

Announcements

Shelter: Our Shelter service continues each week at noon, both in-person and via livestream. This brief midweek service runs about 40 minutes, and reflections are taken from our Shelter daily devotional email. Join us, in-person or via livestream, any week.

Gospel of Mark: The Gospel of Mark class will resume Sunday, June 14th at 11am, via livestream-only.

World Relief: Join us for a virtual event entitled "Journeys to Beginning". It will encourage you to hear the individual and family stories of recent immigrants to Sacramento who have been assisted through the work of World Relief. Thursday, June 18th, 7pm. Register here: <https://worldrelief.org/journeys/>

Summerfest 2020: Our annual vacation Bible school is going virtual! For kids in Kindergarten through Grade 5, videos will be provided each day (June 22nd-26th), and will include songs, funny skits, Bible lessons, at-home crafts, and fun games to play! There is no cost to access the daily video content, but advance registration is required. For the full Summerfest experience, purchase a Summerfest Fun Box for each child (\$25). Each box includes a commemorative t-shirt as well as all supplies necessary to complete the craft activities. Register now: valleysprings.org/summerfest.

Learning to Love - Race, Reconciliation, Forgiveness, and Discipleship: A mix of music, stories, testimonies, teaching, repentance, and forgiveness. Co-hosted Grace Sacramento and Soaring Oaks, two of our sister churches in the PCA. Every Thursday in July, 7pm-8:30pm, in the Worship Room. No RSVP needed. Livestream will be available for those who cannot attend in person.

Valley Springs Christian Preschool: Our weekday preschool program for 3's, 4's, and 5-year-olds. Registration for the 2020-21 school year is now open. See www.valleyspringschristianpreschool.org or contact Danya Schulte: danya@valleysprings.org / (916) 786-7940 x106.

Text-to-Give: A new option to make giving easier. Simply text "give" to (669) 333-5880. You'll be asked to fill out a quick form to get set up for the first time. After that, giving is as easy as sending a text. Try it today!

Order of Service

2nd week after Pentecost

June 14th, 2020

Gathered by God for Worship

Welcome

Call to Worship
Psalm 96:9-10

Songs of Praise
10,000 Reasons
Only a Holy God

Prayer of Adoration

Renewed by God Through Grace

Confession of Sin
Psalm 99:1

Declaration of Grace
Psalm 98:1-3

Song of Renewal and Gratitude
Come Praise and Glorify

Set Apart by God for Service in Every Area of Life

Offering

Sermon

Sent by God to Serve Our World Together

Song of Response
Every Promise of Your Word

Blessing

General Offering: June 1 - June 7	\$ 39,844
Weekly Budget Need	\$ 31,600
Last Week's Surplus	\$ 8,244
Budget Deficit (YTD).....	(\$ 149,572)

This information can also be found at valleysprings.org

Readings

Scripture

¹⁵ And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." ¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" ¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" ¹⁹ God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.

²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation.

²¹ But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

²² When he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham. ²³ Then Abraham took Ishmael his son and all those born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁶ That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. ²⁷ And all the men of his house, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

- Genesis 17:15-27 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

"Comedy is acting out optimism."

- Robin Williams

Even the resurrection has a kind of comedy to it. His closest followers dismiss it out of hand at first as an old wives' tale, and when Mary Magdalen comes upon him in the dim half-light of dawn, she mistakes him for the gardener of all people. The red marks on his hands are where he is holding roses. The trouble he is having with his feet comes from miles of patrolling the gravel walks to pick up gum wrappers with a pointed stick.

- Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale*

Old Sarah with her China teeth knows it will take a miracle to fill the empty place inside her where she waits for a baby that will never come, so when the angel appears and tells her a baby is coming she laughs and Abraham laughs with her because, having used up all their tears, they have nothing but laughter left. Because although what the angel says may be too good to be true, who knows? Maybe the truth of it is that it's too good not to be true.

- Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale* (p. 70-71)

Sermon Outline

Is This A Joke?

Genesis 17:15-27

The Life of Blessing

Brad Anderson

If comedy is the acting out of optimism, then one way the gospel can be heard is in our laughter. (Genesis 17:17)

Where can we hear the gospel in Genesis 17?

A comedic exchange:

- And God said to Abraham... (Genesis 17:15-16)
 - And Abraham said to himself... (Genesis 17:17)
 - And Abraham said to God... (Genesis 17:18)
 - And God said... (Genesis 17:19-21)
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And God said to Abraham:

- That very day... (Genesis 17:22-27)
 - And all the men of his house... (Genesis 17:22-27)
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Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- What is the silliest contract you once signed? The most serious contract? How did you confirm your agreements?
- When have you laughed recently? At what? Did you laugh out loud or just inside? Were you alone or with others in a group?
- Read Genesis 17:15-27. How do you see Abraham and Sarah's incredulity in the face of God's promise?
- Even in the face of his incredulity, Abraham still responds to God's promise with obedience and circumcises his son Ishmael and the men born in his house. Notice that the covenant of circumcision does not only cover his own biological children but also includes "all those born in his house or bought with his money" (Gen. 17:23). How might this begin to reflect God's promise that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (12:3)?
- What do you make of the new names God gives to Abram and Sarai? What about the names of Ishmael and Isaac?
- If cutting off one's foreskin is no longer required of God's people (because of what Jesus Christ has done on the cross), what is yet required? (See Romans 2:28-29 and Galatians 5:6)
- Circumcision then did not confer salvation any more than baptism does today, yet that truth is often missed in both Jewish and Christian circles: Why?
- Look back and trace how Abram's heart toward Ishmael has changed from indifference to blessing advocate? Can you see the trail of blessing God is making for Abram and for the world through Abram?
- For whom in your life today are you becoming a blessing advocate, pleading on their behalf before God?