

E-Messenger

First Church of Christ

In the 1940s, Flagstaff, Maine, was an active logging town. The tiny town's 300 residents enjoyed living in the picturesque valley. However, shortly after World War II, the state government notified the town of its plans to build a hydroelectric dam downriver from Flagstaff. Unfortunately, that meant the town was destined to be flooded, making it a ghost town under 50 feet of water.

Dr. Halford Luccock, Professor of homiletics at Yale University, commented on the sense of futility Flagstaff's residents experienced once they learned it was destined for extinction. He said the effect on that little town was demoralizing. Everything suddenly came to a standstill. All construction stopped, and all repairs and improvements ceased. What was the use of painting a house if, in a few years, it would be under water? Why bother to fill in potholes if the whole village was going to be wiped out anyway?

The town quickly decayed. Month by month, the whole village became run-down and ghostly. Ultimately, they could do nothing about it but prepare to move out. The river that was dammed up was appropriately named "Dead River" because hope had died in Flagstaff.

Dr. Luccock made this memorable application. **"Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present."** Solomon put it more simply, *"Where there is no*

vision, the people perish..." (**Proverbs 29:18a KJV**).

What are your hopes for 2023... and beyond? The Bible teaches that hope is one of three essential virtues. *"And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love..."* (**1 Corinthians 13:13a**). Hope is confidence in the future. Hope is the expectation that something good is going to happen tomorrow. Hope gives us power in the present. Hope is so important that **Romans 8:24** reminds us, *"For we are saved by hope..."* (KJV). We all need hope on three different levels: short-term, long-term, and eternal.

Short-term hopes energize us. I'm invigorated if I have something to look forward to in the immediate future. I'm going to play golf on Friday. I get to preach on Sunday. Our family is getting together for a Christmas celebration next week. Those anticipated events lift spirits and energize us.

Long-term hopes enhance endurance. Perhaps you're looking forward to getting your doctorate someday, or you dream of that day when you can be debt-free or retire. Long-term hopes give us the incentives to persevere through difficulty.

Eternal hopes are essential because they provide an ultimate

purpose regardless of what is happening at the moment.

Simon Peter reminded us that through Christ, we have been reborn into *"...a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you"* (**1 Peter 1:3-4**).

An eternal hope enhances the satisfaction we get from short-term and long-term goals. It keeps other dreams in proper perspective and enriches all of life. The Apostle Paul wrote, *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment."* (**1 Timothy 6:17**).

We enjoy material possessions and healthy pleasures more if they are not our primary hope. The Bible says, *"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope"* (**Romans 15:4**).

A well-known hymn begins, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness," and ends with, "All other ground is sinking

February Issue

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sand." Sadly, there are many who have "sinking sand" hopes. They place their hope in financial success, academic or athletic achievements, or personal relationships. While these may provide temporary satisfaction, they are not eternal hopes. They are sinking sand hopes.

We have all known people who worked hard to achieve prominence but then resisted retiring because all their hopes – their entire identities – were tied to their job. When they were eventually forced to retire, they shriveled up and died because they had nothing to live for. Truly, "All other ground is sinking sand."

The doomed town of Flagstaff, Maine, is

Serving in February

Deaconesses:

Teresa Gambler & Kim Snavelly

Elder Schedule:

5—Larry Snavelly
12—Dave Beerbower
19—Doug Haase
26—Jim McPeak

Nursery:

5—SS-Angie & Eric Murphy, 2nd—
Kelly & Barry VonDeylen
12—SS-2nd—Cody & Ashley
Grimm
19—SS—Beth & Terence Cling-
man, 2nd—Stacie Beerbower & Sha-
ron Blinzler
26—SS-2nd—Sandi & Gary Oberlin

Children's Church:

5—Ryan Beerbower

12—Gail Wyrick & Karen Roose
19—Ryan Beerbower
22—Doug & Julia Haase



Birthdays & Anniversaries



2 Vincent
Girardot,
Sawyer Von
Deylen
7 Aaliya

Grimm, Jacob Manges
9 Carole Cramer, Esther
Rosendaul
12 Cassidy Hughart
21 Julia Haase, Esther Krill
23 Tyler Beck, Rilyn Perry
24 Miles Manges, Edith Wag-
ner
25 Melissa Beerbower
27 John Altman



5 Ron & Karen Roose (51)
14 Tom & Cindy Horton
(37)
26 Barry & Kelly Von
Deylen (6)

Attention Senior Saints:

We will do Lunch
Bunch on Thursday,
2/23 at 12:00 PM at
Third Rail. No trans-
portation will be pro-
vided.

Family News

SYMPATHY

The church family extends her sympathy to Janet McCarthy on the death of her mother, Blake Shilling.

Thank you!

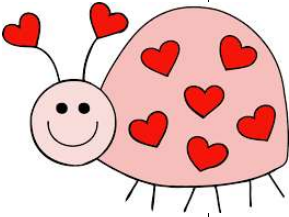



"Thank you for the many cards I received when my son, Bob died. They were so appreciated!" Annabelle West

To my dear Christian brothers & sisters—

I cannot find the adequate words I need to thank you for your help in my move to the apartment. To the ladies who helped me pack three days before the move, you are much appreciated. To the men and women who were part of the team who moved heavy furniture and numerous other things,

you were a Godsend on moving day. Thanks to the ladies how prepared the lunch for the weary movers. It was delicious and a welcome time to rest and fellowship. Also thank you to those who prayed for good weather that day and for a smooth move. God heard your prayers. He is so good. What a blessing you all have been to me. With sincere thanks and love, Joanne Allison

February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 5:45 Supper 6:00 MOPS 6:30 Club 226 6:30 Adult Bible Study	2	3	4
5 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	6	7 9:00 MOPS	8 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 5:45 Supper 6:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Club 226 6:30 Adult Bible Study	9	10	11
12 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship 11:45 Chili Fellowship Lunch	13	14 	15 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 5:45 Supper 6:00 MOPS 6:30 Club 226 6:30 Adult Bible Study	16	17	18
19 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	20 9:30 Senior Seekers 	21 9:00 MOPS	22 10:00 Ladies Bible Study 5:45 Supper 6:00 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 Club 226 6:30 Adult Bible Study	23 12:00 Lunch Bunch @ Third Rail	24	25
26 8:00 Worship 9:15 Sunday School 10:15 Worship	27 9:30 Senior Seekers	28				



First Church of Christ

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Love All, Worship One,
Make Disciples

Bryanfcc.org



Connect with us!

Office Hours: Monday—
Thursday 8:00 AM-5:00
PM

Facts & Figures			
January 1			
Attendance SS	0	Worship	110
Offering			\$3,856.86
January 8			
Attendance SS		Worship	58 /96
Offering			\$4,300.84
January 15			
Attendance SS		Worship	59/88
Offering			\$6,742.71
January 22			
Attendance SS		Worship	50/76
Offering			\$
Needed for Budget			\$5,020.19

Love All

Our Service Personnel:
Austin Brandeberry (GA), Croyden Cardarelli (Afghanistan), Lindsey Carter (FL), Patrick Rendleman (GA), Josh Severs (AL), Braxton Singer (NC), Jordan Thornburg (GA), Katie Sparks (PA), Wesley Tressler (CO). *Cancer:* Gwen Acker-Dickinson, Nathan Bailey, Marcia Baumgartner, Sue Bever, Tim Bight, Brent, Jennie Case, Andrew Dell, Adam Farger, Carrie H., Sheila Hartnett, Jim Henson, Molly Johnston, Kent, Chuck Lees, Ron Lewis, Mark & Carrie, Chloe Merrilet, Rexann McCrary, Crystal Miller, Ruth Ordway, Mary Pinckley, Anna Pitman, Elaine Purdue, Sue Secoy, Terry Shinaberry, Annette Snavelly, Lyle Snavelly, Amy To-

bin, Linda Walker, Kathy Walton, Drew Wayman. *Other Concerns:* Jennifer Mavis, Trevor Bailey, Neighborhood, Arlene Boyer, Danielle Strouse, Brenda Ridgway, Cindy Wolf, Zach Swisher, Cheryl Towers, Gene Nash, Kim Beek, Joshua Taylor, Keely Strouse, Gene Crawford, children's ministry, Danny Hull, Cindy Webber, Kevin Ayre, Kathy Moog, Marsha Fisher, Marty, John Fry, Jackson Wolph, Shawn Roose, Fran Mavis, Nathan Ray, Gene Johns, Nehemiah Haase, Raymond Folk, Holly Sprow, Shawn Gambler, Randy Fisher, Braxton & Trish Snavelly, Annie Engel, Joanne Allison, Carson Strouse, Jason Gregg, Henry Kidd, Sherry Trubey, Nikki Hull, Luke Collins,

Ryan Yahraus, Judy Yahraus, Terry Hallett; *Shut Ins:* Fairlawn Haven: John Altman; Fountain Park: Esther Krill; Hillside: Charlene Gambler; Home: Annie Engel, Ron & Linda Lewis, Marilyn Lundy, Leona Puff, Edith Wagner *SKLD:* Gloria Wright.





an example of the sense of futility people experience when there is no hope in the future. Yet the more important lesson from the now-extinct town is not one of despair but of realistic hope. The people of Flagstaff knew they could not stop the destruction of their town, but they knew they could escape it. So, they quit focusing on their present circumstances, packed up, and prepared to move. Relocating them to nearby towns on higher ground, the government built new shops and schools and helped the town's people finance new homes. And life went on for the people of Flagstaff. In fact, for most of them, their lives were improved in a better community. They now lived on the edge of a recreational lake, and their quality of life was enhanced.

What a reminder for us! Face reality – your body is doomed. It's going to soon be buried under six feet of dirt. The Bible says, "...outwardly we are wasting away" (2 Corinthians 4:16), and we are "...dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). For "You lived in this world without God and without hope" (Ephesians 2:12b, NLT).

Yet there is hope. God has provided a means of escape. Jesus paid the price for our sins and is preparing a new home for us on higher ground that can never perish, spoil, or fade, and He is keeping it in heaven for you.

So do not fear 2023. Do not wallow in despair because your days are numbered. Instead, put your trust in Christ and



MOPS

MOPS and MOPS
Next meet regularly. .
There are now Tuesday (1st & 3rd Tuesdays) gatherings 9-11 AM at the church.

Wednesday night gatherings (1st & 3rd Wednesdays) are 6-7:30 PM. Childcare will be provided. Contact Stacie Beerbower or Kim Snavelly for questions. Check out their Facebook page @ MOPSoftbryanfcc. You may also contact them via mopsoftbryanfcc@gmail.com.

rejoice that the best is yet to come! And take heart. For when there is faith in the future, there is power in the present.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

From Bob Russell's Blog

Destined to Win,
Larry Snavelly