



St. Luke's East Hampton

Sermon Preached by the Rev. Benjamin Shambaugh

August 10, 2025; Transfiguration: [Exodus 34:29-35](#), [2 Peter 1:13-21](#), [Luke 9:28-36](#)

This week the Same Text Different Lens series with St. Luke's and the Jewish Center of the Hamptons concludes with a discussion of Abraham. If you were to ask most people about Abraham, they might respond with something about Abraham Lincoln. This, however, is the Abraham that Abraham Lincoln was named for.

This Abraham is the Abraham of the covenant and the father of not one but three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Jews revere Abraham as the first patriarch and the founding father of Judaism, with the near sacrifice of Isaac and the covenant solidifying their role as the "chosen people." Christians see Abraham as the spiritual ancestor of all believers, both Gentile and Jew, emphasizing Abraham's faith in God rather than strict obedience to Mosaic Law. For Christians, the near sacrifice of Isaac prefigures the death of Christ on the cross. For Islam, Abraham is revered as a prophet and holds the title "friend of God." Many Islamic prayers and rituals refer to Abraham, who is seen as the archetype of the perfect Muslim and the builder of the Kaaba, a site of pilgrimage in Mecca.

To put it simply, we are all children of Abraham. Imagine what would happen if we treated each other as brothers and sisters or – using an image from an Episcopal priest who has spent considerable time in Israel – saw the issues in the Middle East as siblings struggling to get along with one another. If we honored our Abrahamic roots, we would be working toward healing rather than continual hurt and reconciliation and reparation rather than revenge.

As Rabbi Josh will explain, the Jewish interpretation of the near sacrifice of Isaac is that God provides a way out and that human death and suffering are no longer needed. Imagine how our world would be different if we believed that and, with our Abrahamic brothers and sisters, lived in a way to make it so. Reconnecting with our common roots might just be a way to begin.