

# Where's Your Chair?

Acts 7 1-16



Alleluia. Blessed are those who fear the Lord  
and have great delight in his commandments.  
Their descendants will be mighty in the land,  
a generation of the faithful that will be blest. Psalm 112:1-2

## **Praising:**

People of God, arise!  
In the name of the Lord of life,  
stand for truth in the face of lies,  
offer love in the place of strife;  
for his promise will not fail,  
his compassion will yet prevail.  
People of God, arise!

## **Reading:**

Acts 7:1-16  
Consider Abraham and Joseph

Like many early Christian sermons, Stephen's incendiary reply draws on the Jewish back-story he shared with most of those listening to him – friends as well as foes. Abraham's heroism was to step out in faith, to trust in God's promises in the face of all the evidence that he had no reason to do so. What Joseph exemplifies is the grace and wisdom that sees the overarching

hand of God in every situation – whatever way the wind of fate appears to be blowing at the time. Stephen's key observation is that the primary concern of the Jews is to cling to and preserve the past at all costs. True obedience for Stephen, is the willingness to respond positively to God's new call like Abraham, and to trust in God's provision through each new situation like Joseph.

## **Listening:**

## **Praying:**

Lord as the past calls us back,  
again and again

- lead us forward in your truth to the new things you want to do in your Church
- take us through our anxieties and uncertainties to your vision for new life and growth
- show us that you have put us in this time and place to do something new for you

Father: much as I love the tradition, enjoy the history and value the heritage, free me from the chains of the past, to live for Christ in the freedom of the here and now. Amen

## **Doing:**

Monday, 25 April 2016