



# On the Same Page

“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20–21 NAS95)

## A Developing Direction

### Forever-Family Fellowship

**We will teach and practice truth-and-love relationships with brothers-sisters in Christ that must survive/thrive in the present because we believe that these relationships will last forever**

### All-Week-Long Worship

As the local body of believers gathers each Sunday for worship, **we will inspire a worship experience for all age groups that will travel with you all week long.** What we do on Sunday will assist you in your singing, in your praying, in your devotion, and in your witness.

Conversely, it is as you worship all-week-long that you will be prepared to enter into gathered worship on Sunday.

### Day-to-Day Discipleship

As followers of Christ, we are disciples every single day. Respect for and commitment to Scripture is essential. **We will show you how to interact with and respond to God's Word, both as individuals, and in groups.**

### Moment-by-Moment Mission

God, the Architect of the world and of our lives arranges appointments and interruptions. Each of us is called to represent His Son for the glory of His Name. **We will cultivate a mind-set for moment-by-moment mission, whether close to home, or far away.**

## A Lack of Vision

Sunday, December 24, 2017

My wife looks at an old house and sees possibilities. I see lath and plaster and the prospects of lung cancer. She spots an old couch by the side of the road, and, along with Jackie, says, “it’s got good bones.” I say, “Who are we to question the good judgment of the people who ditched it?” She can see it. I can’t. A marriage made in .. heaven?

Abraham, following last post’s story, could not see a way forward. God is making plenty of grand promises about descendants and peoples - that all nations would actually be blessed through his. And yet there was no son, not a single one. A huge roadblock in the road forward. So Abraham now, and Sarah later, begin to rationalize and strategize, both from non-visionary points of view. Abraham thought that perhaps he could pretend that his servant was really his son. God said “no.” Sarah thought a substitute wife might solve the problem. It instead created many more. When there is no human way forward, our prayers should be humble, asking, “Lord, what do you have in mind? I’m willing to wait and see.”

Of course, for Abraham and Sarah, time was a problem. They were already past time for child-bearing, and more time wasn’t going to improve the odds, humanly speaking. They could not conceive of a path forward. They could not imagine a divinely-devised solution. They dared not envision a hopeful future. They failed to see beneath the surface, to the “good bones.”

Our prayers are not purposed to tell God what He can’t do. The impossibilities may flood our minds, but our task is not to inform God of His limitations. As we ponder, we must place God’s promise right before our eyes, so that what we see is colored by what we read and believe. As we pray, we must hold the promise firmly on our tongues, so that the words of our prayers must pass over them, flavoring the doubtings of our own words with heavenly hope.

Abraham prays a very small prayer to God when he says, “What can you possibly give me, since I have no son?” But when he finds himself properly married to the promise of God, he will find himself trusting and obeying, full of faith, and living in expectation rather than dread. He will soon have the experience of being surprised by the magnanimous wonder of a God “who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think,” (Ephesians 3:20 NAS95), something like a marriage made in heaven.

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from Martin Luther's Christmas sermon, 1530

**“For, if it is true that the child was born of the virgin and is mine, then I have no angry God and I must know and feel that there is nothing but laughter and joy in the heart of the Father and no sadness in my heart.”**

Martin Luther, Sermon on the Afternoon of Christmas Day (1530),  
in Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings, Fortress, 2005, p. 200

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### **News and Notes**

**Prayer Time:** Sundays, 9 a.m., in the sanctuary

**Ladies Bible Study** will hold its next meeting at the start of 2018.

**Awana meets** on Wednesday evenings, 6 - 7:30 p.m for ages 3 through 8th grade. We are now off for winter break, and will resume after the New Year.

**Thank you to all who brought in Angel Tree Christmas gifts**

**Thank you to our children's group who blessed us last week with their reading and explaining of the Christmas story.**

Our **Annual Meeting** will be Sunday, January 15 9:45 a.m.

We would like to invite interested people to join **Milford Baptist's Facebook prayer page** (search 'Milford Prayer') - a user-by-permission forum to post/read church family prayer requests.

**Please note the church's phone number: 248-717-3564**

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### **Weekly Worship @ 11:00 a.m.**

**Upcoming Sundays:** This Sunday, **December 24**, we will meet for morning worship at 11, and Christmas Eve service at 6 p.m. No Sunday School on December 24 or 31. The message this Sunday will follow the lead of Martin Luther's Christmas Day sermon, 1530, quoted above, from Luke 2, and the angels' announcement to the shepherds

**Next Sunday, December 31**, our worship will devote a good portion to prayer, reflecting on the blessings of the past year (2017) and anticipating what is ahead (2018). This worship gathering will also include opportunity for testimony.

**No Sunday School on December 24 or 31.**

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