

# The power of belief

Heather Smith *reflects on* Genesis 15:1-12. 17-18

Abram had not exactly covered himself with glory since God set him on his path to the land that God planned to give him. After arriving in Canaan with his nephew Lot, a famine sent him to Egypt in search of food and, afraid for his own safety, he said that his wife Sarai was his sister but neglected to mention that she was also his wife. Poor Sarai was taken into Pharaoh's house, but when God sent plagues Pharaoh realised something was not quite right. On the other hand, Abram bravely rescued Lot when he had been captured by enemies and stuck scrupulously to a promise not to take any goods from the King of Sodom. In today's reading, God makes a covenant with Abram. Recognising that Abram is, like all of us, neither all good nor all bad, God gives Abram the chance to believe, and when he does, it tips the balance.

It seems odd that just believing counted as being righteous, no matter what Abram had done in the past, or would do in the future. But believing God is the key to right behaviour. Abram did not always get it right even after this hugely significant commitment of God's, and neither do we. But believing works deep inside us, working its change, slowly but surely making us the people that God planned. 🙏



God, whose grace is eternal, plant within us a deep seed of belief that sustains and changes us as we journey with you. Amen.

## The ordination of women

### Part 2 – “not in the Bible”

by Heather Cooke

Ten years ago, something controversial happened, over twenty years after the foundations had been laid. So divisive was the consecration of Libby Lane as the first woman bishop in the Church of England, that a protester interrupted the service in York Minster, shouting “Not in the Bible!” One of the first women priests consecrated in 1994, she became suffragan Bishop of Stockport at that service in 2015, then diocesan Bishop of Derby four years later.

The subject of women priests and bishops has always been controversial, and even today a

minority of Anglicans share the views of that lone protester.

It's true that no women bishops are mentioned in the Bible. Indeed, the only possible reference to bishops at all is in 1 Timothy 3:2, depending how it's translated. Yet in just over thirty years of women priests, ten for women bishops, these servants of Christ and their communities have surely proved their worth.

*Heather was ordained deacon in 1999 and priest in 2000, both at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Suffolk. She is now “retired” but takes one service a month, in between attending heavy-metal gigs. 🙏*

## World Poetry Day

by Caroline Hodgson

In recent issues of *Sunday Link* we've been hearing about “Poetry and Faith”. So it's timely that this coming Friday is World Poetry Day ([www.unesco.org/en/days/poetry](http://www.unesco.org/en/days/poetry)). The website for this UNESCO initiative makes a bold assertion: “In every culture and on every continent – poetry speaks to our common humanity and our shared values, transforming the simplest of poems into a powerful catalyst for dialogue and peace.”

With that in mind, during the coming weeks of Lent why not set aside some time to read or write poetry? You might decide to write a poetic reflection after prayer, or when you've read the Gospel reading set for that day. Or you could take a subject such as “faith”, “Jesus”, or “peace”. Start with a blank page, set a timer for five minutes (you'll be surprised how long that seems!) and write continuously, without thinking too much about it. You can always tear it up or shred it afterwards, but you might be surprised at the results. 🙏

“During Lent, let us find concrete ways to overcome our indifference.”

Pope Francis