



# Northwest FOCUS

God at Work Through Northwest Independent Church Extension

DECEMBER 2018



## There I've Walked With God

In December, our focus centers on the birth of Christ, as we play out the events in our minds. Several NICE Missionaries have been privileged to visit the Holy Land and see where our Savior was born, walked, ministered, died and rose. NICE Minister at Large, Roy Sprague recalls, "I stood on the hills above Bethlehem and was asked to read the account in Luke 2. I only got to verse 4 before I was in tears, struck by the fact that I was standing where the shepherds saw the angels!" The memories from the Spragues' trip to the Holy Land still resonate today. He remembers, "We had communion at the Garden Tomb, and sang hymns; we were all in tears. It was moving to see the sign with the words, 'He is not here; He is risen' on the inside of the tomb. This was the most emotionally impacting place!" The same impressions are true of the other NICE Missionaries.



The Garden Tomb

Not just a memorable trip; for our missionaries, it has had an impact on their ministries and personal spiritual walk. NICE Pastor Nate Shinn said that seeing places where Jesus walked has helped him picture it as he studies and preaches. NICE Director, Bob Rodgers reflects, "For me it changed my main perspective on how I read the Scriptures. Being at a majority of sites in the Bible helps me visualize those areas and gives a new perspective to my understanding of sites, distances, and places of major importance. It also helped to recognize the amount of land covered by Jesus and His disciples without the advantage of modern transportation!"

Roy Sprague echoes this thought, "Many times I am able to state, 'When we were here...' in relation to portions of Scripture; and describe what it was like." Similarly, NICE Retired Mission-

ary, Roberta Shinn recalls, "Both Garland and I have mental pictures of places we have been which we think about when we read many portions of Scripture since our trips there. i.e. we see the children of Israel in the large flat area below Mount Sinai; we read the Beatitudes and remember sitting on the Mount of Beatitudes with the red poppies blooming." Emily Hayden, along with her husband, Roger, NICE Inland Northwest Field Director, just returned from Israel. She said, "My very favorite highlight was sitting under the olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying hand in hand with Roger, thanking the Lord for the incredible gift He gave us and praying with my whole heart, 'Thy will be done' as He did." In their last night in Jerusalem, Emily was reflecting on the experience and wrote a poem entitled, "The Ancient Land." Picture it in your mind with her as you read a few of the stanzas ...



Garland & Roberta Shinn



Roger & Emily Hayden

I've traveled in an ancient land,  
Where empires rose and fell;  
Whose cliffs and hills five thousand years  
Of history could tell.

I've seen the sun-jewels flashing bright  
On Galilean waves,  
And heard the quiet breezes stir  
Outside the shepherds' cave.

I've walked in teeming, jostling crowds,  
And thought — they thronged Him, too;  
I've seen a lonely mountaintop  
And felt His solitude.

I've gone up to Jerusalem,  
I've passed where Jesus trod;  
I've journeyed through the Promised Land  
And there I've walked with God.

**So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.** I Corinthians 3:7