



November 16 – 17, 2024

**Smoke and Fire**  
Genesis 15



### MUSIC THIS WEEKEND

CONTEMPORARY  
SAT 5:30 pm | SUN 10:30 am

**Great Things**  
**I Thank God**  
**Living Hope**

**Gratitude** (Sunday 10:30 am only)  
**House of the Lord**

CLASSIC | SUN 8:45 am

**All Are Welcome**  
**House of the Lord**  
**Who You Say I Am**  
CHOIR: **Crowded Table**  
FLUTES: **Adagio**  
**To Be Your Presence**

MESSAGE: **Paul Dean**  
**Communion** (Saturday 5:30 pm)

### JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

**Classic: Sun 8:45am | Contemporary: Sat 5:30pm, Sun 10:30am**  
Resources, livestreams, playlists and podcast links at [popmn.org](http://popmn.org)

**A Journey of Thanksgiving | November 27 | 2:00 – 7:30pm**  
Explore prayer stations set up around the Sanctuary, designed to help you reflect and give thanks. Pie will be served at 6:00 pm

**Service of Remembrance | December 17 | 7:00pm**  
Submit your loved one's name to be read at the service to Kari at [ksnyder@popmn.org](mailto:ksnyder@popmn.org) by Thursday, December 12

### JOIN US FOR COMMUNITY

**2025 Artist Calendars | \$15**  
Purchase your calendars in the Community Room beginning November 23. All proceeds benefit Feed my Starving Children.

**Life Savors: Savor the Season | December 12 | 11:30am**  
Scandinavian lunch with Grace Notes Trio! Register: [popmn.org](http://popmn.org)

### JOIN US IN GENEROSITY

**Your gift supports mission and ministry.**  
You can submit your 2025 statement of intent online at [popmn.org/fall-stewardship](http://popmn.org/fall-stewardship). Thank you!



## Connect With Us

We are here to love God and all people by being the heart, hands and feet of Jesus in the world so that all might know that they are loved. We are an open and affirming church. We value growing a relationship with God and with each other, and showing up for people in need in this community and beyond. **Welcome to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church!**



**Connect** with Prince of Peace! Scan here to join our mailing list and find ways to get involved.



Scan here for more information about **Family Ministry**.



Scan here to make a **prayer request** or to have a member of the Spiritual Care Team contact you.

**PAPER COPIES OF THESE FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CONNECT DESK.**

## WHAT IS A BLOOD PATH?

*God has promised Abram as many descendants as there are stars in the sky a promise that doesn't seem realistic to Abram. The text in black is an excerpt from "Walking the Blood Path," on the Covered in His Dust website, by Marty Solomon:*

Abram starts looking for some collateral to hold on God's promise. And God tells him to go and get a heifer, a goat, a ram, a pigeon, and a dove. So Abram gets the animals and cuts them in half and arranges them opposite of each other.

Does that seem odd to you? God didn't tell him to do that.

Abram knows exactly what to do because this is a common practice in the world of covenants. They are setting up what is called a bloodpath covenant. This is a covenant sign that is often used in Abram's day to signify a betrothal (engagement) covenant. Those very animals are used, cut in half, and arranged opposite one another on opposing slopes. ...

The arranged halves create a path of blood in between the animals. I will use the example of a betrothal to explain the ceremony. As the two parties agree to the marriage, the lesser party (in the example, this would be the future groom; he is asking the father of the future bride to marry his daughter) dons a white robe and then passes through the path of blood. As the blood splashes up on his white robe, the symbolic statement is, "If I mistreat or abuse your daughter, you may do this in my blood". After this, the father dons a white robe and passes through the blood path, saying, "If I do not supply you with a virgin for a daughter, you may do this in my blood."\*

It's the collateral covenant that allows for the parties to be held liable for their promises. God sets up an engagement covenant for Abram. Now, whose move is it? Who is the lesser party? Abram is, obviously.

But Abram doesn't pass through the halves. In fact, he chases away the vultures. What does that tell you? This ceremony has been set up for some time.

But Abram knows that he'll never be able to keep his end of the covenant. He won't be able to live obediently for God for the rest of his days. If Abram's little toe hits the bloodpath, he's a dead man.

And so God puts him in a deep sleep ... and Abram sees a flaming torch and smoking pot pass between the halves. Now, fire and smoke always symbolize the presence of God (think the pillar of fire/smoke). So what does Abram see? God is passing through the covenant halves — twice. God passes through the halves on behalf of Abram.

## REFLECTION:

Why does God walk the blood path in Abram's place? What does this say about God's commitment to Abram? What does it say about God's commitment to us?

Think about the impulse in modern Christianity to create boundaries, to declare who is in and who is outside of our communities and congregations. What does this story say about that impulse? How easy is it to shake God's love and commitment to each one of us?

Abram, who knows he can't live up to this covenant, is loved and blessed by God anyway. Do we have authority to declare anyone outside of God's love and provision? Why do you think we continue to do this, after all this time?

*\* Obviously this reference is problematic, and a topic for another time.  
For now, consider it a moment when we realize how far we've come, and how far we have yet to go.*