March 1, 2026 – Second Sunday in Lent

First Reading: Genesis 11: 31-12: 4

11: 31-32 – Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan; but when they came to Haran, they settled there. Terah died in Haran.

12: 1-3 – Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

12: 4 - So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

When in your life did you most have to leave everything familiar behind?
What was that experience like for you? What made you able to do it?
If God asked you to leave everything familiar behind today, could you do it?
What for you would be the most difficult to leave behind?

Hebrews 11: 8 - By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going.

Have you ever set out, not knowing where you were going? If so, what was it like?

Hebrews 11: 9 – By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents.

When in your life have you felt that you were living in tents as in a foreign land?
What was it like? What made you able to do it?
How does Abraham's being able to face the unknown help you in your life today?

Proverbs 16: 9 – The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps.

What do you think – how do you feel – about the following statements?
The biggest blessings of God sometimes trace back to the smallest of steps of faith.
What for you have been some of those smallest of steps of faith?
A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.
What for you would be the next first step?
God wants you to get where God wants you to go
more than you want to get where God wants you to go.

Psalm: Psalm 121

3 - The LORD watches over you and will not fall asleep.
7 - The LORD will preserve you from all evil and will keep your life.
8 - The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore.

What do those promises mean to you?
How do they help you face the challenges, difficulties, and uncertainties of life?

Second Reading: Romans 4: 1-5, 13-17

3 - What does the scripture say? *(quoting from Genesis 15: 6, when God told a childless man that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars)* "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."

17 - The God in whom (Abraham) believed gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

What else would we need?

Gospel: John 3: 1-17

1-3 - Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above (or born again)."

4-5 - Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."

9 - Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

10, 16 – Jesus answered him, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."
17 - "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) Jesus speaks of salvation in terms of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. The powers of the future have broken into the present and we can experience them now in part but not fully. There is much more to come.

In Paul's epistles he speaks of salvation in terms of justification by faith. If we have faith in Jesus we are declared righteous. Christ's righteousness is credited to our account.

In the Gospel of John Jesus speaks of salvation in terms of eternal life and being born from above or being born again. Note verb tense "may have" in John 3: 16.

The last thing Nicodemus says in this passage is, "How can these things be?"
Fortunately we hear about Nicodemus later.
John 7: 50-51 – Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before and who was one of them, asked (the chief priests and Pharisees), "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?"
John 19: 38-39 – Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds.