

# Senior Recognition Charge: Build Altars

6/11/2023

Rev. Jeff Mansfield

---



Preaching on:  
Genesis 12:1–9

Elaine, Jordan, and Nadine (and Lilly from afar),

In our scripture reading this morning, Abram is called by God to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and to venture into an unknown land. It's a leap of faith, a journey into the unfamiliar. Maybe you can identify somewhat with how Abram must have felt—some combination of excitement and fear.

Graduates, like Abram, you are now standing on the threshold of a new beginning. You have completed one stage of your journey, and before you lies a vast expanse of possibility. Just as Abram left his comfort zone, you too are stepping out of the familiar and embracing the unknown. The future may seem daunting, but remember that God is with you every step of the way.

Now, as Abram journeyed through the land of Canaan, he paused at significant locations and built altars to God. These altars were physical reminders of his encounters and his relationship with God, symbols of worship and devotion. They marked sacred moments in his life and represented his commitment to God's plan.

When you were born, your parents brought you into church (I think this church for all of you, right?) and we baptized you. You were too small to build altars for yourselves, so we built this first one for you. Not a physical structure, of course, but a spiritual marker that we prayed would stand out on the horizon of your identity and always remind you of God's love for you, God's acceptance of you, God's presence in your life. When you were confirmed, we asked you to begin to participate in this spiritual altar-raising, as we guided you through the process of becoming members of the church.

So, seniors, this is my simple charge to you this morning. As you transition from high school to the next phase of your lives, do not forget to continue to build altars to God. Again, not literal structures but spiritual markers—do not let this senior recognition be the final marker of your spiritual lives. Continue to journey with God and build altars of worship, build altars of spiritual growth, build altars of gratitude and of service to others, and build altars of love. Let the life ahead of you be a life filled with the Spirit and a life in which you remember to mark God's presence in your journey.