

WELCOME TO



BELL CREEK

Community Church



DECEMBER 28, 2025

CERTAIN HOPE FOR THE NEW YEAR

1 PETER 1:1–5 AND 1 PETER 1:13

SERMON BY: PASTOR FRED WRIGHT

CERTAIN HOPE FOR THE NEW YEAR

1 PETER 1:1–5 AND 1 PETER 1:13

What is Hope?

We are Born Again to a Living Hope

Focusing All Our Hope on Jesus

FOR NEXT WEEK

For Next Week, read: 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, Ephesians 1:13-14, Ephesians 2:4-7, Romans 6:6-11, Colossians 1:1-14, Colossians 3:12-14, 1 John 3:1-3, Philippians 3:20-21, Ephesians 2:10, 1 Peter 2:9, Romans 8:35-39, 1 Peter 1:3-5

DAILY CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE READING

DECEMBER 28: REVELATION 1-5
DECEMBER 29: REVELATION 6-11
DECEMBER 30: REVELATION 12-18
DECEMBER 31: REVELATION 19-22
JANUARY 1: GENESIS 1-3
JANUARY 2: GENESIS 4-7
JANUARY 3: GENESIS 8-11

UPCOMING AT THE CREEK

ETHICS SEMINAR

Join Pastor Dylan in the Prayer Room at 11:00 AM for the Ethics Seminar.

NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY CLASS

The New Testament Theology Class will not meet for the next two weeks, but will resume on January 11.

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

Take control of your money with Financial Peace University! This nine-week class uses biblical wisdom and common sense to help you tackle budgeting, pay off debt, and invest for your future! Please see Meg Watkins or call 734-778-3272 to sign up. Class starts on January 10.

BETWEEN TWO TREES BOOK STUDY

Our Between Two Trees study will meet Sunday, January 11 at 9:15 AM to discuss Faith in the Wilderness: Words of Exhortation from the Chinese Church by Hannah Nation and Simon Liu for January 11th! Please contact Pastor Dylan (dylan@bellcreek.org) for more information.

EVOLUTION: FACT OR FAIRY TALE

Join Bill Durkee for a seminar on Evolution on January 11 & 18 in the Prayer Room during both services.

GAMES, GRUB & GATHERING

All are invited to an evening of Games Grub & Gathering! We will meet on January 3 from 6:00-9:00 PM. This is an opportunity to meet new friends, build relationships and have fun. Come on your own, bring a friend or your whole family and don't forget a dish to pass. Sign up after service in the gym or online. Text or call Dawnie (734-926-7794) or Audrey (248-444-6690) if you have any questions or need more information.

NIGHT TO SHINE

We are so excited to be an official host church, partnering with 242 -Livonia, for this year's "Night to Shine" sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation! The event will be Friday, February 13th from 6:00-9:00 PM at 242 Church on Five Mile. Night to Shine is an unforgettable worldwide celebration event, centered on God's love, honoring and valuing people with special needs. On one night, hundreds of churches of different denominations from all over the world will come together to celebrate people with special needs! To find out how you can be a part of this worldwide movement, visit the information table located in the back of the gym or contact dylan@bellcreek.org.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

PRAYER MEETINGS

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:30 PM

FRIDAYS 12 NOON

PRE-TEEN & MIDDLE

SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SUNDAYS AFTER WORSHIP

2ND SERVICE

AWANA

WEDNESDAYS 6:30 - 7:45 PM

SEPTEMBER-MAY

HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE

STUDY

SUNDAYS 11:00 AM

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES
AND EVENTS AT BELLCREEK.ORG**

OUR MISSION

MATTHEW 22:37–40

He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and prophets depend on these two commandments.”

MATTHEW 28:19–20

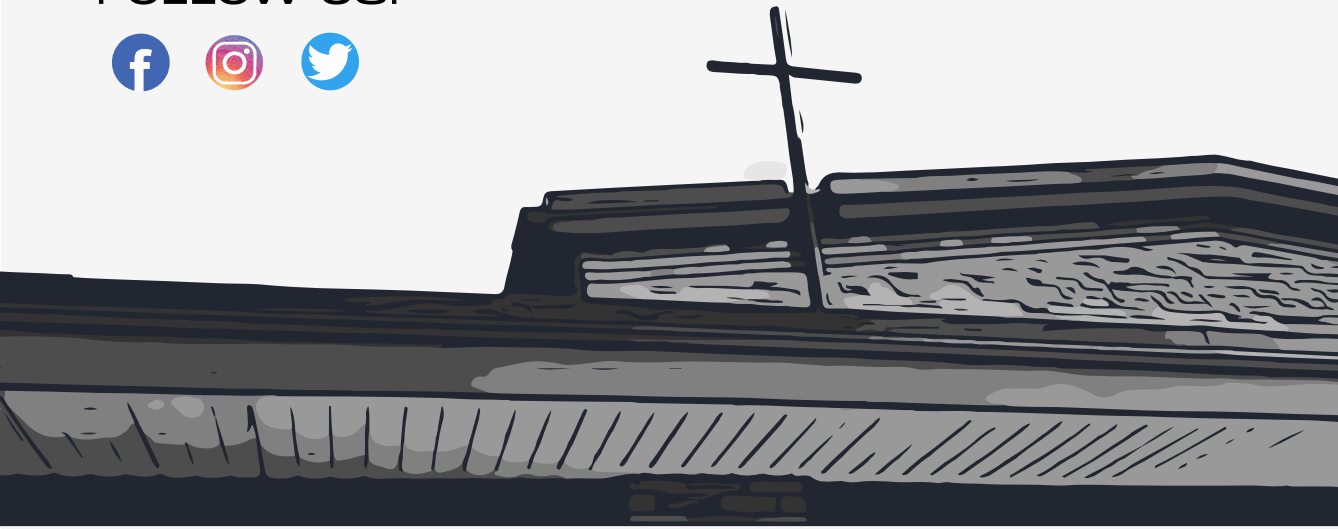
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am with you always to the end of the age.

STAY CONNECTED

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU HERE!

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BELL CREEK
Community Church

30000 FIVE MILE RD.
LIVONIA, MI 48154

Sunday Sermon for 12.28.2025

Certain Hope for the New Year

Scripture Reading:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3–5, ESV)

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:13, ESV)

What is Hope?

Oxford Dictionary definition of “hope”: hope (noun) a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen. It could also be said that hope is: to cherish a desire with anticipation: to want something to happen or be true.

What is the opposite of hope? The opposite of hope is despair. Despair is the complete loss or absence of hope.

Hope, by definition, is oriented toward the unseen and future. This is why Paul says, “For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” (Romans 8:24–25, ESV).

If something is already possessed, visible, or completed, it no longer requires hope, only enjoyment!

Why Do We Need Hope?

Hope is what allows us to move forward.

Hope gives meaning to suffering: Suffering without hope becomes meaningless pain. Suffering can be endured, even formative, with hope.

Hope stabilizes the heart: It empowers us to get out of bed in the morning, keep persevering, and resist despair and temptations.

But here is the problem: What can give us certain hope? Can we find unfailing hope in ourselves, our work, our spouses, our families, our health, our finances, our leaders? No. All these things will eventually pass away!

What Happens When We Despair (Are Without Hope)?

The Scriptures describe hopelessness as spiritual death: The Apostle Paul says, “remember that you were at that time separated from Christ...having no hope and without God in the world.” (Ephesians 2:12, ESV)

Despair distorts how we see reality: The future looks closed, suffering feels permanent, and failures feel final.

When we despair (we lose hope) we either become numb, or we self-destruct: We try to escape into addictions, distractions, or pleasures. We harden our hearts with cynicism and bitterness. The outcome of hopelessness is a collapse into depression, apathy, or despair.

This is not what God wants for us! And this is why it is so crucial for us to find where we can find hope, fight for it, and hold on to it!

We are Born Again to a Living Hope

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” (1 Peter 1:3, ESV)

“to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:4–5, ESV)

Why does trusting in Jesus give us a sure and living hope?

Jesus is the only Savior who died for our sins. He lived among us as a sinless man and sympathizes with all our weaknesses. Yet He is also God. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere. He sees and hears everyone and everything. Everything and everyone is subject to His power. On the cross, Jesus crushed our fiercest enemies: sin, Satan, hell, and death, and then rose victorious, never to die again. As King of Kings and Lord of Lords, He now rules over all. Every promise from His lips will be fulfilled, for He loves us and His power will accomplish what He has spoken.

There is no one like Him. All other hopes will fall short and fail, but Jesus is, “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain.” (Hebrews 6:19, ESV)

Focusing All Our Hope on Jesus

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 1:13, ESV)

How do we set our hope fully on the present and returning Jesus and on everything we will receive when He appears? Let’s look at some examples...

How to Set Our Hope on Jesus at Work:

What do we hope for in our work? Career success, job security, professional respect, fulfillment in our labor, and reward for our efforts.

How does work let us down? Work in this world is challenging, often boring, and filled with drudgery. It tends to be unsatisfying, and we frequently encounter failure and stagnation. We let ourselves down through poor performance and laziness. Difficult bosses and coworkers also make the experience worse.

Fixing our hope on Jesus at Work:

We thank God for our work and the provision He gives us through it.

We ask Him for help and encouragement in our jobs.

We remember Jesus, who was a perfect worker.

He knows how to work hard and succeed under awful circumstances. He completed all the work He was assigned to do, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do." (John 17:4, ESV). So, He can help us in our work! We can work faithfully even when we don't get rewarded as we'd like because our inheritance doesn't depend on quarterly reviews. We can endure mundane tasks because our labor is never in vain and rest is coming. We can serve difficult people because we are serving Christ Himself in our work. The Scripture says, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23-24, ESV). We can endure hard work because one day we will hear Jesus say, "well done good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21, ESV).

How to Set Our Hope on Jesus in Family:

What do we hope for in our families? Happy marriages, obedient and successful children, supportive and understanding parents, close relationships with siblings, family harmony, and being loved and appreciated by those closest to us.

How does family let us down? Marriages struggle and sometimes fail. Children rebel, make poor choices, or drift away from the faith. Parents are critical, controlling, or emotionally absent. Siblings become distant or bitter. Family members hurt us deeply - sometimes intentionally. We experience conflict, misunderstanding, and disappointment. Family gatherings become sources of stress rather than joy. Our families don't meet our expectations, and we fail to meet theirs. We let our families down through our own selfishness, impatience, and sin.

Fixing our hope on Jesus in Family:

We thank God for our families and the gift of those relationships, even when they're difficult.

We seek His help, wisdom, and patience for our family relationships, including spouses, children, parents, siblings, and extended family.

We remember Jesus, who lived in a family. He honored imperfect parents, saying, "I must be about my Father's business," yet went down to Nazareth and "was submissive to them" (Luke 2:49-51, ESV). He cared for His mother even as He died on the cross (John 19:26-27). He knows what it's like when family doesn't understand you or believe in you, "For not even his brothers believed in him" (John 7:5, ESV). So, He can help us in our families! We can love difficult family members because our acceptance doesn't depend on their approval. We're already accepted in Christ. We can endure family disappointments

because our inheritance isn't based on having a perfect family. We can forgive those who've hurt us because Jesus has forgiven us. We can invest in family relationships without needing them to fulfill us, because Jesus, our Living Hope satisfies what no earthly relationship can. The Scripture says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32, ESV). We can persevere through family trials because our family in Christ is eternal, and one day every broken family will be made whole (Revelation 21:4).

How to Set Our Hope on Jesus in Suffering:

What do we hope for regarding suffering? That it won't happen to us, and that if it does, it will end quickly! We hope we'll understand the reasons why, that God will deliver us from it, that we'll be strong enough to handle it, and that our faith won't fail.

How does suffering let us down? Trials don't always end when we pray. God doesn't always explain His purposes. The deliverance we long for doesn't come, or doesn't come on our timeline. Chronic pain, illness, and difficult circumstances persist year after year. We feel weak, and our faith wavers. We wonder if God has forgotten us. The suffering feels meaningless, unfair, or too heavy to bear. We're grieved by "various trials" (1 Peter 1:6 ESV) that seem designed to break us rather than bless us. We watch others suffer and feel helpless to help them.

Fixing our hope on Jesus in Suffering:

We thank God that He uses suffering for our good and His glory, even when we don't understand it.

We ask Him for grace to endure our suffering and for faith that doesn't fail. We ask Him to give us eyes to see His purposes in our pain.

We remember Jesus, who was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3, ESV). He suffered unjustly, experienced betrayal, physical agony, and even said to His Father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46, ESV). Yet He remained faithful, and through His suffering accomplished our salvation. He "learned obedience through what he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8, ESV). So, He can help us in our suffering! We can endure trials without losing hope because "this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Corinthians 4:17, ESV). We can trust God's goodness even when circumstances are terrible because our inheritance is "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven" (1 Peter 1:4, ESV). Suffering can't touch it! We can even "rejoice in our sufferings" (Romans 5:3, ESV) because God is using them to refine the genuineness of our faith (1 Peter 1:7) and make us more like Jesus. The Scripture says, "After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you" (1 Peter 5:10, ESV). We can suffer with hope because Jesus is coming back. When He appears, we will obtain our inheritance and our grief will turn to inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:4 and 1 Peter 1:8).

Do you see the pattern for fixing our hope on Jesus in any circumstance? Because we need a certain hope!

So, We Give thanks. Ask God for help in Prayer. Remember Jesus. Trust His promises.

This isn't a one-time decision we make on New Year's Day and then we're done. It's a moment-by-moment, day-by-day practice of turning our hearts to Christ for hope. When family disappoints you, give thanks, ask for help, remember Jesus, trust His promises. When work feels meaningless, give thanks, ask for help, remember Jesus, trust His promises. When suffering won't end, give thanks, ask for help, remember Jesus, trust His promises. This is what Peter means when he says "set your hope fully on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13). Fully. Completely. Not partially in Jesus and partially in our circumstances working out. But entirely, repeatedly, constantly fixing our hope on Him!

Application: As we step into 2026, what are we actually fixing our hope on? And if that were taken away from us, would our hope still stand?

Then let us, again and again, turn our hearts from uncertain hopes to Jesus Christ, our sure and steadfast anchor, and fix our hope fully on the grace that will be brought to us when He appears! Amen.

BENEDICTION

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5, ESV)

Certain Hope for the New Year

1. What did you think of the sermon "Certain Hope for the New Year"?

2. How does biblical hope differ from wishful thinking or optimism based on circumstances?

3. Where are you most tempted to place your hope outside of Christ (work, family, comfort, control, security)? Why is that hope ultimately unstable?

4. How does Jesus' resurrection and our promised inheritance give us hope that suffering, disappointment, and death cannot destroy?

5. What is one area in your life where you need to intentionally fix your hope fully on Jesus this year? What would trusting His promises look like there?

