

# Reflections



## HILLVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

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### The Lamb of God - by Dale Hufnagel



**P**apa, why is that man so angry? Why is He knocking over all the tables? Look, he's setting free all the pigeons! Oh no, the goats and the lambs are heading our way. Papa, everyone is going crazy, should we get out of here before we get trampled? Papa, I'm scared!

I remember that moment like it was yesterday. My brother and I had just arrived in Jerusalem, with our father, for the Passover celebration. We had been on a boat on the big sea for the first time, coming from North Africa, Cyrene. We went to the big Temple to buy what we needed for the celebration when we witnessed the scene. As we fled down the steps, we heard the angry man say something about the Temple being His Father's house and a place of prayer for the nations. **Papa, what is that man saying?** Son, He is saying that YHWH is His

Papa and that His Papa had King Solomon build the Temple with different courtyards. When King Herod rebuilt this temple, he followed the original design. The outer courtyard, the one where this man chased out everyone, is to be the place where we, who are not Jews, can come to pray and worship. The Jews made it into a market place instead. The man wanted to fix things so we can pray and worship like YHWH intended us to do. **Papa, what are we going to do now?** We needed to buy a lamb for the Passover celebration, but the market place is now empty. Son, we'll come back tomorrow and see what we can find and do.

The next day, we found the man they called Jesus healing people and teaching them the Word of YHWH. People were getting healed, repenting of their sins, weeping, laughing for joy, and listening to Him as

though they had never heard the Word of God before. I wonder, maybe we were truly hearing God's own words for the first time! **Papa, why are those men over there looking so angry, whispering to each other and pointing their fingers at the teacher? They don't like Him, do they?** No, son, they don't. I think that they're afraid that Jesus will turn the people away from them and maybe cause an uprising that will make the Roman leaders punish the Jewish people. I wonder what they are planning to do? Listen to the way they are trying to trick Jesus into saying something wrong. Boys, let's go find ourselves a lamb and the fixings for our celebration.

That night we followed the rituals of the Passover celebration for the first time in the Holy City. We used to do it in Cyrene with the other believers, but to do it Jerusalem...wow! What a feeling! Papa found the cutest little year old lamb that was perfect in every way. He also found the right bitter herbs and the stuff to make flat bread with no leaven. Leaven makes bread puffy. **Papa, why do we have to kill that cute little lamb and eat this yucky meal?** Son, God told our ancestors back in Egypt that we had to kill a lamb, put some of its blood

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## Something to Think About . . . - by Kurt Redschlag

### LIVING OUR PRAYERS!



"OUR PRAYERS TO GOD ARE NOT LIMITED TO OUR WORDS . . . PERHAPS OUR TRUER PRAYERS ARE EXPRESSED BY THE DESIRES THAT DOMINATE OUR HEARTS ..."

Many years ago I came across a statement in my reading that, at the time, struck me as being a very questionable comment about prayer. I felt it was an overstatement. I placed it into my mental "File 13" and soon forgot all about it. But as I was thinking about the nature of prayer during one of my recent devotional times, this long-forgotten statement suddenly came to mind again. The statement (and I'm quoting it from my faulty memory bank) went something like this: "Prayer is blasphemy if it does not align with your life." I still think it is an extremely harsh assertion about prayer, but rather than dismiss it again, I decided to do some serious thinking about it because maybe, just maybe, there is more truth in it than I had originally thought.

I believe one of the things this statement correctly reminds us of is that our prayers to God are NOT only limited to our words. Perhaps our truer prayers are expressed by the desires that dominate our hearts. After all, it's relatively easy to let a torrent of pious phrases flow from our lips. It's easy to say all kinds of impressive words

that we feel will touch the heart of God. But if our words are not in harmony with our lives, then our prayers may be . . . no, not blasphemy, but certainly shallow or perhaps even hypocritical.

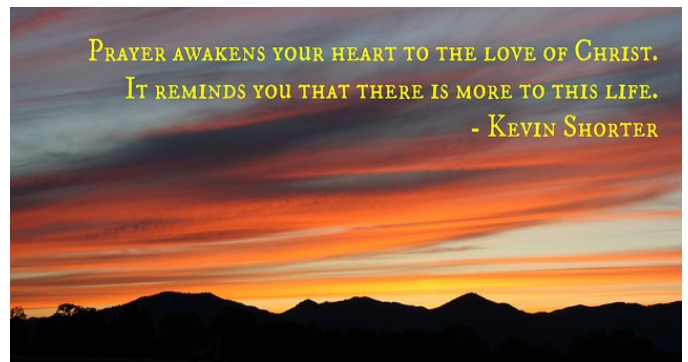
For instance, I'm wondering whether God is truly moved by our petitions that He provide for the needs of our missionaries when we haven't given anything towards their support, even though we are in a position to do so? I'm wondering if our prayer that our church might have a successful outreach ministry into our community isn't rather shallow if we have never bothered to invite someone to come to our church? I'm wondering whether our prayers that God would keep us from yielding to a given temptation have any validity if we constantly place ourselves in the very place of that temptation? Read Psalm 1:1.

Although spoken in a different context, I think the words of Jesus (quoting Isaiah) are relevant to this discussion: "*These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*" *Matthew 15:8*. Therefore, if the

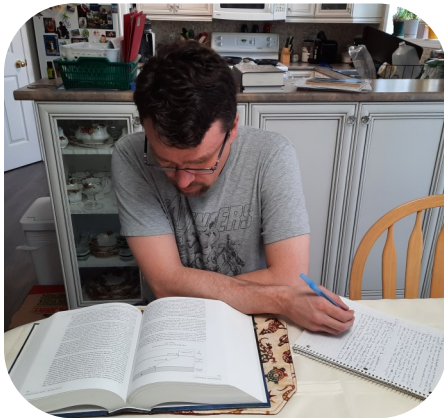
way we live contradicts the words we articulate in our prayers, then we should not be surprised if God's response to them may be somewhat different than what we had hoped for.

As I reflect on this, it's becoming quite clear to me that if we want our prayers to be effective, if we want God to hear and graciously respond to them, then our lives, our heart's passions, need to be more in line with the words we speak. Then we need to live our prayers. Perhaps the following stinging words of the poet will awaken us to that truth like nothing else: "What we are speaks so loudly that God cannot hear what we say." Ouch! Truth can certainly hurt, can't it?

But by all means, let us "*Pray continually*" (*1 Thess. 5:17*). Let our prayerful words ever ascend to God's throne of grace. But at the same time, let us also strive to more and more bring our lives, our actions, in line with the words of our prayers. Then our prayers will surely invite the favour of God upon them. I trust you too have found this to be something to think about.



# Theology - Who Needs It? - by Neil Carlberg



**This is Neil being studious!**

In the late spring of 2022, I got a phone call from Pastor Norm, asking if I'd like to study Wayne Grudem's book - "Systematic Theology" with him. After some thought and a word of encouragement from my girlfriend, I took him up on his offer, and together we read through Grudem's book. Calling it a book is a bit of an understatement. At over 1200 pages and weighing almost five pounds, you would not be exaggerating to put the old-fashioned term 'tome' to Grudem's work. With 57 chapters and 6 appendices, it was a major project that we worked our way

through until late 2023. I spent many an hour bent over my kitchen table with the book, a notebook and a handy Bible in front of me. It has to be one of the more rewarding and comforting things that I could have done as a 'green and growing' Christian. But why? Why should we study systematic theology?

First of all, what does 'systematic' mean in systematic theology? It's just a way of saying being organized, and using all the available material to consider what God wants us to know about Him. By 'material', I, of course, mean the Bible. The Bible provides us with all the information that we need in order to understand how He wants us to live and how we can be saved from our sins. This reinforces God's natural revelation of Himself in the world. Even without the Bible, God's creation testifies to His greatness.

What systematic theology helps us to do is answer the question of what God wants from us in a given area. In order to be systematic, we have to consider everything the Bible has to say about a given topic. In some cases, the Bible has little to say about a matter. It means that we have a lot of freedom in how we approach those issues, within the bounds of loving each other and honouring God. For example, if I want to know whether it would be better to read a book or to watch a movie, the Bible does not show a preference, but instructs me to exercise self-discipline and to keep things in proper perspective with verses in 1 Corinthians 9, and 1 John 2. However, if I wanted to list every verse in the Bible about the forgiveness of sin, I would need a concordance and a lot more room than we have in this column. The point of systematic theology is that we consider what every part of the Bible has to say about a matter, rather than just

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## Too Many Animals for the Ark? - by Wayne Baker

The Bible states that Noah was to take two of every kind of animal. Evolutionists often suggest including the massive dinosaurs on the ark as proof the Bible is false. The Bible in Genesis 1 states that dinosaurs were created on the sixth day. A literal interpretation of the Bible means that unless the dinosaurs went extinct before the flood they were on the ark.

Most secular paleontologists (those studying fossils) believe that the dinosaurs started their tremendous growth during their fifth year, meaning they would be no larger than a horse by the fifth year. The young dinosaurs boarding the ark would be entering this growth spurt just as they leave the Ark. I think that answers the size issue.

As to the numbers of animals Noah needs on the ark, you can delete many creatures because they do not meet the qualifications of the Bible.

**Two of all flesh that has the breath of life in it entered the ark with Noah. Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered just as God had commanded him. Then the LORD shut him in. Genesis 7:15-16.**

In general, limiting the animals meeting the Biblical qualifications reduces the

number. Also, the Bible uses the term "kind".

**Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. Genesis 1:24.**

The Bible indicates that "kind" must be able to reproduce fertile offspring,

his report a reference to how ferocious unicorns could be if cornered or trapped, indicating that unicorns did exist. If some animals became extinct after the Flood, we would have no fossils of them. This means we would not know about them, slightly increasing the number of possible animals on the ark. Allowing for errors, 2,000 animals on the ark seems reasonable, however this number is slightly higher than suggested by "Answers in Genesis".

"EVOLUTIONISTS OFTEN SUGGEST INCLUDING THE MASSIVE DINOSAURS ON THE ARK AS PROOF..."



Questions to be answered in future articles:

- How big was the ark?
- What happened to the dinosaurs?
- Why are there no human fossils?
- How do fossils form? How long does it take for fossils to form?

If you have questions, please submit them to the editor and he can forward them to me, or you can give your questions to

"Answers in Genesis" expands this slightly, allowing for "kind" to include animals that are infertile with one type of animal, but can reproduce fertile offspring with a third animal. "Answers in Genesis" determine that the number of "kinds" is less than 2,000 animals.

The unicorn creates a problem because they became extinct after the flood. A Roman commander included in

me. If you have someone who has lost faith because of evolution, ask them to submit questions. I will try to answer any question.

*"Answers in Genesis" is a Christian apologetics organization. It upholds a literal and historical Biblical interpretation and understanding of the Bible, including the events described in Genesis. Ed.*

# Theology - Who Needs It?



*(Continued from page 3)*

picking our favorite verses and ignoring ones that do not suit us as well.

Learning about theology is a valuable tool to protect yourself as well. If you remember the famous 'armour of God' passage from Ephesians 6, you will note that truth and righteousness are the armour that cover the vital parts of the body. Consider how many good, well-intentioned people have been led down strange religious paths by people who knew how to take parts of scripture out of context. David Koresh and Joseph Smith are two examples of people who claimed that they alone had the authority to interpret the Bible and would not allow anyone to reason with them. They felt that they could just ignore any part of scripture that did

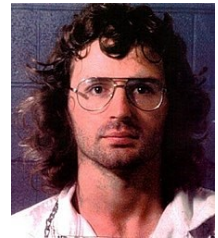
not meet their desires, as well as the considered opinions of nearly two thousand years of dedicated theologians, people who have debated Biblical interpretation for some time. We have to be careful and wise when we're interpreting the Bible. It is the Word of God we are dealing with here, truly powerful stuff! Systematic theology strengthens our armour of faith against those who would misuse God's Word for their own ends.

Related to this is how systematic theology helped me to understand the unity of the Church. Grudem's book explained the differences between the major and minor doctrines of Christian faith. It explained different perspectives on the minor doctrines that vary between different branches of Christian faith. Learning about how different branches of the faith interpret scripture to support their practices

reminds me to be humble. I might not agree with infant baptism or that Jesus is physically present in the elements of Communion, but someone can believe those things and still be my brother, providing he holds to the divinity of Jesus Christ and that He was incarnated on Earth, died on the cross to atone for sin and was resurrected in triumph.

Starting this study, I was very much a new Christian. I cannot overstate how helpful it was to be able to commit to the study as a way to help me organize my thoughts as I was reading through the Bible. Reading the Bible is a massive undertaking, and even at the three chapters a day that I decided to commit to, it took just about a year to finish. When I was wondering about how specific elements of scripture meshed with a more complicated doctrine, for example the Trinity, I was very glad to have a rigorous and well-researched resource to help me understand the reasoning for how scripture has been interpreted by great minds. These Biblical scholars devoted their lives to considering God's word.

Grudem's book devotes an entire section of 11 chapters to discuss God and all the attributes and activities that He is engaged in, as documented in scripture. Not only does Grudem show us the scriptural evidence that God is good, but he also shows us that because of God's nature and the universe



David Koresh was a leader of a cult called the Branch Davidians. He died during a police raid on his compound at Waco, Texas in 1993. Ed

" ... I WAS VERY MUCH A NEW CHRISTIAN AND I CANNOT OVERSTATE HOW HELPFUL IT WAS TO COMMIT ..."



Joseph Smith was the founder of Mormonism and the Latter Day Saints sect. He wrote the Book of Mormon in 1830 and was killed in 1844. Ed

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## Theology - Who Needs It?

*(Continued from page 5)*

around us, He could never have been anything but the glorious Creator that we know and love. That was probably my favourite part of the whole study. I had invited Jesus to take control of my life earlier, and now I was also getting a real personal and intellectual understanding of God, His nature and why I could rely on Him.

A key part of why my study was so rewarding and successful was the fellowship component. Grudem's book includes a series of questions at the end of each chapter for the reader to consider. After reading the chapter, I would be able to reinforce what I learned, as well as put it into perspective in my own life. But the best part of the questions, was sharing them with my lovely young bride, as we

would often discuss them around the dinner table. Because of her long background in the church, Krista had different perspectives on some of these scriptural questions. We had some thoughtful conversations about various elements of Christian doctrine, and how they influenced our lives before and our lives together. Spending time discussing scriptural interpretation was an enlightening practice. I think we both influenced each other's thinking in positive ways, growing in Christ together. There was also a weekly review session with Pastor Norm. Being able to discuss how the doctrines of the Bible were intellectually impactful and spiritually engaging with a man who has shown strong discernment and wisdom was a true blessing.

I think that people should study Christian belief and God's word with people who they love and trust. It certainly helped me to define for myself exactly what I believe and how I approach issues that I come upon, not only in my daily life in the world, but also in my relationship with Jesus Christ. Throughout this study, I have learned more than I ever expected, and encourage everyone to dig into your faith more to understand how we can begin to fulfill the Great Commission by teaching ourselves about God's word.

*At Hillview, Neil is the Chairman of the Audio/Video Committee, operates the soundboard, prudently attends the men's Bible Study, and is our resident historian. He is married to Krista, whom, as I understand it, everyone loves! And some how also works full-time!*



## Church and Community Events

- ◆ Wednesday Creative Coffee Group started on March 13
- ◆ Missionary Letter Writing - April 23 @ 7 p.m.
- ◆ Garden Kick-Off - May 4
- ◆ Parking Lot Coffee Outreach
- ◆ An outdoor firepit small event might be in the works - sometime in May
- ◆ Big Bin Event - May 25
- ◆ Ladies Tea - June 1 (in partnership with the Social Committee) - **see special request below**
- ◆ Back-to School event - August 24



**From the Mission's Committee - there are many opportunities for you to volunteer and help with our various projects and community programs. Please contact Jo, Gloria or the church office for more information.**



**Also, for the tea party we need donations of 8 large teapots and 4 dozen pretty tea cups. Please talk to Margaret or Sally for more details and additional information.**



## The Lamb of God



(Continued from page 1)

on the door, roast it, and eat all of it that night. His angel would pass over every home with the painted doorposts, instead of killing all the firstborn in the house. The bread had to be made without leaven and there are to be specific bitter herbs to be eaten as well. We are to do this every year to remind us how YHWH protected the firstborn son of His people. The lamb took the place of the firstborn. By doing this celebration every year, we remind ourselves of our salvation that comes through the shedding of the lamb's blood and we are declaring that this is for us. We tell God that we trust Him with our lives. I hardly slept all night, but even so, I couldn't stop seeing that lamb die and all the blood. I am the firstborn. In a way the lamb died for me! Then I started wondering what was happening with Jesus and His followers.

The next morning we awoke to a clamour. Papa went out to check things out. **Papa, what's going on?** Boys, get dressed. They have arrested Jesus, during the night. The religious leaders tried Him in

their court and found Him guilty of blasphemy against God. They accuse Him of saying that He is actually God. They are taking Him to the Roman leader Pilate to be sentenced by the Government. We need to see what is going to happen. We joined the crowd and went to the courthouse. Funny thing, none of Jesus' followers were arrested and people were whispering that one of His followers had sold Jesus to the leaders for 30 pieces of silver.

We waited and watched. Seems Pilate wasn't all that interested in condemning Jesus, so He sent Him off to the Jewish King Herod saying it was his problem. The King just sent Jesus back wearing a purple robe to mock Him. Finally, the Jews had enough and told Pilate that they would tell Caesar that Pilate was not his friend if he didn't condemn Jesus. **Papa, what are they going to do with Jesus? What did He do wrong?** Son, this is unbelievable! Pilate just condemned Jesus to be flogged, then crucified. He even has to carry His own cross up the hill to the crucifixion site! From what I can tell, I don't think Jesus actually did any-

thing wrong. **Papa, this is terrible and so wrong!** Sons, keep calm and stay close to me. It'll be alright.

The soldiers got the cross out and dropped it on Jesus' shoulders, and told Him to get moving up the hill. The blood was running down His back and He screamed out in agony. Before He got 20 steps, He collapsed under the weight. The centurion spotted my papa and yelled at him to carry the cross for Jesus. I was terrified. My little brother Rufus and I were alone in the chaotic crowd. All we could do is try to keep up and not get trampled or lost.

Finally, everyone found a place to watch as the soldiers told Papa where to lay the cross and then they shoved Jesus down on top of it. I still have nightmares of the sound of the hammer driving the nail in His wrists, of His screams of agony, of the thud of the cross as it dropped upright into the hole; of Jesus gasping in pain for breath. Then everything went silent as the centurion nailed the sign to the cross: "King of the Jews". At last Papa found us. He enfolded us into his arms, we buried our faces in his embrace and wept.

Suddenly, everything became terribly quiet. I looked up and saw the sky had turned so dark, it was almost as if it was night, but it was still the afternoon. For three hours it stayed dark like that, then at the mo-

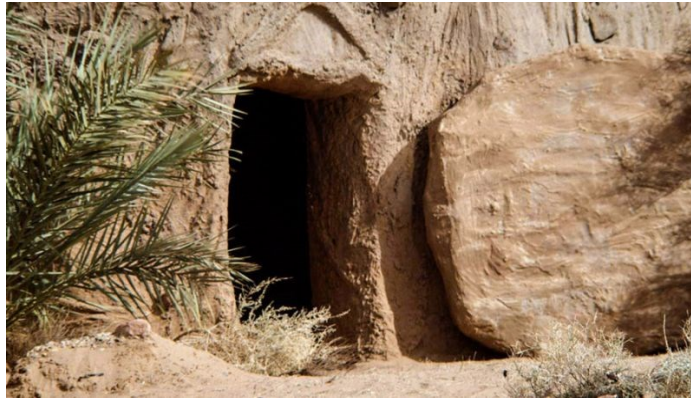
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"... THEY  
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## The Lamb of God

"YES, WE GOT THE IDEA THAT HE WAS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PASSOVER LAMB; THAT HE WAS THE LAMB OF THE GOD SACRIFICED..."



(Continued from page 7)

ment the sacrifice was being made at the Temple, Jesus cried out:

**"My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?" Shortly after, He said: "It is finished," and "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit."**

Immediately, a terrible earthquake hit, knocking us to the ground. The centurion cried out:

**"Surely He was the Son of God!"**

Later we learned that the curtain separating the Holy of Holies in the temple tore in two from top to bottom and tombs broke open with the dead coming back to life. As we turned to leave, I asked, **Papa, what just happened?** My sons, remember when you asked why we had to sacrifice the lamb? Well, behold the Lamb of God! He just died for our sins!

When we left with Jesus hanging there, I thought it was all over, but YHWH was not finished. YHWH was about to begin His part of the drama. We had come to

Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, but that now seemed so long ago. As we hung around Jerusalem, it seemed like nothing was interesting anymore after witnessing Jesus' crucifixion. We could not grasp how, until now, we had never heard of Jesus. Yet, in a matter of hours we came to understand Him to be the very Son of God. Now, even before we could hear His message and get to know Him, He was dead. Yes, we came to understand He was the fulfillment of the Passover Lamb, He was the Lamb of God sacrificed for our salvation, but what did that really mean?

We awoke the first day of the week to noise. We heard soldiers marching in a hurry. Since we had gotten to know some of Jesus' followers, we

hurried to find them to hear what was happening. They told us that two of the Mary's had gone to the tomb early in the morning only to find that it was empty. An angel was there and told them that Jesus had risen — He is Alive! On the way back, Jesus just appeared to them out of nowhere telling them:

**"Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."**

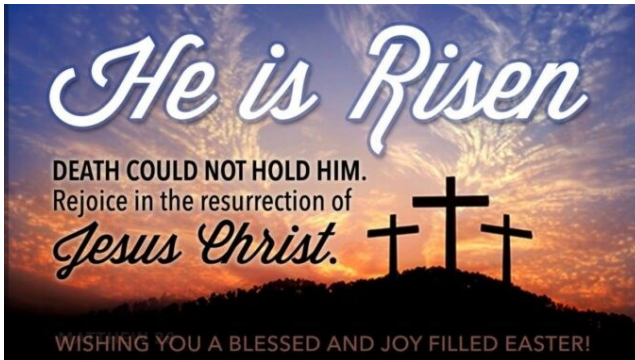
During the next days, Jesus appeared to many of His followers. There can be no doubt that He is alive.

My name is Alexander. You may not know me, but Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross, is my father. He became a missionary who was part of the team evangelizing Antioch. You may recall that Rufus, my younger brother, is mentioned by the Apostle Paul as someone special to him. Paul also mentioned my mother as being like a mother to him. While I never personally spoke to Jesus or heard Him teach, He transformed my life and my family's life. He wants to do the same for you. Yes, He died as the Lamb of God, but He Lives as the Son of God and desires to be your Saviour!





## An Easter Poem - by Ardath Effa



**Do you, like me, also find  
That time flies quickly by?  
Seems we just had Christmas,  
Now Easter time is nigh.**

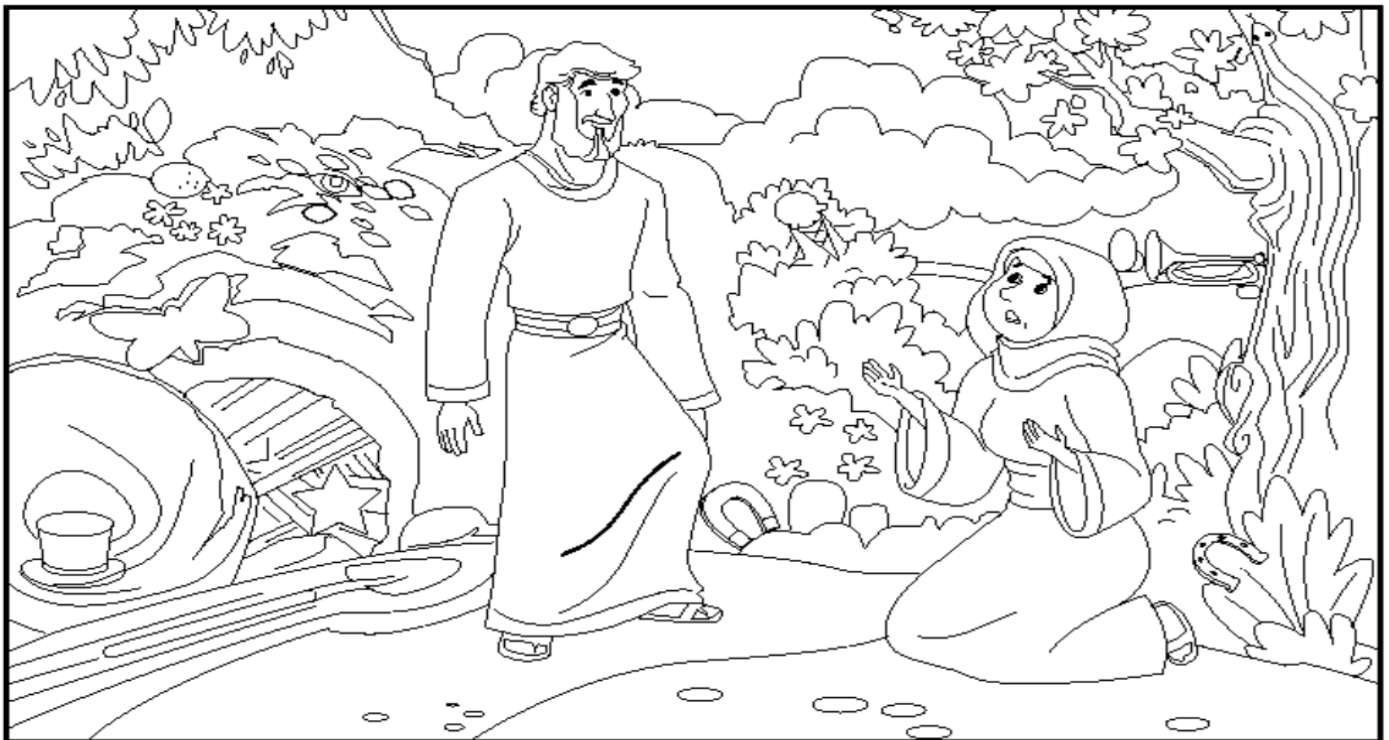
**"Goodbye" winter, "hello spring,"  
Dead Flowers begin to appear,  
Poking through the ground to bring  
Beauty, joy and cheer!**

**That's what Easter is all about,  
Our Savior also died,  
To pay the price for all our sins  
Was cruelly crucified.**

**But after three days in the tomb  
He rose up from the dead  
To show He paid for all our sins  
And lives just like He said.**

**To those who in repentance  
Accept His grace and love,  
He promises eternal life  
And a heavenly home above.**

**That is why we celebrate  
This glorious day anew.  
So have a blessed Easter  
Is the wish from me to you.**



Find each of these items hidden in the picture: snake, magnet, horseshoe, lemon, shovel, ice cream cone, pot, star, eye, butterfly, trumpet. Then colour the picture.

Living, Loving, Reaching, Growing,

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Back Row (Left to right) - Al Aben, Wayne Baker, Marcy Hufnagel, Miranda Snook.  
Anne Marie Bruce, Mary Anne Dietrich (missing: Lynda Lee)  
Middle Row - Elaine and Bob Tweed, Donald and Russ Nelson, Brian Worobec  
Front Row - Evangeline Worobec, Gloria Swain, Jo Legaspi, Jared and Lillian

### Memories of Coldest Night of the Year - by Gloria Swain

On February 24, 2024 at 5 p.m. I found myself with 15 other Hillview Hikers out on the streets of Edmonton walking to support a great cause to help women and children overcome addictions. We were walking for an organization called Adeara Recovery Centre. In total our Hikers raised close to \$4,600 and came in 4th out of 36 teams in South Edmonton. Adeara's goal for this event was \$60,000. This goal was far surpassed thanks to hikers and sponsors like those right here at Hillview.

As we were walking my mind went back to many years ago when Adeara was known as The Edmonton Dream Centre. At that time we were pastoring a small Community Church in the hamlet of Strome. One of our annual events was to honour widows in Flagstaff County. It was at one of these events that we had the pleasure to host not only 120 women, but The Edmonton Dream Centre's clients and staff as well. Their choir of recovering addicts sang their hearts out in praises to our Lord and shared recovery stories, bringing tears to many in attendance. But we hadn't seen anything yet! As the evening came to a close, women from the Heisler Catholic Women's League, came out from the kitchen carrying armloads of home-made blue jean quilts. They went up on stage and wrapped a quilt around each client. At that moment the entire place became a melting pot of cheers, tears, hugs and prayers.

That is one night I will never forget. Now, again, these many years later an opportunity arose to be able to bless this same outreach, but only in a different way. Walking with the Hillview Hikers and enjoying chili afterwards was a real treat to interact with church people away from a church setting. We all had a good time and talked of doing it again next year. The whole event was very well organized and our team leader, Donald Nelson, did an excellent job of keeping us informed and on track. Thank you everyone for the opportunity to serve together!