



Weekly Booster

CHURCH STAFF

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Jeff Hiser

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Pianist

Terry Stafford

Bells & Choir Directors

Dan & Linnea Shook

Multimedia & Website

Jeff Hiser

Sunday Media Booth

Alan Hutchison

Jeff Hiser

Sunday Facebook Host

Craig Harris,

Facebook Contributors

Pastor David B. Clark,

Barb Cunningham,

Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

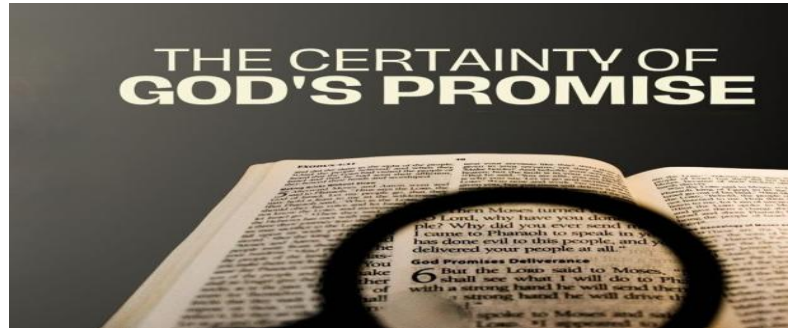
Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Drew Morelock,

Pastor David



The Certainty of God's Promises

When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. ... Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. Hebrews 6:13-15; 17

Every once in a while, you may find yourself wondering if everything God promised in the Bible is true. Can God love each person individually? Is heaven out there, and is it as glorious as it sounds?

For better or for worse, it's human nature to question and wonder. We live in a skeptical world, a world where promises are broken every day. We've all had a friend spill a secret she wasn't supposed to tell or watched an important relationship fall apart despite a commitment to be faithful forever.

But we also find people who show us what it means to be faithful. And if you can put your trust in another person, why not put your trust in God? The Bible tells us he cannot lie; he'll keep his word to us forever.

Continued page 2.

“Vitality shows not only in the ability to persist but in the ability to start over.” F. Scott Fitzgerald

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.” Alice Walker

Reminders

January 12th

PK-6 S.S.– After Children’s Message
Jr/Sr High S.S. – 10:30 a.m.
Confirmation Class – 10:30 a.m.
Communion Sunday

January 14th

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

January 15th

No Bible Study – 11:00 a.m.
Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.
Choir Practice – 5:30 p.m.
Bell Choir Practice – 6:30 p.m.

January 16th

T.O.P.S.

Meals-On-Wheels Deliveries

****Worship Assistants are needed for January 26th & February 2025**

**** Fellowship Volunteers needed sign-up in Fellowship Hall**

Baptism of the Lord



God’s Promises- Continued from page 1.

The Old Testament tells story after story of God’s promises coming to pass. God may have blessed Abraham centuries and centuries ago, but his promise continues through Abraham’s descendants, the nation of Israel, today. Take God at his word: he has promised forgiveness of sins through his Son Jesus Christ, strength for today and hope for tomorrow, and an eternal home with him one day.

So be someone who keeps their promises. Be an example of faithfulness. Help shape the world, your world, to be one that shines the truth of God’s promises without a doubt.

Adapted from the NIV Bible for Teen Girls. NIV Weekly Blog, All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, January 6, 2025.



Having Faith When God Doesn’t Make Sense

No servant of God in the Bible had more to complain about than Abraham. He was promised the land of Canaan for an inheritance, but when he went out he “did not know where he was going” (Heb. 11:8). Not only that, when Abraham came into the promised land God “didn’t give him an inheritance in it—not even a foot of ground” (Acts 7:5). Figure that out! John Calvin observed that Abraham must surely have felt deceived or betrayed. In a word: Abraham, more than any character in Holy Scripture, must head the list of those who felt that God made no sense!

Yet more difficulties followed. When Abraham was about eighty-five and his wife Sarah was seventy-five, God promised him a son from his own body. Since Sarah was now barren, this surely made no sense! But Abraham believed God’s promise and his faith was counted for righteousness (Gen. 15:6), this being Paul’s chief illustration for the teaching of justification by faith alone.

But there is still more to tell! When Sarah didn’t get pregnant, she persuaded Abraham to make good God’s promise by sleeping with her servant Hagar (Gen. 16).

Continued 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

Michelle Morelock - Chair
Mary Peterson - Secretary
Margaret Brady - Vice Chair & Trustee
Gary Milstead - Trustee
Roger Jones - SPRC
Open - Finance
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 during service,
Jr/Sr High 10:30 a.m.**

Wednesday
****Choir –5:30 pm**
****Bell Choir –6:30 pm**

The front door to the church
will be unlocked during
office hours and closed only
for errands and lunch.

Monday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Tuesday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Wednesday
CLOSED
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 in 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 the next
business day.



Who was killed because
he did not stop pursuing
Abner?

- a) Asahel
- b) Joab
- c) Shimei
- d) Jotham

Who lost his supernatural
strength when his hair was
cut off?

- a) Absalom
- b) Samson
- c) Gideon
- d) Solomon

Whose life was completely
transformed on the road to
Damascus?

- a) Pontius Pilate
- b) Paul
- c) Herod
- d) Caiaphas the High Priest

**Check page 4 for answers from
the previous week.**



6th – Jessica Bell
7th – Judy Ogden
11th – Logan Wiebold
12th – Mary Peterson
14th – Dee Cooper
17th – Kris Anderzhon, Claudia McEvoy
18th – Doris Swank

****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: Arise, shine; for your light has come,
People: and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
L: Come, see, and be radiant.
P: Come, thrill and rejoice.
L: Lift up your eyes and look around.
P: All are coming to the brightness of God's dawn.**

"Arise and Shine!"

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Songs

**O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing #57
Shout to the North #3042
Shine, Jesus, Shine" #2173**

Last Week's Attendance

**In-Person Worship – Canceled
On-Line Worship – Canceled**

Our Mission:

"Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love."

Our Vision:

**"We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a
difference in our world."**

**Answers for January 5th are a) cupbearer d) His household d) Hilkiah
Quiz hints – Q1) 2 Samuel Q2) Judges Q3) Galatians**



**Food
Pantry
Monthly
Needs**

January 2025

Pancake Mix & Syrup, Cake, Brownie, and Cookie Mixes, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Pasta (any variety), Spaghetti Sauce, Microwave Popcorn, hot Chocolate Mix, Crackers (sods, graham, snack), Macaroni & Cheese, Potato Flakes & Boxed Potatoes, Toilet Paper, Bar Soap

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 with their food items home. 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 know of anyone who would be interested in volunteering at the Food Pantry, please have them contact Jeannine K. Liljedahl, at 712-215-2488.



This coming Sunday, January 12, 2025, after service, all the Christmas decorations need to be taken down and put away. If you could stay and help it should not take long. Your help would be appreciated.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Two Volunteers Needed each Thursday
to Deliver Meals
Sign-Up Sheet is on the
Welcome Center Counter**

Abraham, therefore, assumed that when Hagar conceived and had the male child, Ishmael, this must have been what God had in mind all along. Wrong! God revealed to Abraham and Sarah that she would conceive after all—that Isaac was coming and that Isaac, not Ishmael, was the child of promise. Can you blame Abraham for being confused?

The Promise and the Oath

I had a vivid supernatural experience on October 31, 1955. What I saw was more real to me than anything I ever saw with my physical eyes or heard with my physical ears. I was driving on old U.S. 41 in Tennessee between Monteagle and Nashville. Suddenly, Jesus appeared before me, praying for me. I felt overwhelmed. I was fascinated that he was positioned at the right hand of the Father. I could not tell what Jesus was saying, but never in my lifetime—before or since—had I felt so loved. I wept and watched. I do not know how I drove for the next eighty miles.

Over an hour later, as I passed through Smyrna, I distinctly heard Jesus say to the Father, “He wants it.” I heard the Father reply, “He can have it.” At that precise moment, I felt a warmth in my chest and a peace and joy in my heart that surpassed anything I have ever—ever—felt. I saw the physical face of Jesus for about a minute. Then it diminished. I had no idea at that time what had happened to me. It all made no sense.

What I do know is that my theology underwent a major surgery—I would call it a personal paradigm shift. By sundown that very day, I had learned two indisputable things from this experience: (1) I was eternally and unconditionally saved (which went completely against everything I had been taught), and (2) I was sovereignly chosen (which I had known nothing about). For days I wondered (I am almost ashamed to say) if I was the only person to have this kind of experience. Had I come to believe something new?

My memory and details of that experience are as real today as if it had happened yesterday. This vision is more real than the Nashville skyline Louise and I see from our condo every day. Ironically, we now live on U.S. 41 in Nashville, overlooking Nissan Stadium, where the Titans play. But it took a long time—years—before I could say what Jesus’s words “He wants it . . . he can have it” meant. I now know that “it” is the oath as described in Hebrews 6:16–17, where the writer says that the “oath ends every dispute.” Hebrews 6:18 also refers to “two unchangeable things,” i.e., the promise and the oath. Finally, the author calls “it” the “rest” in Hebrews 4:1 and 4:10.

The “oath” is called by other names in the Bible: “the rest,” “inheritance,” and “full assurance.” The Westminster Confession also refers to “infallible assurance” not belonging to the “essence of faith.” I take this to mean that you can be a good Christian without experiencing unbroken assurance. This type of assurance comes pretty close—I think—as a fulfilling reward to those who don’t give up even during a season in which God seems to make no sense. It is a reward worth waiting for.

Abraham's Finest Hour

Let's get back to Abraham and his greatest challenge.

"Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." (Gen. 22:2)

I find it impossible to put myself in Abraham's shoes in this moment. How did Abraham's trust in God—what did he see or feel?—give him the willingness to sacrifice Isaac? Abraham's actions recorded for us in Scripture have been questioned and commented on for ages. We only know that he did what God told him to do.

Risking everything that was promised to him, Abraham could not have known what would follow. Nobody was there to witness his actions—God alone was his witness.

Nevertheless, Abraham obeyed. And that was his finest hour.

What followed Abraham's finest hour was a big deal. The writer of Hebrews wants us to know just how big a deal it was for God to swear an oath to Abraham. Whereas one swears an oath by something "greater"—whether it be by the Holy Bible or something that seems sacred (one may say, "I swear by my mother's grave")—God could not find anything greater. Therefore, he swore "by himself" (Heb. 6:13):

I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. And all the nations of the earth will be blessed by your offspring because you have obeyed my command. (Gen. 22:17–18)

The letter to the Hebrews refers to Abraham having experienced God's oath. The oath came to him after he became utterly willing—indeed, he was in the process of sacrificing Isaac as a burnt offering. Receiving God's oath was Abraham's reward for his obedience.

God's Promises Are Worth Trusting

The moment when God swore an oath to Abraham was ten thousand times more powerful to Abraham than my experience on U.S. 41 was to myself. Furthermore, Abraham was over one hundred years old, but I was only nineteen—which I find embarrassing to say (if I am totally honest). Why did God give me this vision? I honestly do not know. But I do know one thing for sure: I had done nothing before, nor have I done anything ever since to deserve this blessing. At the same time, the experience of God swearing an oath is promised to ALL believers, and this blessing has happened to millions all over the world.

Abraham would never doubt God's promise again. Had he doubted God's word before the oath came? Possibly. From Genesis 12 through Genesis 21, God spoke at different times to Abraham—again and again. But he only spoke by promise—promise after promise. Finally, for the first time in Abraham's life, God swore an oath to him. What does this mean? Answer: the oath ends all disputes. An oath is more convincing than a promise. Whereas both a promise from God and an oath from God are equally true, the oath removes all doubt. After God swore an oath to Abraham, you could say that he was "set." Never again would Abraham need more convincing—the oath did it. Nothing, indeed, tops experience over argument. It is like seeing the Swiss Alps rather than viewing pictures of them.

Times will come in your life when God doesn't make sense. You probably already have had some of those experiences. But I want to encourage you that in those times you can believe God even more. Let Abraham be our guide into believing that God's promises are worth trusting even in the midst of confusing times.

Adapted from Their Finest Hour: 30 Biblical Figures Who Pleasued God at Great Cost by R.T. Kendall, foreword By: O.S. Hawkins. August 8, 2024

This week is photo number 25 in a series of unique pictures from all over the world. For some pictures, **you may need to squint** and then you will see what the picture represents, others you will see it right away. I have found these amazing and wanted to share them.

#25





YEAR END GIVING STATEMENT

The end of the year giving statements will be coming out soon. They will be sent electronically by email. Those without email will be included with your weekly booster. If you would like your copy to be mailed to you, please contact the office, 712-246-2081, to make sure that your mailing address is correct. If you live in an apartment the address must include your apartment number for mailing purposes.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

**Sunday, January 19th
8:00 a.m.
Fellowship Hall
All Men Are Welcome!**

COMMUNION

Sunday

JANUARY 12, 2025



At the beginning of the year, many people try to focus on their physical health. Sometimes it sticks and more often than not that focus fades as we get closer to February. Even still, I think, this is an invitation for us as disciples of Jesus to consider how our bodies and souls are connected. There is indeed a long tradition in Christianity and in the broader culture to think and live in a dualistic way. Dualism says that the soul is one thing, the body is

another, and they are not connected. Dualism often takes a further step and says that the body and the things that happen in the body are bad, whereas the things of the soul are good. But this kind of dualism ignores the incarnation that we just celebrated during the Christmas season. What happens with our body affects our soul and what happens with our soul affects our body. Not only does Christian teaching support this, but scientific research does as well. If we do things like walking regularly and maintaining healthy sleeping habits, our mental health and our capacity to bear the fruit of the spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) increase. Likewise, if we follow the advice of the Psalmists to regularly meditate on the Word of God, scientific research has shown that the practice of meditation can improve our immune systems and decrease the harmful effects of stress.

My invitation to you is not to pick up the next diet and exercise fad, but to consider how our bodies and souls are connected. The invitation is to see that when we commit to growing together as the church, that growth can sometimes look like pickleball, going for a walk, or choosing to eat healthy food, just as much as praying, studying the Bible, and serving others in compassion. In Christ, it is all connected.

Grace and peace,
Pastor David Clark
308-258-7749 (cell)



Office hours for the week of January 13th – 17th

Monday – 9-11 & 12-3
Tuesday – CLOSED
Wednesday – 9-11 & 12-3
Thursday – 9-11 & 12-3
Friday – 9-11 & 13-3