

The Connection

Messages of Hope



A Weekly Online Newsletter: Edition 780

April 24, 2024

“A Cold Day and One Critical Piece”

January 28, 1986, was a bitterly cold day in South Florida. The previous night a front had swept through, plunging temperatures below freezing and bringing a morning of brilliant indigo skies. Walking into work that morning, I stopped, faced the north wind, and inhaled deeply. It was the sort of morning that made you feel alive, grateful, exhilarated.

I remember it so well because the shuttle Challenger was lifting off at noon with a schoolteacher on board. I went to lunch with friends from work, hoping to see the lift off from the restaurant. I had just parked, looked up and saw a swirl of debris, some tentative tongues of flame and then a reddish-orange fireball as the restraints fell away and Challenger slowly rose toward the heavens.

As I watched it gain altitude and speed, I marveled at all the people who had contributed to this program...how so many details had been managed, the math and physics involved, the power of the rockets, the thrill the seven astronauts must be experiencing. As a young girl, I aspired to be an astronaut (a nerd, even then). People with vision, people who could transcend the daily pettiness of the world had come together as a team and set their gaze on something higher...and I was watching the amazing result. God created all the universe and Challenger was on its way to explore and learn more about it.

Seventy-three seconds into the flight, at an altitude of 46,000 feet and going just under twice the speed of sound...something happened. Of the millions of pieces of equipment on board, of the thousands of actions and checks and commands going on at once, one of the pieces failed. Not a complex, finicky piece, not a human-controlled piece. A simple piece, a rubber gasket...an O ring...with one simple job to do. But it didn't. Because as the world slept and NASA made their last checks, the O-rings soundlessly froze and cracked in the frigid Florida night.

The catastrophic explosion didn't register at first. I simply didn't process it, this must be an error, it must be planned, it must be.... something. It wasn't until the solid rocket boosters flew wildly in circles, leaving thick white circular plumes and a small speck-- Challenger--fell from the yellow fireball that I drew another breath. Oh, my God. I stood, staring, sickened. I went inside and saw it replayed over and over on TV. It was all people talked about for weeks. It only took one piece of the whole, a freak freezing of an O ring, to bring down the Challenger. As a nation, we grieved. But then again, we started asking questions...what, how, why. And as a nation, we picked ourselves up with improved designs, undeterred enthusiasm, unquenched curiosity. We cheered as Discovery thundered back into orbit in September 1988. The dauntless American spirit. Rest in peace, Challenger crew. We need to always lift our eyes higher and move beyond the disasters in our lives and our world to reach the next challenges God has for us.

Job 30:24 “Yet does not one in a heap of ruins stretch out his hand, or in his disaster therefore cry out for help?”

We are all just one piece of the whole; a critical piece. Do we fail sometimes? Of course we do, we are human and imperfect. God has a plan though, for each of us. Every crisis is like a dust storm. In the middle of it, you can see nothing else. And all of us, too – rudderless, clueless, helpless, hopeless, drifting along...need to discern God's plan for us even in the storms of life. He encourages us to be wise, learn His ways and move on from disasters.

Jeremiah 31:28 As I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant,” declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 32:42 For thus says the Lord, ‘Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them.

You may remember what you were doing or where you were during significant world events like the story above or like the John F Kennedy assassination on November 22, 1963, or the September 11, 2001, attacks on the US. On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, leading to social unrest and protests that make those today look like a party. On June 5, 1968, Robert Kennedy was assassinated as he campaigned for the U.S. presidency. Where were you? What were you thinking? Were you anxious? Were you praying?

After the Kennedy assassination in 1963, I was five, and very upset that I could not watch cartoons because the funeral procession was taking precedence on the television. I was not praying, I was whining. During the 9/11 attacks, I was at work and praying I could get my son and myself to safety should the attacks come this way. I was anxious. Those events, as well as many others shaped our world perception and we saw the world move on from those disasters.

Disasters are scary and many folks are apprehensive for those to come. There will be many more disasters before the Lord comes to take us to be with Him, but we must trust in the Lord, that it is all part of His plan.

Isaiah 26:4 Trust in the Lord forever, For in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock.

I trust and pray the Lord will protect and watch over me and all of you as we navigate the world as we know it with an inner peace that we have from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Blessings to you all,

Becky Hale - Ruling Elder Elect - HOPE Church Raleigh

Worship . Grow . Serve

HOPE Calendar

Wednesday, April 24

TLC Devotion @ 11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Night Supper, Study,
& Prayer @ 6:15 p.m.

Friday & Sat., April 26 - 27

The 6th Presbytery Meeting of the
Presbytery of the Coastal Mid-Atlantic
Trinity EPC, Florence, SC

Saturday, April 27

Women of HOPE @ 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 28

NO Worship Team Practice

Worship @ 9:30 a.m.

Fellowship Time @ 10:50 a.m.
Sunday school @ 11:10 a.m.

Monday, April 29

The Vision Team Meeting @ 7:00 p.m.

Helping Hands Ministries

Fellowship - April 28

Church is Providing

ProPresenter - April 28

Elizabeth Floyd

Soundboard - April 28

Jane Davis

Live Streaming - April 28

Al Floyd

Communion - April

Elizabeth Floyd

Greeter - April 28

Joan Rollinson

Nursery Volunteer - April 28

Volunteer Needed

Scripture Text and Sermon

This Sunday

Elder Franklin Johnston

Preaching

Selected Verses

“Transformed by the
Power of God”

Daily Devotions

For This Coming Week

Apr	28	Luke	15
Apr	29	Luke	16
Apr	30	Luke	17
May	1	Luke	18
May	2	Luke	19
May	3	Luke	20
May	4	Luke	21

Outreach Ministries

“Food of the Month”

for the Raleigh Dream Center
Food Pantry

Boxed Cereal

We have a collection bin in the foyer

HOPE Meal Ministry

Take a meal from the freezer if
needed for you or someone else.

TLC Devotion

4th Wednesday each Month
@ 11:00 a.m.

Spiritual Growth Ministries

Women of HOPE

Saturday, April 27

@ 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday Night

Supper, Study, & Prayer Tonight

Last one for Spring of 2024

Supper @ 6:15 p.m.

Bible Study @ 7:00 p.m.

Prayer Time @ 8:45 p.m.

Menu:

Spaghetti, Salad, Fruit,
French Bread, & Dessert

We are studying Exodus

Presbytery of the Coastal Mid-Atlantic

Will hold our Presbytery Meeting on
April 26 & 27 @ Trinity EPC,
Florence, SC

Please be in prayer for all the
Commissioners

Quote of the Week

“So the real question confronting
you now is: How can you afford not
to be in God’s Word.”

Howard Hendricks

Prayer Requests:

Revill & Mary Lane Mallory, Jamie
Baldwin, Ron Clifton, Donna Williams,
Carol & Colin (Kathy Herriman’s Sister &
Brother-in-law), Loretta (Sandi
Underwood’s daughter), Joan Summers,
Shelley, Diane Mack’s Sister-in-law,
Jordan & Cinnamon (son and daughter of
Lynn Joyner’s family members), Tommy
and Billy Lanphere (Lynn Joyner’s
brothers), Gene & Becky Hale, Ellie
Tappan, Dave & Dot Geil, Carlyle and
Cynthia Franklin (Sandra Pierce’s dad
and stepmom), our Military, our
Missionaries, our Nation, and the world.
If you have those you would like added to
our prayer concerns, please email me
those names.

HOPE - REBOOT NOW

Everyday Prayer

For

The Vision Team

The Session

The Congregation

The Vision Team will meet
on Monday, April 29 @ 7 PM

Mother’s Day 2024

Sunday, May 12th

NO Sunday School that Day
Extended Fellowship Time

Susie Savino, our new
Worship Leader, will be with
us a couple more times in
the month of May before
she officially begins on
June 1st.

HOPE Church Raleigh

An Evangelical Presbyterian Church

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Worship Time: 9:30 AM

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in the search box)