



After 75 years living in the land of Ur of the Chaldeans, the Lord appeared to Abram and instructed him to pack his bags, uproot his life and livelihood and, along with his wife Sarai, move to the foreign land of Canaan. Without a question of why he was going or what exactly he was to do there, Abram did as the Lord commanded and started life anew in the Promised Land. Then, fourteen years later, God surprised Abraham by declaring that his long barren wife, Sarah, at 90 years old, would conceive.

Centuries later, in his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul described Abraham's actions in this way:

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. - Romans 4:18-21 NIV

I love the way Paul puts it: *against all hope*. Abraham in hope believed. Though the biological clock was ticking, though all precedent would have him believe otherwise, and though it had been a quarter century since God first made the promise, Abraham's faith did not weaken. But instead, he gave glory to God and acted in faith, being fully convinced that "God was able to do what He had promised."

It is with this same measure of faith that we are invited to RENEW our faith in Jesus and our commitment to serve Him with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness through the mission and ministries of Christ Church.

These past months have, at times, given us reasons to hope against hope. COVID, economic recession, and a denominational divide that has caused great pain across the pews have left us vulnerable to a weakening faith and wavering hope. But the witness of Abraham reminds us that in times that seem "as good as dead," we are called to RENEW our faith in the God who is always "able to do what He has promised."

As you consider your response to this call to RENEW, I encourage you to pray, "Lord, what do you want to do through me and Christ Church in 2023?"

We'll conclude our RENEW series on Celebration Sunday, February 5, at which time you are invited to bring your commitment card and give glory to God as you offer it to Him.

May God RENEW our faith in Jesus, and our following Him at Christ Church in 2023.

Rev. Dr. Daniel Irving

BETWEEN NOW AND FEBRUARY 5...

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Consider your blessings and the faithfulness of God to you and Christ Church. Ask for His guidance: "Lord, what would you have me give in 2023?"

ASSESS YOUR INCOME AND GIVING

Identify your current giving as a percentage of your income using the Renewed Generosity graphic.

SET YOUR GIVING GOAL

RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT IN WORSHIP

Fill out your 2023 Estimate of Giving Card and return it on February 5, Celebration Sunday. In worship, we will renew our commitment to Christ and Christ Church and consecrate these cards together.

TWO WAYS TO GIVE



Fill out the Stewardship Card and bring it with you to worship on February 5.



Set up your giving online at christchurchsl.org/renew.