

## Mid-week Lenten Services 2021 (3/3/2021)

Welcome to our midweek virtual Lenten devotional for 2021. The theme this year is, “What is Faith”?, a series focusing on the biblical figures of Noah, Abraham, Moses, the Israelites and finally Jesus as the “Perfecter and Pioneer” of our faith. Our primary scripture text is Hebrews 12-13.

A reminder that our congregation is meeting for in-person Sunday worship only, Sunday mornings at 8 and 10:30 am. Sunday Church School for all ages begins at 9:15 am. Although we have returned to in-person Sunday worship, a video recording of our Sunday service is still available from our website and Facebook page.

All mid-week Lenten Services are virtual.

Let us begin.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,+ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Dialogue**

P Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways, by the prophets,  
C **but in these last days God has spoken to us by the Son.**  
P The Son is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being  
C **the Son sustains all things by the Word.**  
P Since we have confidence by the new and living way opened for us by Jesus,  
C **let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith.**

### **Opening Prayer**

P Let us pray. O God our deliverer, you led your people of old through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide now the people of your church, that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

C **Amen**

### **A Reading from Genesis.....Genesis 12:1-4a**

12Now 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. 2I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

4So Abram went, as the LORD had told him.

## **A Reading from Hebrews.....Hebrews 11:1, 8-22**

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.” 13 All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, 14 for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them. 17 By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, 18 of whom he had been told, “It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you.” 19 He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead—and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. 20 By faith Isaac invoked blessings for the future on Jacob and Esau. 21 By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, “bowing in worship over the top of his staff.” 22 By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions about his burial.

### **Reflection**

#### **The Prayers**

P Faithful God, shower the world with your lovingkindness,

**C that all may know your peace.**

P Open our eyes to the needs of our neighbors,

**C that all may know your love.**

P Comfort the sick and dying,

**C that all may know your mercy.**

P Guide our leaders in the way of truth,

**C that all may know your justice.**

P Focus our hearts on the way of the cross,

**C that all may have faith in you.**

P Let us pray in the words of Martin Luther:

**C Behold Lord, and empty vessel that needs to be filled.**

**My Lord, fill it. I am weak in the faith; strengthen me.**

**I am cold in love, warm me and make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbor. I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and I am unable to trust you altogether.**

**O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you.**

**In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have. I am poor; you are rich and came to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner; you are upright. With me, there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness. Therefore, I will remain with you, of whom I can receive, but to whom I may not give.**

**Amen**

P Finally, let us pray with the words our Savior gave us:

**C 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;**

**and 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.**

**The Blessing**

P The God of peace,

who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,

the great shepherd of the sheep,  
make you complete in everything good  
so that you may do God's will,  
through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

**C    Amen.**