



Remarked

Easter 2017
Volume 7, Issue 1

WHY IT'S REAL

BY ANDREA VELTHUIZEN

I used to ask, isn't it just weird to have a religion based on a death? Good heavens. Strange. Why focus on someone's dying a gory death. Maybe the following blurb answers that a little. I think the message is all these things and more. Does one of them strike a chord?

Why Christians make a big deal of Good Friday and Easter:

- Well, life IS a life-and-death issue, after all. So this is NOT 'religion'
- It's pure love—it is giving up EVERYTHING (life) willingly (action, not just talk!)
- It's very radical. Never happened before. Highly unlikely scenario. Rather impossible. Only happened once.
- It's very physical, very visceral.
- It's the opposite of fighting. It flips "power" upside down... and wins.
- It tells me Someone understands suffering, identifies with me when I struggle
- It crosses all cultural and historic lines. The movie line doesn't ever need to change
- It has to do with how life works (which is weird

too when you think about it): bury a seed and a way bigger plant (life) grows from it (you know: He died, etc.)

- The ultimate happy ending. He wins—a rep. for the whole world—the ultimate game: rages war against permanent death (and the devil/evil) for three days (symbol for completion) and comes back out successfully.
- The prospect of our dying is completely changed: now it's a transition to a new life, not a termination. I mean, we pretend we're not going to die, but we all will...
- After all, we all didn't want to come out of the womb once, either, before we knew there was another life out here...
- The experience for Jesus was a complete disconnect from the Maker of the universe. The resurrection was a complete re-connect. We're mostly all in a state of partial connect or disconnect right now. A total re-connect would make us love others enough to suffer for them, give up our lives for them... Not just folks we like, either! Okay, so that would be quite a world, if everyone was like that.
- That's the goal: for us to be like that. I mean, if

Cont'd on page 3.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Jennings Creek Christian Reformed Church

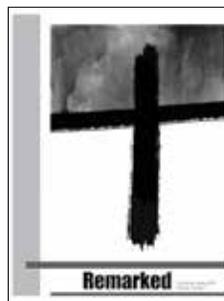
Pastor: Ben vanStraten
 Youth Leader: Kim Griffioen
 Secretary: Sarah Cooke
 Church Office: (705) 328-0177
 CAP Mental Health Network: 1-866-347-0041

Ministry Contacts

Cadets: Richard Wilms
 Gems: Nicole Barker
 Kid Connection: Grace van Oudenaren
 Coffee Break/ Story Hour: Kim Fintelman
 Women's Bible Study: Jeanne Dykstra
 Youth: Kim Griffioen

REMARKED: THE NEWSLETTER

Editors: Cora Wilms and Fiona Karelsen
 Layout: Jess Terpstra
 Cover: Jess Terpstra



Next Issue: June 18, 2017
 Deadline for articles: May 28, 2017

REFLECTIONS ON WORSHIP

BY CYNTHIA SCOUT

Last Sunday, when coming home from church, I realized how blest we are with our worship people.

Yes, I very much appreciate the message, but there is so much more. We are blessed with so many gifted people in our congregation. When I enter the church I sense the love the Lord has given us all around me. How precious is that! Truly a place where we belong. The incredible pianists we have, the worship leaders, the readers. When Jannah plays, I have goose-bumps.

And then the songs...what a blessing they are to me.

Singing has always been a big part of my life. As a child in a large musical family I grew up with singing and music. On Sunday night after church we gathered together and sang around the organ.

One sister played the big pipe-organ in church and sometimes I could go with her and pull out the stops. Boy that made me feel important!! Another

sister played the mandolin and a brother the guitar. And did we sing. Panis Angelicus, The Holy City, Brahms Lullaby, the old familiar hymns....I can still hear in my mind.

One particular memory stands out as a precious moment.

We had all gone to bed and then we heard our Dad say from the bedroom, "Listen kids, there is a nightingale". And this was very rare; a true bird that sings all alone in the night. Then my dad started singing this old song about a nightingale and before you knew it, from every bedroom people sang and harmonized along. Truly a golden memory!

So, Praise Team, keep on doing your wonderful work and may the Lord bless you all.

Although my old voice does not do what I would like, the praises ring out. From all of us.

Cont'd from page 2

everyone was like that...!

- But I know I for one sure can't love like that.
- So I fail. So we all fail. Not just partially. Because in a perfect world, there's no half way. And it's the failures which trap and imprison us. Ultimately fearing for our lives limits our living.
- Freedom is getting away from our tendency to protect ourselves not others. (which tendency will eventually ruin the whole world)
- Freedom, it turns out, is provided. If you choose to take it. Can't get free as humans. But follow Jesus who will lead you there. He won't guilt you into following; He'll just love you into it.... Gradually, with the Holy Spirit, you can choose to get a closer connection with ultimate love and you will start to live this way. Very carefree and full of joy, no fear.

Other aspects that made this story stay around for thousands of years:

- There were hundreds of predictions historically and they all came true

- God and Jesus are one, so it's about all the suffering it took to bring what they had built back into what it was meant to be; perfection in the universe. This action starts the universe back on track. Because he "killed" all badness, all injustice. (This was all planned from the beginning, though)
- Divine justice: nothing short of perfection can be in God's world. So there's a cost to being imperfect, which he paid for us, the penalty.
- For Jewish culture, there were obvious parallels: it had to do with sacrificing a lamb on the altar (substitute for the punishment) to get back into favour with God, and with Passover, when God led His people out of slavery into their own free land.
- It juxtaposes the lowest humiliation over against the highest position, King, which is where Jesus is right now. Cross, then crown. For us too.
- It's also obviously about God touching earth, connecting, being not far away. Very, very cool. Very real.

Happy Easter

BOOK REVIEW: A THOUSAND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

By MICHAEL KING

REVIEWED BY CORA WILMS

Imagine you have just learned that you have colon cancer, and then learn your adult child is dealing with breast cancer! This is what the conflict in *A Thousand Sleepless Nights* centres on.

There are three adult children who live in various parts of the country with their families and careers, and hardly keep in touch with their parents who still live on the old family ranch in northern Virginia. Does that sound like a happy family to you?

When mom finds out that she has the same cancer that claimed her grandfather and her father's life, she is devastated. She would like to be alone outside on her beloved ranch where she can come to terms with her new reality: battling colon cancer. She can't ride because her horse has been sold along with all of the other horses to satisfy creditors. The ranch is a shadow of its past when there were cowboys and a lovely painted barn with a front porch and stalls full of horses. Those are gone and the barn is hardly discernible anymore.

This is a needy family, each member turned inward, seemingly without any hope.

The disease ages her noticeably so her husband wonders: when did she get so old?

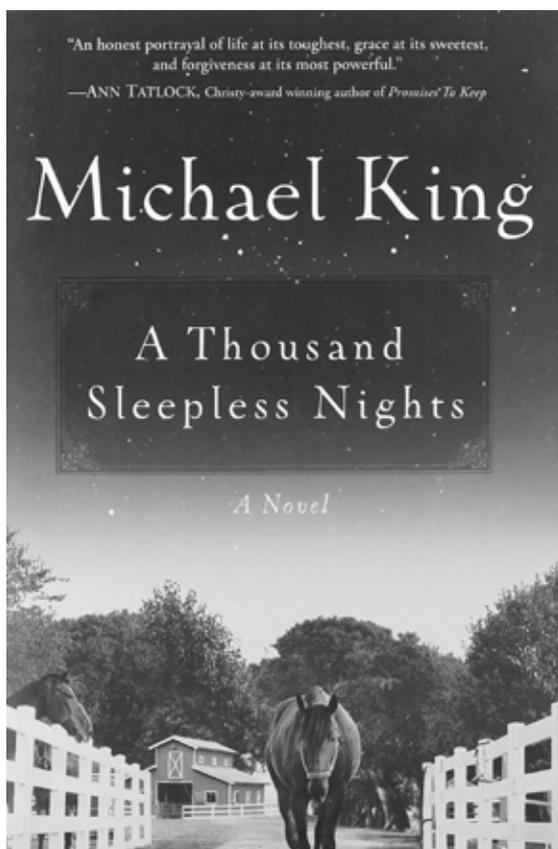
Without telling his wife, he phones each of their children with the grim news. The son, a lawyer, knows that the parents cannot afford medical care and tells dad to send him the bills, knowing that it will be hard for him to do that. The daughter who has just learned she has breast cancer apologizes for being unable to come to the ranch just now, without explaining why. The daughter in California feels disconnected from her mother, but upon reflection realizes there will not be another opportunity to heal the breach. They are asked to come home for Thanksgiving.

And they do all eventually arrive, with the grandchildren. So the door is open for dialogue, for honesty, for forgiveness, for insight.

All credit goes to the author for crafting a novel that really seems true to life. He writes on a topic that is familiar to him. His wife and children

supported him along his own journey with cancer and recovery. He knows what a toll it took on all of them. Knowing this about the author makes the story that much more credible.

Look for *A Thousand Sleepless Nights* in our church library.



PALM ZONDAG 1945

BY DICK KUIPERIJ

Many of you will be aware that my mother passed away almost two years ago. When Dad sold and moved out of the family home it meant a major cleanup. My Mom saved a lot of things and recently Marilyn came across a typewritten page. She asked me to look at it and immediately I recognized what it was. It was a poem written about the death of two brothers less than a week before Mom's village was liberated in 1945. This is the story.

Wim Vermeulen was in hiding at one of the neighbours to avoid conscription by the Germans. His brother Aldert had come to visit him and had spent some time staying at Mom's home. Mom also had a dear friend Leny, a girl from Amsterdam, who was living with them during the war. Wim was Leny's boyfriend...I believe they were engaged by this time.

On Palm Sunday, March 25, 1945, Wim and his brother Aldert were walking to Mom's home to pick up Leny in order to go to church, when they were shot at by an Allied plane. Wim died instantly, while his brother died several hours later. The remarkable thing is that Wim was a believer, whereas his brother Aldert had turned away from God and the church years earlier. But in his last hour or so of life he asked someone to read Romans 8 to him and in his dying breath whispered "zo blij, zo blij" (so happy, so happy). By God's grace he was granted those few last hours to become right with God.

The brothers were to be buried two days later on Tuesday. As the neighbours where Wim had been in hiding were getting dressed for the funeral, Wim and Aldert's father and sister suddenly arrived. They had received a message that Wim had been wounded so they had biked about 150km to visit him. Imagine their shock when they realized that not only Wim had died, but also Aldert. They had no idea that Aldert had visited his brother and had died also. Aldert had been living elsewhere in the country. Instead of coming to visit a wounded son, they arrived in time for the funeral of both brothers.

Wim's girlfriend Leny later went on to marry and immigrate to New Zealand. My mother corresponded with her for many, many years.

This story of events that happened during Lent 72 years ago shows the horrors of war but also the glorious message of Easter. A young man who had turned his back on God was given a few extra hours of life to accept God's grace through Jesus. Hallelujah!

If you read Dutch and would like to read the original poem, please speak with Dick. He has made copies

MINISTRY SUMMIT 2017

BY NANCY & BOB MATTHEW AND CORA WILMS

Prior to the Ministry Summit an invitation was given during our worship services encouraging everyone to consider becoming part of drafting "Courageous Proposals" to guide the future ministry focus of Jennings Creek Christian Reformed Church (JCCRC). When the Ministry Summit started on March 4, there were twenty-nine folks present.

Opening the morning with a time of worship there was singing led by Pieter and Pastor Ben. Then the pastor opened Scripture to 1John 4, a chapter emphasizing God's love as demonstrated in Jesus Christ who laid down his life for all who believe. He led in prayer.

The speaker for the day, Jack Tacoma, was introduced, and coming to the podium told how it came about that an engineer by training and profession came to be a speaker and teacher with Home Missions. It was the result of discovering his spiritual gifts some twenty years ago when many of us went through such a workshop. To his surprise his spiritual strength was shown to be teaching, and a great love for people, so he became a teacher within his congregation, then volunteered for Home Missions, and later sold his engineering business and went fulltime with Christian Reformed Home Missions.

He has spoken in a great number of churches and spoke passionately about several places where he was invited to come up to the Prayer Room prior to the formal meeting, and was blown away by the number of people there and the intensity and duration of spirit-filled prayer—not for five minutes—for a half hour! God does amazing things in response to prayer. "Wonder what God is going to do today."

Jack read Matthew 25: 35-36 where Jesus teaches that we serve him by serving our neighbors, our community, people who are marginalized. During the morning he referred to that passage frequently.

Speaking about vision and its connection to relationship and action, Jack used the imagery of a car with a driver and passengers. Vision is the driver. Vision determines the road to take to get to the destination. The passengers are relationships and programs. Vision matures with relationship, and

the relationship produces and develops programs and all drive along that way for twenty to twenty-five years. Then along the way, Vision gradually gets pushed to the back seat by programs and their management. They don't have a clear idea of where they are heading. Vision belongs in the front seat, driving. When vision meets action, off we go, a healthy church. The longer the church is without vision the harder it is to get along without it. Changing the church culture takes courage.

The plan for the morning involved forming small groups of four people to brainstorm courageous proposals in three areas and write them on posters to be hung on the wall like giant Post-its. The areas of brainstorming were how to serve the community, how to be an inviting church, and how to welcome and enfold.

The first assignment: JCCRC will be known as a church that loves its community. The people have a servant heart and because of that, lives are being transformed. Write a courageous proposal about JCCRC that could make the above statement true. After a half hour, the proposals were posted on the wall, and we could grab a drink and a snack.

Our next courageous proposal was based on the following statement: Welcome and Enfold. Guests are loved, cared for, valued and engaged. Have a focus that will be interesting to newcomers.

The final opportunity to create a courageous proposal was about inviting people to JCCRC. When this third proposal was posted, there were three batches of proposals in separate areas on the wall.

It was time for lunch and also an opportunity to individually put our stickers on two proposals that we deemed most fruitful in each group. Before the meeting reconvened, Jack grouped the proposals according to the stickers received and by their similarity. Eventually the suggestions were pulled together by asking ourselves how this proposal can be more fruitful. How can the proposal work better? What needs to die (to be pruned) in order for this proposal to find life? What needs to be considered, that might be forgotten?

Cont'd on page 7.

YOUTH WITH A MISSION

BY EMILY GEERLINKS

“And God said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19)

My name is Emily Geerlinks, I am twenty years old, and in May I will be going on a missions trip with an organization called Youth with a Mission (YWAM). To give a little background on the organization for those who may have never heard about it before, YWAM is an international volunteer movement of Christians working to help make a difference throughout the world. The purpose is simply to know God and make Him known with a mandate of evangelism, training and mercy ministries. YWAM was founded in 1960 and is now one of the largest interdenominational and international Christian ministries, with about 16,000 volunteer staff based in over 1000 locations in over 150 countries. The YWAM location that I have chosen to complete my discipleship training school and outreach mission is based in Steinbach, Manitoba, and I will be going to Fiji to complete my outreach portion. This location is referred to as “Island Breeze Manitoba”. I will be away on this trip for 5 months; 3 months in Manitoba, 6 weeks in Fiji, and 2 weeks back in Manitoba.

Throughout this trip, there are a variety of different activities we will be doing to help us grow in our faith. The schooling phase will help us in our journeys by hearing various speakers talk about their walks with God and how they show His love,



as well as teaching us how to be missionaries. This YWAM location mainly focuses on song and dance as acts of worship and the importance of them. This theme will be carried out within Manitoba as well as while we are in Fiji. Our main focus while in Fiji is to create strong and meaningful relationships with people. Song and dance are major parts of the Fijian culture, so showing others that it is an amazing way to glorify God will hopefully allow more people to welcome Him into their lives.

I am incredibly excited to go on this adventure to see what God has in store for me and can't wait to share my experiences with everyone when I come back. I feel as though this is what God has called me to do and I am so grateful to have the opportunity to spread His love to others. *“Be brave, strong and courageous. Seek adventure and truth. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)*

If you would like any other information on YWAM Manitoba, please visit www.ywamislandbreeze.com



Cont'd from page 6

The table groups wrote concrete steps and considerations that would make each proposal do-able. By two o'clock our proposals and their to-do lists had been finalized. Jack Tacoma took them along to convert to a document for our use.

This was not an ordinary brainstorming event. This brainstorming of "courageous proposals" provides a vision and a road map for the future of Jennings Creek CRC and its community.

WHY DO I DOODLE?

BY SARAH COOKE

Have you ever wondered why all of a sudden you are doodling when you should be paying attention to what's being said or taught? Or you have wondered why someone next to you is doodling and not paying attention to you or a speaker? Well there is a reason for this; you (or they) are a visual learner.

What is a visual learner you may wonder? As a visual learner I prefer to use images, pictures, colours and maps to organize information and communicate with others. I love drawing, scribbling and doodling, especially with colours. This visual journey helps me memorize or remember content that isn't easy to see.

While many see doodling as a distraction, for me it is just the opposite. Research shows that all that free form scribbling actually helps you to concentrate and retain information, especially during dull tasks (in no way am I saying that sermons are boring... just to be clear).

Over the years I have journeyed through different mediums to seek a closer relationship with God. I am not a prayer warrior and am very emotional when I try to pray openly so I generally choose not to pray in front of others.

I first started with praying in colour. As I doodled I would think of people or events that I wanted to pray for. This produced unique and meaningful pieces of art. I am able to communicate with God on a level that is very meaningful for me. It also gives me the freedom to not be a perfectionist. As I am an artist through and through that is something I struggle with daily. As a Graphic Designer I am trained that everything has a place, purpose and reason for being there. The constant need to be perfect can be restrictive so I discovered a freedom of colouring "outside the lines" (so to speak) while praying in colour.

As I have evolved I became caught up in the NEW fad of adult colouring books. I can lose myself for hours at a time but I found that I yearned to communicate more intimately with God. So I sought out scripture

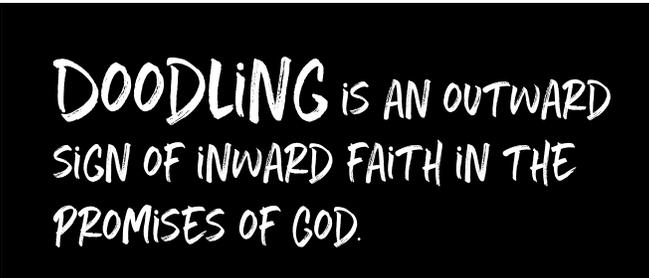
based adult colouring books. This allows me to connect with scripture and let the words saturate my soul as the page comes to life as I work. This has led me to a new journey of Bible Journaling.

I have doodled during Sunday morning sermons as a way to focus on images that have come to my mind while listening to what the Pastor is teaching. This image is one that I have been working on from Pastor Ben's sermon on Encountering Jesus: Encounter His Freedom. As I doodled I drew images that stood out to me but as the days past I couldn't just leave it as random images. I felt God taking these images and guiding me in how He wanted me to see the image as a whole. So I gathered all of the images, scanned them and digitally assembled the images into this final picture.

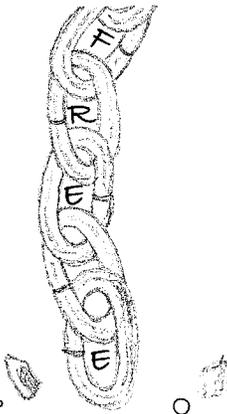
I have started to incorporate this process with images or phrases that come to me as I go through our current bible study at Coffee Break. I have been more connected with God then I ever have been before and I am retaining more of the information. Being able to recall what God is teaching me is making scripture come alive and have more of an impact on my life.

For me Bible Journaling is a creative and fresh approach to the age-old discipline of Bible reading. With a pen in my hand I can visually capture Scripture, meditate on God's Word and understand the text. Some may see it as a way of private devotion or as an act of worship but for me it is a creative outlet that I love to share with others. For me the beauty of journaling is that I don't have to be a skilled artist, I can let go of the hard and fast rules of design and allow myself to experience God and His Word in a creative way.

Give doodling a try...you never know what path God might lead you down...for me it is usually purple and sparkly but it always has meaning and a purpose even if no one else sees it. I guess I view these doodles as my love letters to God.



DOODLING IS AN OUTWARD
SIGN OF INWARD FAITH IN THE
PROMISES OF GOD.



Freedom

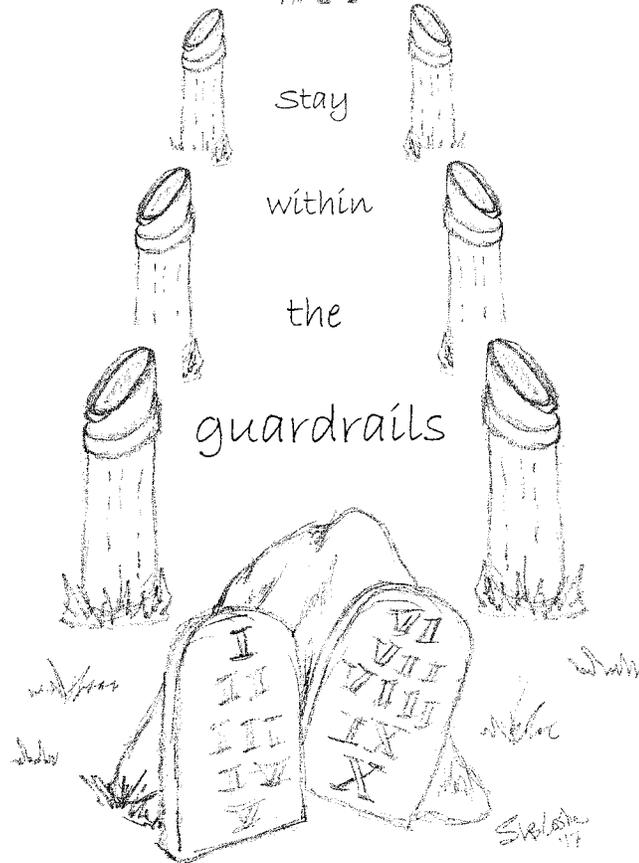
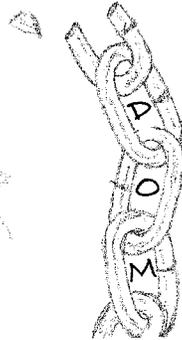
Legion

Encountering
Jesus

Encounter His Freedom

Mark 5:1-20

Sermon:
Jesus restores a demon
possessed man
Sunday, March 19, 2017



REMEMBRANCE OF HELEN MENDLER

BY LAURA ROWLANDSON

My first encounters with Helen Mendler were in the church foyer following morning services. Chatting with her I learned that both she and her dad were battling cancer. At some point, Helen stopped attending our church. It wasn't until a couple of summers ago that I again encountered Helen, this time at the Lindsay Farmer's Market. She shared some more about her troubles and the progress of her cancer. Helen was facing all her problems on her own. Right then, I wanted to show her I cared about her, and I tried to encourage her to let our church family get involved as well. Being the very independent person she was, the only thing Helen asked for was a hug, which I gladly gave her; she needed that hug! Initially I determined to keep her in prayer and to keep in touch, but sadly it wasn't long before I mostly forgot about Helen.



This past summer the Lord caused our paths to cross once more. This time I checked out where she lived, and I started to call her. Helen continued to be very positive in her efforts to fight the cancer that was now worsening in her body. An accident she'd had in her teens had left Helen with some physical challenges. She dragged one leg; her speech and memory were somewhat affected, too. She now became more stooped over. Although Helen was taking measures to fight her cancer on her own, she'd also had chemotherapy treatments. The last round of it this Fall was too much for her body to handle. Helen's body swelled: first her arm, then her legs, and then her face. She was finally ready to take some help!! Of course, I wasn't the only person helping her out at this point, but I tried to do my little part. I asked her what foods she enjoyed and, with her usual wide smile, she requested some cooked turnip! That was an easy one since I love turnip, too.

During these weeks of physical decline, I tried to encourage Helen by reading scripture and praying

with her. My daughter Jessie joined me on one of those visits, and Pastor Ben on another. Kim Griffioen visited her numerous days during that last week (which she resistantly spent at Ross Memorial Hospital). Kim read from the Psalms and prayed with Helen the evening before she died. Helen was pleased, and hugged her goodbye.

I was told that this past summer Helen had sat in on one of the outdoor church services held in Victoria Park, not far from her home. She had not cut the Lord out of her life. Although I don't remember hearing Helen express that God was "getting her through", she welcomed input. I know for certain that the Lord wanted her to understand He'd not forgotten her. I felt His love for her; He knew her pain; He knew all about her broken relationships, her hardships, her cancer. Helen seemed to have this indomitable spirit. She desperately wanted to

know victory, in this life, over the many problems that she had, but the Lord has given her a far better victory, He has given her victory over sin and over death. And now, all those troubles are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in her.

I have one final thought, here. Helen left behind family members who are not yet saved. We can still do something for Helen, and for the Lord! Let's pray for Kim and Kerrin, Andrew (her brother), Holly and Nigel, as well as Erwin, and Victor. I'll thank you for her

MILESTONES

Matt Vandenberg and Kerra Plesko were married March 9, 2017 in Jasper, Alberta. They now make their home in Prince George, B.C.