



# Reflections

September 2025

A newsletter for the community of Hillview Baptist Church

## How Does God Speak to Us? - by Pastor Norm

In the June newsletter, Bill Holmes shared a story about having car troubles while on vacation. Bill, being born around the time of the Model T Ford, was filled with incredulity while his car was "repaired" remotely via computers, satellites, and a very pleasant person on the other end of Joy's cell phone. This event inspired deeper thoughts about communication, interaction and intervention, especially as it related to God and His people. Bill, like many other people, wonder how God speaks to us and interacts with us. Here is my very simplified response.

### • Through His Word

The Bible is the inspired word of God, filled with teachings, parables, and prophecies. "All Scripture is God-breathed," declares 2 Timothy 3:16, suggesting that through reading and meditation, believers encounter God's direction and comfort. Furthermore, 2Peter 1.21 reminds us, "...no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." God speaks to us through His Word.



### • Through Creation

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" -- Psalm 19:1. This poetic vision invites us to listen for God in the whisper of wind, the song of birds, and the rhythm of the seasons. When we are surrounded by the majesty of creation

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Volume 4

Issue 8

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## An Interview with Gift Awwomakpa

In the July issue of Reflections, Gift wrote a letter outlining what she discovered about our Church - the friendliness, acceptance and love she found among our congregation. I decided to learn more about Gift. My questions and her answers are as follows ED:

1. Some people ask me for my hometown, granted it mostly occurred when I was in university. It is Chat-ham, Ontario. What is the name and location of your hometown? In other words, where are you from?

- Hmm, I am from Delta State in Nigeria, Africa

2. Why are you and your family in Edmonton? What would cause a person to come to a place of snow, cold and mosquitoes.

- Firstly, I think you should know that it was from Nigeria that the Lord commissioned mosquitoes to go ye into

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# An Interview with Gift Awwomakpa



(Continued from page 1)

the world and multiply. Secondly, who wouldn't want to live in a beautiful city with a church set on the hill with lovely members who consider themselves family? I believe the Lord led me here, my flight was booked for Calgary and we had every intention of calling it home! However, at 7am the day after I arrived in Canada, I found myself on a bus with my kids to Edmonton, not knowing anyone or what the Lord has in store for me. People told me I was coming to DEADMONTON, I wouldn't find a job and there's nothing here for me. But look what the Lord has done with me.

3. What is the best thing about driving in Edmonton, in the winter?

- That's actually my best time to drive, I can make mistakes without anyone criticizing me because, the road markings are covered in snow and I get to drive and park however I want.

4. In addition to being a full-time mom, do you have another job? What? What do you love about the job?

• Hmm, we arrived in Edmonton on July 26, 2023 and I got a job as a Health and Safety Administrator in October. I was promoted to a Health and Safety Advisor in July 2025. The best part of the job is the people I work with, I feel loved and I believe it's a thing with the people of Edmonton

5. What is your Christian background? I heard a rumour you were raised Pentecostal, me too.

- I was a Pentecostal from my mother's womb! My parents are ministers of God who own their ministry. I am from a very vibrant church with loud music, dancing and a lot of singing. Its amazing how God planted me in a completely opposite ministry and I still find peace and joy serving here at Hillview Baptist church.

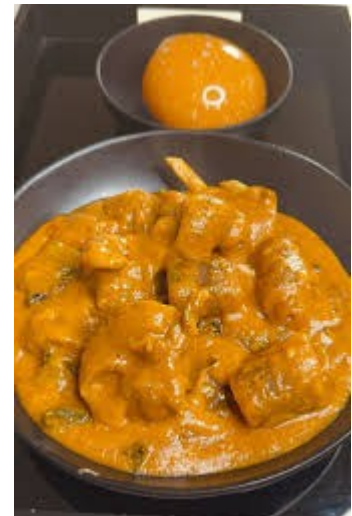
6. What is your favourite Nigerian tradition? Food? What is Emerald's?

- Starch and owo soup, same for Emerald. (I will check with Emerald about that! ED)

7. Have you adopted any Canadian traditions?

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"I believe the Lord led me here, my flight was booked for Calgary with every intention ..."



Owo Soup is made from fish, bango oil, beef, crayfish, palm oil and potash, according to Google, not Gift. "One person's faith allows them to eat anything..."

Romans 14:2.ED





# How Does God Speak to Us?

*(Continued from page 1)*

whether in a thunderstorm or watching a hummingbird outside our window.

- **Through Silence**

God is often described as speaking in silence—in the depths of conscience, intuition, and reflection. This inner sense may be subtle, elusive, but it is cherished as intimate and personal. "Be still and know that I Am God." – Psalm 46.10

- **Through Prayer and Meditation:**

Through prayer, meditation, and contemplation, individuals open their hearts to receive divine guidance. Many report moments of peace, clarity, or conviction that feel like the gentle prompting of God. This was Moses' experience.

- **Through the still Small Voice:**

"And he said, "Go out and stand on the mount before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave." 1Kings 19.11-13

- **Through Angels:**

Angels are messengers from God. The Angel of the Lord appeared to various people in the Old Testament (OT) including

Joshua and Gideon. In the New Testament (NT), the angel Gabriel came to Zechariah and Mary. And then, one of my most favourite verses, Daniel 10.12: Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words.

- **Through Dreams**

Solomon's divine commission came through a dream and Peter's vision in Acts 10 are powerful examples of God speaking to us through our dreams.

- **Through our Conscience**

The Holy Spirit convicts us of right and wrong—is itself a gift from God, urging us toward goodness and justice. "...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." – Hebrews 9.14

- **Through Other People,**

wise teachers, loving friends, and even strangers. Through conversation, acts of kindness, and shared stories, the Divine presence is felt in human relationships. The support and counsel of those around us can become a channel for God's wisdom and care, especially in times of doubt or suffering.

- **Through Art, Music, and Literature**

Creative expression can serve as a vessel for the transcendent. A poem, a painting, or a song may move us in ways that feel sacred, opening hearts to divine meaning.

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Prayer

"God is often described as speaking in silence—in the depths of conscience, intuition, and reflection."



Not these angels, they are only a baseball team.







## An Interview with Gift Awomakpa

(Continued from page 2)

- We now go to Nanny McCluckins to get chicken eggs, an incubator and have the hatching experience. We had 6 eggs in May, and 4 hatched, we got to spend a few days with the chicks before we returned them. (I am not sure this is a Canadian tradition. Think hockey!ED)

8. *Living in Canada, what do you miss most, besides your husband? Incidentally, what's his name and when will he be joining you here in Edmonton?*

- I miss the food back home, there is nothing like starch

and owo soup, or bangs soup with dry meat, good garri and correct banga rice. Surprise!! Stephen is here, he arrived on the 15th of August, 2025.

9. *Have you experienced any "culture shock". Can you identify one or two things that have been a challenge for you and your family?*

- Children call their parents by their first name, their aunts and uncles by their first names. Back home we call our parents mummy and daddy and uncle and aunty for relatives. It's extremely cold in Edmonton, sometimes we feel like going back home when the winter gets really bad.

"We now go to nanny mccluckins to get chicken eggs, incubator and have the hatching experience."

## And Now meet's Gift's Daughter, Emerald

*H*i Emerald, I am going to ask you a few questions, to learn more about you. No worries, it will be easy.

1. *Your name is unique; do you know where it came from or how your parents picked it?*

- I'm not sure where and how they picked it, I choose to believe its related to May, the month I was born, but other than that I'm not sure.

2. *How do we know each other?*

- We met because of livestream. One day my mum had talked about me going upstairs and doing the tech and that was how I met you.

3. *Why do you enjoy doing the livestream?*

- I enjoy doing livestream because its fun and it gives me extra skill that I might use in life.

4. *What else do you enjoy doing, what are your hobbies or favourite activities?*

- Apart from Livestream I really enjoy reading and sleeping.

5. *Can you describe your travels, places you have been before arriving in Edmonton?*

- Before arriving to Edmonton I used to live in England. It's very different from Canada in ways of society and structure. The houses are designed differently, like in a small, cozy way.

6. *I understand your dad has just recently arrived from England. Is there any place you want to show or take your dad to?*

- When my dad arrived I would like to show him West Edmonton Mall again.

7. *What are you doing in September? Are you excited about the challenge?*



Emerald at the Hillview's livestream station.

- In September, I will be entering grade 8 at Millwoods Christian School. Social is the subject that challenges me the most and requires more of my time and focus.

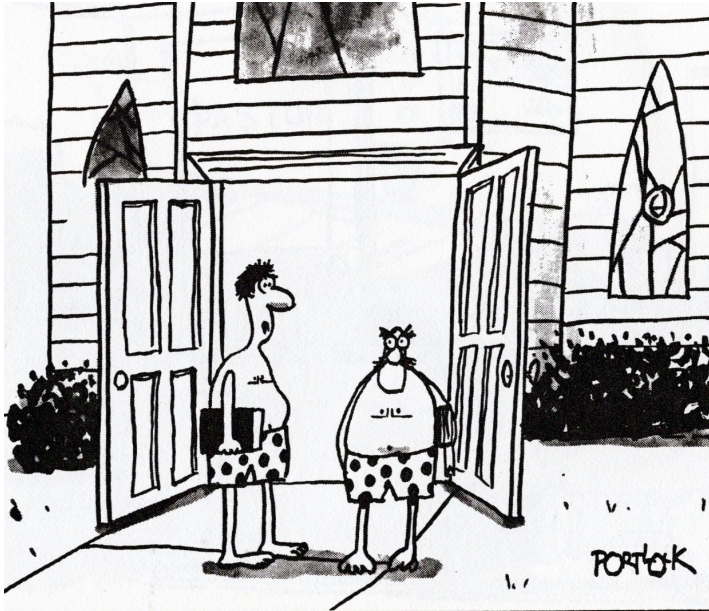
8. *Do you ACTUALLY like the soup your mom mentioned?*

- Yes, I do really like starch and OWO soup.





## A Hillview Financial Update - by Bill and Joy Holmes



"That was the best sermon on giving I've ever heard."

There are two major parts to this captivating and informative "story":

1. A year-end summary for the 2024/2025 fiscal year, and
2. A much less fascinating report for the month of July 2025.

### 1. 2024/2025 Summary

Joy closed the books for 2024/2025 in August. That means all tithes, offerings, other revenue and expenditures have been processed and the transactions entered into our accounting system (i.e. the dreaded "books"). The fiscal year for the church is July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. A special meeting and vote will be held in a few weeks for the Church membership to accept and approve our financial documents. For now, please note the following condensed and simplified version (rounded to only the nearest dollar --- because Joy has this obsession about utterly accurate numbers, whereas I would round to the nearest thousand):

As of June 30, 2025 (our year-end), and unless otherwise indicated:

- Tithes and offerings – **\$298,264**
- Expenditures – **\$265,317**
- Surplus (moved to Building Reserve account) - **\$27,937**

Available funds:

- Operating (chequing) account - **\$58,634**
- Building Reserve (savings) account – **\$26,790** (as of July 31, 2025, reflecting the final roof replacement payment)
- Computer replacement fund – **\$600** (will be increased monthly to \$2,000, assuming funds are available)
- Insurance reserve fund - **\$1,545** (as of July 31, 2025, also increased monthly)

The rental revenue from Little Hands Playschool is not considered as tithes or offering but rather is deposited into the Building Reserve fund. We do not use this income or other rental income for regular on-going church operations. Little Hands did not use our building during July and August. The playschool will reopen in September.

### 2. July Monthly Report

As of July 31, 2025, please note the following:

- Tithes and offerings – **\$16,960**
- Expenditures – **\$17,693**
- Deficit - **\$733**

We are not overly concerned about this small deficit. Historically, reduced tithes and offerings during the summer months is common.

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## A Hillview Financial Update

(Continued from page 5)

### Other Financial Notes:



⇒ For some unknown reason the church has been warehousing all financial records since 1989. I think it's called hoarding. Thanks to Howard, the records from 1989 to 2017 have been or will be destroyed. Legally the church must retain the previous 7 years, we will retain 8 years. Going forward we will destroy the oldest year as we add the most recent year to the "bat cave" balcony storage room.

⇒ The City of Edmonton requires that we pay taxes on the space rented by Little Hands. The City loves finding irregular ways to obtain money. We paid \$3,072.24, and have been reimbursed by Little Hands. These funds will be placed in the Building Reserve fund as part of the 2024/2025 surplus.

⇒ Every month we transfer all rental income (e.g. Little Hands etc.), plus an additional \$1,545 to cover our annual insurance premium which is due in June 2026.

⇒ After discussions with Terry Fossen, Regional Minister for the Alberta Baptist Association, only a review of the 2024/2025 financial records should be completed, not a full outside and expensive audit. We are hoping to have a review completed within this year.

Any questions or concerns, please contact either myself or Joy. No guarantees that we can provide an answer but we will surely attempt to offer either a semi-coherent and correct response, or get back to you after checking our records.

*PLEASE NOTE: The cartoon on page 5 is from a book titled "Off the Church Wall" by Rob Portlock. It magically appeared in my mail slot by an anonymous donor, apparently as an encouragement to upgrade the quality of the cartoons. To the donor - what a great little book, thank-you! ED*

## Questions for Bill Bruce



Anne Marie, Bill and his children.

*Bill Bruce was elected to Hillview's Leadership Council at our Annual General Meeting in June. He joins Nathan Shessel, Krista Carlberg, Wes Werstiuk, and Bob Tweed in providing direction and connection to our church. Unfortunately, this responsibility will probably interfere with playing with his toy monsters. ED*

1. I suspect many people know Anne Marie, she is so outgoing, but you are a bit of a wallflower. Tell us about yourself and your family?

- For years I've hosted the card game Magic the Gathering at my kitchen table on Friday nights. I enjoy Battletech with my good friends Ty, Brad and Neil. I en-

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## How Does God Speak to Us?

*(Continued from page 3)*

A core challenge in religious life is distinguishing God's voice from other influences—personal desires, fears, or the opinions of others. Spiritual discernment involves humility, openness, and sometimes seeking the wisdom of trusted guides.

◇ **Community Wisdom:**

Conversations with spiritual mentors or participation in communal worship can help clarify the authenticity and meaning of divine communication.

◇ **Self-Reflection:**

Regular self-examination and reflection can foster a receptive heart, attuned to subtle promptings and corrections.

◇ **Test Everything Against Scripture:**

Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good.—1Thessalonians 5:20-21

Sometimes, people feel that God is silent, distant, or absent. This experience, rather than being a void, can itself be meaningful. In many traditions, periods of silence invite deeper trust, patience, and growth. Mystics like St. John of the Cross write of spiritual dryness as a stage on the journey toward union with God. Silence can teach resilience and hope. Not all communication is immediate or obvious; sometimes guidance arrives slowly, through unfolding events and persistent faith.

*In response to Pastor Norm's insights on how to connect with God, I asked a number of people to write how God communicates*

*with them. Here are two perspectives. ED*

Well Bill, I can share how God speaks to me. I take everything to Him in prayer; sometimes it is answered right away and sometimes I have to wait for a while. It isn't my time, it is His. I always try to be patient while I am waiting and I accept His answer whether it be mine or His. I feel He speaks to me in thoughts and it is such a nice feeling and too hard to explain, but the communication is His and mine. He always answers in this way. If it is "no", I know it is not right for me and something better will come in His time. This has happened to me many times. When I ask for strength it comes. God is so good. I am truly blessed to have Him in my life. He is with me always.

Wende Stonehouse

It's always interesting to hear my friends tell me how God talks to them. Some hear His voice, some have had visions and dreams, some seem to see things that I just don't... Even though I haven't had a vision and I don't hear God speak audibly, He does speak to me through His Word or while praying with a friend, and then confirming the same message in a devotion, podcast or another sermon I happen to listen to. Sometimes we need to hear the same thing a few different ways before we recognize what He is saying... There are other times He places someone on my heart and I'll reach out just to find out they have been struggling or have a need. Sometimes I feel compelled to go somewhere or buy something and then find out quite quickly what He had in mind. I like to call these co-inky

-dinks or God-winks, as I just don't believe in coincidence. I know I need to get better at responding immediately when the Lord places someone on my heart. And I know He can use anyone and certainly does when I miss His voice... But what a blessing when we are used by Him. It's so humbling.  
Yvonne Aben

### Acts 2:17-21

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they ..."





## Questions for Bill Bruce

joy my Wednesday night Bible study with the Hillview men. Anne Marie and I like to road trip and tent camp all around Alberta. We love that Edmonton is a foodie city and like to pick a new restaurant to try. We take walks around the city, either nature walks or sightseeing walks on Whyte Ave.

2. *You recently won a hard fought election and were elected to the Leadership Council. Any thoughts on what is involved with being on the Council? Do you have some goals in mind?*

- I hope to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the members that make up the church board and leadership teams.

3. *How long have you been a Christian, how has the journey been?*

- My mother was a Christian so I was raised in a Christian home. I had my born again experience at a church camp when I was a child. I've always had a strong faith and trust in the Lord completely.

4. *It's Sunday morning. What do you have for breakfast?*

- I'm not a breakfast guy but Anne Marie makes us breakfast sandwiches for lunch after church on Sunday's.

5. *You are in a restaurant, the church is buying. What are you having? And if you could be sharing this meal with someone living or dead who would it be. Jesus is not an option.*

- One of my favorite meals is roast beef dinner with yorkshire pudding and horseradish. I would want to pick Leonardo da Vinci's brain, or Nikola Tesla.

6. *What's a talent most people do not know you have?*

- My mother always used to tell me I walked between the raindrops. Despite being a trouble maker, I mostly avoided serious consequences!

7. *How would you spend your time if you could not have any devices for a week?*

- After the withdrawal symptoms wore off, I would paint lots of Battletech models!

8. *What are your favourite rom-com movies? If necessary, Anne-Marie can tell you.*

- I think The Princess Bride counts as a rom-com!

9. *What is your favourite vacation destination?*

- I would like to explore Japan. We made a trip to the Dominican Republic last year. It was my first time on a tropical vacation and I enjoyed it.

10. *If you weren't a pipefitter, what would you be doing for a living?*

- If I wasn't a pipefitter, I would be a high school English teacher.

11. *What is the one thing you have not done, that you would love to do?*

- I would like to go on a mission trip. Specifically, I'd like to use my skill set as a pipefitter to help provide clean water to a town or village.

12. *If you could change one thing about our Sunday church service, what would that be?*

- I can't think of anything. Hillview is the best. I didn't know church could be so good.



Bill's men only work area with various tools and supplies.

"I would like to go on a mission trip. Specifically, I'd like to use my skill set as a pipefitter to help ..."



An army of Battletech models painted by Bill. The male version of needlepoint!







# Something to Do!



Jesus prayed for His friends.

Use the code to find some of His words.

○=A	◐=E	◑=I	◒=M	▢=Q	◼=U	◻=Y
●=B	◕=F	◔=J	▣=N	◓=R	◼=V	◼=Z
◕=C	◑=G	◑=K	▢=O	◓=S	◼=W	
◕=D	⊗=H	◕=L	▢=P	◼=T	◼=X	

He said, "

▢ ◓ ▢ ◼ ◐ ◕ ◼

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*The October issue will focus on the various groups, volunteers and committees that keep our Church functioning in a sharing, loving and helpful manner. ED*

## Old Testament Translations - by Wayne Baker



Some criticisms of the modern Biblical translations and their differences from the King James Version (KJV) stem from the fact that the meaning of a word in the late 1500's could be very different from today's meaning, if it is even still in use. Translations using the current words matching the Aramaic, Greek and Hebrew words, are accused of altering the Bible. With these problems and the questions as to the accuracy of the transcripts, how can we trust the Bible? The truth is we can.

Our Bible, as we protestants have it today, consists of the Old Testament and New Testament. Up to the 1950's the oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament were dated from circa 1000AD. The Dead Sea Scrolls have given us a copy of the Old Testament from circa 250BC. These earlier manuscripts have very little variation from our modern translations. Any differences can often be shown to be clarifications such as using "King David" instead of "he" in a very long passage that covered several sections of the scroll. This is especially true in the New Testament. There is exceptional correlation to the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Texts. (*The Masoretic Text is the authoritative Hebrew and Aramaic text of the 24 books of the Hebrew Bible in Rabbinic Judaism ED*). There is almost no difference between the Dead Sea Scrolls from 600BC to the time of Christ and the Masoretic Texts from 800 to 1000AD. This means that for the most part we can rely on the accuracy of the Old Testament.



## Rick's Trivia - The YoYo

by Rick deLeeuw

A yo-yo is a toy consisting of an axel connected to two discs, and a string looped around the axle, similar to a spool. It is an ancient toy with proof of existence since 440 B.C. The yo-yo was also called a Bandalore in the 17th century.

It is played by holding the free end of the string known as the handle (by inserting one finger, usually the middle or ring finger into a slip knot), allowing gravity (or the force of a throw and gravity) to spin the yo-yo and unwind the string (similar to how a pullstring works). The player then allows the yo-yo to

wind itself back to the player's hand, exploiting its spin (and the associated rotational energy).

This is often called yo-yoing or playing yo-yo. In the simplest play, the string is to be wound on the spool by hand, the yo-yo is thrown downward, hits the end of the string then winds up the string towards the hand and finally the yo-yo is grabbed, ready to be thrown downward again.

Yo-yo's were known to the ancient Greeks, and they appear in very ancient Greek vase

paintings. Records from the period describe toys made out of wood, metal, and terra cotta (fired clay). The terra cotta discs were used to ceremonially offer the toys of youth to certain gods when a child became of age.

