

November 2025

# BROADCASTER

A magazine of Worship Anew

*He will wipe  
away every tear*

FINDING COMFORT IN OUR GRIEF





*Matthew F. Leighty*

**Matthew F. Leighty**  
Executive Director

# Grief, Peace, & our God who Holds Us

The summer of 2002 will always live in my memory as a season braided with both joy and sorrow. Kelli and I were married on July 5, one of the happiest days of my life. Just weeks later, on July 29, my grandmother, Ellen Hendrickson, went to be with the Lord. We traveled to her funeral, where we remembered my dear grandmother, mourned her passing, and celebrated her life in Christ.

Right after we returned home, our phone rang during the night, startling me from sleep. It was my dad. “Matthew, it’s your dad. Your grandma has died,” he said. Still in that fog of waking up, I answered, “I know, Grandma Hendrickson died. We just got back from her funeral.” He paused, then gently said, “No, Grandma Leighty died.” It was August 7, just days after we had buried Grandma Hendrickson.

I was stunned. Grandma Hendrickson had lived a long life and hadn’t been well for some time, but Grandma Leighty’s passing came suddenly,

shortly after she turned 70. Later we learned she had declined surgery for a treatable heart condition. Whether it was stubbornness or a deep peace with God’s timing (I think it was some of both) we only discovered her decision after she was gone.

I still vividly remember Grandma Leighty’s funeral and the sheer depth of grief that washed over our family. In many ways, I have not felt that same magnitude of communal sorrow since, not even years later when my own father entered his eternal rest.

Double loss has a way of hollowing the heart and quieting a home. The grief would deepen further when my Grandpa Leighty followed his beloved wife home in October of that same year. By year’s end, all four of my grandparents had entered their eternal rest, leaving a silence that would echo through every family gathering.

In the middle of such aching silence, God speaks. Scripture assures us through the psalmist: “*Father of the fatherless*



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*Worship Anew engages and equips aging adults with resources to live a full and abundant life in Jesus Christ.*



*and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation” (Psalm 68:5 ESV).* That is not a sentimental line; it is a promise.

When our family tables have an empty chair, and our hearts carry a new name: widow, widower, grandchild without a grandparent — God is close. He draws near through His Word and Sacraments to protect, to uphold, and to give a peace the world cannot manufacture.

Still, in the valleys of grief, our prayers can turn into questions: *Why, God? Why this? Why now?* Scripture never scolds us for honest lament. The Bible gives us the language of tears and the courage to bring our “Why?” directly to the One who can bear it. And then, right in the thick of our questions, Jesus speaks a word that no one else can: *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid”* (John 14:27 ESV).

Christ’s peace is not the denial of loss; it’s the **presence of the Lord** in loss. It does not erase the empty seat, but it fills the empty heart with Himself: crucified, risen, and reigning. In Him, fear does not have the final say. In Christ, grief is real, but **hope is greater**, a hope not based on our strength or faith, but on Christ’s finished work for us.

It’s in moments like these that we need more than our own strength; we need the wisdom of those who’ve walked this path before us.

This month, we want to walk alongside you in that peace. Through our new Grief Ministry, we share resources to support you during the first year after a loss. One of those resources is the Rev. Michael Newman’s book, “Getting Through Grief.” In its pages, readers discover eight biblical gifts for living with loss, gifts that remind us how God anchors our hearts in His promises, renews our strength, and offers hope in Christ even when the path feels dark.

As a child, a picture of an eagle hung on my bedroom wall, and beneath it were the words that still steady me: *“They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles”* (Isaiah 40:31 ESV). My prayer is that these words — and the resources we share through Worship Anew — will lift you up and remind you that you are never alone. God is with you, and His peace will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

As we journey through this theme of grief in the pages of this magazine, it is my prayer that you may be encouraged that what we provide will help you in your own times of deep sorrow and as you support those around you facing similar struggles. Know that through it all, you are not alone. You are surrounded by those within our family of believers, this vital ministry at Worship Anew, and most of all, our loving Lord and Savior who carries us in His arms and brings us His everlasting peace.

***“They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”***

*Isaiah 40:31 (ESV)*

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# Worship Anew's Grief Ministry walks alongside you after a loss

*By Renee Schuller  
Care Ministry Specialist*

***“The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”  
Psalm 34:18 (ESV)***



When someone we love dies, our hearts are broken. Grief is a difficult, unpredictable journey. When someone we care about loses a loved one, we empathize with their pain. We desire to express to them that we care. However, sometimes we just don't know what to say or do.

We go to the viewing and the funeral. We may take a casserole a few days later, but then we realize they may have more casseroles and desserts than they know what to do with. We are left wondering what we can do.

Worship Anew's Grief Ministry is here to help.

The Grief Ministry is a tangible way for you to remind a loved one about God's love and to extend care to someone who is grieving.

When you enroll a loved one in the Grief Ministry, they will receive a series of mailings every four to six weeks throughout the first year after a loss. Each mailing includes written resources that address different stages of grief. These resources are full of practical guidance and most importantly the blessed hope of the Gospel. Each mailing also includes a special gift to help the grieving cling to Christ and the comfort only He can give.

To enroll someone in the Grief Ministry, visit [worshipanew.org/grief](http://worshipanew.org/grief) and complete the online form.

If you would like to extend care to an

aging adult or their caregiver who is grieving beyond the first year, we have resources available to let them know that they are not alone and they are loved by you and by God. Please visit our website at [worshipanew.org/grief](http://worshipanew.org/grief) to learn more.

To send a care package filled with comfort items, activity items, and biblical resources, go to [worshipanew.org/care-packages](http://worshipanew.org/care-packages) to complete the online form to personalize the package for the recipient.

“I was so pleasantly surprised to receive the box of wonderful gifts from Worship Anew! I can't thank you enough for all the special gifts that were in there. May our gracious God continue to bless the wonderful work that Worship Anew does for so many people. God's blessings,” said a care recipient.

These ministries would not be possible without our generous donors whose gifts enable us to offer both of these ministries at no cost.

If you would like to support Worship Anew's Care Ministry, go to [worshipanew.org/give](http://worshipanew.org/give) and designate Care Ministry. We also welcome donations of items for the Care Packages through our gift registries on [MyRegistry.com](http://MyRegistry.com) and [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). Visit [worshipanew.org/care](http://worshipanew.org/care) to learn more.

We also thank the Lord for our faithful volunteers who come in each week to pray for each recipient and to pack each mailing with thoughtfulness and love.





Worship Anew Board  
President Larry Graham putts  
with his team during the  
outing.

# Thank you to everyone who supported our Golf Outing!

Worship Anew hosted its 12th Annual Elsie Rossman Memorial Golf Outing on Sept. 25 in Fort Wayne, Ind. The outing goes to support the airing of "Worship Anew" in the Fort Wayne market. Thanks to all who participated and supported this event!

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At top, Executive Director Matthew Leighty stands with the Elsie Rossman Memorial Golf Outing sign. Middle, Glenn and Lynne Rossman, founding sponsors for the outing, pose with Phil and SuzAnne Rossman (right), their teammates for the day. Bottom, 30 teams participated in the event in great weather.



# Helping a grandchild cope with grief

*By Donna Arthur Downs*

**E**ven when death is expected, once life finally passes, grief hits. Hard. The closer the relationship, the more prominent the loneliness. It comes at us from every angle at all hours, often leaving us feeling helpless and void. At times, we want to close ourselves off and refuse to be vulnerable again or get close enough to experience pain again.

And that's when we're adults.

Watching my aging parents' health fail over the past couple of years, I began to wonder how my grandchildren would face the demise of their great-grandparents. In turn, I wondered how they will react someday when I'm gone. It was then that I formulated the words to "Always and Forever," my children's picture book about a little girl whose grandma has died, though the grandma promised to be with her "always and forever."

When children experience grief, adults often struggle to find words to answer the "why" question or to know how to respond to a child's anguish.

A wise woman once recommended, "What shall I do with this experience, Lord?"

An unwise man once said to yell and kick the trash can.

Which is the better answer when we are coming alongside the grieving? The wisdom of the first might be harder, but it's guaranteed to get better results. "Lord, how do I both survive my mourning and help those who are grieving around me?"

Humbly asking for next steps means praying without ceasing to have the wisdom and emotional intelligence to mourn well with others, especially children.



When youngsters are involved, specifically those facing death for the first time, we struggle even more to know how to react and encourage. The simplest responses are sometimes the best. Some responses are immediate; others are more planned.

Acknowledge the grief. It's OK to be sad. It's OK to cry. It's OK to feel lonely. As adults, we feel it, too. We can't be afraid to agonize with the children in our lives. It shows our humanness.

Words aren't always necessary. Sometimes, just sitting close and holding a hand or putting an arm around a shoulder is enough. Words cannot enhance those moments.

Encourage youngsters to share good memories, especially stories that are funny or describe fun times together. Sharing brings people back to our hearts and minds, even though they're not physically with us. Remembering stories conveys how the deceased are still a part of us and likely always will be.

Pull out some paper and colored pencils or markers and spend time together drawing representations of the one who has passed. Engulfing ourselves in something tangible not only draws us closer to the person's memory but also solidifies the remembrance. This can be a catharsis for both young and old.

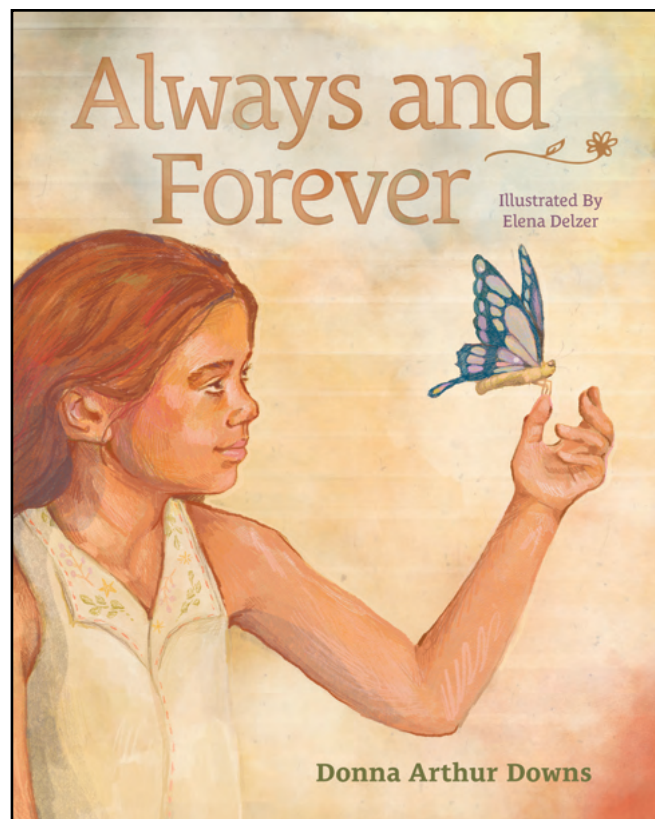
Plant a tree, butterfly bush, or flowering plant of some type in memory of the loved one. Seeing something blossom either in a season or year-round is representative of recollected life, ongoing life, and new life. The blossoms also draw living creatures to the plant, symbolic of life drawing from life.

Don't be afraid to ask how the child is feeling. Sometimes we think avoiding the subject lessens the hurt. It doesn't; it just buries it deeper. Let others know it's OK to talk about our hurt, frustrations, and grief. Talking doesn't always make it hurt less, but it acknowledges that we're hurting just as much as others. Shared emotions can open doors to healing.

People experience the effects of death in distinctive ways; the key is to acknowledge that each of us feels deeply, each of us feels loss, and each of us comes at death from a different perspective. Wherever we are in our journey, we are not alone. It's especially important to acknowledge the grief of children and let them know we are walking beside them.

As I wrote and published "Always and Forever," my prayer was that it would touch all age groups at different intervals in their grief struggles and help inspire people to be vulnerable, grow relationships, and create memories that will sustain us for years to come and keep those who pass on forever alive in our hearts.

*Donna Arthur Downs is the Associate Professor of Communication at Taylor University in Upland, Ind., and the author of "Always and Forever." The book is available from [redemption-press.com/BOOKSTORE/](http://redemption-press.com/BOOKSTORE/).*



# See You Later!

By Eric Kaschinske

*“For all the saints, who from their labors rest,  
Who Thee, by faith, before the world confessed,  
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia!  
Alleluia!”*

As we near the end of the church year, the 1st day of November celebrates All Saints’ Day. Sometimes, this day is misunderstood, and some may tend to elevate a deceased relative beyond what is appropriate for sinful, imperfect humans who have finished their earthly race.

For me, All Saints’ Day is one of the toughest days of the year. It’s very difficult to go through the emotional lows of missing loved ones (in my case, my mother) and yet still praise the Lord for His influence on my life, while I eagerly look forward to the day when we will join our loved ones in the mansions of heaven.

Without fail, those first few words of “For All the Saints” come out of my mouth full and bold. But by the time we’re even midway through the first verse, I can’t see the hymnal through the flood of tears, and I can’t compose myself to sing much of the rest of the hymn. My wife sits next to me in much the same state — overcome with emotion and unable to continue singing.

My thoughts at that time often go to my mother, June, who was such a humble servant of the Lord and joined Him in His heavenly mansions in 2012. Certainly, there are also others whose presence I miss on this earth, including grandparents, friends, and even former students. For my wife, those people she misses include both of her parents, as well as her grandmother, who was a guiding force in my wife’s faith walk.

Without a doubt, there is someone (and likely more

than one individual) that you miss dearly. That individual might have died recently, or it may be years or even decades since they have been gone. This might be a spouse, a close friend, or even a child or grandchild. At times, it is incredibly hard to press on. As we sing in stanza 5 of “For All the Saints,” “... we feebly struggle, they in glory shine.” The days we have on this earth are often marked with struggles, and some of the greatest struggles can be the emotional loss of a loved one.

Yet, we, as Christians, don’t grieve as those who have no hope.

*“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.” ~ 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (ESV)*

We know that for us, as Christians, a loved one’s death is not the end, nor is it a time to be filled with hopelessness. What we often consider to be a “Goodbye” is really a “See You Later!” as the Lord, in His infinite wisdom has chosen to call that loved one home first. We are comforted by the promises of His Word, promises that are trustworthy and true. In Revelation 7, we get a glimpse of what this glorious gathering of all the saints will look and sound like. What a reunion!

*“But, lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day:  
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;  
The King of Glory passes on His way. Alleluia!  
Alleluia!”*

*Eric Kaschinske is the host of the weekly “Worship Anew” program. He also serves as a teacher at Concordia Lutheran High School in Fort Wayne, Ind.*





# Worship Anew in November

Year 2025 | Series C



## The Saints in Heaven

**November 2, 2025 – All Saints' Day (observed) ~ Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III**

On All Saints' Day we have sadness as we think of our departed loved ones whom we greatly miss. The apostle John in the Book of Revelation presents to us a vision of the saints in heaven.

*Sermon Text: Revelation 7:9-17*

*Readings: Psalm 149:1-5; Revelation 7:9-17; Matthew 5:1-12*

Featured Choir: Holy Cross Lutheran Church Treble Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Kingsville, Md.



## Your God is Too Small

**November 9, 2025 – Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer**

The myths people believe about heaven! The problem with these beliefs is that they are so much less than what God has prepared. If you settle for the myths, then your God is too small!

*Sermon Text: Luke 20:38*

*Readings: Psalm 148; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17; Luke 20:27-40*

Featured Choirs: Holy Cross Lutheran Church Sanctuary Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.;

St. Paul Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, LaPorte, Ind.



## Redemption Draws Near

**November 16, 2025 – Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Shayne Jonker**

Just when things are at their worst and you are left with literally nothing in this world, precisely then, "straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Luke 21:28b ESV).

*Sermon Text: Luke 21:28*

*Readings: Psalm 98; Malachi 4:1-6; Luke 21:5-28*

Featured Choirs: Holy Cross Lutheran Church Sanctuary Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.;

St. John Lutheran School, Plymouth, Wis.

Featured Art and Architecture: Trinity Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, Ind.



## The Greatest Triumph

**November 23, 2025 – Last Sunday of the Church Year ~ Rev. Paul Shoemaker**

Life presents us with many challenges. As we reflect on these challenges, we recognize that in Christ we have the victory. In Him we have the greatest triumph.

*Sermon Text: Colossians 1:13-20*

*Readings: Psalm 46; Colossians 1:13-20; Luke 23:27-43*

Featured Choir: Lincoln Lutheran High School, Lincoln, Neb.

Featured Art and Architecture: Chapel of the Resurrection, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.



## Your King is Coming

**November 30, 2025 – First Sunday in Advent ~ Rev. William Mueller**

The First Sunday in Advent turns the pages of our lives to turn our attention toward Christmas. But are we merely going through the motions or are we turning our hearts to the message of this season?

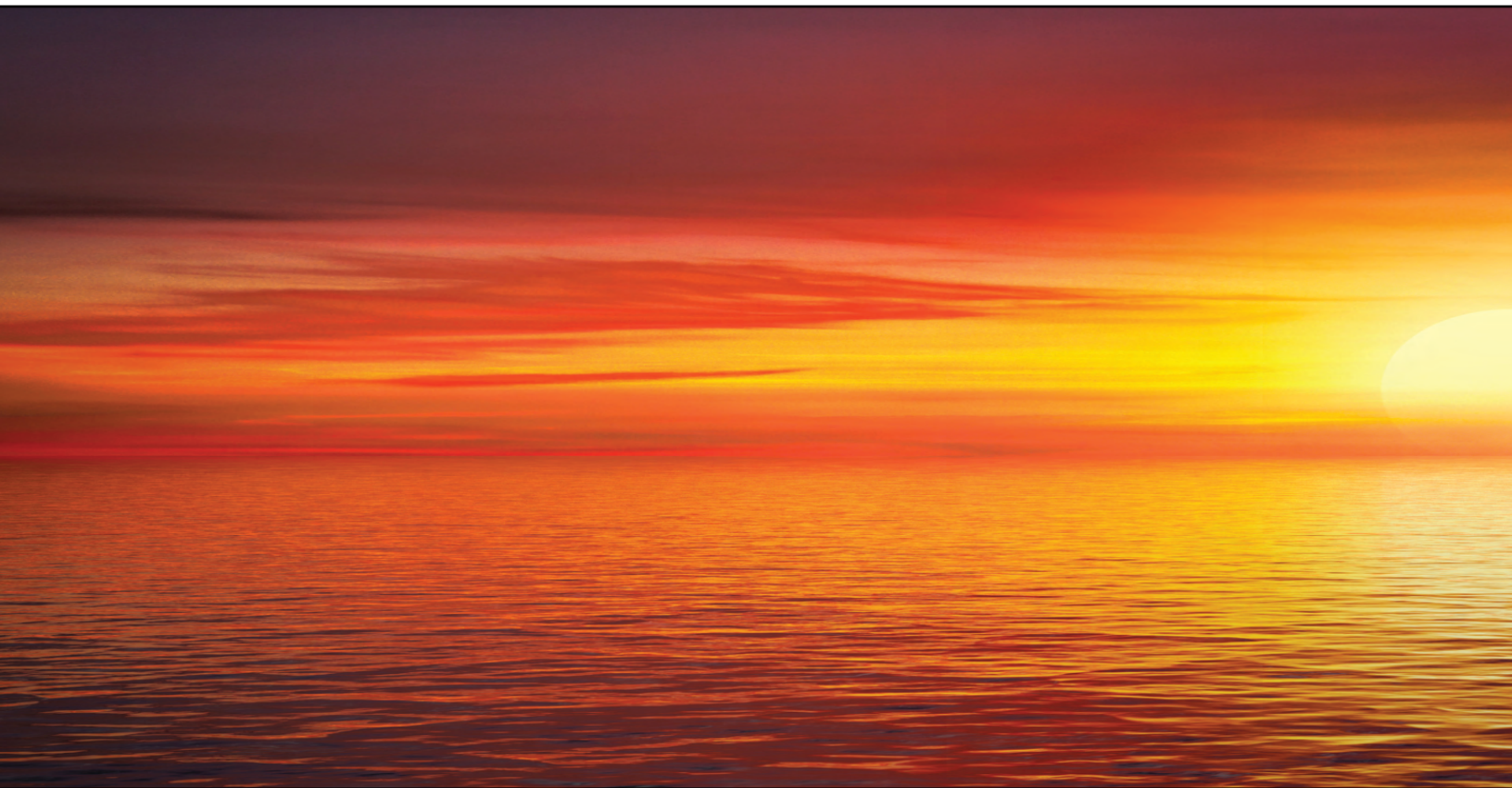
*Sermon Text: Matthew 21:1-11*

*Readings: Psalm 122; Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 21:1-11*

Featured Choirs: St. Paul Lutheran School, Fort Wayne, Ind.;

Holy Cross Lutheran School Junior Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.



# I'M BUT A STRANGER HERE

*By Rev. Michael Wakeland*

One of my mother's favorite hymns was "I'm But a Stranger Here, Heaven Is My Home." As a child, I really thought this old hymn was pretty depressing, as it talks about earth being a dreary, sorrow-filled place. But, as I lived a few more years, the truth of this hymn became a lot clearer for me, as did the wonderful promise of eternal life that we are given by our God.

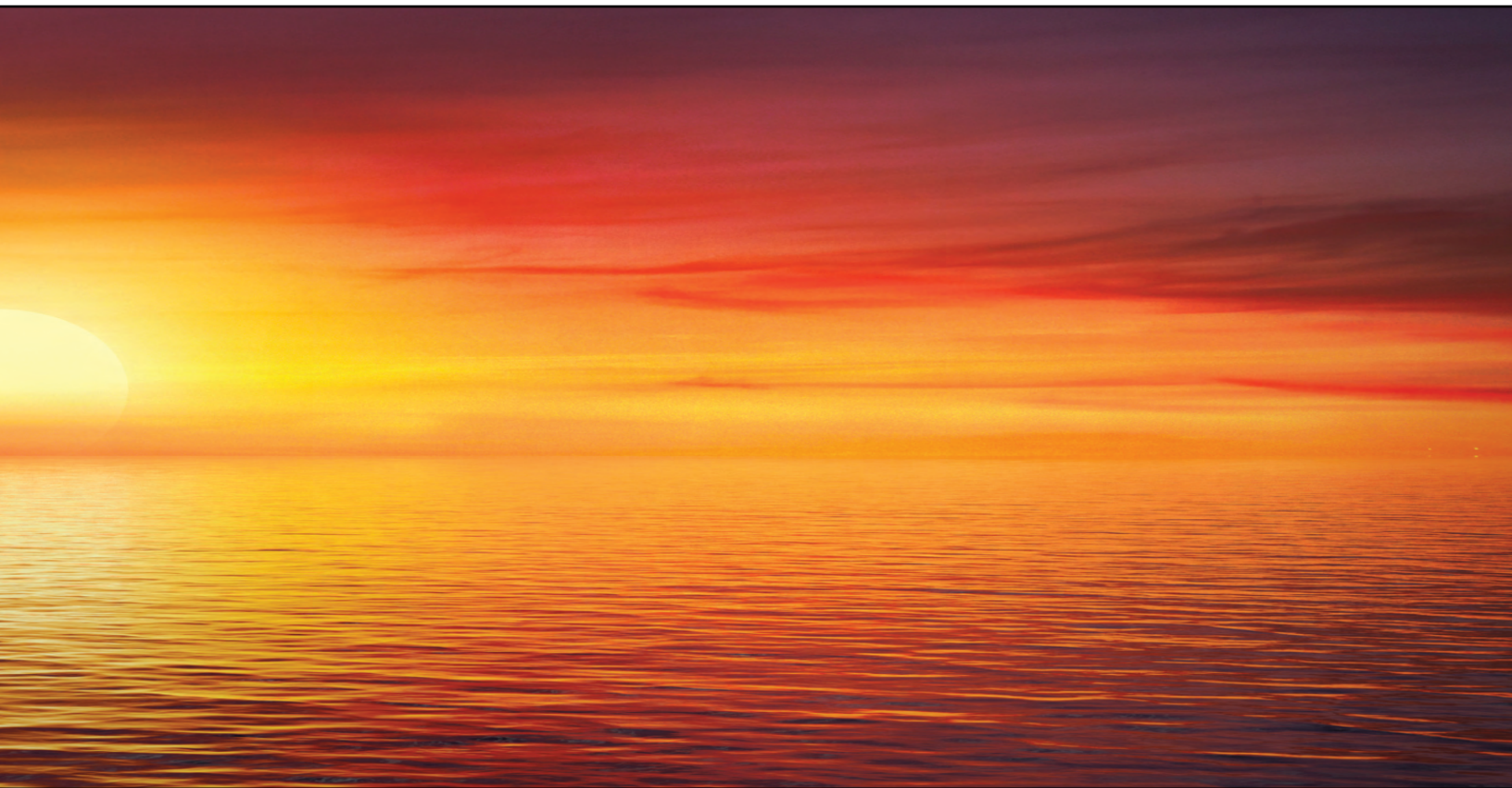
I recall visiting with one older member of our community who remarked to me: "Getting old isn't for sissies." I chuckled at this, but understood, as they went on and explained some of the health challenges and difficulties they were dealing with, along with the grief and sadness that was the result of the death of many of their friends

and family members.

Dealing with suffering and death is part of our reality since we live in a world corrupted by sin. But God has given us an answer to this. Jesus tells us clearly in John 16:33b (ESV): "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." By His death and resurrection, Jesus has overcome the power of sin, death, and the devil, and gives the gift of eternal life to all who believe in Him.

This doesn't take away the pain that we experience when faced with suffering or the death of someone we love; however, it does give us the wonderful promise that this pain and grief will not last forever.





God has promised us a new reality, which is described in Revelation 21:1-4 (ESV):

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

This is the promise that the hymn writer is trusting in as the final verse of the hymn says: “Therefore I murmur not, Heaven is my home, Whate’er my earthly lot, Heaven is my home; and I shall surely stand, There at my Lord’s right hand, Heaven is my fatherland, Heaven is my home.”

May God’s peace fill your heart and mind as you continue your journey home!

*The Rev. Michael Wakeland is a retired pastor and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Worship Anew.*



# Getting Through *Grief* by God's Grace

*By Rev. Michael W. Newman*

*As I prepared to write this article from my South Texas home, dozens of families were unexpectedly and heartbreakingly plunged into unspeakable sadness and pain after floods overwhelmed children and adults who camped along the Guadalupe River near Kerrville, Texas over the July 4th weekend. More than one hundred lives were lost. Hundreds of hearts were gripped by indescribable grief.*

*What words can address this awful manifestation of a sin-broken world? What help is at hand when you are put in the position of grappling with grief and loss? How can anyone survive this terrible result of our fallen world? How do you get through grief?*



## GOD'S LIFELINE

Notice I didn't say, "How do you get OVER grief?" or "How do you GET RID OF grief?" No, when grief invades your life, it will always be a part of your story. But God's grace will get you THROUGH it with His hope and help in heartbreak.

First, He provides His LIFELINE. When you lose someone precious in your life, the freefall of sadness and loss can seem impossible. Death exposes our helplessness and weakness. Our might, our money, our smarts, and our skills are no match for death. We need God's help, and He does not fail us as He steps in with His lifeline of grace.

God's Word promises:

**"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18 ESV). "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1a ESV).**

When loss overwhelms you, God reaches out to you. The Good Shepherd pursues you with His life-giving and heart-sustaining love and care: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Psalm 23:6 ESV).

Your grief is not a story of abandonment by God; it is the story of God's persistent pursuit of your precious life. Even when you are speechless in your anguish, "The Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26b ESV). God's got you covered in His grace. The lifeline of His love holds you fast — a lifeline earned at the cross, sealed through Jesus' resurrection, delivered in your Baptism, and reinforced with His living Word.

God's gracious and saving work is your lifeline when grief causes you to lose your grip.

*continued on page 14*

## TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD

*11 Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.*

*12 What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?  
13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.*

*14 Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*

*15 The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.  
16 The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.*

*17 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.*

*18 The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.*

*19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all.  
20 He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.*

*21 Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.*

*22 The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.*

*Psalm 34:11-22 (ESV)*

## GOD'S PATHWAY

But there is more. God provides a pathway through the fog of sorrow and sadness. After you are plunged into the pit of loss, the time comes when you wonder about the future. How do you keep living? What do you do next?

Instead of being stuck on slippery ground, God places you on His firm footing. The psalmist declared, "I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand" (Psalm 40:1-2 NIV).

In your grief, God reveals His ways and teaches you His paths (Psalm 25:4). He blesses you with His gifts that sustain and carry you through the storm.

First, God gives you the gift of conversation. He speaks through His Word of restoration and strength, and you respond in prayer, casting your cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7). This gift holds you close to God. It tames the voices of doubt and despair in your head. It lifts the burden of hopelessness from your shoulders, and carries you from day to day in God's gracious power.

"I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me" (Psalm 50:15b ESV). Sometimes this conversation needs to fill the first year of your grief, moving through seasons, special days, and holidays, before you can think about taking any steps forward. Patiently, persistently, let God's Word dwell in you richly (Colossians 3:16). Fervently, unceasingly, give your Savior the weight of your sadness through prayer.

### **"Call upon me in the day of trouble," God pleads.**

Second, God gives you the gift of forgiveness. Too often, guilt tries to imprison you after loss. You regret an argument or careless words. You feel like you could have been a better caregiver. The "woulda, coulda, shouldas" start to dominate your

*Cast all your anxiety on him  
because he cares for you.*

1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)

thoughts. But God delivers you from your guilt. Jesus carried it to the cross. He put your sins to death once and for all. Forgiveness erases your guilt, removes your sins, and gives you a new history. In Christ, you are a new creation! The old is gone and the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17)! Release your load of guilt and cling to the promise of Christ's forgiveness.

Third, God gives you the gift of love. God's love sustains you on your journey through grief. You are His precious child. He will never let you go. You may not understand everything, and your life will not be problem free, but God's love will carry you through. His love will even shape your heart to show love — not bitterness or hopelessness — as you travel on your grief journey.

Next is God's gift of hope. Because of Jesus' resurrection, you have certain hope in Jesus' presence with you and His eternal life for you. Jesus died and rose for you. Because of Him, something very good awaits you. Everything will be okay because of Christ your Savior. You may not see that fully today, but there will come a day when tears and pain are gone forever (Revelation 21:4).

The fifth gift on God's pathway is faith. Faith is not a measure of your personal strength or piety, and it is not a guarantee that bad things won't happen. Faith is God's shield, protecting you against Satan's assaults and the despair-inducing power of sadness (Ephesians 6:16; 1 Peter 1:3-5). Sometimes you become angry with God when you lose someone you love. You ask, "Why did this have to happen?" God answers by drawing close, providing His strength (2 Corinthians 12:9), and not letting you go.



Sixth is the gift of community. God makes sure you're not alone by knitting you into His community, the Church. The purpose of the church is not to make you busy or to turn you into a social butterfly. Church is where you receive the encouraging presence and prayers of fellow strugglers. Church is where your empty soul is fed with the Bread of Life. Church is where God uses you to bless others.

That leads to the seventh gift, purpose. Sometimes your most meaningful purpose is found in your pain. You empathize with others and bring credible care to people who are hurting just like you. Grief doesn't rob you of your purpose, it refines it and directs you to people who need the gifts you share.

Finally, God gives you the gift of presence. Someone once said, "Don't just say something; stand there." In other words, being present is, at times, the best gift you can give to a person who is grieving. Being present shows you care. Just as God's enduring presence brings you comfort and relief, your presence reflects the self-sacrificial and life-restoring presence of the Savior Jesus.

God's gifts provide firm footing and a gracious pathway that sustain you, restore you, and allow you to bless others.

## A NEW REFRAIN

So, how are you doing? What refrain do you have in your sadness? A refrain is an expression that happens over and over again. Sometimes grief pulls you into a refrain of anger or bitterness or hopelessness. But God gives you a new refrain. Consider what

happens in Psalms 42 and 43. Psalm 42 begins with expressions of grief and fear and agony. But verse 5 (NIV) declares: "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

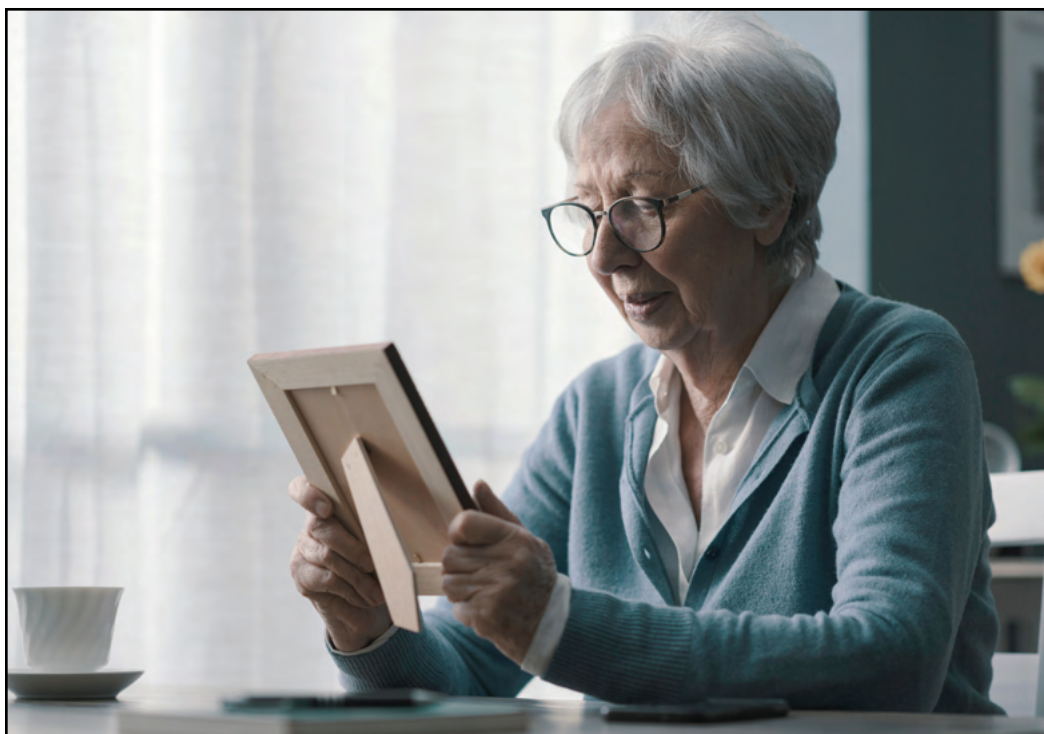
The psalm continues with mourning and feelings of abandonment, but in verse 11 (NIV), the refrain chimes in: "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God." It's a refrain of grace and hope!

Psalm 43 continues with more feelings of grief and rejection. But then, it's as if the previous psalm's refrain spills over into this one: "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God." God's new refrain of hope and life prevails — and spills into your life.

Even in your most difficult times, you are blessed with the lasting refrain of hope and salvation. As you meet grief, God is faithful to get you through it!

*Thoughts for this article have been drawn from Rev. Michael Newman's books: "Hope When Your Heart Breaks: Navigating Grief and Loss" (CPH 2017), and "Getting Through Grief: Eight Biblical Gifts for Living with Loss" (CPH 2021).*

*The Rev. Michael W. Newman is the recently retired district president of the Texas district of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS).*





# Estate Planning & Biblical Stewardship

## *Why Waiting Can Cost Your Family*

By Robert L. Myers  
Estate & Legacy Planning Attorney

Steve sits by his elderly mother's hospital bed, his head in his hands. He already buried his father last year, and now his mother has suffered a stroke. Today, she is unconscious and unable to speak. The due date for her utility bill has passed, and Steve has no way to access her bank account. But that is the least of his worries. He knows that soon he will face the larger problem of settling her estate — and his parents never made a will.

This situation is all too common. Families often lack essential documents, such as a will or powers of attorney, assuming there will be time “later.” Yet, sudden illness or death leaves loved ones unprepared, stuck in legal and financial gridlock. For Christians, the consequences go even deeper: delaying an estate plan can compromise our call to biblical stewardship.

### ESTATE PLANNING AS STEWARDSHIP

The Bible reminds us that everything we have ultimately belongs to God. “The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Psalm 24:1 ESV). We are stewards of His resources, responsible for managing them wisely in life — and planning for how they will be handled after we’re gone.

### THE COST OF WAITING

Without a durable financial power of attorney, Steve cannot pay his mother’s bills or access her accounts.

Banks, utilities, and insurance companies will refuse to work with him. His only option may be to petition for guardianship, a slow and costly court process.

If his mother passes without a will, matters become even more complicated. State law will determine who administers the estate and how assets are divided. Selling a car or family home could require court approval, adding stress, expense, and family conflict at the worst possible time.

This is not what faithful stewardship looks like. Proverbs 13:22a (ESV) tells us that a good person “leaves an inheritance to his children’s children.” That inheritance is more than money — it is order, peace, the absence of avoidable burdens, and setting an example. The way we prepare our affairs teaches future generations how to handle theirs.

### THE PEACE OF PREPARATION

A proper estate plan changes everything. A financial power of attorney allows a trusted person to manage accounts and pay bills during incapacity. A health care power of attorney enables loved ones to make medical decisions consistent with your values. These documents prevent confusion and costly legal battles.

A well-drafted Last Will & Testament ensures that, upon death, your wishes are honored and assets are





distributed in ways that reflect your values, including charitable giving. Additional tools, such as payable-on-death accounts or transfer-on-death deeds, can help transfer property quickly and sometimes avoid probate entirely.

These are practical measures. They are also acts of stewardship, generosity, and care for family. As an estate planning attorney, I can tell you the most common reason people delay creating these documents is not cost — it is procrastination. Sadly, I have seen the heavy price families pay when “later” comes too soon.

## A CALL TO FAITHFUL ACTION

One of the greatest gifts you can leave your loved ones is clarity and preparation. Difficult conversations about death or incapacity become much more difficult when left until a crisis. Planning now means protecting what God has entrusted to you and providing for the people He has placed in your life.

The apostle Paul urges us: “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time” (Ephesians 5:15-16 ESV).

Don't let procrastination or discomfort stand in the way of faithful stewardship. Begin your estate plan today — and leave a legacy of wisdom, peace, and care for generations to come.

## I lost my spouse six months ago, and people keep telling me I should be “moving on” by now. Is there a timeline for grief that I’m supposed to follow?

There is no prescribed timeline for grief, and God’s Word never hurries those who mourn. Scripture shows us that grief is a natural response to loss — even Jesus wept at Lazarus’ tomb despite knowing He would raise him from the dead. Your spouse was a gift from God, and the depth of your grief reflects the depth of that love and companionship. While we grieve with hope in the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14), this hope doesn’t eliminate the pain of separation in this life. Give yourself grace to grieve at your own pace, and surround yourself with patient, compassionate brothers and sisters in Christ who will walk alongside you.

## Since my adult child died, I find myself angry with God and struggling to pray. Does this mean I’m losing my faith, and how can I work through these feelings?

Your honest struggle with God does not mean you’re losing your faith — in fact, bringing your anger to God in prayer shows you still trust Him enough to be real with Him. The Psalms are filled with laments where God’s people cry out in anguish, asking “Why?” and “How long?” (Psalm 13, 22, 88). God is big enough to handle your anger and questions, and He doesn’t abandon you in your darkest valleys. Your faith isn’t measured by the absence of difficult emotions but by God’s faithfulness to you in Christ, which never wavers even when your feelings do. Consider speaking with your pastor, who can offer pastoral care and point you to the comfort of God’s promises, and don’t hesitate to simply pray “Lord, help my unbelief” when words fail.

## My longtime friend passed away, but I don’t feel like I have the “right” to grieve as deeply as family members do. How do I honor this friendship loss?

Your grief is legitimate and God-given, regardless of biological relationship. Scripture honors deep friendships like David and Jonathan’s, describing their bond as surpassing even family ties. God created us for community and companionship, and longtime friendships are precious gifts that leave real voids when broken by death. Your sorrow honors both your friend’s memory and the blessing that friendship was in your life. Grieve openly, share memories, attend the funeral if possible, and don’t minimize your loss — the body of Christ grieves alongside all who mourn, recognizing that love takes many forms. Consider writing down favorite memories or praying prayers of thanksgiving for the years you shared together.

## *A note from the Editor ...*

In our letters to the editor section, we would like to answer any and all questions that you have about Scripture, aging well, and our ministry. Please send your questions to [editor@worshipanew.org](mailto:editor@worshipanew.org). Please know that we will try to answer as many questions as we can. Thank you and enjoy!

# Remembering our mental health in grief

*By Rev. K.C. Dehning*

Grief is a natural reaction to the death of a loved one, and grief extends beyond the funeral. You may be feeling fine and then get hit with a wave of grief when the calendar rolls around to a wedding anniversary or the birthday of a child that has died (no matter the age of the child). Holidays may also bring grief as there is a natural void of the loved one who has died.

A wave of grief can also come upon you in unexpected places, such as Sunday morning worship when you are sitting alone. When you are shopping for groceries, there is no one to call to make sure you are buying the right product or there is no one to help carry out the groceries, and you must rely on the person bagging to help carry the groceries to the car. Vacations take on an entirely different experience when the one you love is no longer there to experience your favorite vacation spot together. Waves of grief can come upon you in each of those times and in other unexpected times and places.

Most everyone is acquainted with the five stages of grief, popularized by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. These stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. I do not intend to explain these various stages and help you discern where you are in the grieving process because everyone

grieves in their own way and not necessarily in a 1 - 2 - 3 ordering of the various stages. Instead, I will approach grief from a pastoral perspective and explore how persistent grief may affect your mental health.

Recalling memories can assist with processing the grief we all experience. Share some of your favorite memories with your friends and family and let them support you by listening.

Do not neglect attending Sunday morning worship, for in the Divine Service, the Gospel will provide a soothing balm. Remember that both you and your loved one are baptized into Christ. This is a present reality. In the Divine Service, Holy Communion can provide sweet comfort as you remember the words of the Proper Preface, “Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven ...” (“Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book”). These words remind us that when we commune, we are communing with all the company of heaven, including our loved ones who have died before us. Receiving the Holy Sacrament, we have an eternal connection in Christ with our loved ones.

While it is OK to grieve, persistent grief could be problematic. Letting grief consume your every waking





hour obscures the Gospel and can lead to depression and anxiety.

I know the difficulties of depression and anxiety, not from grief, but from the pressure of serving my congregation, trying to do everything myself, and not asking for help. In 2023, I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety and spent three months on disability away from my congregation. Mental health treatment — intensive therapy, medication, learning coping skills, and the importance of self-care AND the Gospel — is making recovery possible for me. It is the Gospel that has had the greatest impact on my recovery.

If you are experiencing persistent grief, turn to your pastor who will provide spiritual care for your hurting soul. He will redirect you to the Gospel of Christ, sharing Bible passages that can provide hope and comfort, and praying for and with you that our heavenly Father will comfort you. If you are feeling down and depressed for two weeks or longer, seek help from a mental

health professional who will meet you where you are emotionally, show you unconditional positive regard, and, along with your pastor, help you process the grief you are experiencing.

When grieving, remember grief is natural and everyone grieves differently. Persistent grief is problematic and may result in depression and anxiety. Seek the care of your pastor and a mental health professional to help you process your grief. They will help you express your grief in healthy ways. Your pastor will deliver the Gospel to you through pastoral care and the Divine Service.

It is the Gospel that ultimately provides comfort for those who grieve.

*The Rev. K.C. Dehning serves as a director on the board for Cross Connections of Tippecanoe County (Indiana). He is retired from congregational ministry after serving for 30-plus years.*







experience the effects of sin. They do not have any discomfort, pain, or sorrow. They have come out of the great tribulation — by God’s grace and power they survived all the suffering, persecutions, trials, and tribulations Christians experience in this evil world. They remained faithful to the end, and now, they enjoy total freedom from all troubles in heaven.

The Lamb, Jesus Christ, will continually shepherd His sheep, the saints in heaven. He will tend to them with great care, and “guide them to springs of living water.” Christ will lead the saints to ever new delights; He will show them one new, exciting vista after the other. There is absolutely no boredom in heaven. Christ constantly will be unfolding tremendous surprises for the saints in glory, unimagined joys.

John’s vision gives us joy.

With regard to the loved ones who have preceded us to glory, although we miss them, we are happy for them. They are having an awesome, joyful time in heaven! We rejoice that, by God’s grace, we through faith in Christ are on the road to heaven, our real home.

*The Rev. Dr. Walter A. Maier III has been a regular pastor on “Worship Anew” since 1998. He currently teaches in the Exegetical Department at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.*

## Reflection Questions:

How does John’s vision bring you comfort in your grief and suffering during your time here on earth?

What does John’s vision encourage you to do while here on earth?

Who are you looking forward to seeing in heaven?

## This month’s study text:

### *A Great Multitude from Every Nation*

*9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”*

*13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” 14 I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*

*15 “Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.*

*16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat.*

*17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

**Revelation 7:9–17 (ESV)**



# Writing today, tomorrow, & throughout your grief

## *Journaling prompts to help you process during a time of loss*

By Thomas Moll  
Director of Content & Innovation

Journaling can be a valuable tool in processing grief, providing a safe space to share whatever you need to before God, much like the psalmists did in Scripture.

Writing helps externalize overwhelming emotions, track your grief journey over time, and recognize God's faithfulness even in dark valleys. It can also serve as a form of prayer when spoken words feel inadequate, allowing you to lament, question, remember, and ultimately find comfort in God's promises.

Many find that journaling brings clarity to confused emotions, and it creates a tangible record of how the Lord sustains them through their loss.

Use the journaling prompts below to write over the next few days, weeks, or months. Take one prompt at a time to express your feelings related to your grief.

### 10 JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR GRIEF:

1. What are three specific memories with my loved one that I want to remember and thank God for today?
2. What does Psalm 23 ("The Lord is my shepherd") mean to me in this season of grief?
3. Write a letter to your loved one, expressing comments or feelings that you wish you could have said.
4. How have I seen God's presence or provision this week, even in small ways?
5. What emotions am I feeling today, and can I bring them honestly to God in prayer on this page?
6. What Bible verse or hymn has brought me comfort lately, and why does it speak to my heart?
7. What do I miss most about my loved one, and how can I honor that aspect of who they were?
8. How has my church community supported me, and how can I allow others to help carry this burden?
9. What does the promise of resurrection and eternal life mean to me as I grieve this temporary separation?
10. What would I want to tell someone else who is walking through similar grief?






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## Answer Key

7	9	1	2	8	4	5	3	6
8	4	6	5	7	3	2	1	9
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4	5	7	1	9	8	6	2	3
6	1	8	4	3	2	7	9	5
2	3	9	7	5	6	1	8	4
1	6	4	3	2	7	9	5	8
9	7	3	8	1	5	4	6	2
5	8	2	6	4	9	3	7	1



*He will wipe away every  
tear from their eyes.*

and death shall be no more, neither shall there be  
mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore,

**for the former things have  
passed away.**

Revelation 21:4 (ESV)