

Elaine Willis

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Dear Family and Friends,

This is Christmas Day, 2023. It has been an unusual day. Only two people have shown up at my door today, both beggars. Aren't we all beggars in one way or another? I am a happy beggar, completely dependent on the Lord, just as the birds are. Someone once said, "We are all beggars telling someone else where to find bread!" BOTH of my beggar friends, today, asked for bread, literally!

This week I came across an old hymn, "Of the Father's Love Begotten" composed by a man who was born in 348 A.D. I was amazed that the lyrics could have been written today, expressing Christmas joy and telling the story of God's love for mankind and redemption. In it, I was amused that he spoke of "ancient times". The hymn "Tell Me the Old, Old Story" came to mind as I reflected on the grace of God to put up with us for ever so long. Truly, we have so much to be thankful for. To be called to serve Him is indeed a privilege. I was moved to translate it's nine verses, combining three of them to shorten it. I hope to sing it as a New Year's Offering to the Lord. I cheated. Since the music is totally unfamiliar and for the giant organs of old, I asked the Lord if there is a melody that would fit it; then my mind filled with "Angels From the Realms of Glory" and it is perfect for private use; not to infringe on copyright laws. I am impressed to discover that the original hymn is still used every Christmas.

On the 17th of this month, our grandson, Anthony Allen Willis was ordained to the ministry, to serve as a missionary to a rather large section of our province where he and Cathy have been visiting for months in preparation for opening a new work and planting a church.

December is the busiest month of the year since it marks the end of the school year, Mothers' Day and is a favorite month for weddings. We had two weddings the weekend of the 15th. Summer activities also begin or are in the planning stage, such as camp for the children and teens. Conferences are announced and special activities such as bonfires, softball league between the churches' 16 teams, plus wedding showers and baby showers fill up the schedules. When March arrives, everyone is exhausted.

May God bless each of us as we do what we do for His honor and glory to help others be saved and grow in grace. Love, Elaine