



JULY 2023 NEWSLETTER

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Secretary hours: Wed. & Fri., 9-2pm

Pastor Rosemary Captain

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For those of you who know me well, you are aware that when it comes to Bible stories and passages, I am very curious. If I don't understand something or if I want more information, I ask questions; questions that you may also have.

Lately we have been exploring the book of Genesis in worship. Who was the father of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam? The answer is Abraham (formerly Abram) with his wife Sarah (formerly Sarai) and their story can be found in Genesis 12:1-25:18.

Which brings me to my first question. Why the name change and what does it mean? In Genesis 17:1-8 is the story of God changing Abram's name.

God's covenant with Abraham

17 When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk with me and be trustworthy. ²I will make a covenant between us and I will give you many, many descendants." ³Abram fell on his face, and God said to him, ⁴"But me, my covenant is with you; you will be the ancestor of many nations. ⁵And because I have made you the ancestor of many nations, your name will no longer be Abram but Abraham."

The name Abram means "high father". The name Abraham means "**father of a multitude.**" In Genesis 17:15-16 we can read about his wife's name change.

¹⁵ God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you will no longer call her Sarai. Her name will now be Sarah. ¹⁶ I will bless her and even give you a son from her. I will bless her so that she will become nations, and kings of peoples



will come from her.” The name Sarai means “my princess.” The name Sarah means “**mother of nations.**” (*Names were very important for the ancient people. Their name must mean something. For example, the name Isaac means “he will laugh”*)



INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW

My next question is “**why circumcision?**”, cutting off the flesh of the foreskin on males. Genesis 17:9-14, ⁹ God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, (*made in verse 2*) you and your descendants in every generation. ¹⁰ This is my covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Circumcise every male. ¹¹ You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it will be a symbol of the covenant between us. ¹² On the eighth day after birth, every male in every generation must be circumcised, including those who are not your own children: those born in your household and those purchased with silver from foreigners. ¹³ Be sure you circumcise those born in your household and those purchased with your silver. Your flesh will embody my covenant as an enduring covenant. ¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male whose flesh of his foreskin remains uncircumcised will be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant.”

(It appears to me that the ancient men were not as modest as the men of our time. In those days men did not wear underwear. To relieve themselves they just lifted their tunic and doing so, anyone could see if they had followed Abraham’s example.)

Quoting Walter Bruggemann’s **Interpretation** commentary on Genesis, page 155, I found an answer. “Circumcision may or may not have had religious or hygiene significance before the time of the Covenant with Abraham, but neither past religions significance or hygiene are the significance here. Circumcision has to do with a uniting of the spiritual and the physical. In other words, what is said must also be done. Circumcision was dramatic, but it created a radical sense of belonging. “Circumcision announces that Israelites belong only to this community and only to this God.” Circumcision is weighty, it represents a radical committed faith. Furthermore, it speaks to something deeper. Throughout scripture, and culminating in Romans 2:29, we see the circumcision is more than just the outward, it deals with the inward. The phrase ‘circumcision of the heart’ speaks to a deeper connection than a physical sign. It represents a “yielding of affections and will to God.”

I thought this topic of my curiosity was too “delicate” to discuss from the pulpit. That’s why I approached it here.

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE THAT I COULD RESEARCH? I will be glad to search for an answer. Have a safe holiday. Peace, Pastor Rosemary

USHERS:

- 7/2 Jan and Tom Miller
- 7/9 Sue Williams and Chuck Kistler
- 7/16 Jan and Tom Miller
- 7/23 Eric Moayer and Judy Schmitt
- 7/30 Melinda and Mike Stidham

JULY BIRTHDAYS:

- 7/8 Darlene Schaperkoetter
- 7/10 Tiffani Eisenhauer
- 7/23 Yvonne Weber
- 7/26 Clay Harris
- 7/28 Sherry Hackbarth



JULY ANNIVERSARIES:

- 7/14 Kim & Jim Turnbull # 39
- 7/15 Sharon & Steve Banjavcic # 45
- 7/17 Trisann & Bill Underwood # 24
- 7/30 Stacie & Tim Pickens # 7

OUR FRIENDS WHO ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND WORSHIP

Jeanette Brown
5904 Perrin Road
Fairview Heights, IL 62208

Yvonne Weber
200 St. Clair Dr.
Fairview Heights, IL62208

Darlene Schaperkoetter
1258 Larkspur Dr.
Mascoutah, IL 62258



Becky Ballard
1211 Moreland Apt. 12
Belleville, IL 62223

Ivy Schneider
213 Merriweather Ln.
Fairview Heights, IL 62208



PRAYER LIST: Urban Baum, David Seneczyn, Mari Ella Gianino, Carson Edwards, Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, Marilyn Paul, Beth Sheldon, Mary Holcomb, Syd Safriet, Ronald Bopp, Rosemary Williams, Becky Ballard,



CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF

Christoffer Galey, son of Bruce and Penny Wagner
And Bill Donovan

MEMORIAL FOR DARLENE BAX

Eileen Gammon, Judy Schmitt, Urban & Mary Lou Baum, Ginny Ganschinietz

DO YOU ENJOY FELLOWSHIP TIME ON COMMUNION SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP?

If so, would you be willing to provide the snacks on one Sunday? We have a volunteer for July, but the sign-up sheet is empty after that.



THANKS BE TO GOD!! If you haven't heard, we have a new Secretary. Her name is Dawn Cipponeri. Her hours are at the top of this newsletter. She is also the secretary for St. John UCC in Wood River, so she has experience.

WELCOME DAWN!!

July

2023

| Sunday | Monday | Tues day | Wednesday | Thursday | Frida y | Saturday |
|---|----------------|----------|---|---|------------------|----------|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 Service of Word & Sacrament 10 am Fellowship time after worship | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 Bible Study via Zoom at 6:30 pm AA Meeting | 7 | 8 |
| 9 Service of Word 10 am | 10 | 11 | 12 Church Council Meeting at 7 pm via Zoom | 13 Hearts & Hands daytime Quilters 10-2 pm Bible Study via Zoom at 6:30 pm AA Meeting | 14 | 15 |
| 16 Service of Word 10 am | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 Bible Study via Zoom at 6:30 pm AA Meeting | 21 | 22 |
| 23 Service of Word 10 am | 24 ASL 9-12 | 25 | 26 | 27 Bible Study via Zoom at 6:30 pm AA Meeting | 28 ASL 5-8 | 29 |
| 30 Service of Word 10 am | 31 | | | | | |

IT MAY BE VACATION SEASON FOR SOME, but bills do not take a vacation. Please remember your offerings this summer.

