

E-Messenger

First Church of Christ

This article appeared in the Wall Street Journal.

In 1966 Time magazine ran a cover story asking: "Is God Dead?" Many have accepted the cultural narrative that he's obsolete—that as science progresses, there is less need for a "God" to explain the universe. Yet it turns out that the rumors of God's death were premature. More amazing is that the relatively recent case for his existence comes from a surprising place—science itself.

Here's the story: The same year Time featured the now-famous headline, the astronomer Carl Sagan announced that there were two important criteria for a planet to support life: The right kind of star, and a planet the right distance from that star. Given the roughly octillion—1 followed by 27 zeros—planets in the

universe, there should have been about septillion—1 followed by 24 zeros—planets capable of supporting life.

With such spectacular odds, the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, a large, expensive collection of private and publicly funded projects launched in the 1960s, was sure to turn up something soon. Scientists listened with a vast radio telescopic network for signals that resembled coded intelligence and were not merely random. But as years passed, the silence from the rest of the universe was deafening. Congress defunded SETI in 1993, but the search continues with private funds. As of 2014, researchers have discovered precisely bubkis—0 followed by

nothing.

What happened? As our knowledge of the universe increased, it became clear that there were far more factors necessary for life than Sagan supposed. His two parameters grew to 10 and then 20 and then 50, and so the number of potentially life-supporting planets decreased accordingly. The number dropped to a few thousand planets and kept on plummeting.

Even SETI proponents acknowledged the problem. Peter Schenkel wrote in a 2006 piece for Skeptical Inquirer magazine: "In light of new findings and insights, it seems appropriate to put excessive euphoria to rest . . . We should quietly admit that the early estimates . . . may no longer be tenable."

February Issue

Volume 4, Issue 2

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As factors continued to be discovered, the number of possible planets hit zero, and kept going. In other words, the odds turned against any planet in the universe supporting life, including this one. Probability said that

THE POWER OF PRAYER

How often do you pray? Paul tells us that we should "pray without ceasing", but do we?

And even if we do pray many times a day, what are we praying? Do we fully understand that who we are speaking with is the God of all creation who wants each of us to draw closer to Him and allow Him to be the dominant force in our lives?

James 5:15-17 says, *And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord*

will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.

¹⁶ *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

¹⁷ *Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.*

In these verses we learn a few things

about prayer that may be helpful in our daily prayer life and in our walk with the Lord.

We see that *the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective*. There is power in prayer! It is a power that is given through prayer and a power reserved for His children. Notice, however, that it is the prayer of a "righteous" person that is powerful and effective. What does

that mean? We know that the only way for us to be righteous is to receive the gift of salvation offered through Jesus. That is a one-time decision we make to secure our eternity, but since we are human beings and are living sacrifices before our God, we tend to crawl, wiggle, or even run off of the altar before Him. Since that is the case and sin is still very much a part of our

Serving in February

Greeters:

- 7—Scott & Anne Bard (A)
- 14—Toby & Jane Runyan (A)
- 21—Scott & Pam Hartman (A)
- 28—Dean & Sue Smethurst (A)
- 31—

Communion Ministry:

- 7—Dean & Sue Smethurst
- 14—Larry Snavely
- 21—Ramon & Barbara Alpaugh

28—Jim & Pat McPeak

Prayer Warriors:

Jane Perry & Cindy Perry

Welcome Center:

- 7—John/Nora Altman (9); Ron & Shellee Brown (9:45)
- 14—Lesley Shirkey (9); (9:45)
- 21—Jordan/Heather Day (9:45)

Nursery:

- 7—Jane Runyan/Grace Rohrer
- 14—Anna Trubey/Megan Grimm
- 21—Kim Snavely/Caity Karnes
- 28—Courtney Herendeen/Riley Sabins

Birthdays & Anniversaries



- 1 Bill Brandeberry
- 2 Vincent Girardot
- 4 Katelyn Farrell
- 7 Jacob Manges, Logan Smith
- 9 Carole Cramer, Esther Rosendaul, Danielle Strouse
- 12 Cassidy Hughart
- 13 Ben Riehle
- 14 Tracy Brandeberry, Dean Krill
- 17 Wendy Farrell
- 18 Roger Ellis, Paul Engel
- 21 Nora Altman, Esther Krill
- 24 Jan Piper, Kayla Stiverson, Edith Wagner
- 25 Katie Beerbower, Melissa

Beerbower

- 27 John Altman
- 28 Rick Reasor, Polly Slesman



- 4 Joe & Linda Roberts (21)
- 14 Tom & Cindy Horton (30)
- 15 Mark & Kelly Breininger (18)

Valentine's Day Dinner

The Mission Team will host a fundraiser dinner on Sunday, February 14, 6:00 PM in the fellowship hall for couples. The menu includes salad bar, bread, chicken parmesan, and pie. Tickets cost \$30/couple and will be available 1/31 and 2/7 or through the church office.

Family News

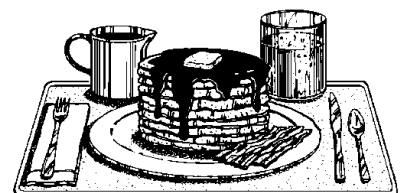
The church family expresses her sympathy to the following families:

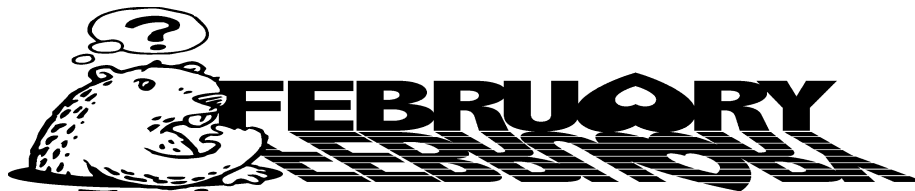
- ♥ Tom & Cindy Horton and family on the death of Tom's brother, Ned.
- ♥ Naida Rittenhouse and family on the loss of Ann.

Pancake & Sausage Supper





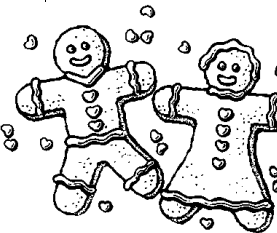
The 8th annual Pancake & Sausage Supper, hosted by the Mission Team and the Pancake & Sausage Committee will be held Thursday, March 3, 5:00-7:00 PM in the fellowship hall. The free will offering will go toward the July 13-23 Mission

Trip to American Indian Christian Mission in Show Low, AZ. Frozen 1 pound yummy Jacoby's sausage patties and casing will be available for purchase for \$4 each.





FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 10:00 Craft Group	2 10:00 Craft Group 	3 5:30 Supper 6:15 Fusion 6:30 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Men's Bible Study	4 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons 9:30 Senior Seekers	5	6
7 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship 6:00 Super Bowl Party @ Snavelys'	8	9	10 5:30 Supper 6:15 Fusion 6:30 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Men's Bible Study	11 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons 9:30 Senior Seekers	12	13 8:00 Men's Breakfast @ 4 Seasons, Bryan
14 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship 6:00 Valentine's Day Dinner	15  PRESIDENTS DAY	16 12:45 Visitation Ministry	17 5:30 Supper 6:15 Fusion 6:30 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Men's Bible Study	18 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons 9:30 Senior Seekers	19	20
21 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	22	23 11:45 Lunch Bunch @ 4 Seasons, Bryan	24 5:30 Supper 6:15 Fusion 6:30 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Men's Bible Study	25 9:30 Ladies Bible Study @ Seasons 9:30 Senior Seekers	26	27
28 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship 11:45 Senior Saints Pizza Potluck Deadline to return M & M containers	29 					



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Love All, Worship One,
Make Disciples

Bryanfcc.org



Connect with us!

Facts & Figures

January 3

Attendance SS 38	Worship 41 /133
Offering	\$

January 10

Attendance SS NC	Worship 32/94
Offering	\$

January 17

Attendance SS 28	Worship 46/132
Offering	\$7,095.50

January 24

Attendance SS 28	Worship 36/136
Offering	\$3,330.00

Needed for Budget \$5,980.01

Love All

Our Service Personnel: Kevin Bergman (GA), Igor Blinzler (MO), Jared Headley (CO), Lindsey Kaiser, Nathan McCoy (Japan), Stewart Martin (NC), Jessie Stillman (OH), Josh Severs (Afghanistan), Josh Tonneas (MA)

Cancer: Gwen Acker-Dickinson, Bruce Beerbower, Arlene Boyer, Brent, Tim Bright, Sherry Buchsteiner, Elizabeth Burkhardt, Jennie Case, Chuck, Martin Collins, Gwen Acker-Dickinson, Diane Distan, Weston DuBois, Carrie H., Gene Johns, Molly Johnston, Kent, Judy Koerner, Chuck Lees, Marshall, Tim Mavis, Aaron Nartker, Connie Pence, Jim

Pringle, Elaine Purdue, Kathy Rittenhouse, Bob & Sue Secoy, Gail Siebenaler, Lyle Snavely, Dinah Stiltner, Jaime Trevino, Tammy, Joe Vaccaro, Linda Walker, Kathy Walton, Drew Wayman, Stacy Weber, Al West, Gloria Wright. **Other Concerns:** Jennifer Mavis, Bill McCarthy, Brianna Lloyd, Amy Boyd, Jo Harman, Troy Hug, Trevor Bailey, Leona Puff, Neighborhood, Geri Cox, Dale Boyer, Danielle Strouse, Bob Wagner, Paul Newcomb, Denise Easterday, Asher Cravens, Brenda Ridgway, Annie Engel, Alexander Tressler, Bryce Gambler, Cindy Wolf. **Shut Ins: Fountain**

Park: Maribel Duckworth, Georgianna Weaver **Hillside:** Floyd Puffenbarger, **Home:** Marcena Bly, Linda Lewis, **Fairlawn Haven:** Gerald Wetmore, **Genesis:** Vivian Holdsworth, **The Lakes of Monclova:** Roger Ellis

even we shouldn't be here.

Today there are more than 200 known parameters necessary for a planet to support life—every single one of which must be perfectly met, or the whole thing falls apart. Without a massive planet like Jupiter nearby, whose gravity will draw away asteroids, a thousand times as many would hit Earth's surface. The odds against life in the universe are simply astonishing.

Yet here we are, not only existing, but talking about existing. What can account for it? Can every one of those many parameters have been perfect by accident? At what point is it fair to admit that science suggests that we cannot be the result of random forces? Doesn't assuming that an intelligence created these perfect conditions require far less faith than believing that a life-sustaining Earth just happened to beat the inconceivable odds to come into being?

There's more. The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces—gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the "strong" and "weak" nuclear forces—were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio between the nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction—by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000,000—then no stars could have ever formed at all. Feel free to gulp.

Multiply that single parameter by all the other necessary conditions, and the odds against the universe existing are so heart-stoppingly astronomical that the notion that it all "just happened" defies common sense. It would be like tossing a coin and having it come up heads 10 quintillion times in a row. Really?

Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who coined the term "big bang," said that his atheism was "greatly shaken" at these developments. He later wrote that "a common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology The numbers one calculates from the

facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question."

Theoretical physicist Paul Davies has said that "the appearance of design is overwhelming" and Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox has said "the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator . . . gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here."

The greatest miracle of all time, without any close seconds, is the universe. It is the miracle of all miracles, one that ineluctably points with the combined brightness of every star to something—or Someone—beyond itself.

Mr. Metaxas is the author, most recently, of "Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life" (Dutton Adult, 2014).

[Destined to Win,](#)
[Larry Snively](#)

[\(Prayer cont. pg. 1 \)](#)

world we are to "confess our sins to each other and pray for each other so that we may be healed" making us a righteous person with a powerful and effective prayer.

We are given the example of Elijah and told that he was a human being like us meaning that he dealt with sin as we all do. But his prayer for no rain and later his prayer for rain were powerful and effective prayers. Elijah knew that prayer was useless without him being totally dependent on God for the answer. Nothing from Elijah or nothing from us can work through a prayer, it is God and God alone who hears and answers

Ready to step-up your prayer life; to have powerful and effective prayers? Stay in God's Word, grow closer to Him, let Him take control of your life in all areas. Come join us as Larry and Brock guide us through learning more about prayer over the next few weeks so that we

may have powerful and effective prayers.

[Continually Overcoming,](#)
[Tim Calvin](#)

