

Scripture: [Genesis 18:1-14](#)

I was once going through some of my old files at work with the intent of thinning them out, and I came across a technical report I had written quite a number of years earlier. As I read through the report, I was struck with the thought, “Man, I was pretty smart when I wrote that. I wonder what happened?”

As we age, we decline in many ways. My mental ability is not what it was. Physically, I am a far cry from the young Don Brunk who worked on a framing crew. I realize this, and I've tamped down my expectations as to what I'm capable of.

In the scripture passage, an eavesdropping Sarah hears a stranger saying that she will have a baby when she is well beyond childbearing age. Her reaction is completely normal – she laughs. She knows she is no longer capable of it. But God has other plans. Within a year she bears a son, an heir to carry on the family of Abraham and Sarah, and the special understanding of, and relationship with, God. We don't know what it took for Sarah to do this. Bearing a child and giving birth is hard work, but somehow she did it.

We moved into this community three years ago, and frankly, I viewed the Warwick River Mennonite Church as old, declining, past its prime, and probably not capable of giving birth to anything new. Was I wrong? Does God have something else in mind?

In the last three years I've learned a few things. I've learned that this church also has a special understanding of, and relationship with, God. It is lived out through your embrace of each other in this close-knit community, but it is not limited to just the insiders. I have experienced this personally as you supported me during my surgery and recovery. I have seen it extended to other newcomers as well.

I've learned that you are not afraid of change and newness. You have not balked at new songs, or new formats of worship. This has been especially evident recently as we have been meeting for “virtual” worship. Although we are not physically together, there is a certain intimacy in our meetings that bespeaks

adaptability. You know that what's important is not the building or the particular style of worship, but the intentionality of reaching out to each other.

Sarah laughed initially, but at some point she must have noticed something happening that contradicted her self-assessment. Maybe it was morning sickness, or some other indication of inner stirrings. I don't know what God has in mind, but perhaps now is a good time to look for inner stirrings in our congregation. Could something new be growing within?

