

ViewPoints

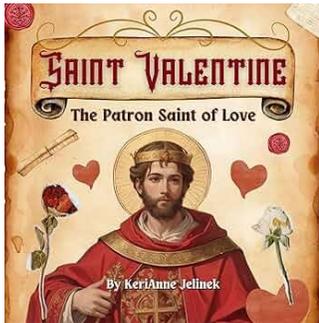


HILLVIEW BAPTIST CHURCH

Volume 5, Issue 2

February 2026

Should Christians Observe Valentine's Day? - by Pastor Norm



Exploring Love, Faith, and Cultural Traditions

As February 14th approaches, stores fill with heart-shaped chocolates, red roses, and sentimental cards. Valentine's Day, celebrated worldwide as a day dedicated to love and affection,

prompts a recurring question among Christians: Should we observe Valentine's Day?

To answer this, it's helpful to look at the origins and meaning of the holiday. Valentine's Day is named after St. Valentine, a Christian martyr from the early centuries of the church. Over time, the day became associated with romantic love, largely influenced by medieval poets and modern commercial interests. While its roots have Christian ties, many of today's customs are more cultural than religious.

Some Christians express concern that Valentine's Day can promote materialism, superficial expressions of love, or even values that conflict with their faith. Yet, at its core, the day provides an opportunity to celebrate love—something the Bible calls believers to do generously. In John 13:34, Jesus commands, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Observing Valentine's Day doesn't have to mean embracing every cultural

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Special points of interest:

- PEANUTS
- WINNING SILVER BY ARDATH
- CAPE BRETON PICTURES
- CALVIN IN LOVE
- THING TO DO

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Staying in Touch - by Gloria Swain



The Missions Committee wants to continue staying in touch with our international missionaries. We recently had four of the missionaries we sponsor speak at our church - (Nathan, Lyndell, Sonya & Sherri). Each one said how much they appreciated re-

ceiving our cards and letters. Some even keep them on their desks to remind them that someone from home cares! Two of them even said that their mail system is better than Canada Post at the moment.

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Should Christians Observe Valentine's Day?

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norm. For Christians, it can be a chance to reflect Christ's love in all relationships – romantic, familial, and platonic. Some may choose to exchange cards and gifts, while others may focus on acts of service, quality time, or sharing

words of encouragement. The key is to let the day be about genuine love, not just tradition or consumerism.

Ultimately, whether to observe Valentine's Day is a personal decision guided by conscience, biblical principles, and family tra-

ditions. Christians are encouraged to use discernment, honoring God in whatever they choose. As with any holiday, the most important thing is to let our love reflect the selfless, sacrificial example set by Jesus.



Staying in Touch

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That is one way of saying - **keep those cards and letters coming.**

In the past we met at the church to have a missionary letter writing evening. Few people attended, so we have decided to let you take the time to write a letter at home. We will collect them twice a year and send them out as one bundle of mail from Hillview.

OK Hillview, let's put pen to paper and get writing.

The missionaries we sponsor are:

- Lyndell Campbell-Réquia- Brazil
- Jeff & Sonya Kilmartin - Cameroon/Nigeria
- Roman & Vicky Gehring - Wycliffe
- Nathan Reich - Youth For Christ, Moose Jaw Ab.
- Sherri Hufnagel - France
- Aaron Cranton - Old Strathcona St. Mission
- Chain of Love - Brazil

We can't all go and spread the love of Christ abroad, but we can all do our part to encourage those who do go. Thank you for taking the time to say, "I care".

Ed. Don't know what to write? I asked Marcy Hufnagel a former missionary. Her reply --

"You can write a little about yourself, your family, and what you do/enjoy, if you are comfortable sharing these things".

"Perhaps share some spiritual encouragement, Scripture, a good book you've read, some music you have enjoyed".

Please place your card or letter in Gloria Swain's mail box by Sunday, March 15th. Ed



Artwork by B. Worobec

Food Bank - God Answers - by Gloria Swain

It's a Monday afternoon and the Hillview Food Bank volunteers are all on board and anxious to get our day started. However, even before anyone shows up to pick up a hamper, a pair of size 11 steel toed boots appeared from somewhere. By all accounts these are huge shoes and to add to that they are steel toed. What are the chances that someone will actually want them? Never mind - we put them under the "free giveaway bench" in the entry way.

The day went along and the boots were forgotten, well not quite. In comes a middle aged gentleman and he is quite embarrassed to be there in the first place. He is eager to

talk and tells me why he is there. First they had a flood in his house and lost pretty much all of their furniture. Then to make



Artwork by B. Worobec

things worse he lost his job. Now he has to resort to this, the Foodbank. He really doesn't want to be here. I listened patiently to his story and he proceeded to tell me that he had a job interview that morning and he got the job.

He can show up for work

in the morning but he needs a pair of steel toed boots. Where is he going to find that kind of money? I asked him what size he wore and he said size 11. I told him to sit down on the bench and I pulled out the boots that were stored away there. He put them on and was surprised that they fit perfectly. He happily danced around in them and tears welled up in his eyes. He was so excited over the boots that he almost forgot about his food hamper.

What were the chances that those boots would arrive the very day that man needed them? Our amazing God is always right on time!

"THEN TO
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AND NOW HE
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RESORT ..."

Remembering Ardath - Winning Silver

Al Zuch stumbled across some stories written by Ardath and published in "The Senior Paper". He thought this would be a nostalgic and interesting story for the Hillview people who knew and loved Ardath. Here is her story "I Sang in a Solo Competition". The story begins with a preamble - a short note attached to the original story. Ed

A few months ago I subscribed to "The Senior Paper". I have submitted two

articles to it and both have been published. The first one was about my experience going to school with a horse and buggy. The second one was about singing in a music festival in 1941.

I Sang in a Solo Competition

Every year the Trochu-Three Hills, Alberta District had a music festival, involving several schools. I sang in the solo competition in 1941 at nine years of age. I was nervous for the

finals' presentation, where I sang "A Big Little Woman and A Little Big Girl".

My sisters told me to take three deep breaths before I sang to calm me down, but they didn't tell me to do that backstage, so, in front of the entire audience, I took my three deep breaths and then sang.

I won the silver trophy and still have it today!



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Delivering Hope - by Gloria Swain

"IT IS ONLY
WHEN WE
ALL PULL
TOGETHER AND
WORK JOINTLY
IN LOVE ..."

On Tuesday January 13 Howard and Larry had the privilege of delivering 20 boxes of love donated by the members of Hillview.

What an overwhelming show of support for those people less fortunate than us. Over 75% of the clothing was brand new, along with toiletries, baby formula and baby diapers, coffee, cookies, tea and snacks.

The Missions Committee wanted to do an outreach

into our community to end the year 2025. Hillview you helped us do just that.

It is only when we all pull together and work jointly in love that we will see the kingdom of God reach out into our community and we will see lives changed.

Thanks everyone for standing with us and letting the love of Jesus shine.



Hope Mission staff unloading the paraphernalia donated by Hillview people.

Another Committee for Hillview? - by Bill Holmes

"THE REALITY IS
HILLVIEW IS
CHANGING –
PROCEDURES,
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SITUATION".



It happened on December 6, 2025. There was a meeting of committee chairs and other church leaders. The purpose was to discuss some issues arising with having a growing congregation. Recently it had become apparent that there have been some operational issues. The objective of the meeting was an attempt to improve coordi-

nation and planning among the various committees and groups within the Church. The participants were Pastor Norm (acting as Chair), Bob (Elder representative), Neil (A/V), Howard (Trustee), Rick (Deacon) Gloria (Missions, plus), Keith (Worship) and Bill (Treasurer). Obviously an eclectic group of people

with a variety of responsibilities, perspectives and priorities related to the operation of the Church.

The first item on the agenda was determining the purpose and responsibility of the group, especially since it does not exist within

Hillview's current constitution. The reality is Hillview is changing – procedures, policies and operations need to reflect this new situation. This is a good thing! Problems have been identified and it was time to have an effective meeting to exchange ideas and identify possible solutions. The Church's structure or operation has been de-

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Another Committee for Hillview?

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scribed as “functional, not organizational based”. To be honest, I am not sure what that means, but I think it is related to how the church actually operates in reality, not necessarily as outlined in Hillview’s Constitution. Apparently, the traditional approach for projects, especially new projects, has been a sort of a “seat of the pants” operation based on experience, instinct, or guesswork. This approach is not the best approach. For example, the need was identified for acquiring new Christmas trees. Is this purchase the responsibility of the Trustees, the Worship Committee, or Leadership Council? The end result, new trees were not purchased in time for the Christmas season.

Discussions were open and wide-ranging. We had a conversation about creating a new motto for the church. Suggestions included “Country Church in the City” or “The Church on the Hill”. The intent is to be a Bible focused congregation and to provide an alternative to the professional mega churches that exist. It was also noted that the Leadership Council (Elders) should be concentrating on spiritual aspects of our church and less with



"I forget, is this a committee meeting, a sub-committee meeting, a steering committee, an executive committee meeting, a planning committee meeting, or an alignment committee meeting?!"

the day to day operational aspects.

To improve internal communications it was recommended that the chairs for each committee send a monthly report to Elders, even to say “nothing to report”. A number of possible future needs or wants were mentioned including a mission venture, and to develop a priority list of church improvements. Projects mentioned were vinyl tile (or equivalent) in Fire-side Room, clean out balcony storage area (affectionally known by some as the bat cave), re-view Fellowship Hall storage area (the area behind the curtain), complete the

renovation to the sanctuary, specifically the stage, and investigate the possibility of air conditioning for the sanctuary.

From my perspective, the meeting was useful in providing suggestions as to possible future direction for Hillview. As treasurer I can inform the committee leaders of their individual budget situation, within the context of the church’s overall financial situation. In addition, problems and possibilities can be identified, discussed and evaluated by the participants. I believe the overall objective, to encourage conver-

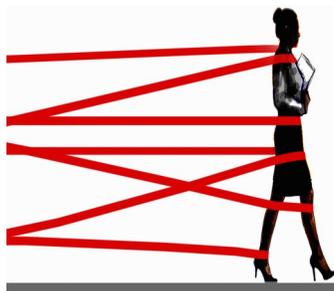
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Another Committee for Hillview?

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sations, and coordination among the various committees to be more than just useful, it is critical for the church as we grow, both in numbers and spiritually. Most importantly, pray for the church leaders, for wisdom as they make decisions regarding the fu-

ture for our "Church on the Hill".

I conclude with a verse from Pastor Norm's sermon on Sunday - January 26.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to

him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5,6

Final Note: This was written by me as a church member and does not necessarily reflect the views, priorities and policies of Hillview management and/or the Pastor.

Financial Update - by Joy and Bill Holmes

General Financial Information

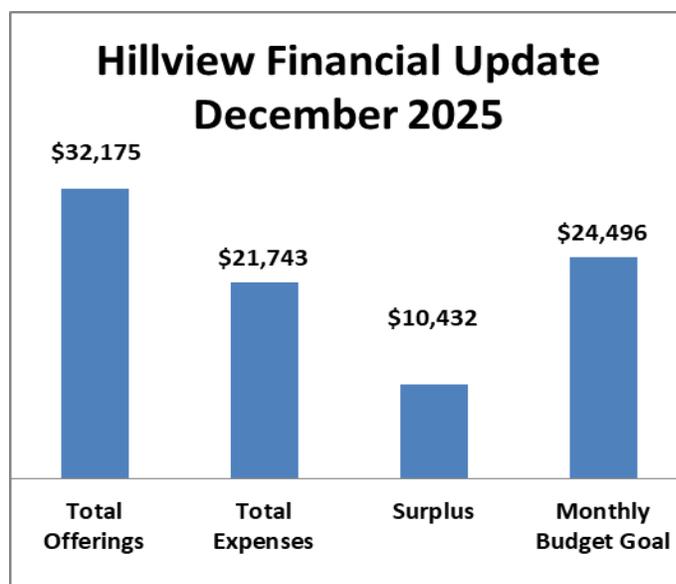
- Operating (Chequing) Account – \$101,503.
- Total Reserve (Savings) Funds - \$54,994.
Designated as follows: for building improvements (\$44,724), computer upgrades (\$1,000), and insurance (\$9,720). These monies are not included in Operating Account.
- Year to date surplus (July to December) is \$40,909
- As of December 31, 2025 we have received \$149,180 in tithes and offerings. This is \$2,200 over our projected budget total for the first 6 months of this fiscal year.

Global Missions:

- In December, we paid out \$5,000 to various missions as part of our budget commitments. The balance to be disbursed to our missions by June 2026 is \$8,900.

Comments

- Historically, tithes and offerings decline during January and February and then rebound in March. We are used to this pattern.
- Two things on the horizon that could impact on our overall fiscal situation is the hiring of Bradley Baker as Christian Education Director starting on February 1, 2026. In addition, Pastor's Norm sabbatical is from May 1, 2026 to July 31, 2026, not including vacation time. The Leadership Council is planning to hire Mark Morris as interim pastor.
- Any questions or concerns, please contact us.



The Heart of the Creation/Evolution Debate - by Wayne Baker

There are questions about the value of the creation versus evolution debate. One suggestion that comes up is that the debate is divisive. Those who accept the creation by God of the earth, universe, and life on earth should simply accept man's wisdom and the "science of evolution". However, you will never hear that those accepting the "science of evolution" should surrender their ideas and accept the "science of creation". Let's consider this question. Which view is more "scientific"?

The first question to ask is which science are we really dealing with in this debate? Individuals defending man's wisdom will often compare the "science of evolution" with cell phones, aircraft, medical science, but dismiss "creation science" as religious frivolity. Is that accurate? Both are talking about the past, not present, events. Neither group can replicate past events, but rather depend upon interpretation of the observed results. In addition, neither group can do experiments to prove their conclusions. Evolutionists are known for their repression of crea-

tionist science. In the Grand Canyon as well as the Rocky Mountains, there are layers of rock that have bends/curves. These bends lack signs of shattering; there are only two possibilities. The layer was bent either very slowly over an extremely long pe-

riod of time, (the evolutionist position) or the layer was deposited as sediment because of a catastrophic event such as a flood. In 2016, Dr. Snelling, a young earth scientist, applied to study this phenomenon within the Grand Canyon. His research on the rock layers supported the thesis that something catastrophic, like a flood, caused this geological feature. This layer of sedimentary rock, which is found across the globe, identifies the period of time by the specific layer of rock. Each layer is found across the

globe, identifying the same period of time for the same rock. This only happens if there was a worldwide flood. Those supporting evolution will say evolution is to be taught as science, young earth creation is to be

taught as religion. The evidence for evolution is the same evidence that we have for creation, the difference is how the evidence is interpreted as well as our willingness to objectively examine the evidence. The main issue is not science; the issue is do we believe man or God? Man's interpretation of the evi-

dence shows a very old universe and earth. The Bible says it is young. There is plenty of evidence for the young age of the earth. The amount of sediment in the ocean suggests a young earth. We do not need to deny science to accept the earth is younger than ten thousand years.



"... EVOLUTION IS TO BE TAUGHT AS SCIENCE, YOUNG EARTH CREATION IS TO BE TAUGHT AS RELIGION."



ViewPoints

Christmas with Bill and Anne Marie - by Anne Marie Bruce



Anne Marie and Bill

"WE WERE GREETED WITH WARM CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, HUGS, SNACKS AND A LATE NIGHT ..."

Bill and I spent the Christmas in Cape Breton. We have been back home for Christmas only once in the 13 years we have been together. We began our trip on December 18th, with a return on New Years Day. Air travel at Christmas time can be stressful but is made worse by the unpredictable east coast weather. We expected delays but were pleasantly surprised to reach our destination without a single issue! We always fly into Halifax and drive to Sydney, Cape Breton. At Bill's request, I read aloud online articles about the Acadians, the island's towns and villages, the steel industry and more while he drove the winding roads. Bill loves history, I've learned to like history more since meeting him.

It is a long day of travel. However, pulling into my parents driveway at the end of the day made it worth it. We were greeted with warm Christmas lights, hugs, snacks and a late night catch up session. Our 10 year old nephew, Marek, insisted on sleeping over at his grandparents house so he could greet us on arrival. What a wonderful surprise!

I grew up at the eastern edge of the island in a town called Dominion. My sister Courtney and her husband are now raising their family in that same town. We've visited many times since I moved to Alberta. The beauty never ceases to amaze. We drove to the beach several times to take in the sight of the powerful winter waves crashing against the shoreline. We also took time to drive through many of the small fishing towns that are just perched on the most picturesque landscapes.

During the next two weeks we traveled around the is-

land, visiting with friends and family. We had "kitchen parties", game nights and relaxing movie nights. We watched Die Hard and were split on whether it is a Christmas movie or not. Bill was disappointed he didn't get to experience a real kitchen party that traditionally included fiddle music. However, we did enjoy fiddle music elsewhere.

We attended the Barra MacNeil's Christmas Concert. The Barra MacNeils are a family of local musicians, all classically trained and extremely talented. I saw them when I was a lit-

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Cape Breton and all its unique little towns. There's even a town called Christmas Island known for sending out a record number of letters at Christmas with a special stamp.

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Christmas with Bill and Anne Marie



Bill is relegated to kids table!

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"WE VISITED
MANY
RESTAURANTS
AND ORDERED
ANY MEAL
THAT
CONTAINED
SEAFOOD, ..."

the girl and especially loved Lucy, the only girl of the family. Their Christmas show consisted of carols, Gaelic folk songs, stories and sing-a-longs. It was a festive, joyous night. We also enjoyed a night at "The Old Triangle" pub listening to the Newfoundland band "Signal Hill" singing covers, and fisherman shanties.

Most of the time was spent doing simple things with the people we love. We took our nephews on little adventures and built Lego with them. We ran errands to help out my busy sister and brother-in-law. We

traced the roots of my family tree, and played radio bingo. We made our favourite, everyday meals for my parents.

No trip to Cape Breton would be complete without a visit to the local hockey arena and poutine. We were able to enjoy both while watching Marek's hockey game at the North Sydney Centennial Arena. It was an exciting game that ended in a 3-3 tie. Bill would say this was the highlight of his trip - it was not watching our talented nephew play hockey, but rather the donair poutine he found on the menu. He couldn't believe his good



Dominion Beach was my backyard playground.

fortune to discover such a culinary treat at the local hockey arena.

Speaking of food, Cape Bretoners love to host and to make a "scoff". We enjoyed many home cooked meals. Dad's turkey dinner with all the trimmings and home pickled onions and sausage were my favourites. We visited many restaurants and ordered any meal that contained seafood, including seafood chowder and lobster poutine.

The economy in Cape Breton has been in decline since the coal mines and steel plant shut down in the 1990's. The island's main source of income is tourism. I want the island to thrive and seeing some new businesses open up was a good sign of prosperity.

I love how cozy Cape Breton is. You're greeted with a pot of tea and baked goods no matter whose house you visit. I love how you never meet a stranger there, the people are so warm. I love how proud the locals are of their island. The old homes are so charming. I love the deep rooted traditions and the significance placed on them. It's an easy place to visit, especially at Christmas time. We were blessed with a most delightful 2025 Christmas.

Two Ingredient Chocolate Fudge Cupcakes



Active Time: 5 Min

Total Time: 2 hrs, 5 Min

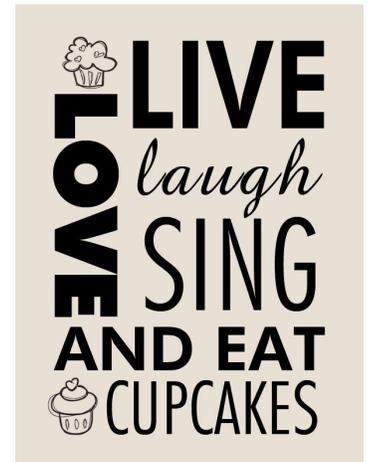
Serves: 10

If you're craving something rich and chocolaty, these 2-Ingredient fudge cakes will hit the mark!

- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups chocolate chips, semisweet or dark
- 1 cup pumpkin puree

NOTE: Use only **1 cup** pumpkin puree (it's easy to confuse "cup" with "can" and I want to make sure you don't include the entire can as it will negatively impact the final result)

1. Prepare a standard muffin tin with paper liners (you'll only use 10 of the 12 muffin compartments - double up on the liners for extra sturdiness. No need to mist with oil spray. Set aside
2. Melt chocolate chips using a double boiler or in the microwave by stopping and stirring every 30 seconds until they are velvety smooth (about 2 minutes total). *My life-saving hack: Mist your microwave-safe bowl with oil spray before adding your chocolate chips. It will make cleaning the bowl so much easier.
3. Mix in pumpkin puree; stir until mixture is smooth and creamy without any streaks of pumpkin.
4. Divide batter among 10 paper-lined compartments, smooth the tops using the back of a spoon and give the muffin tin a few taps on the counter to flatten out the cakes
5. Place in fridge to firm for 2 hours or more to set. Serve with optional berries, a squirt of whipped cream and dark chocolate shavings. Store in the fridge for up to a week, or freeze for a few months.



As editor, I was thrilled about receiving this recipe for the newsletter from Yvonne. Surely I could make these for Joy as a Valentine Day gift (she is dairy intolerant). I also thought that maybe Chesley, Stacey and Martin could enjoy these cupcakes too, but nope, our chocolate chips have "dairy ingredients". So close! Ed

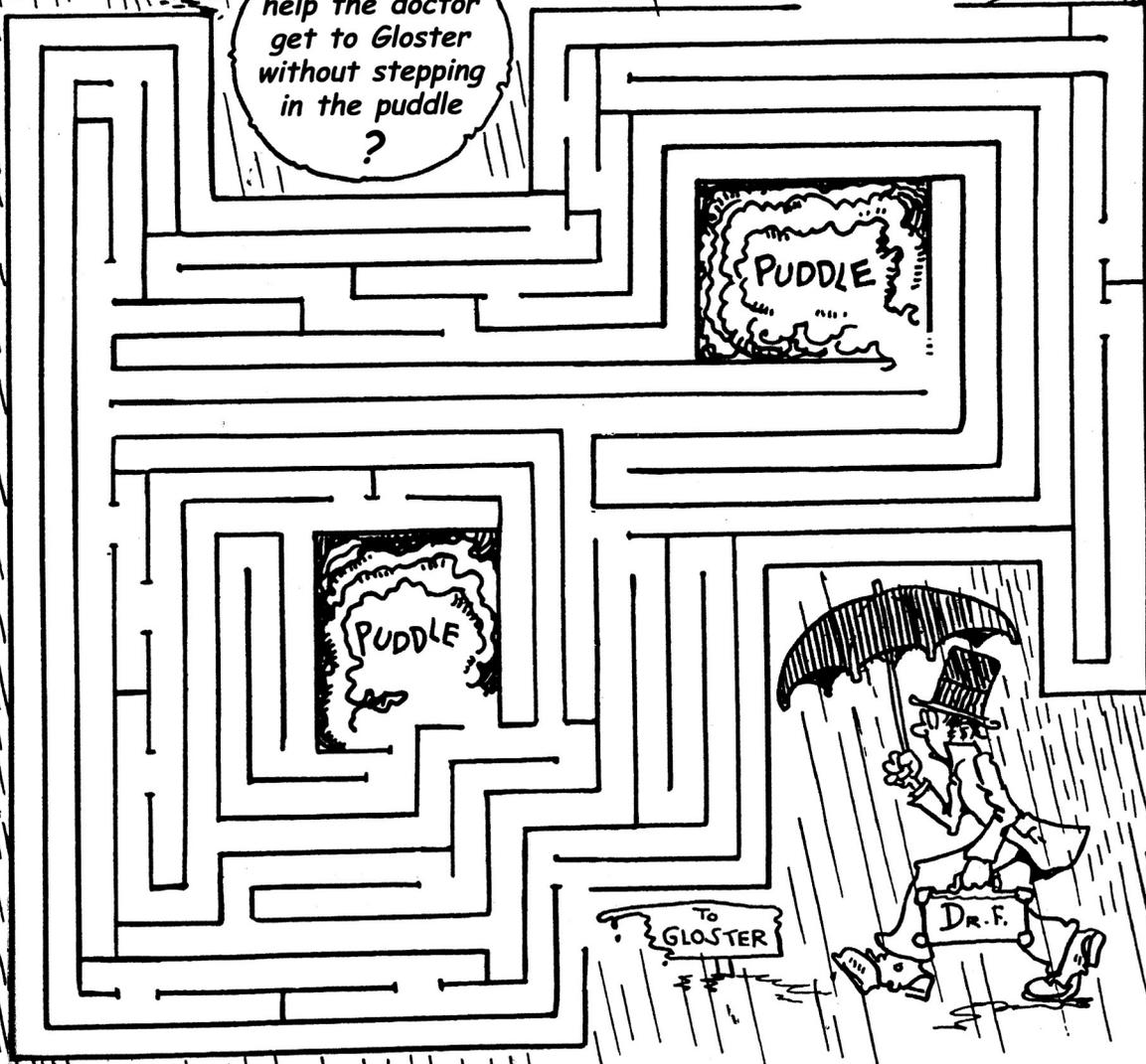


Doctor Foster

went to Gloster,
in a shower of pouring rain,
He stepped in a puddle,
up to his middle,
and never went there again!



Can you
help the doctor
get to Gloster
without stepping
in the puddle
?



At first, make your lines lightly, so you can erase if you must.

Opportunity may knock once, but chocolate temptation bangs on the front door forever!

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Rick's Trivia - Chocolate - by Rick deLeeuw

What better time than now to think of chocolate as Valentine's Day approaches!

Did you know...In the United States alone, consumers purchased approximately 75 million pounds of chocolate for Valentine's Day in 2025. Globally, chocolate is the most popular gift for the holiday, with 34% of people intending to buy it. The holiday represents a major peak in the \$120 billion global chocolate industry.

Top Markets:
Chocolate gift-giving is highest in Japan (75%), South Korea (61%), and Mexico (47%).

Preferences:
Milk chocolate is the favourite (40%), followed by dark chocolate (28%).

Valentine's Day is considered the third-largest chocolate consumption day of the year, following Halloween and Easter.

Here's a bit of history for you chocolate enthusiasts. Chocolate wasn't discovered at a single moment in time, but evolved from ancient Mesoamerican cul-

tures, with evidence of cacao use dating back over 5,000 years in Ecuador. The Olmecs, around 2,500 BC, made a bitter, ritualistic drink. The Maya and Aztecs later refined it, using cocoa beans as currency. Europeans introduced sugar in the 16th century, transforming it from an elite beverage into the solid, sweet treat we know today, thanks to 19th-century innovations like the cocoa press and milk chocolate.

1847: Joseph Fry created the first solid eating chocolate bar by mixing cocoa powder with cocoa butter and sugar.

1875: Daniel Peter invented milk chocolate by adding milk powder, developed by his neighbor Henri Nestlé.

1879: Rodolphe Lindt developed the conching process, giving chocolate its smooth, melt-in-your-mouth texture.

To those of us that must watch their sugar levels (Diabetics) in the early 1990's came the "No Sugar Added" bars: Brands like

Ross Chocolates began marketing "No Sugar Added" chocolate bars in 1998, primarily targeting diabetics. They used sugar alcohols like Maltitol to replace refined sugar. While early versions often relied on sugar alcohols (which can cause digestive issues), the newer, and healthier, approach (i.e. Nestlé's) uses the natural sweetness within the cacao fruit. This version also offers higher fiber content and less saturated fat. Of course, this all comes with an added price!

Do you remember when people asked the question, "How did they get the caramel inside the Caramilk Chocolate bar?"

Caramilk bars are created using a "one-shot" process where liquid chocolate and caramel are injected into molds simultaneously, with the chocolate lining the bottom just before the caramel fills the center, followed by a final top layer of chocolate. Another approach is to pour caramel into pre-hardened chocolate shells, allowing the liquid caramel to be sealed



"FORGET
LOVE —
I'D RATHER
FALL
IN
CHOCOLATE."