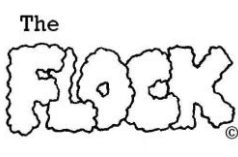
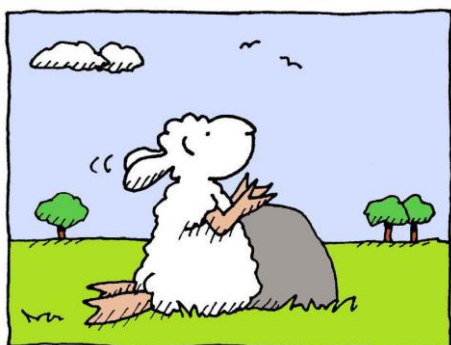




New Normal?

Re-emerging from the

Pandemic with 



The Flock has always been about “a humorous approach to the serious matter of our relationship with God.”

Indeed, that relationship has certainly been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and the serious matter of enormous human suffering, stress, and a sense of hopelessness.

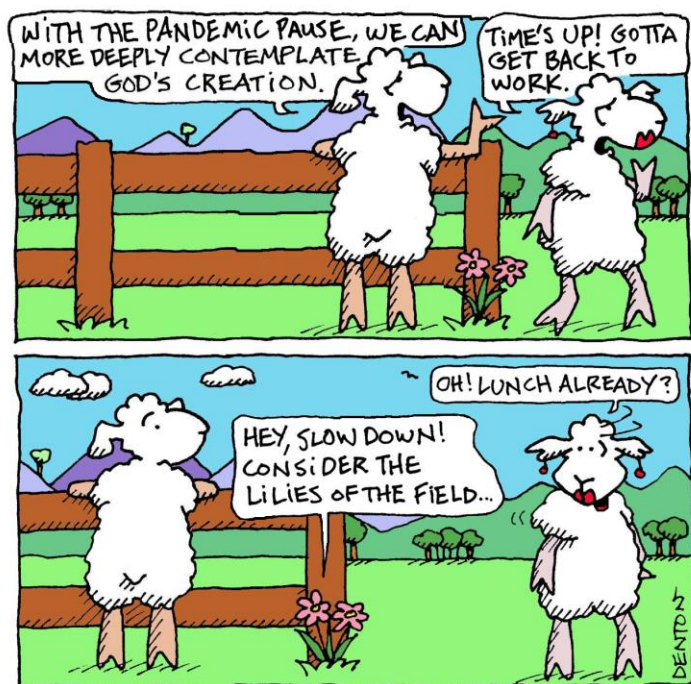
As daily life has been upended, our trust in God and faithfulness in following Jesus’ ways have been tested.

But sheepishly, if we may, we remember that Jesus’ promise of new life in him—yes, resurrection—is at the core of our belief.

Now, as the world slowly emerges from this dark time, so do Jesus’ sheep — so that new life can mean being attentive to what we’ve learned and committing to live accordingly.



What have we seen and heard from God that points us to new life following Jesus (our savior, remember?) more closely than before. What have we learned of his desires for us?

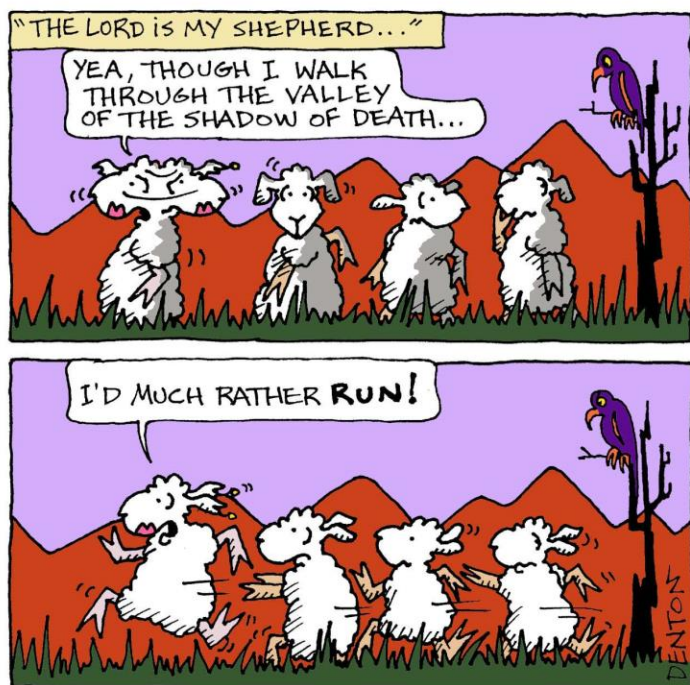


Secular leaders are calling for a “soft re-entry” to normal life — or a “new normal,” as they say.

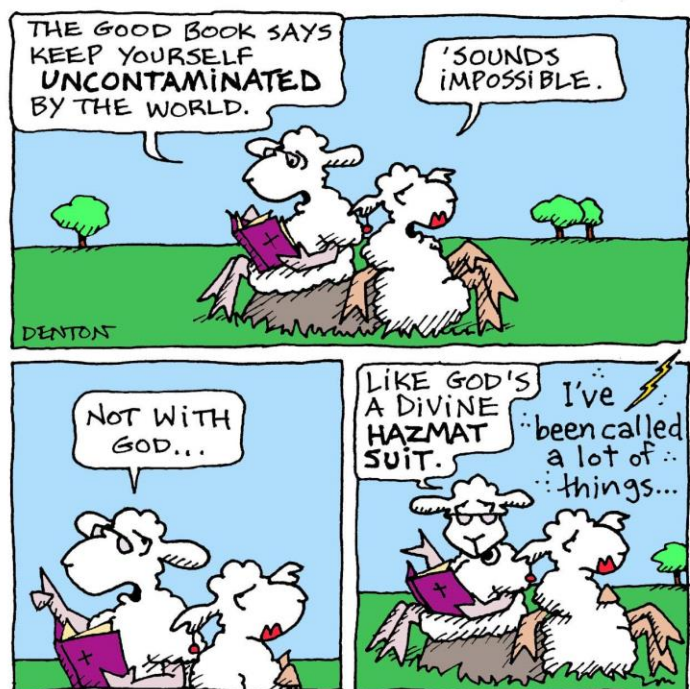
As God’s flock we want to make soft re-entry, too. We don’t want to lose our gains.

We can't ignore what we've experienced. Consider where we've come.

Our early response was that we just wanted it to be over...now.



In the meantime, God would protect us, right?...



So we prayed hard.

We sent out chain letters urging millions of people to all pray together at the same time so that the new coronavirus would suddenly and completely disappear

from the face of the earth and wouldn't cause us any inconvenience.

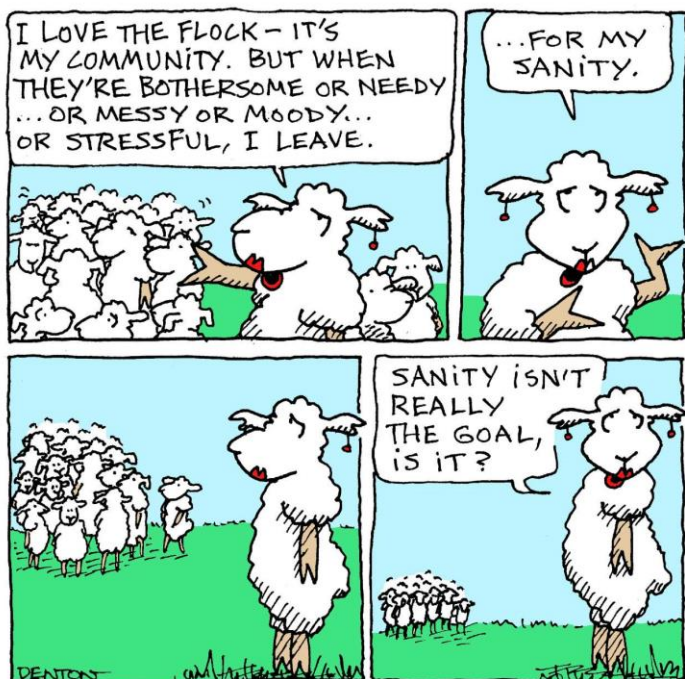


Oh. That didn't quite work.

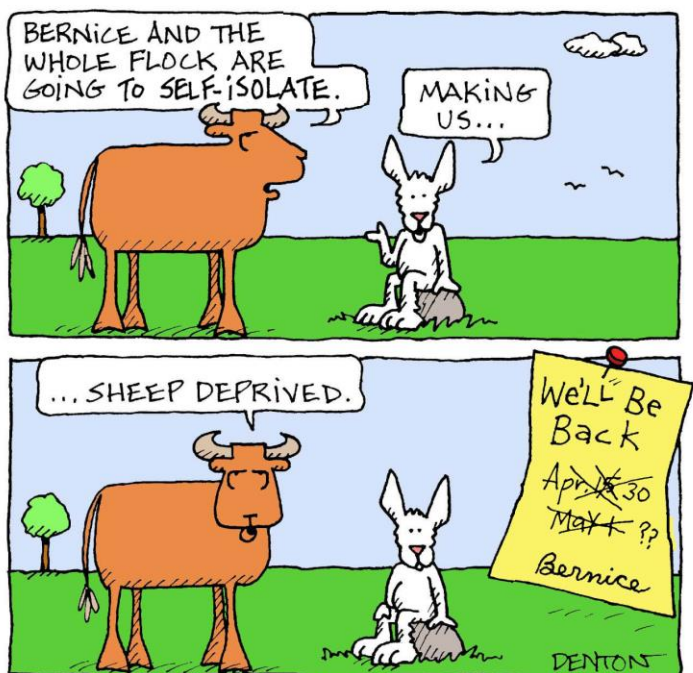
It became clear we would need to face the realities of life and consider our responsibilities—find the right ways to take care of each other and God's creation when it poses difficulties. (Not unlike dealing with earthquakes, drought, floods, war...)



And sure enough, along came social distancing! Maybe not such a bad idea. Might even be a bit of a relief to get a break from each other for awhile...



Uhhhh...we missed each other...



Yes, we were pretty much that!

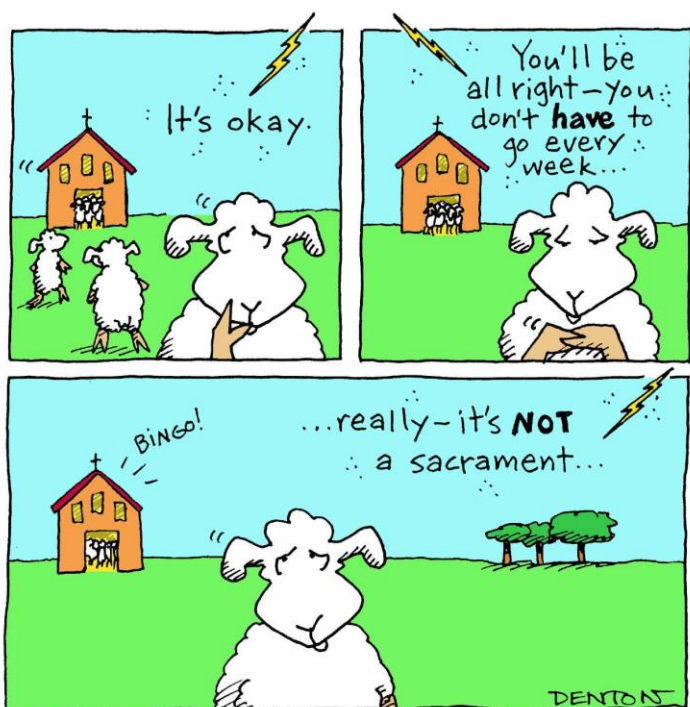
We realized how much we NEEDED each other...



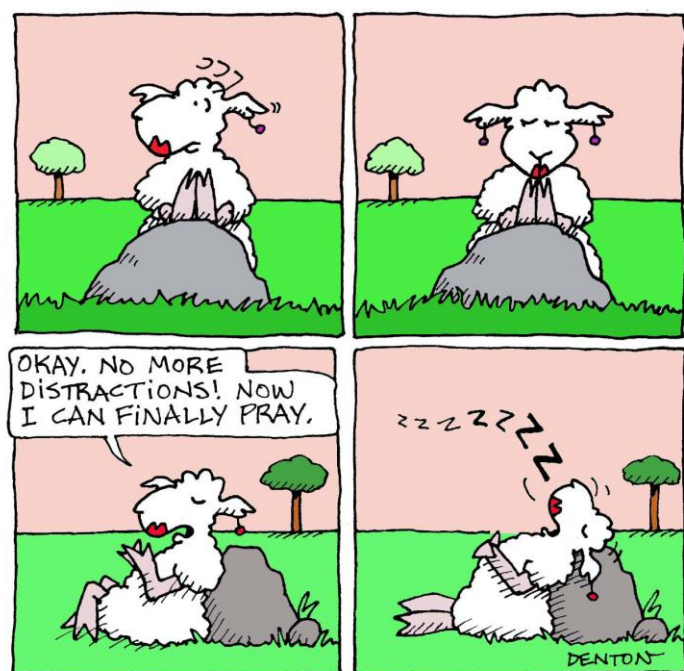
There were a few things we didn't miss...



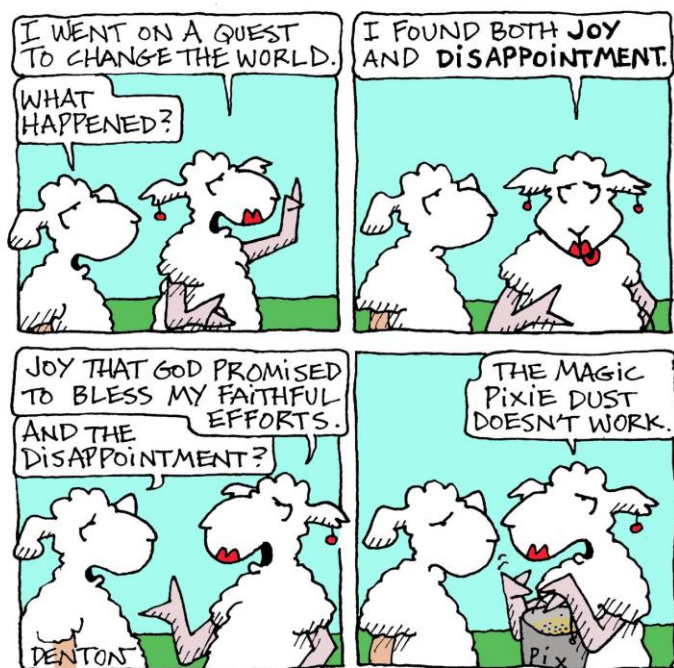
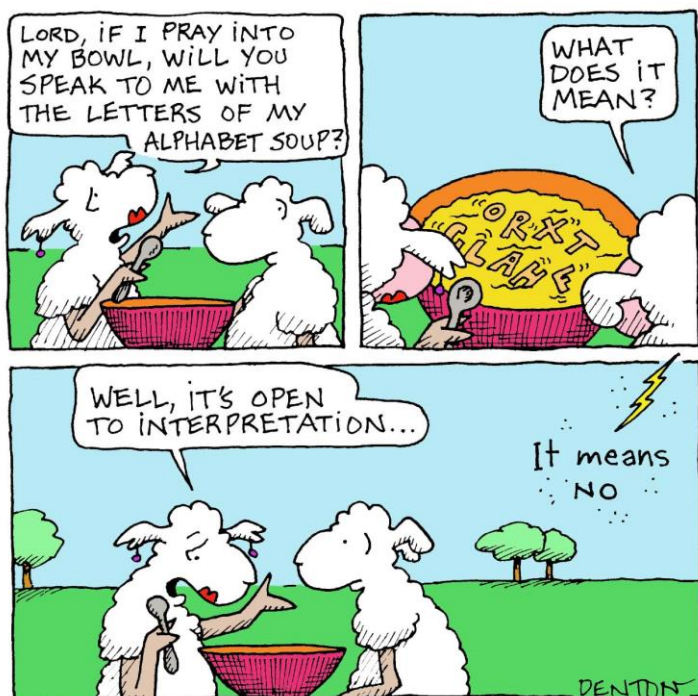
But, you know, we learned what was most important about being church.



Being physically separated did open some fresh opportunities for reflection and prayer.



Maybe we didn't go about seeking God's help in the right way. We sure didn't get the easy answers we'd hoped for.



So we were kind of forced on a spiritual journey...

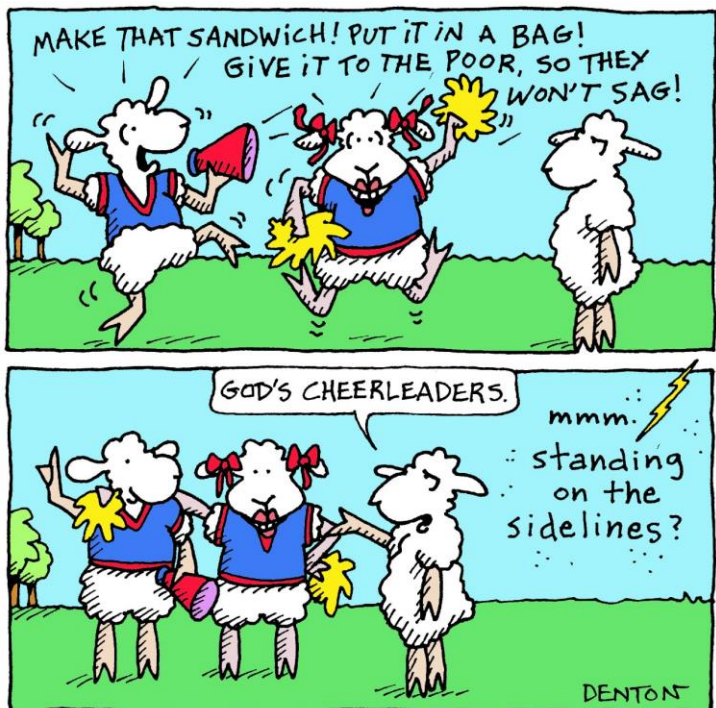


With mixed results.

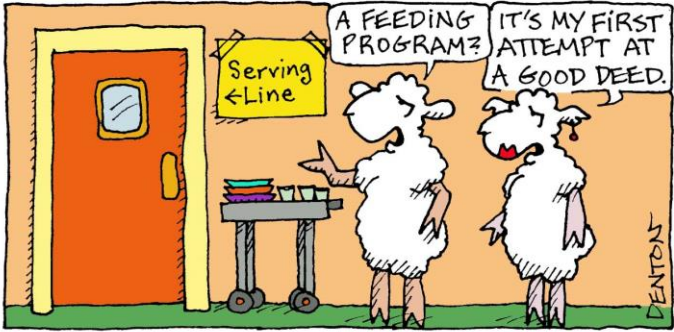




But we prayerfully searched for ways to respond, to serve with compassion for one another while maintaining our distance in an attempt to be responsible and wise .



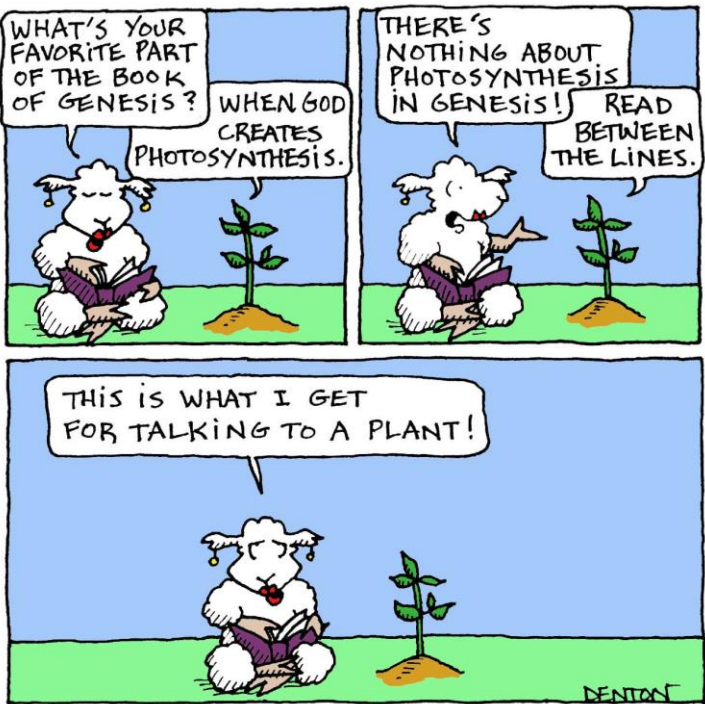
Sheepishly, we didn't always get it right.



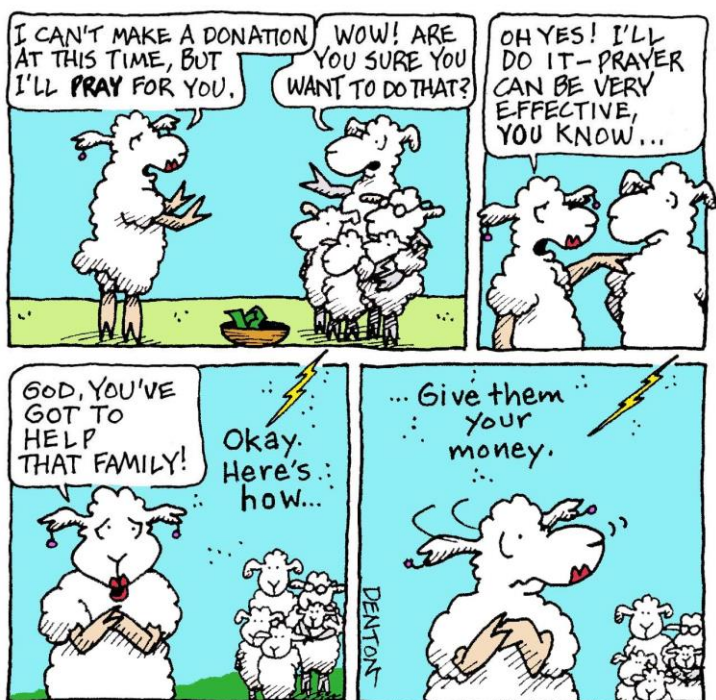
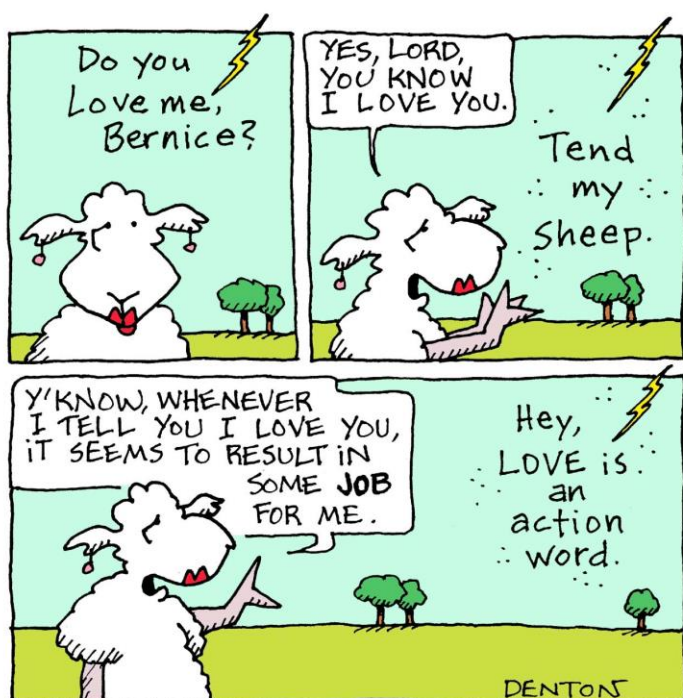
Bringing HOPE was not as easy as we wanted to think.



But we finally figured it all out...with some help.

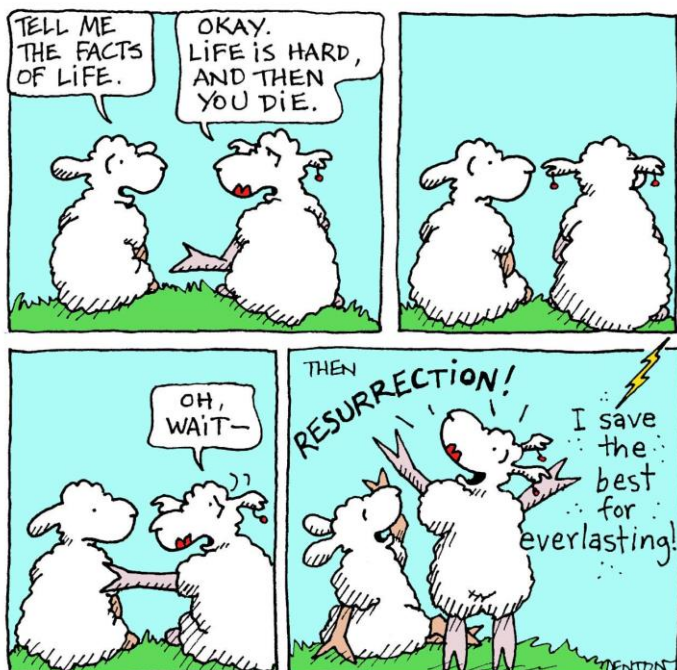


'Turns out, despite the challenges, some things never change...um, like the ways of our Savior.

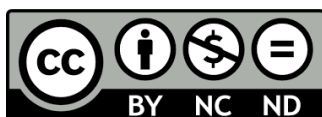


So here's to a soft re-entry into a kinder, infinitely loving new life after pandemic!





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