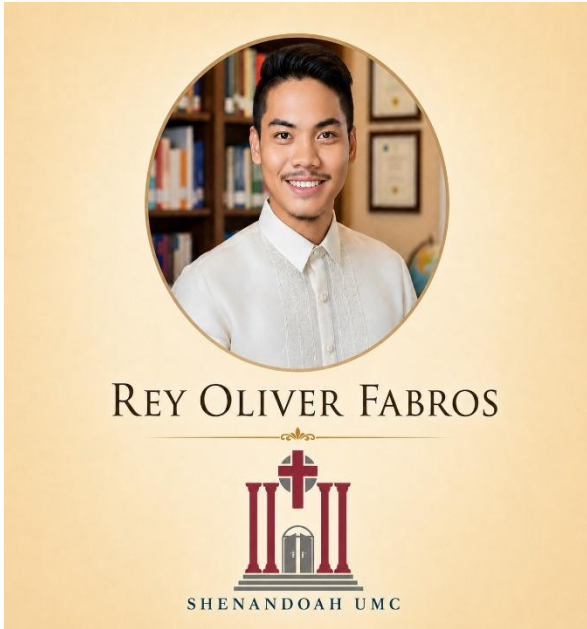
Can you share an example of a time when you tried to do something your way instead of God's? What was the result?

6. We should never doubt God. It would have been easy for Abraham to doubt when God told him to sacrifice Isaac, but he had such a strong confidence in God's character he knew that the Lord would not lead him astray.

In the same way, God will never lead us the wrong way. There will be many times when we do not understand God's plan. It is like trying to work a puzzle but only seeing one piece. That piece by itself doesn't look like much. You can't tell what it is. But when the whole puzzle is finished, the significance of each piece will be revealed and if even one is missing there will be a glaring hole.

Even when we don't know why God wants us to do something and even if we don't know where it will lead, we should follow in faith. He leads us step by step. That means that while He may not show us what we should do ten years in the future, He will guide us to what we need to do today.

Application: What principle have you learned from Abraham that you think you should follow in your own life? Can you share one specific example of how you will apply that principle this week?



Welcome Pastor Rey Oliver Fabros (Pastor Oliver)

Last Sunday, during our worship service, SPRC Chair Dave Christensen announced that Pastor Oliver will become our new pastor, effective July 1st.

To learn more about Pastor Oliver and his extensive ministry work over the past several years, please visit the following link: <https://bit.ly/4uJkoH>. The link takes you to a shared folder with the documents. If you are having trouble opening them, please let me know and I will try and help you. There are too many pages to run off or to attach to a single email. We believe you will be inspired by his diverse background, particularly his impactful work with youth ministry—as well as the energy and dedication he brings to this position.

Dear Church Family,

This coming Sunday, we will hear Jesus tell us that living waters will flow forth from our hearts. Water, throughout Scripture, has always held deep meanings. In our baptismal service, there is a prayer that is prayed over the waters:

When nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah, you saved those on the ark through water. After the flood, you set in the clouds a rainbow. When you saw your people as slaves in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. Their children you brought through the Jordan to the land which you promised.

In the fullness of time, you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb. He was baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. He called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection, and to make disciples of all nations.

This water is what we call a sacrament, an outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual reality. And isn't it remarkable that God uses such an ordinary and necessary-to-life kind of thing, such as water, to help us experience the spiritual reality of grace and wholeness? If we have eyes to see and ears to hear, we might just see these signs of grace all around us: when we brush our teeth, wash the dishes, water the flowers, take a drink after working hard, or clean up after a child.

Living waters, signs of God's grace, are all around us. May you have the courage to jump in.

Grace and peace,
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