



Volume 2, Issue 1

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In this issue:

<i>A Note from Nicki Melara, Director of Women's Ministries</i>	1
<i>Resources</i>	1
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	2
<i>AGWM Silly Survey</i>	2

## Hope!

### **A Note from Nicki:**

**Here we are, three months into 2022.** Do you feel like a lot has happened in the past two years? Lots of back and forth, lots of ups and downs. After a couple years of really heavy life stuff, people have really clung to the hope of a new year. Maybe 2022 will be better. Maybe 2022 will be less heavy and less hard. Maybe 2022 would be less divisive.

Do you identify? Did you hope that the new year would bring new life to a hurting world, unity where divisiveness has reigned, peace to strained family relationships, comfort to strained friendships, purposefulness to job stress, to... you name it?

I think it easy and natural to have these underlying, even unspoken hopes and expectations. If we put our Hope in any of these though, we are going to find ourselves very disappointed. Just a few months into the year and there are already more examples of why we cannot put our Hope in the world—war, sickness, gas prices. In a world that likes to Hope in all the wrong things and encourages us to do the same, we must re-

mind ourselves about true Hope. We can find true, lasting Hope in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Over the next year, as we have events and newsletters, it is my intention to seek and explore this type of Hope with you. Can I invite you to do the same?

As we are entering the Lenten & Easter season, a season honoring and remembering the work of Christ on the Cross and His Resurrection, I think this is the perfect place to start our reflections about in, what or who we put our Hope.

I want to share with you my two favorite parts of the Easter Story. After Jesus had been mocked and beaten, he was hung on the cross. John 19:30 says, "When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished,' and He bowed His head and gave up his spirit."

Tears come to my eyes as I write this verse out. Jesus fulfilled all of scripture—starting back in beginning of Genesis. Jesus justifies sin. Jesus finished the work. I do not have to finish it. I do not need to rely on family, friends or the government to finish it. Praise the Lord He finished the work and is the fulfillment of all that was foretold in Scripture.

Another favorite part of the Easter story comes from Matthew's account of the death of Jesus, in Matthew 27:45-54. Verses 50-51 say, "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His

*Continued on page 2*

## Resources

### **Kids & Family:**

***The Garden, the Curtain and the Cross***  
by Carl Laferton

***A Jesus Easter: Explore God's Amazing Rescue Plan***  
by Barbara Reaoch

***The Donkey Who Carried a King***  
by R.C. Sproul

***On that Easter Morning***  
by Mary Joslin

### **Adult:**

***Hope in Times of Fear***  
by Timothy Keller

***On Calvary's Hill***  
by Max Lucado

***Holier Than Thou***  
by Jackie Hill Perry

***When Strivings Cease***  
by Ruth Chou Simons

## *Hope!* (Continued from page 1)

Spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom...

The curtain tore in two. Can you imagine being in the temple when that happened? In the children's book, "The Garden, the Curtain and the Cross" by Carl Laferton, the curtain in the temple is described as a big "KEEP OUT" sign. (Children's authors have such a way of making a hard concept seem much simpler, don't they?). We could not enter the presence of God because of our sin! BUT, the veil tore in two. The piece of the Temple that signified the separation between us and God was torn from TOP TO BOTTOM. God did the tearing, not human hands, nor human effort. At that moment, God welcomed us into His presence. We can confidently enter the presence of our good and faithful God as we are. We can be honest in His pres-

ence, we can bring Him our burdens, we can bring Him our sins and we can bring Him our dreams. We can trust Him.

In midst of a broken world, these pieces of the Easter account give me Hope and Confidence in our Savior. Jesus fulfilled scripture and justified our sin with His death. God the Father welcomes us into His presence. He welcomes us into relationship with Him. When Hope of the new year wanes, when Hope in our government wanes, when sin feels just so heavy, I pray that you look at the Easter story and have Hope.

- Nicki

*Nicki Melara  
is Director of  
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*But as for me,  
I watch in **HOPE** for the Lord,  
I wait for god my savior;  
my god will hear me.*

*Micah 7:1*

## *AGWM Silly Survey...*

**What fashion trend from the past do you wish would come back in style?**

Text your answers to 562-659-1274 and we'll print the survey results in the next issue of AGWM Newsletter!

## Scheduled Events

**5/21/22**

**Ladies' Brunch**

**7/23/22**

**Women's  
Hike & Swim**

**11/5/22**

**Women's  
Progressive  
Dinner**

**Watch the Sunday bulletin  
for details!**



Do you have questions or  
want to volunteer to help  
and/or plan events?  
Call Nicki @ 562-242-4091