

Christ Lutheran Church

127 N. Spring St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601
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February 2021

“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11).

I remember as a boy reading a book entitled, *Fortunately* (Remy Charlip). A boy is invited to a party, but on his way there is a series of unfortunate and fortunate events. *Unfortunately* the party is far away... but *fortunately* a friend lends him an airplane. *Unfortunately* the plane crashes... but *fortunately* there is a parachute. *Unfortunately* the parachute fails... but *fortunately* there is a haystack on the ground. *Unfortunately* there is a pitchfork in the haystack... but *fortunately* he misses the pitchfork. *Unfortunately* he misses the haystack... but *fortunately* he falls into water...

The story goes on with the boy *fortunately* out-swimming sharks and out-digging tigers until... *Unfortunately* he digs through a floor of a fancy ballroom... but *fortunately* there is a surprise party going on... and *fortunately* the party is for him! So through a series of unfortunate and fortunate events, everything works out for the best after all!

Is this the way life seems at times – like a series of good and bad things that happen, seemingly shaped by chance and luck, fortune and fate? *Fortunately*, there is some good news today, and life is going fine... *Unfortunately*, the next day there is bad news, and everything is going wrong... But *fortunately* we have a remedy, at least for now... Do we live each day just hoping that somehow, in the end, by a turn of good fortune, everything will finally work out for the best after all?

Unfortunately, this is how many people see the story of life. They see human existence as a

product of events shaped by blind fortune or misfortune. When it comes the origins of life, they tell a story of unimaginably great odds in which, by a series of *fortunate* events, life spontaneously springs forth from a lifeless universe. Then follow eons and eons of *unfortunate* deaths of the unfit... but *fortunately*, life for the fittest... so that here we are, humans at the top of the food chain!

Yet *unfortunately*, as advanced as we are, we have no control over life-changing events that spring upon us – a disease that comes out of nowhere bringing devastation... an economy that turns downward bringing loss... an enemy that brings anxiety and suffering... a doctor's report that brings shock and hopelessness...

For many, living with a godless worldview, day-to-day life becomes a series of events in which one must survive against the odds, trying to influence fortune and fate by human wisdom and strength, resources and remedies. And who knows whether it will all turn out for the best?

How different is the story God tells in the Bible. He is the God who is in control of history (His story). He is the God who has always promised His people a good outcome, no matter how dark the days become: *“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’”* (Jeremiah 29:11).

Consider the life of Joseph, for example. *Fortunately*, he is loved by his father Jacob... but *unfortunately* his brothers are jealous and sell him into slavery in Egypt. Then, in a series of

unfortunate events, things go from bad to worse... Joseph is falsely accused by his master's wife. He is thrown into prison and seemingly forgotten. Years pass. Then at last *fortunately*, he is able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams... and he is even raised to a position of second in command in all Egypt!

But wait! None of this ever was left to fortune and fate. Despite the sin and strife among Joseph's family, despite the false accusation of a master's wife, despite years of unjustly languishing in prison, despite all the heartbreak and hopelessness... yet through it all, God was working out His story on a greater scale than ever could have been imagined.

As Joseph could tell his brothers later on: "*As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive*" (Genesis 50:20). By bringing Joseph to Egypt and raising him to this position, God used him to provide food for many nations during seven years of famine. But there was more to it than just that. By raising Joseph to his position, God worked it out to bring Jacob and his family to live in Egypt, where they would be preserved and grow into the great nation of Israel. And one day through that nation, according to God's plan, the Savior of the nations would come – the Savior whom God has now sent "*to save many people alive*" – Jesus Christ.

He is the God who has worked through all history for the good of His people. He is the God who has entered the story of our life to work out His great plan as our Savior. Despite all the sin that has caused strife and heartache in our lives, despite all the sin by which we all have deserved the wages of death, He has come to work out His gracious plan of salvation for our eternal good.

As God in our flesh, living day to day in this world, Jesus endured much suffering and sorrow which, outwardly speaking, some might see as a series of *unfortunate* events – from His betrayal by a friend, to His arrest and false accusations by enemies, to His suffering and death on a cross, to His body being laid in a grave.

Yet none of this was left to mere fortune and fate. Through it all, God was working out His plan of salvation on a greater scale than ever could have been imagined. Through the precious blood of His Son, shed on the cross for us, God has taken away all our sins and forgiven us. Through the powerful resurrection our Lord from the grave, God has guaranteed to us His wonderful gift of eternal life.

He is the God of our salvation, who is at work in our lives, bringing about His eternal plan for us. He has called us by the Gospel to faith in His Son. He has baptized and claimed us as His children. He has sent His Spirit into our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing our eternal inheritance. "*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*" (Romans 8:28).

In the made-up story, the boy who was invited to a party went through many *unfortunate* events... but *fortunately*, he made it there in the end. Indeed, it turned out better than imagined as he discovered that the surprise party was in his honor!

In the true story of our lives, God has called us to His heavenly banquet. Along the way through this world, we may pass through many tribulations; but God leaves nothing to fortune and fate. By His infinite wisdom and love, He is bringing all His plans to fulfillment for our good.

And at last, He will bring us to that wonderful heavenly home He is preparing for us. And there, as He lifts us up and honors us in His glorious presence, we will experience joys greater than we can imagine – joys without end.

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11).

In His loving plan for us in Christ,
Pastor Smith

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	5 Pastors Meeting (Myrtle Creek)	6 Happy Birthday Eva Brumble
7 <i>Epiphany 5</i> Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM	8	9	10	11 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	12	13
14 <i>Transfiguration of Our Lord</i> Radio Program 8:30 AM (KAGO 1150 AM) Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM	15 <i>Washington's Birthday</i>	16	17 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>  Midweek Lent 1 Service – 4:30 PM	18 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	19	20 Happy Birthday Ana Jay
21 <i>Lent 1</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	22 <i>Happy Birthday Lucinda Webb</i>	23	24  Midweek Lent 2 Service – 4:30 PM	25 Youth Catechism 4:00 PM	26	27
28 <i>Lent 2</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	<p><i>“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11).</i></p>					

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