

➤ ... out of Egypt and through the wilderness, God **REplanted** or **TRANSplanted** His Family Tree in the **Promised Land**. There it flourished and grew through the times of the judges and the kings. God's people *still* had to live by faith that He would send the Seed of a Savior. This was especially true when God sent His people into Babylonian exile. They could no longer see God's Family Tree. They would have to imitate Abraham and **live by faith, which receives God's offered blessing.**

SEED SPROUTS God *did* deliver on His Promise to send a Savior, Jesus the Christ, born of the Virgin Mary. When you read the genealogies of Jesus in the New Testament (**Matthew 1; Luke 3**), you see that Jesus is indeed the Descendant of Abraham and his family. They lived in hope looking forward in time, but you and I get to look backward in time to see the full bloom of God's Family Tree - **Jesus Christ and Him crucified.**

TRUE VINE In **John 15** Jesus used imagery similar to a tree and called Himself "the **True Vine**" (**John 15:1**). As Jesus said, when you are connected to Him, you **have life and bear fruit**, especially the fruit of trusting God's promises. The same is true when **you see Jesus as God's tree of life**. Jesus takes on our human flesh and blood so that He can be nailed to the tree of the Cross. When He hangs from that Cross, you see God's Family Tree **at its fullest bloom**. He connects you to Himself and His Cross-won forgiveness and life through your **Baptism** into His death and resurrection. Through His **Body and Blood** given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, Jesus **keeps you grafted** into **eternal life** with God, **even now.**

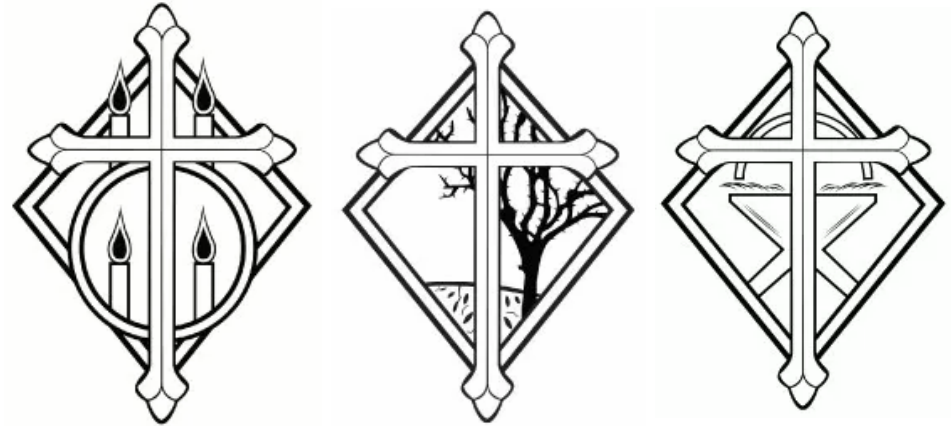
FAITH EXERCISE So, dear friends, you get to **exercise** the faith of Abraham, the faith that **receives God's offered blessings in Jesus the Christ**. When you have trouble trusting God's promise of forgiveness and life with Him, remember how God kept comforting Abraham with the promised Seed of a Savior. Your God **will always comfort you in the same way**, that is, by giving you the Immanuel who was promised, the "King" who went to the Cross, and the Lamb Who will come again **in glory..I'N, Amen.**



Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL 
 2nd Midweek in Advent  **God's Family Tree: 1. Promised
 Advent 2018** ✧ December 12th, 2018 ✨ 4:30 pm

OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP On gold liturgy sheets or BLACK ELHymnary p.120

| Service | ELH# (vv) | ...First Line |
|-----------------|------------------|---|
| Opening Hymn | 110 (7v) | <i>Sing v.1,5-7</i> O Come, O Come, Immanuel |
| Main Hymn | 121 (5v) | Behold, A Branch Is Growing |
| <i>Canticle</i> | <i>Nunc Dim.</i> | <i>(Song of Simeon)</i> Lord, You Now Let Your... |
| Closing Hymn | 123 (15) | <i>Sing v.6-10</i> From Heav'n Above to Earth |



Scripture Lesson for the  Second Midweek in Advent (Sermon Text)

Text Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6 NIV The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be Blessed through you." ... 15:1 After this, the Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your Shield, your very Great Reward." 2 But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can You give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." 4 Then the Word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars - if indeed you can count them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be." 6 Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

SERMON-1 (Last Week 5-DEC) GENESIS 3:1-21 THEME: "THE TREE **PLANTED**"

SERMON-2 (TODAY! 12 December) THEME: "THE TREE **PROMISED**"

- A. The "**Trouble**" with **Trusting** the Promise,
- B. The Promised Tree **Sprouts Up.** (Next, 3. "**PRUNED**" 4. "**PRESENTED**")

ADVENT-2/W Genesis 12:1-3;15:1-6 “GOD’S FAMILY TREE PROMISED” 12.12.18

PLANTING (GOD’S) A FAMILY TREE After you dig a hole in the ground, plant a seed, and cover it up, there is a time before you see the little sprout coming up out of the ground. This is a **time of faithful waiting**. During this time you cannot see the seed, and so you cannot monitor its progress and growth. But just because the seed is hidden from your sight does not mean that nothing happens. Under the cover of topsoil and enlivened by moisture, the seed that you planted germinates and begins to take root in the ground.

GOD’S TREE – PROMISED In much the same way God **planted** the Seed of His Family Tree, and then came the time of faithful waiting. Last Wednesday we heard how **God PLANTED the Seed** of His Savior to rescue fallen humanity. This Seed would crush the serpent’s head and bring life and forgiveness for God’s fallen people. But once planted, the Seed of God’s Family Tree **remains hidden** for a time before it sprouts from the ground. Today we hear of (THEME: God’s Family Tree) “**The Tree Promised.**”

A. The “Trouble” with Trusting the Promise

FAST-FORWARD... Today we jump from the time of **Adam and Eve** (last week) to the time of **Abraham**. The tree of humanity grew and flourished “*when men began to multiply on the face of the earth*” (**Genesis 6:1**), but that tree was diseased because “*every intent of the thoughts of [man’s] heart was only evil continually*” (**Genesis 6:5**). So God sent the great **flood of Noah’s** day, and later He confused the languages and scattered the people at the **tower of Babel**. But, despite all of this judgment through these many centuries, God’s promised Seed of a Savior **remained planted**. God always preserved a faithful remnant of people who trusted and proclaimed the promise of the coming Savior. Then came Abraham, the father of nations. About 20 centuries before Christ, God called Abraham to faith in the promised Savior. God told Abraham, “*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing...In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*” (**Gen.12:2-3**)

HARD TO TRUST But don’t think that Abraham found it easy to trust God’s Promise. He was **75 years old when the Holy Spirit** gave him the gift of faith. Before that, he and his family had served false gods (cf. **Joshua 24:2–3**). Even after Abraham believed in the coming Christ, he still had trouble believing God’s promise that he would have a son. On one occasion Abraham even despaired that his servant Eliezer of Damascus would be his heir. So God renewed His promise to Abraham: “*This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.*” (**15:4**)

WE TOO HAVE TROUBLE Just like Abraham, **you and I have the same trouble with trusting** God’s promises. God plants His Promise of a Savior, but we often don’t see the visible, tangible evidence that God works in our lives. Abraham saw his old age, but he couldn’t see the fruit of God’s

promise to give him a son. You and I can see our lives, our struggles, our doubts, our failures, our frustrations, but too often we don’t see the Fruit of God’s Redeeming Work of His own Son, Jesus Christ. When the economy slows down or you lose your job, you **struggle to believe that God provides** for your every need. When you are diagnosed with **cancer** or lose a loved one, you struggle to believe **that God gives you life** in His Son, Jesus Christ. When you struggle **with certain sins and temptations**, you struggle to believe that the Holy Spirit **gives you faith** and makes you holy.

MAKE YOUR OWN(?) You *could* try to imitate Abraham and **forge your own fulfillment** of God’s promise, some fulfillment that you can easily see. That’s what Abraham tried to do when he had **a son, Ishmael, by Hagar**, his **wife’s maidservant (Genesis 16)**. But our man-made solutions always fall short in fulfilling God’s gracious promises. As **Psalms 146** says, “*Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help*” (**v.3**). **That includes YOU!** God warns you not to trust your own ways of fulfilling His promises of salvation! God promised to give Abraham a son of promise, not a son of a servant. So, God again renewed His promise: “*I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.*” (**Gen17:2**)

B. The Promised Tree Sprouts Up

WAS ABR. (REALLY) GREAT? In spite of his many doubts and his troubles with trusting God’s promise, Abraham is still a great example of faith. “*He believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness*” (**Genesis 15:6**). **What makes** Abraham a great example of faith? Certainly not his perfect life, because he worshiped false gods for most of his life **before THE LORD chose HIM and gave HIM faith**. Certainly not his spotless record in dealing with other people, because, after all, twice he lied to the authorities that his wife was his sister. And it was certainly not because he always completely trusted God, because, as we’ve seen, Abraham both despaired and tried to offer his own fulfillment for God’s Promise.

WHAT MAKES GREAT(NESS)? So, what **does** make Abraham a great example of faith? (In the end) He simply **received God’s mercy** and **clung to the promise** that God would send the Seed of a Savior. As our **Lutheran Confessions** say, “*Faith is the worship which receives God’s offered blessings...*” (**Tappert, Apology IV 49**). Abraham certainly received God’s offered blessing that the Savior of the world would come through him and his family line. The promise may have been like a seed hidden in the ground, and the growth, or progress, of God’s promise may have been undetectable for a time, but Abraham still **received** it and **believed** it.

IN DUE TIME (Aka “...In the Fullness of Time”), when **Abraham was 100 years old and his wife, Sarah, was 90**, God’s Family Tree began to poke through the soil and show itself. Isaac was born, and then **Isaac** had two sons, **Jacob and Esau**. Jacob then had 12 sons, **the sons of Israel**. God’s Family Tree began to shoot up for all to see. After He led His people...