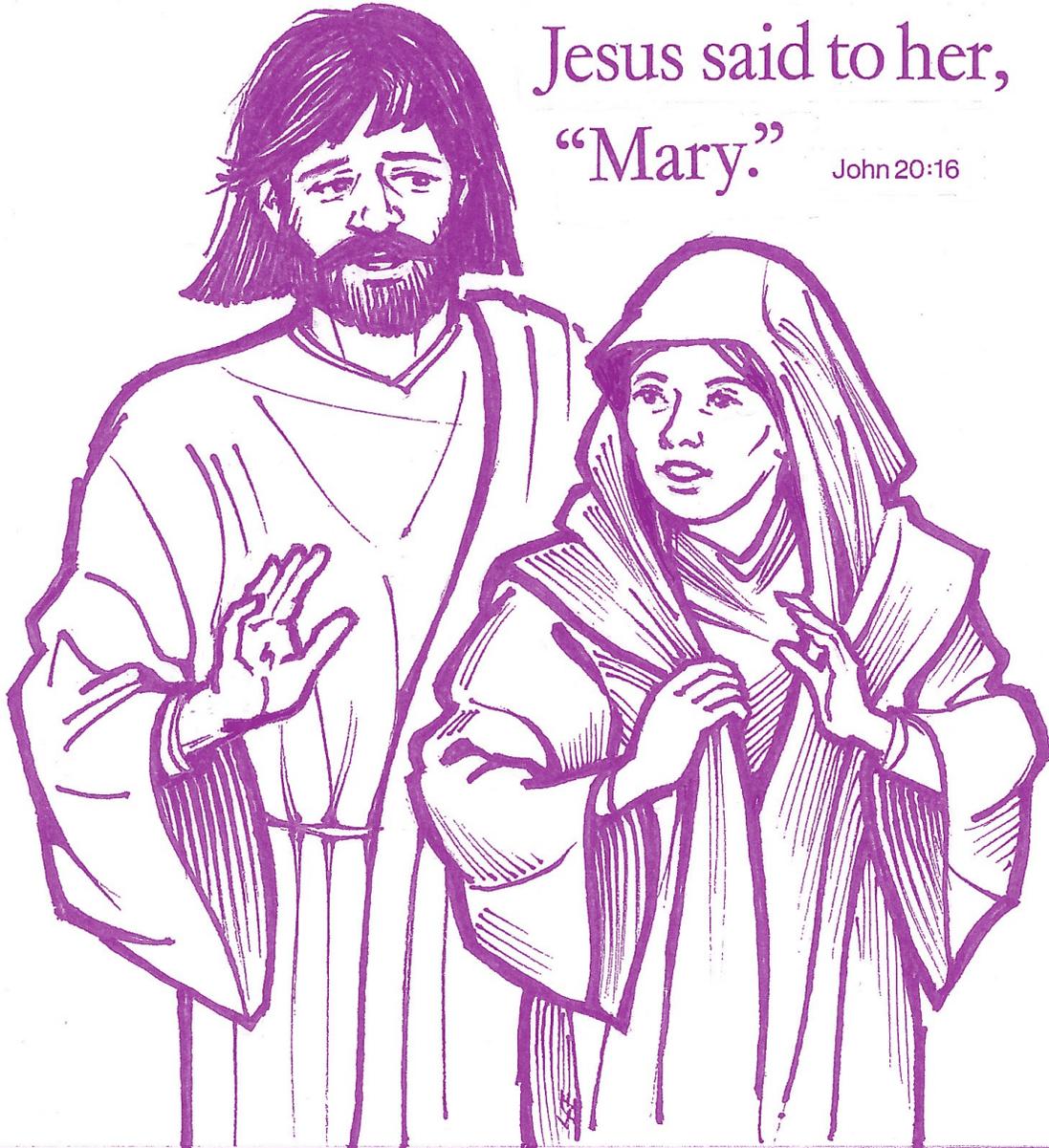

Jesus said to her,
“Mary.”

John 20:16



Holy Week Reflections

2018



On Eagle's Wings



From the desk of ...

Rev. Lesley Hand

On Eagle's Wings' Executive Director

Jesus said to her, "Mary". She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). John 20:16 (NIV)

Dear Friends,

When you look at our cover art this year, can you hear the tenderness in Jesus' voice as he calls Mary's name? Can you see the surprised recognition on Mary's face when she hears her name spoken in that familiar, beloved voice? In that moment of recognition, all of Mary's grief, sorrow, and disillusionment are erased. Hope is restored. We are thankful for the way Mike Lee, our graphic artist, has captured this moment between the risen Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

As you walk through Holy Week, may these reflections help draw you into a quiet, still moment where you hear Jesus speak your name, know that you are loved beyond your wildest imagination, and give you hope.

We are continuing our experimentation with distributing our Holy Week Reflections electronically. We hope that the various access points (email, Facebook, website) mean that you can read them quickly, easily and, with the larger print, comfortably. We also hope that you will share them freely with friends!

May peace and hope be yours in abundance,

Lesley

Who Are My Teachers?

Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you are looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned to him and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).

John 20:15-16 (NRSV)

What joy must have filled Mary's heart when she realized that it was the risen Jesus she had just encountered. Up until this moment of awareness, she thought Jesus was dead and her heart was heavy with sadness and grief. A question came to mind as I reflected on this passage. How often in my life have I encountered Jesus but never recognized him?

We all have a list of "teachers" who have influenced us. Do we list Jesus? Like Mary, we don't always recognize Him or may even miss Him totally.

One of my fond memories of my life in the North was on a hot summer afternoon. Just as I was about to take a much needed rest, the door bell rang. My thoughts were not very holy ones. "Go away!" However, I went to the door and there were four children. They wanted to play dress-up with the rummage sale clothes. "Sure! Go ahead!" I just got settled back in my chair when the children returned to display their wonderful fashion creations. Do I shoo them away or invite them in? Within minutes they had drawn me into the lively spirit of their fashion show. Then Patrick wanted to take them into the chapel. He assured me that he was going to lead the kids in prayer and not play there. Patrick very reverently led the others in spontaneous prayer and ended with the Lord's Prayer. I had just experienced a most simple heart-warming faith-filled experience. My tiredness was gone and through these kids I deeply felt God's presence. These poor ragamuffin looking kids who could hardly read had just been my teachers. Thank you, Jesus, for revealing yourself and your love to me through them.

Jesus, open our hearts to be receptive to you and to recognize You in all the people we encounter. Help us to see past their weaknesses, idiosyncrasies, age, culture and infirmities and to see you in them. As we commemorate your passion, death and resurrection this week, may we all grow deeper in our gratitude to you for being our Saviour. This we ask in your name through the Father and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sister Joan Liss

Former *On Eagle's Wings* Governing Board member
Waterdown, Ontario

Called To Action

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. 1 John 13:18 (NRSV)

When I was first approached about teaching Bible Camp in the North, I was both humbled and a bit uneasy at the prospect. The invitation was to serve Paulatuk (one of OEW's most northern communities). Fear of the unknown was likely the reason for my pause; after all, the trip would be 3,000 miles from my home in North Carolina. Even so, I felt that God was calling me to step out in faith.

After prayerful consideration, I accepted the invitation and preparation for the journey began. This included fund raising, educating donors, preparing camp lessons and managing to pack camp supplies and necessities for a week in one duffle bag and backpack per person! As preparation proceeded, excitement for our northern adventure grew!

As the week progressed in Paulatuk, we experienced the love of Christ through the Bible Camp and through relationships formed with the people of the community. Not only did we serve the community through the camp, the community served us through their hospitality (experiencing traditions of the North, celebrating a Canadian national holiday, and enjoying the kindness of elders).

It took action for us to accept God's call to serve Paulatuk. It took action for the people of Paulatuk to embrace us.

The love shared and bonds formed in this experience came from action. Action that God called us to. Even 3,000 miles away, the love and bonds I have with Paulatuk will never, ever fade.

Jesus, help us to open our hearts and minds to hear your call. Give us the strength to take action when your call requires it. Your gifts of love and grace far outweigh any fear that we may have. Help us remember you are always with us...even to the end of the age. Amen.

Jen Canipe
On Eagle's Wings Governing Board Member
Harrisburg, North Carolina

Lots of individual attention helps bring Bible stories to life for children in Paulatuk.



Calling Our Name

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). John 20:15-16 (NIV)

"Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Kathy!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher).

I work with intellectually and developmentally disabled adults. They range from highly capable to just barely aware of their connection to the surrounding world. Kathy is one of these latter individuals. I often can't tell what she really knows about what is happening around her, but she's always cheerful in spite of circumstances.

One day she walked right past our door and kept going. By the time I caught up to her she was in the wrong office and didn't recognize anyone. She was emitting this little wail she has when she is distressed. Unrecognizable people were moving toward her to help. She didn't know they were trying to help. The pitch of the wail increased... alarming everyone. No one moved any closer, understanding that this was an emotionally challenged young woman in a state of fear.

In that silent moment I said, "Kathy!" She turned and saw me and the fear drained from her face as she ran to hug me. She knew she was safe.

Dear Creator, God... in Lent we find ourselves in distress. We know not where we stand, nor who these people around us might be. Call our name out clearly, that we may find comfort in your embrace during these dark times. Bring us back into the fold of your life giving love. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Rev Terry Tomlinson
Former *On Eagle's Wings* Governing Board member and Bible Camp teacher
Papillion, Nebraska

Doubting Believers

A Canaanite woman ... came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly." Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment. Matthew 15:21-28 (NIV)

It is not the faithful women with whom I identify most in the cast of characters who surrounded Jesus in the days before and after his death and resurrection. It is with Thomas that I most identify. When I started to study scriptures, I began to examine myself and recognized my years of struggle and doubt. Then I started to build and grow my faith, as well as feed my soul, by reading the Bible. But this also revealed my doubt.

When I became a Christian, it came to my attention that my faith was weak. Matthew 15:21-28 is one of the scriptures that has opened my heart to see that faith grows by trusting the Lord. When we focus on Jesus, our faith and trust grow as he answers our prayers.

Sometimes, when we pray the words without really trusting God to answer, our lack of faith surely grieves the heart of our Lord. It disappoints both of us. Yet now I understand my struggle. As Jesus said, *Everything is possible for one who believes.* (Mark 9:23, NIV)

Jesus, help me to be a person of great faith like the Canaanite woman. When I doubt, help me to trust in your promise that everything is possible for those who believe. Amen.

Geela Qaapik
Community leader
Grise Fiord, Nunavut

Children in Grise Fiord discover how Jesus makes our sins 'disappear'.



Of Knees and Washing Feet

So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

John 13:14 (NRSV)

Bad knees in Jerusalem are bad news. The holy city, built on hills, with a million stairs and steep slopes, is a daunting challenge for the able-bodied, let alone for anyone coming with aches and pains. But this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. So I gritted my teeth and went.

Entering church after church, sanctuary after holy site, excavated caves and ruins, my body and spirit yearned to kneel in prayer and adoration. I shivered in so many places where Jesus walked and talked, where our faith tradition was born. Alas, my knees would have screamed if I had followed my spirit's desires. I shivered not only because it was overwhelming to be in those spots, but I shivered at the sight of every steep slope, every set of stairs, and every alley of uneven ground, especially the ones with no railings or other holds.

Slowly, frustration turned a page. Surrendering to the reality of weak knees revealed deeper invitations, unearthing a spirit-type archaeology. Noting my cautious steps, an elbow would appear, unbidden, saying: lean on me. Leaning into vulnerability and dependence with grace opened others to the call to make sure I would not cast my foot against a stone (Psalm 91).

My physical need for support called forth compassion and concrete action, including in some with whom differences of opinions would make a friendship a prickly undertaking. Walking arm in arm allowed for some unique grace-filled sharing first with one, then another and another. Separation lines blurred in the common task of shouldering the burden of my bad knees. Whereas relational tension might keep us apart in other settings, my simple need for help gave rise to communion and reconciliation, softening hearts and adorning them with a smile.

Jesus, our Lord and Teacher, grant us humility of heart to reach out in our need. Let your call to wash one another's feet, knees, and hurting hearts with your love and mercy, melt away all division and strife. Amen.

Rev Marie-Louise Ternier Gommers
Pastoral Leader and *On Eagle's Wings* supporter
Humboldt, Saskatchewan

Blanket of Love

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool.

Isaiah 1:18 (NIV)

On a cold Alberta winter day, my friend and I set out on a road trip. The forecast called for a lot of snow and poor driving conditions, so we left as early as possible. Before we set out, we prayed for God's protection.

The first part of our drive went well even though there was some snow on the road. Suddenly, a semi passed us at a much faster speed than was safe. In its wake, we drove into a literal white out. Slowly our vehicle began to veer into the ditch. After we came to a stop, we tried to drive out of the ditch but couldn't because there was so much ice under the snow. Miraculously, a man in a truck, equipped with tow straps, stopped to help us. He hooked our vehicle to the back of his truck and pulled us out. We were soon back on the road, thanking God.

As we drove on, the image of how white everything was kept filling my mind: the whiteness of the snow thickly falling, the whiteness of the fields, the ditches and the sky, the whiteness of the man's truck and the whiteness of the cloud of snow that we had driven into. This whiteness seemed a blanket of love and protection that God had wrapped around my friend and me. I was reminded of the scripture, *Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool.* (Isaiah 1:18 NIV)

Only through Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection are we made white as snow, protected from the fate we all deserve as sinners, which is death. On Good Friday, Jesus loved us so much he died our death. Only Jesus' sacrifice for us allows us to be reconciled to the Father, to approach His mighty throne of grace asking for forgiveness and protection.

Thank you, Jesus, for choosing to make each of us as white as snow through the forgiveness of our sins. During the winter months when we look out on the snow day after day, may we be ever mindful and thankful for this gift of forgiveness. May we be moved to always forgive others and be merciful to others in order to honour You. Amen.

Kathy-Lynn McKay
On Eagle's Wings Bible Camp Coordinator
Edmonton, Alberta

Grief ... Not the Final Word

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4 (NIV)

It's been a rough year for my family. A difficult couple of years, actually. This spring will mark two years since the Fort McMurray wildfire. Many of our friends who lost their homes or were displaced due to severe damage are finally moving back in, settling into clean, bright new homes and getting back to familiar routines. However, in their neighbourhoods they still see empty lots and charred trees, sightlines forever altered and still alien. They've heard stories of insurance delays and absentee landlords preventing rebuilding efforts. It's getting better, but the grieving process continues.

Our family home suffered only minor smoke damage. We had thought we were prepared to lose it. We had backed out of our driveway that May afternoon repeating, "It's just stuff." Everything we loved was coming with us- children, pets, each other. We didn't know that a little over a year later we would lose our house to insecure employment and a depressed resale housing market. I cried, more often than I can ever remember crying before. I knew in my head and my heart that God was still with me, but I just couldn't feel it. Like Mary Magdalene mistaking the risen Christ for a gardener, I could not see him through my tears.

Jesus calls Mary by her name, and she recognizes him. Through the veil of her grief and tears, she sees him and calls him "Teacher." This moment speaks powerfully to my own grief over the loss of my home, the sudden removal from my community, and the uncertainty of my future. I see Jesus, hear him calling me, and know that this moment and this pain are not the final word. Jesus teaches me to receive his comfort for those who mourn. His resurrection teaches me he is the Lord even over death, loss, and our grieving hearts.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for your words of comfort in scripture, and the promise kept in your resurrection that by your sacrifice we are given eternal life. I pray that all who grieve will receive your comfort, and the joy of living with you forever. Amen.

Tara Munn

On Eagle's Wings hospitality volunteer

Evansburg, Alberta



Calming the storm for children in Ft. McMurray.

Voice Recognition

Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”
John 20:16-17 (NIV)

“Good morning!” “Well, how are you?” No further introduction is needed. Although we do not see each other as frequently as we once did, my northern friend and I know each other instantly by our voices. The inflection in our voices communicates our feelings. Try as we might, it is often hard to disguise what’s going on in our lives. And it is often those things, unspoken at first, that shape our conversation, prayer, and plans. Our needs, conveyed through our tone of voice, shape our mission. Maybe voice recognition is not such new technology after all!

Voice recognition. It is Jesus’ voice, saying her name, whereby Mary recognizes her friend and Lord. One word, her name, spoken by Jesus, instantly transforms her life from utter dejection to complete joy. Yet this is no mere chit-chat. Jesus calls her name, not only that she might recognize him, but also that he might give her a mission: *“Don’t cling to me ... But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”* (NLT)

Celebrating our Lord’s Resurrection, then, gives us cause to ponder, how well do we recognize Jesus’ voice? Do we even pause to listen to and for him speaking to us? And when we hear him, how might we respond to his injunction to go to our brothers and sisters with the Good News that he is risen, alive, and ascending to our heavenly Father? On this, the most joyful celebration of our year, let us not cling to Jesus, but allow the joy of recognizing his voice to shape us to go as Mary went.

Father thank you that you created each of us with the ability to recognize and respond to your voice. As we celebrate your resurrection today, renew in us, the desire to hear you, respond to you, and, like Mary, to go where you send us. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Rev. Lesley Hand
On Eagle’s Wings Executive Director
Spruce Grove, Alberta

Individual attention helps us recognize each child’s unique gifts in Ft. Chipewyan.



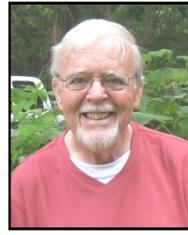
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Thank You!

Your ongoing support of *On Eagle's Wings* is deeply appreciated.

In 2017, your gifts enabled us to provide a transformative ministry of Word and presence as we walk with people in over 20 of our most remote northern communities. That's over 500 northern children, youth, and their families.

We would like to have an On Eagle's Wings Bible Camp in our community ... children look forward to this every year! (Cindy, Aklavik)

To make a special Easter thanks gift now,

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Or call: 1-866-441-6594 / 780-440-6594

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MISSION STATEMENT

On Eagle's Wings is an ecumenical Christian ministry that proclaims Jesus Christ and serves the Church and individuals in remote and isolated areas of northern Canada.

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