**Sermon at Service of Commemoration & Thanksgiving for the life of her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth ll, to include start of Sermon Series on “Isaac-the little know Patriarch” –Isaac’s long delayed birth on Sunday, Sept. 11, 2022**

Today, we’re commemorating & thanking God for the life, example & work of our late Queen Elizabeth ll. Among so many tributes, are repeated references to her constancy, duty, service, the dignity, with which she carried herself, her innate modesty & meekness. Despite her lofty position, she was humble not in the sense of being a ’creep’, but in having no swagger or ‘side’ to her. Surely that came from her Christian faith & following of Christ’s principles. On August 3rd, 2022 she wrote “Throughout my life the message & teaching of Christ have been my guide & in them I find hope.” In one of her Christmas Broadcasts, she said “For me the life of Jesus Christ-the Prince of Peace-is an inspiration & anchor in my life.” The Lord Jesus Christ was her anchor, inspiration & hope meaning future certainty. Indeed, when her death was announced on Thursday, one TV shot was of a rainbow next to Windsor Castle’s Round Tower. A rainbow-God’s sign to Noah that He would keep His covenant promise not to repeat the flood. Was this a sign that the Queen was entering “an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade (so unlike even the grandest earthly ones, as the Queen knew) kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power.” 1 Peter 1: 4? Clearly, in her long life with its many ups & downs, she trusted in Him as her anchor & in His promises, as she obeyed & followed His teachings. What an example for us & we thank God so much for that!

She was, of course, following in the footsteps of a long line of believers in Scripture & elsewhere since the days of the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac & Jacob. “Abraham” we read in Romans 4: 20-21) “did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith & gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had the power to do what He promised.” This trust sustained Abraham through the long years of waiting for Isaac’s birth. He was, naturally, tempted to “waver”, as he looked at the facts-the impossibility of an aging couple conceiving. It’s so human to “waver” in these circumstances & try to give things a nudge. Yet, on the whole, he was “fully persuaded” to trust & obey God, as we shall see.

In the long run up to Isaac’s birth, God promised Abram, as he was then, a son & heir 4 times. Firstly, in Gen. 12: 1 there was God’s call to leave Haran for Canaan which he obeyed. At Shechem “The Lord appeared to Abram & said ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’”verse 7. Secondly, in Gen. 15: 2-4 Abram was starting to “waver”-to despair of offspring, so tried giving God a nudge by suggesting Eliezer of Damascus, his steward, should be his heir. In v 4 comes the promise of a son “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” He then obeyed the instructions to make a sacrifice, where there was a special sign, which helped him not to “waver” anymore. Thirdly, in Gen. 16: 1-7 Sarah despairs, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go sleep with my maidservant (Hagar); perhaps I can build a family through her.” v 2. This ended badly for all of them-she was unkind to Hagar & blamed Abram for the unhappy situation v.5. Thirdly, in Gen. 17: 15-17 Abram “wavers” again & laughs, in incredulity, when God promised a son to the newly named Sarah-“her name will be Sarah. I will bless her & will surely give you a son by her…Abraham fell face down; he laughed & said to himself ‘will a son be born to a man a hundred years old?’ “v16-17 . Moreover, he obeyed God when told to adopt circumcision, which leads to his new name of Abraham. This shows that obedience is a remedy for “wavering”. Lastly, Sarah’s incredulity causes her to laugh, when she overhears God’s promise of a son within a year Gen. 18: 10-hence God’s wonderful challenge in verse 14 “is anything too hard for the Lord?” This reminds us to recall God’s promises when we doubt him in uncertain times. Sarah’s laugh of unbelief became one of joy & thankfulness to God. When Isaac was born Gen.21: 2, Sarah’s laugh of unbelief became one of joy & thankfulness to God “God has brought me laughter & everyone who hears about this will laugh with me (adding) who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children?” Gen. 21: 6-7. What can we learn from this? It is human to fluctuate between “wavering” & being “fully persuaded” that God will fulfil His promises. To avoid wavering we should recall, thankfully, past promises fulfilled & obey whatever we’re called to do now, while we wait-perhaps asking for a sign to encourage us in our trust. The Queen’s life, modesty & sense of duty suggests she followed Christ’s teaching, trusted his promises & was moulded by Him, for which we are so grateful. In the King’s speech, he said ”to my darling Mama, thank you.” We echo “thank you Ma’am for your long life of Christian service.” & thank you, Lord, for the Queen’s trust without “wavering” in You & your promises. May we follow her example.