

Having Life Abundantly

By Neil Guion

In Chapter 10 of the Gospel according to John, Jesus delivers a rambling discourse on gates, sheep, shepherds, and hirelings, concluding: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

The Cecil Creek Church of Christ cherishes this promise of abundant life.

But it is not a promise of a life free from suffering. Most of us are old enough to be familiar with pain and loss and experienced enough to know that Jesus made no promise to insulate us from such matters.

Nor is it a primarily *eschatological* promise, to be fulfilled only when our days on earth are done. The promise of abundant life is here and now.

This promise of abundant life is frequently a messy promise, however, with failure and triumph, disappointment and joy. It is fulfilled in moments around a campfire listening to a scratchy radio voice calling the play-by-play of an NFL playoff games; in reminiscing about shared experiences at Gander Brook Christian Camp; in attempts to harmonize old hymns with the lilting strains of Cecil Creek in the background. It is fulfilled in humble acts of service to the “least” of our brothers and sisters. It is fulfilled in truly seeing the marginalized, the oppressed, the voiceless in our midst—and in treating them with the dignity and love worthy of the *imago dei* they bear.

Many thieves in our polarized and xenophobic world would strive to steal our joy. As heirs of the promise, however, the members of the Cecil Creek Church of Christ strive to follow the example of the one who promises abundant life.