



# Ministry of Women

DECEMBER 2023

## The God Who Is With Us

For the past two months, I have felt unwell but have resisted going to the doctor. Among other reasons, the embarrassment of clogging up the medical system for a silly cold kept me home. But, as the weeks passed, I grew increasingly miserable and eventually desperate enough to bite the bullet, if simply for the hope of life going back to normal. You can predict what happened next: “Why didn’t you come in earlier?” the doctor asked. “Your lungs are so tight they can barely draw breath. It’s pneumonia.” Oops. With a goodie bag of steroids, a puffer, and antibiotics in hand, I was set upon the surprisingly easy path to feeling well again.

While it is something of an oversimplification, isn’t that a great snapshot of the human condition? So many of us are walking wounded. And Christmas can often exacerbate many of our wounds. Loved ones who won’t be at the table this year, family members who thrive on picking at our scabs, haunting loneliness, financial strain, and mental illness are just a few of the burdens that we carry through the holidays. There is no tree bright enough and no Hallmark movie sweet enough to fix us. Like me with pneumonia, we can press on alone growing weaker and more miserable, but that doesn’t even qualify as a Band-Aid. What we need is healing. We need qualified outside help.

This brings the Israelites to mind. They had entered Egypt in a spectacular display of God’s sovereignty but were now enslaved. Hundreds of years after Joseph’s beautiful confession that “you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good”, they were languishing. They needed to be rescued and, in their groaning, cried out for help.

I absolutely love this response from Exodus 3:7-8

*Then the LORD said, “I **have surely seen** the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and*

***have heard** their cry because of their taskmasters. I **know** their sufferings, and I **have come** down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.”*

Do you see the four action verbs in this text? God *saw, heard, knew, and came.*

Friend, God **sees** you right now as you are reading this. He sees the brokenness the rest of us can’t. He **hears** your cry for help. He hears you as He did the Israelites before you, as “a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” (Nehemiah 9:17), He **knows** you. He knows your suffering, your need, your exact circumstance. He will not forsake you. Jesus Christ has **come** to deliver you, to heal you and to carry your burdens. As someone who has struggled with depression and self reliance most of her adult life, I don’t say these words glibly.

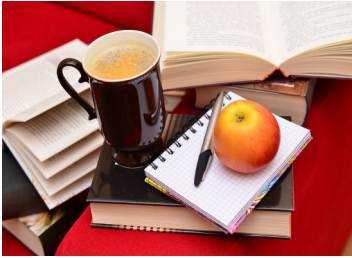
With these beautiful truths in mind, this is what we can grasp on to this Christmas:

*Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
And through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned,  
And the flame will not consume you.  
For I am the Lord your God  
The holy one of Israel, your Savior.  
Isaiah 43:1-3*

Instead of trying desperately to make it on our own, let’s reach out and grasp Him who loves us, resting in the peace that comes with that dependence.

~ Lacie Jahnke

# Winter Bible Studies



We invite all women to prayerfully consider joining a Bible study group this winter.

Our morning and evening studies will both begin on Tuesday January 16<sup>th</sup>. The morning study will run from 9:30-11:00 a.m. and free childcare will be provided.

The evening study runs from 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Whether you're newer to Peoples Church or have been attending for many years, participating in a Bible study can be a great way to get to know others and build friendships as we delight together in our Saviour, growing together in our faith in Him and His Word. We hope you'll join us!

## The Story of Scripture from Eden to Eternity

Many people have a knowledge of the Bible's stories and characters, but don't understand or appreciate the master narrative. The Bible is one cohesive story from Genesis to Revelation. It is a beautiful story that points to one Person. It is a story of how our eternal God is on a mission to redeem and restore His rebellious children. A story with many different books, with many different styles. But it is a story that is not only meant to inform us, but transform us.

Join us Tuesday mornings from 9:30-11:00 for this overview of the Bible. There is no book to purchase; however, it is recommended that you bring a binder for the handouts you'll receive.

Free childcare is provided for pre-schoolers. Ladies, please sign up at the Welcome Centre, and if you'll be bringing little ones, please add their names and ages as well so we can plan for childcare.

## The Minor Prophets

Starting on Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., I am excited to be leading a study on the first six of the twelve minor prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah.

The study will run for 11 weeks and will be an overview of each of these books. We will look at the books in their historical context: who was king in the northern and southern kingdoms when the book was written? We'll do a character check: who were these men called to prophesy? And we'll briefly touch on how the books were grouped: where did the term "minor prophets" come from?

We will also look at four themes that are often represented in each of the books:

1. The times the prophet and people found themselves in
2. The threatening captivities and eventual restoration
3. The coming of the Messiah
4. The reign of Messiah as king

These books can be fun to study because they are not overwhelmingly lengthy even if the message they deliver may be a bit ominous! Remember though, the promise of the Messiah is always present, and we will see how that promise is fulfilled over and over again through the verses from the minor prophets that appear in the New Testament.

Beth Ann Wiersma

## Baby News



### New Arrivals

(Since last newsletter)

#### **Claire**

Born: September 21<sup>st</sup>  
to Andrew & Megan

#### **Lily**

Born: November 26<sup>th</sup>  
to Tim & Natasha

### Expectant Mothers

**Emily Levitt** (December)

**Amy Buurma** (January)

**Nora Gordon** (February)

**Christine Steckley** (April)

**Sophia Oosterhof** (May)

# That You May Know: Encountering God in Exodus

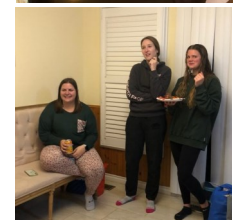
## The Gospel Coalition Canada Women's Conference

November 16-18, 2023  
Scarborough, Ontario



On Thursday, November 17, 2023, twenty women from Peoples Church set out toward Scarborough to attend The Gospel Coalition Women's Conference. Most of these women stayed together in an Airbnb, and as we arrived at various hours that evening, we excitedly prepared for a couple of days of learning, growing, and being challenged in our faith.

The theme for the conference was "That You May Know: Encountering God in Exodus" and the keynote speaker for most of the main sessions was Mary Willson Hannah. Mary brought the Word to us with passion, skill, and a good dose of humour. She has a strong presence and her love for the Lord was evident as she challenged us to know the Word, to share the gospel, and to be faithful in obedience to our Holy God and Father. The schedule for Friday was very full—each woman attended four main sessions and two breakout



sessions of choice. We were able to enjoy dinner out together as well as a great time of fellowship back at the house following the evening session. We shared apps in our PJs, played a game, and many of us laughed until we cried (and a few headed to bed early, fighting sickness, knowing they would need rest and energy for another busy day ahead.)

On Saturday, after a breakfast treat of homemade Klassen cinnamon buns, we all headed back to the church for two more main sessions and one more breakout. Many more opportunities for conversation, hours of sitting beside each other learning, and lifting our voices in worship together to our awesome God, made it bittersweet when our time together ended.

As we headed back to Wyoming, many of us sent messages to our group text thread, praising God for the spiritual growth and refreshed awe of Him as we spent this time deeply in His Word. We



also praised and thanked Him for the gift of our time together. We experienced beautiful fellowship and grew in our relationships and love for our sisters in Christ. At the end of our weekend together, many of us also expressed our exhaustion and readiness for a good sleep...in our own beds!

Following are a few reports from several of the women who attended.

### Encountering God in Exodus

"Sometimes fear does not subside, sometimes you have to proceed afraid." (Elizabeth Elliot). From midwives to Moses, this quote understands the missions God has set before them. We saw God bring about a complete transformation in Moses from Exodus 2 to 33.

Moses does not hide his stubbornness at the burning bush, but records it for us in Exodus. The very One who spoke everything into existence was guaranteeing Moses' victory through His power and yet Moses gives excuses to why he is not the right man for the job! He ultimately wanted God to find someone else. This seems utterly ridiculous to us as we know the outcome of Exodus, but don't we give the same excuses to God when it comes to our turn?

I was reminded of the quote, "God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called." - Mark Batterson

God uses the weak things to reveal His strength: our weaknesses do not disqualify us. Moses was weak and yet God revealed His power through him! Mary Willson Hannah, the main speaker at the conference, frequently reminded us that we can't fulfill God's mission while not being in His word. We need to KNOW God's promises to trust His promises. We see God turn His servant Moses from wary to willing throughout Exodus. As Moses mediated for Israel to God we see the foreshadowing of our absolute need for



the mediation of Christ in the new covenant with us. We can only experience and enjoy God's presence through the mediator, Christ.

Another very powerful encouragement from the life of Moses in Exodus is how alone he stood in the faith at times. In Exodus 32 at Mount Sinai, Moses returns from the presence of the Lord to a people who have so quickly forgotten the God who delivered them from Egypt. They've created their own god, the golden calf. I'm sure we all know this as a classic Sunday school story, but what stood out to me this time was that it was Moses' own brother, Aaron, who obeyed the people and made this idol. Aaron has faced Pharaoh with Moses, brought the ten plagues on Egypt, and led the Israelites out of captivity. These two brothers had been through so much together as the Lord chose them to be leaders of His people. Yet after all this, Aaron betrays God and Moses. Out of all the people, Moses must have been hurt most by his brother. I don't know about you, but that right there would be about the most discouraging and isolating thing to me. I think we need to ask ourselves what our faith would look like if everyone we cared about turned from God.

May we be in His word so as to know His promises, trust His promises, and live to share His promises.

"The fields of discipleship are ripe for the picking all around us!" -Mary Willson Hannah

- Sophia Ooserhof

### **Trusting God after the Loss of a Child**

I attended this session with Jamie and Vanessa Strickland who lost their son Jude in a tragic accident in 2020. They shared about their grieving process and how they've learned to continually trust God through their loss and are now able to help others who may be grieving.

They also shared much wisdom on how we all may learn to come alongside others in our communities who are grieving. They reminded us that believers have the opportunity to grieve well, so that unbelievers also may see there is hope, even through the most difficult times.

The Stricklands shared about that tragic day, the days following, where they still are as a family and what they have learned. They explained how they can see God's care for them through the accident, details and people He has placed into their story. They reminded us that God invites us to bring all of our struggles to Him, no matter how raw those difficult thoughts and emotions may be.

The Psalms show us many examples of lament and Jamie and Vanessa shared that learning how to lament well and bringing it all to the Lord has helped them in their healing. Scripture is full of reminders of comfort, and sometimes it helps when others remind the hurting of these passages as they find themselves in too difficult a place to search on their own. The Stricklands shared a number of other resources that can help through the journey of grieving, such as Seasons Of Sorrow by Tim Challies and Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy by Mark Vroegop.

Jamie and Vanessa knew people cared and wanted to support them, but not all good intentions were helpful. They had much wisdom to share from their own experience and explained that many people desire to help, but not knowing how, they would offer help in an open-ended way. When someone is grieving, they are often not able to reach out to others, even when someone expresses a willingness. It is better to offer a specific form of help, giving them the opportunity to accept the help, rather than having them think of a way they might require help on their own, or leaving it up to them to let you know if they need help.

Grief is paralyzingly hard—physically and mentally. Bearing one another's burdens is to join the grieving person in their sorrow. Attend visitations and funerals. Remember to pray for them in the days/months/years that follow. Remember significant dates that will always be difficult for them and be willing to talk about their loved one as the years go by. They fear their loved one being forgotten. Joining someone in their sorrow is not about coming up with words that feel like advice or somehow trying to "fix" how they are feeling, but rather being willing to sit with them in their sorrow, allowing them to be comfortable where they are, even if that means sitting and crying with them. Everyone grieves in their own way and may require support in a different way than you would choose for yourself.

Jamie and Vanessa are strong examples of trusting the Lord through deep pain and offered many reminders of God's grace, love and faithfulness through their heartbreaking story.

- Shelley Korvemaker

### **Ministry Among the Least-Evangelized Women of the Western Hemisphere**

This breakout session was informational and challenging. We listened as a panel of women discussed ministry in Quebec. We were given a brief church history of the province and an overview of ministry challenges. I realized through the session that many of the advantages we enjoy as believers in Ontario are because of an established church community and the ongoing Christian influence of many generations—this is not the case for our brothers and sisters in Quebec. Two of the women on the panel were missionaries to Quebec from the USA and a call went out for workers, funds, and resources (there is a surprising lack of French resources available for ministry). If you have any questions or are interested in hearing more, I'd be happy to discuss the session further.

- Julie Klassen

## **What Is Biblical Forgiveness?**

This breakout session was led by Andrea Thom. She discussed how the core aspect of forgiveness comes from the ultimate sacrifice that was made by Christ at the cross. It was unfair, it was costly, and it was brutally necessary, yet Jesus was obedient to His Father. We are offered forgiveness through this great sacrifice and we are called to forgive others just as He forgave us. Biblical forgiveness starts with a readiness in our hearts to forgive. God freely offers us forgiveness through His Son when we repent of our sins. Therefore, we freely offer forgiveness to those who have wronged us when they come to us and truly repent of their sin.

The purpose of forgiveness is reconciliation. Jesus forgave us so we could have access to a relationship with Him because of our repentance. Biblical forgiveness is replacing hostility for a mended relationship. Andrea Thom explained at this point what biblical reconciliation looks like practically. It is an event, but also a process that can often take much time and biblical council. She emphasized that biblical forgiveness is not saying that what happened is ok, does not eliminate consequences, and the reconciled relationship won't necessarily be as it was before. Sometimes reconciliation is peaceful harmony, but no longer an intimate relationship with that individual.

Andrea concluded with discussing how justice and mercy perfectly coincided at the cross. We as Christians should always be reflective of this peace that was made for us through Jesus, so we can in turn make peace with others.

## **Medical Assistance in Dying**

This sessions looked at the sobering topic of Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) from a legal, medical and Christian perspective. It is helpful to differentiate the following terms when discussing MAID:

- Euthanasia – The practice of intentionally and painlessly putting a person to death to eliminate pain and suffering. Euthanasia was a criminal act in Canada.
- Assisted Suicide – A patient who wishes to end their life is prescribed a lethal drug at their request and then self-administers it. (It's interesting to note that rates of assisted suicide remain relatively low, which is telling – people are not so willing to end their own lives.)
- Palliative Care – Refers to care for persons who are facing a serious, life-limiting illness and aims to relieve suffering and improve quality of life until the person's natural death.
- Medical Assistance in Dying – A process that legally permits a person to receive assistance from a medical professional in ending their life prematurely if they meet certain criteria. MAID is essentially euthanasia renamed and Canada legalized it in 2016. Over the past few years there has been an approx. 30% increase annually in the number of people accessing assisted death in Canada.
- Life Support – Medical procedures that aim to keep a person alive until their body is ready to take over again. Removing life support in cases where the body can no longer function on its own and allowing the person's life to come to a natural end, is not the same as assisted death.

Although the legal session was informative, I really appreciated the session with Dr. Ewin Goligher on "How Should We Then Die? Euthanasia and Christian Conscience."

He spoke of two reasons we as Christians oppose assisted death: the intrinsic value of the human person and the intrinsic value of the human body.

We are created by God in His image, and what God created is good and of value. Assisted death questions the value of a person's existence and devalues the body, whereas Christianity affirms the value of both the person and the body.

God took on a human body in the Lord Jesus, He lived in a physical human body, died in the body, was resurrected in a physical human body and ascended to the Father bodily. Likewise, we will all die and our bodies will be resurrected. The body matters, and what we do with it matters.

It sounds compassionate to not want someone to suffer and grant their wish to die. Our culture makes it sound kind, as if death is a friend to be welcomed, but Scripture says otherwise: "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor 15:26) and "the Lord has no pleasure in the death of anyone" (Ezek. 18:32).

Even if a person is no longer able to care for themselves, they matter. There is honour in dependence (needing others to care for you) as well as honour in independence (being able to care for yourself and others). Dr. Goligher stated that euthanasia is a spiritual response to the problem of spiritual emptiness and challenged us to prepare well for our own deaths. In a sense advocates of assisted death are saying, "Having no answers, I can offer you death." How tragic!

If death is the last enemy, life is the answer!

Dr. Goligher has co-authored with Pastor Kyle Hackman a very informative and insightful article on death and dying. It is available on the Gospel Coalition Canada website at the address below:

<https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/death-and-dying-a-catechism-for-christians/>

- Helena Klassen

The Ministry of Women at Peoples Church invites you to the

## Women's Christmas Breakfast

Saturday, December 9, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.

Peoples Church, 3888 London Line, Wyoming, ON

Speaker: **Michelle Kember**

The breakfast and program are free; however, registration is required. There will be an opportunity to make a Christmas centerpiece (photo below left) for those interested, facilitated by Sipken's Nurseries at a cost of \$30.



Please sign up for both the breakfast and the craft from Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup> at the Welcome Centre or contact the church office.

The deadline to register for the craft is November 26<sup>th</sup>. The deadline to sign up for the breakfast is December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

519-845-3386

Email: peoples@peopleslambton.com

*And Mary Said,  
"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my  
Saviour, for he has looked on the  
humble estate of his servant.  
For behold, from now on all  
generations will call me blessed;  
for he who is mighty  
has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name."  
Luke 1:46-49*

## Recipe Section

### Festive Kale Salad

1 bag Sweet Kale chopped salad mix  
Berries (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries)  
Goat cheese  
Candied pecans  
Mix salad as directed on package. Top with fresh berries, crumbled goat cheese and candied pecans. Delicious!



#### Candied Pecans

6 Tbsp. brown sugar  
1 ½ tsp cinnamon  
¼ tsp salt  
Pinch cayenne pepper, optional  
½ tsp vanilla  
1 ½ Tbsp water  
2 cups pecan halves  
Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or silicone baking sheet.  
In a medium skillet mix together sugar, cinnamon, salt, cayenne (if using), vanilla and water. Place skillet over medium heat and cook, stirring often until the brown sugar melts into a bubbling sauce, about 1 minute.  
Stir in the pecans so that the brown sugar sauce coats them.  
Continue cooking until the pecans look candied and smell nutty, 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly. As the nuts heat up in the pan, the sauce will slowly coat them and become shiny. Watch closely so they do not burn.  
Transfer the candied pecans to the prepared baking sheet and spread out in a single layer. Allow the nuts to cool before breaking them up if needed.  
Delicious as a snack or added to salads, cheese boards, etc.

### Chocolate Toffee Almond Squares

#### Crust:

2 cups flour  
2 cups oats  
1 cup packed brown sugar  
1 tsp baking soda  
1 cup melted butter

Combine first four ingredients. Add melted butter. Reserve 1 ¼ cup for topping. Press remainder into a greased 9X13 cake pan. Bake at 350 for 12-15 minutes or until golden.

#### Topping:

1 cup chocolate chips  
1 cup slivered almonds  
1 cup SKOR toffee bits  
1 1/3 cup caramel sundae sauce  
1/3 cup flour

Combine baking chips, almonds and toffee bits. Sprinkle evenly over base. Mix together sundae sauce and flour until smooth. Pour evenly over crust. Sprinkle reserved oat mixture on top. Bake for 20-25 minutes longer, or until golden. Cool completely; then cut into squares.

Dessert recipe submitted by Beth Ann Wiersma.  
Kale salad recipe inspired by Alanna Oravec.