

FAITH @ HOME

Week of August 11, 2019

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

READ: Genesis 15:1-6

REFLECT: There is nothing more peaceful than going outside on a clear, cool, crisp night, looking up, and seeing a sky full of beautiful stars. Ah! What an amazing witness of God's promise to Abram and Sarai. In this Old Testament lesson, Abram and his wife Sarai really wanted a child, but for a long time they did not have one. Abram began to get impatient, but God told Abram not to be afraid. In time, Abram would not only have one child, but he would eventually have a huge family. We learn in Genesis that God took Abram outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them" and "so shall your descendants be." (Genesis 15:5, NRSV)

Because we are privy to the end of the story, we know that God's promise to Abram did come true. He ended up with many descendants, including our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

RESPOND: Play a game to thank God for all that God has given you. Go through the alphabet with your child and for each letter, come up with something for which you can thank God, for example: thank you God for apples, babies, the cross, etc.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MEREDITH EHLER



Meredith Ann Ehler spends her days juggling life as a mama, wife, and daughter of God in San Antonio, TX. She gained over eight years' experience with hands-on parish ministry as both a Youth & Children's Minister before being called to focus on full-time momming for her two children, Camille and Camden. When she is not chasing her own kids or folding laundry, she enjoys helping with her congregation's children's ministry, reading, and living her best life. She has a passion for Jesus and sharing his love with children and families in practical, relational ways.

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ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

READ: Psalm 33:12-22

REFLECT: Have you ever tried to lift something that was too heavy, like a bag full of groceries or a backpack with too many books? Or, have you ever had an arm-wrestling match with someone and felt like no matter how much you pushed and pushed, they were not moving? The truth is we can only be as strong as we are. We can only get as strong as we will be. None of us is Superman or Wonder Woman. We will never be able to lift a car over our head or dig our heels into the ground and stop a moving train. We are regular people--stronger than some and not as strong as others.

In today's reading from Psalm 33, we hear that "...a warrior is not delivered by his great strength..." and "...our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield." (Psalm 33:16, 20; NRSV) There are things that are even stronger than the strongest people. But, somehow there is no one or nothing stronger than God. God asks us to trust that God will lend us God's strength when we feel weak or when things feel hard.

It is unlikely that God will swoop in like a superhero to save us from all the things that are hard, but God will always be there ready to listen to us talk about how weak we feel and how hard things are. Simply talking to God can often help us to feel and be stronger and help to make things seem a little less hard.

RESPOND: Think about the things that make you feel weak and that you find hard. Talk to God about them. Then, share them with someone in your family and ask them to share with you what makes them feel weak and what they find hard.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: PATRICK KANGRGA



Patrick Christopher Kangrga is the Associate for Youth Ministries at Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park, California. Originally from Arkansas, he left home to participate in two years of the Episcopal Service Corps in Maryland and in Massachusetts. After this came the beginning of his lay-professional journey with positions at parish and diocesan levels in New York and New Jersey. He has primarily served youth, with a foray into children's ministry.

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ADULT AND YOUTH

READ: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

REFLECT: Faith is hard. It is the idea that we are to believe and trust in something and someone that we cannot feel with our hands or see with our eyes. This reading reminds us of the strength in faith. Abraham passed down his faith through his offspring, all with the promise of home that God built. While the story of God's people has definitely not been easy, they persevered with their faith in God. The trust and hope that gave Abraham and his people faith are what we continue to have. We trust in God. We hope for the home that God built.

Sometimes we need a reminder of the hope and trust we have in God. Sometimes, life is hard. We aren't able to make sense of what is going on around us. Abraham's descendants roamed and lived in different lands as strangers. Their perseverance, even though they did not get to see the home they were promised by God on earth, is something to remind ourselves that we are able to do, too.

RESPOND: Write down what gives your faith strength. If you have been struggling with that recently, write down what has been hurting your faith recently and spend some time praying over it this week.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: MAGGIE PAUL



Maggie Paul is the Assistant Director for Youth and Family Ministry at Christ Episcopal Church in Charlotte, NC where she focuses on Middle School and relational ministry as well as curriculum. She previously served at the Cathedral of St. Philip in Atlanta, GA where she developed and implemented a comprehensive Confirmation curriculum. She is very excited to bring aspects of this curriculum to her new parish. As an undergraduate with a passion for youth ministry, she served as a summer camp counselor and Episcopal student center "church mouse," and she continues to use her gifts and talents as a singer and musician to nurture her own journey and inspire others on theirs.

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ADULT AND ADULT

READ: Luke 12:32-40

REFLECT: “Do not be afraid, little flock,” Jesus says. There are many things in life that can make us afraid. Just turn on the news or check social media and you will find threats to fear. We may have internal fears, deep worries that live in our minds and hearts. Sometimes, we even fear God or have fears stemming from our spiritual lives.

In the midst of that fear Jesus says, “Do not be afraid.” We can live our lives without fear because God only has good intentions for us. We are free to live lives of generosity and thankfulness without having to fear or worry that we are not enough or that we should be doing more to earn the love of God. We can live knowing that no matter what may stand against us, God will be present with us.

Even as Jesus warns his disciples about their need to stay focused on God’s Kingdom, which has a tendency to surprise us and be present when we least expect it, he encourages his disciples not to be afraid. This doesn’t mean that we won’t be afraid from time to time, or that we are supposed to be stone walls of courage at all times. Sometimes what God is doing in our lives may cause us to worry about the future, especially if change is coming. We are to remember that by God’s grace we do not have to be controlled by our fears, but instead trust in God’s love for us.

RESPOND: Sometimes our fears control us because we do not name them or acknowledge them. During your prayer time, name your fears to God and ask for God to be present with you in them and to give you the courage to trust in God’s love.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CLAYTON HARRINGTON



Clayton is the Episcopal Campus Missioner at the University of Georgia. He is also the Rector’s Associate for Youth and Young Adult Ministries at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Athens, Georgia. In these roles, Clayton is passionate about the potential of Christian community, worship, and service to empower youth and young adults to grow into the people that God has made them to be. Before moving to Atlanta in August of 2014, Clayton earned a BA in History and Religion from Campbell University in North Carolina (May 2014). Clayton is a graduate of Candler School of Theology, having earned a Master of Divinity with a Certificate in Episcopal Studies (May 2017). Clayton is a postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Atlanta.

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