

Gorse Hill

BAPTIST CHURCH

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Pressing on

Dear friends

Many people have heard of the outstanding exploits of Blondin, the tightrope walker who amused and amazed thousands of people as he made his way over Niagara Falls on a thin rope stretched from shore to shore.

He never faltered or failed, even when he made one crossing with a man on his shoulders and another with a passenger in a wheelbarrow.

His secret was simple: as he made his way over the rope, he would keep his eyes fixed on a point on the far shore, a large silver star which he had nailed to a post. The star was the centre of his attention and guided him to the other side. Only when he kept his eyes in the right place could he be sure that he would not waver or fall.

To what or to whom has our focus been directed over the past year? How might we need to refocus for 2018 and beyond?

This last year has been one of challenge and change, blessing and sadness. Through it all I believe that in seeking to put Jesus at the centre of our life together, and by keeping our eyes on God we have met and grappled with the challenges, accepted change where it has been necessary, wondered and marvelled at God's abundant blessing (both to us as individuals and as a church) and have grown as we shared sadness together.

I have no doubt that we would not have been able to achieve all or any of this, had our clear aim not been to put God first in all we do. To him be the glory!

(continues in next column)

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Lord God, through this Year,
We entrust our lives to you afresh.
Be our beginning. Be our end.
Be our purpose, our energy, our action. Amen

(continued from previous column)

As we move into another new year, it is vital that we maintain our focus on the gospel.

Each of us has a part to play - and there are certainly many opportunities for service in the church. It begins as each of us makes and renews our personal commitment to serve God and make Him known.



Yes, the challenges before us are great but so then are the opportunities for us to grasp, even when we have a spiritual wheelbarrow to push or heavy loads to carry.

We should remember, though, that an opportunity is only an opportunity if we are prepared to recognise it, take hold of it and do something about it.

This is perhaps the real challenge for us: that being so open to God, so prepared to listen, so ready to follow, that we do not miss either his blessings or the opportunities to make him known.

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name.

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. (Hebrews 13: 15,16)

Every blessing in Christ

Steve

OUR MOTTO TEXT FOR 2018

Philippians 3 verse 12

I have not yet reached my goal, and I am not perfect. But Christ has taken hold of me. So I keep on running and struggling to take hold of the prize.



What has God been doing? (Encouragement)

- we're a welcoming church with opportunities for everyone to serve God
- prayer has been answered
- new people are joining us on a regular basis
- we've held a successful community festival
- we've reviewed and implemented changes to our leadership structure

Bridging the Gap

Perseverance (keeping on) is a means by which we get closer to Christ. It means not looking back but looking ahead toward Christ with single minded purpose

What am I looking forward to? (Opportunities)

- seeing people come to faith as we share Christ with them
- expanding our work amongst children and young people
- widening our work into the local community: building bridges
- developing our small groups ministry, using the talents and gifts of the fellowship
- building the fellowship: living and working as a body

Pause for thought: Philippians 3:1 - 19

How can I know God?

Committed to knowing Christ

- experiencing God's power
- sharing Christ's suffering
- taking on Christ's nature

Where do I go from here?

- there's always room to grow
- keep on keeping on: press forward
- reach out: take hold of life (John 10:10)

Living as God intends

- thanking God for what He has done
- recognising where God is at work today
- looking forward with anticipation

Growing room

- realistic; what's it like now?
- hopeful: what are we looking forward to?
- led: the power of example

IMAGINE ...

... this church as being a place where ...

... children, young people and adults are helped to come to faith in Christ

... everyone is welcomed, loved, taught and guided

... everyone is confident in sharing their faith, and clear about God's call on their lives

... everyone serves one another and their community

... gifts are grown & leaders developed; all this through the ministry of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit



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Sunday Services
10.45 am Morning Celebration
6.30 pm Evening Worship

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