

RECTOR'S REFLECTION

Last week, I ended my reflection on the covenant that God made with Noah with this prayer: "May our covenant lead us into new beginnings, new life, new blessings!" As we progress through the season of Lent, we will see that the Old Testament readings for the Sundays recall us to the covenant that God makes with us. Last week, Noah was told of the bow that God would set in the sky as a reminder of the covenant. This week we read of Abram and Sarai and the covenant made between them and God.

When Abram was seventy-five years old, God told him to leave the place where he lived and to travel to an unknown land called Canaan. This would have entailed packing up all his belongings on camels and travelling with his family, his servants, and all of his livestock for hundreds of miles. There were no moving companies, no air conditioned cars, no comfortable hotels. It was not an easy thing for God to ask of Abram. And, he was asked to do it at 75!

It is remarkable that Abram did this thing. He gave up his comfortable life and journeyed forth into a strange land. He had no idea who lived there who might resent his arrival (I wonder if the families who arrived in this community in 1784 had similar concerns!). He didn't know if the land was suitable for farming or what the climate was like. Today we can find all of this information out on the internet and Google Maps allows us to pinpoint exactly where we want to go and print out directions on how to get there. What astonishes me is that Abram—without the benefit of any of this wonderful modern technology that's available to us—got up and went. And why? Simply because God asked him to.

In the part of the story of Abram and Sarai that we read this week, it's now twenty-four years later. Abram is ninety-nine years old. God appears to him and renews the covenant. "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations." It continues, telling Abraham that the offspring that he shall have with his newly-renamed wife Sarah shall include kings and that all of the nations that descend from their line will be part of the everlasting covenant.

There are a number of pieces of this story to unpack. First, the transformation that comes from being part of the people of the covenant. It is symbolised by the renaming of the principal characters, Abraham and Sarah. Being in relationship with God changes us. The second is that God is the one who initiates the covenant. God claims us for his people first. Surely, we can choose to accept or reject the invitation, but God's deep desire to be in relationship with us is there from the beginning. And, as we saw with the story in Noah's time and then in Abram's time, even when humanity doesn't hold up its end of the covenant, God is still there, being faithful.

Now, all of this being said, there is some effort that God asks on our part. Just like a friendship, which requires that effort be made to keep in touch from time to time, God asks something of us. In Abraham's case, God asked that Abraham set aside all of the gods of his ancestors in order to follow God alone. He asked him to walk before him and to be blameless. Abraham made great sacrifices in order to go where God called him. But he became the father of a promise that extends through the generations down even to today, where God extends the invitation to be in covenant relationship with him to all of the nations.

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THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF TYENDINAGA

*To be a Spirit-filled and life-giving place where strangers
become friends and friends become disciples.*

SUNDAY CELEBRATION

Sunday 1 March 2015
Second Sunday in Lent

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

9:30 a.m.

All Saints' Church, 1295 Ridge Rd

PARISH PRIEST

The Venerable Brad Smith
rector@parishoftyendinaga.org

QUEEN ANNE PARISH CENTRE

1295 Ridge Rd
Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory
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Mission Statement

Our mission, for the glory of God in Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, is to:

- Celebrate all that God has done for us through worship and witness with others.
- Respond to our call to be disciples of Christ by sharing our faith, rooted in the Word of God, with others and encouraging others to become followers of Christ through word and action.
- Practice good stewardship of our human, financial and environmental resources, working to ensure that all of God's Creation is viable for future generations.
- Grow ourselves and others by reaching out to our communities, following Jesus' example of generous caring, giving, and welcoming.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Parish Council—The next meeting of Parish Council is Wed 4 Mar at 7 p.m. at the QAPC. Packages are available this morning for parish council members. The Bishop will be with us at our meeting.

Lenten Study—Continuing Wed 4 Mar until 1 Apr. We will gather from 5-7 p.m. in the QAPC. Each session will begin with a simple potluck supper and continue with the study. There are still a few books available at the front of the church if you'd like to attend. To read this week: Chapter 2 (starts p 17) and the commentary for chapter 2 (starts p 76).

Start of Daylight Saving Time—Don't forget to turn your clocks AHEAD one hour on Saturday night (7 Mar).

Friendly Manor Service—The next ministry team visit for the Friendly Manor is Thu 26 Mar at 10:30 a.m. In winter weather, please bring indoor footwear.

Food Bank Donations—We gather non-perishable food items on the first Sunday of each month and donate them to the Food Bank. The Food Bank is experiencing a significant increase in the number of families it serves so this is a material way we can help our neighbours. The next Food Bank Sunday is 5 Apr.

Rectory Rental—The rectory is available for rental on a weekly basis as a cottage for tourists, fishermen, etc (and may be rented for shorter periods in the off season). Check out the website at cottagesincanada.com/bayofquinterectorycottage and please tell your friends who might need a place to stay!

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In other words, while God freely offers us salvation, it can be quite costly. It asks us to give up all of the things the world strives for and to entirely trust in God.

In the Gospel for this week, we see the same thing being played. Jesus tells the disciples that he must suffer and die and then he will be raised. Like Abraham, Jesus models what it means to give yourself over completely to God. Jesus knows that he will be glorified, but that the path to glory can only be achieved through the cross. And so, he says to his disciples that if they also want to achieve glory, they will have to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow him.

For us, the temptation is always great to find excuses as to why we can't give complete obedience to God, why we can't take up our cross today. In this Lenten season, however, we are invited to examine our lives more closely, in order that we might set our minds not on human things but on divine things; to be God's people of the covenant.

PRAYERS THIS WEEK

Anglican Communion

The Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury
Parish of Mbale (Uganda)
The Rt. Rev'd Patrick Gidudu

Diocese of Ontario

The Rt Rev'd Michael Oulton
St Alban's, Odessa
The Rev'd Greg Long

Companions

St Ann's Episcopal Church, Amsterdam, the Very Rev'd Neal Longe
HM Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace, the Rev'd Canon Denis Mulliner

Parish of Tyendinaga

Altar Guild

Pray for the families of: Terry & Yolande Brant; Viola Brant;
Warren & Olive Brant; Will & Caroline Brant; William A. & Norma Brant

READINGS FOR SUNDAY 8 MARCH

Exodus 20:1-17
1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Psalms 19
John 2:13-22

Stewardship Reflection

The Rt Rev'd Michael Pollesel

Jesus reprimands Peter for not thinking in God's terms. A faithful steward spends some of their time trying to discern God's terms, so that they can act accordingly.

Financial Report

Weekly Need:	\$2,459
Last week's Offering:	<u>\$1,848</u>
Shortfall last week	\$ 611

Based on the 2015 budget and the number of identifiable givers, the following is what is required of each giver in order to meet our needs:

Weekly: \$40 Monthly: \$173