 **COMMON GROUND**

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**Hope and a Future**

 It’s easy to say that, with the darkness and the cold, the long Fairbanks winters can be…depressing. Winter really messes with folks, especially those already struggling with depression. Many lose hope at this time, and with Alaska having the highest suicide rate in the country, it’s pretty easy to see.

 This story I’m about to tell doesn’t take place in Alaska but it really speaks a lot to this problem. Recently I found out that a 15-year-old boy from my family’s town in Missouri had taken his life. My youngest brother was closest to him but the whole family knew him from the wrestling team. Many of the kids there have rough home lives to say the least. This one young boy, who thought he had no future, demonstrated what hopelessness looks like. Those who know God though, don’t ever need to have that mindset. God promises himself that we have hope and a future.

 **Jeremiah 29:11** “’For I know the plans I have for you’ declares the Lord ‘Plans for peace and not for evil to give you a hope and a future.’”

As those He’s forgiven, He promises that everything that we experience will be ultimately good.

 **Romans 8:28** “And we know that God works all things together for good to those that love God, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

Throughout the semester, the darkness, cold, exams, and other parts of life, remember that there is hope. We live for Christ, whatever happens is for good and is a part of God’s plan. Most importantly, if He is our hope, we have a future.

In Christ,

Will Middleton

**UPCOMING UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY EVENTS**

**Tuesday Evening Worship** has been moved!! It is now at 7PM in the ***Duckering Building Room 354***. We call this worship service Vespers (evening worship service). Vespers consists of singing, student testimony, a short message, and a time of quiet reflection.

**Thursday Lunch Bunch** will meet at the ***United Campus Ministry office*** (306 Constitution Hall) every ***Thursday from 1PM-1:50 PM***. This semester we will continue our study of the book of Genesis. Feel free to bring your own lunch; we will provide cookies, milk and Ramen.

**Raven Landing!** On Friday, February 27th we will meet at the office at 6pm and head over to Raven’s Landing Retirement Community for a rousing night of minute to win it games. It’s sure to be lots of fun and is a “no-cost” event.

**Ice Park!** On Sunday, March 8th we will meet at the UCM office at 7pm and head over to the Ice Park to see the ice sculptures on display. If you would like to join us please bring $5, warm winter gear, and spending money for any souvenirs or concessions you would like to purchase. Bring a camera, a friend, and join in on the fun!

**Spring Break Trip** We are going to Anchorage; leaving **Friday, March 13th –and returning Tuesday, March 17th**. We will be staying at St. John’s United Methodist church. We will work on Saturday the 14th at The Empty Bowl Fundraiser for Bean’s

Café in Anchorage. On Sunday we will assist in leading Worship at St. Johns and on Monday we will be Skiing at Alyeska, and having fun in Anchorage. For a complete list of times, events, and items to bring, please contact the UCM office. If money is a problem please see David.

**Reduced Cost is $125 if you are skiing and $75 if you are not skiing!!!**

