

*For God so loved  
the world that he  
gave his one and  
only Son....*



JOHN 3:16, NIV

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# The Reporter

## February 2018

The Reporter

Volume 16, Issue 02

### "Just a Reminder"

by Pastor Proeber

While we may not always appreciate them, we usually need them. These are reminders. Throughout our life we receive them gratefully, or perhaps we are resistant to them. In any event, with the help of hindsight, we come to appreciate them more and more. We know the form some of those reminders take. "Don't forget!" Did you remember!" Make sure you!" Certainly there are more, but the basic idea is the same.

We mainly need reminders in situations when we try to run on "auto-pilot." Unfortunately, those are the times when we tend to forget things. It could be as simple as keys, identification, phones, or something more worrisome, like losing track of your children.

It is interesting, but as time moves on we need more and more reminders. I for one appreciate reminders, especially when my schedule becomes more frantic.

As we approach a new year with a new ministry plan for our congregation, it would be a well-timed reminder to consider our personal stewardship of the gifts God has entrusted to our care. These can be summarized as time, talents, and treasures. And let's be honest, from time to time who doesn't need a reminder, simply because it is so easy to do things the way we have always done them.

Two experiences come to mind. One was from the congregation where I did my vicar year. There was a man who consistently talked about two topics. One was how much money he made working for General Motors for seemingly doing very little. The other was he freely admitted he gave one dollar a week for the work of the church. It wasn't until he received a gentle reminder that he became aware of what

he was doing. The thought never crossed his mind that he was being unfaithful in the use of his God-given gifts.

This is why you and I need a gentle reminder from time to time. We can lose sight of what personal stewardship is. It is much more than giving money to keep the lights on, the building in good repair, or making sure the pastor gets paid. It is all about returning our joyful and grateful thanks to the Lord for the rich way he has blessed us. When we approach the use of our possessions from this perspective, we appreciate the reminder, because it aids us in being more faithful to our Lord and Savior. This is what our stewardship always needs to reflect—growing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let's recall the basics. The Bible helps us understand what God-pleasing stewardship is. It can be summed up in the words, planned, priority and percentage. Each of these have Scriptural support.

Stewardship is something we plan. We all need to have budgets. Unlike the government we cannot deficit spend, print more money, or raise taxes. We have a finite amount of resources to cover sometimes an infinite amount of needs. This is why a budget, or a plan is imperative.

A plan helps us consider how we will use every gift the Lord has given us. With the guidance of prayer and the Scriptures, we can put into practice what Paul encourages: "Each one should give as he has determined in his heart, not reluctantly or under pressure, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

This is a good reminder, because there

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*Reminder, from page 1*

are times when we run on auto-pilot, or we simply forget. That is, until the offering plate comes down the aisle. Then, hastily we either throw something in the plate, or we scribble an amount on a check and stick it into our envelope. A good plan starts with considering what we have received from the Lord. Then, make it your routine to write the very first check each week or month as a thank offering to the Lord. After that decision has been made, work out the rest of your budget. From my experience, most people who plan this way never seem to find themselves with “nothing left for the Lord.” The new creation which the Lord has brought about through the working of the water and the Word, delights in serving the Lord with a plan. That plan can include gifts, the use of time, and the use of our abilities.

The second reminder we need is that our stewardship needs to be in proportion to the way the Lord has blessed us. Paul reminded the Corinthians—“On the first day of every week, each of you is to set something aside in keeping with whatever he gains” (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Old Testament believers were commanded to use a tithe. However, when one examines what the Lord actually prescribed for his people, the tithe was almost thirty percent. Still, the Lord was not interested in their sheep, sacrifices, or monetary gifts. He wanted their hearts first. This is where proportionate giving actually starts for the New Testament Christian. Once we have our hearts purified through the working of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit, our attitude changes. Instead of assuming the Lord asks too much, we actually believe and put into practice the words of the hymnist:

O Lord of heaven and earth and sea, to you all praise and glory be!

How can we thank you properly who gives us all?

Dear Lord from you we all derive our life, our gifts, our power to give.

Oh may we ever with you live, who gives us all!

*Christian Worship 487 st. 1 & 8.*



“Love  
the LORD  
your God  
with all your  
heart...soul  
...mind and...  
strength.”

Mark 12:30, NRSV



A third reminder which is helpful is to make good stewardship our priority. I recall one family I served over 20 years ago. Both the husband and wife had regular income which was more than ample to cover their obligations. Still, they were always looking to the congregation for financial aid to pay their bills. Because this was a regular occurrence, the Church Council asked me to meet with them. I had asked them to list their income and their expenses. Then I asked them to prioritize them. I was amazed at what their priorities were. I was also amazed that a gift to their Lord didn't even make the top ten. When I asked about this omission, they apologized. “Oh, we forgot about that, but the church is right up there.”

Our Savior speaks as to how we are to prioritize the use of our God-given gifts. He teaches during the Sermon on the Mount: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33). You and I need our Savior's reminder every time we look at our personal budgets. Our stewardship is not an obligation. It is opportunity to put the Lord first in everything we do. This is what he deserves, and what he desires from us as his blood-bought and holy people.

This leads to the final reminder we need. It is a privilege to serve the Lord. Here is where we need to check the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. There is a broad spectrum of obstacles we have to overcome. All need to be addressed with the words our Lord places before us: “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops” (Proverbs 3:9).

The best place you and I need to begin is at the cross, and the first thing we need to do is confess:

“Forgive us, Lord, for shallow thankfulness,  
for dull content with warmth and sheltered care;

For songs of praise for worldly wealthiness,  
while of your richer gifts we're unaware.”

*Christian Worship 482 st. 1*

*Continued on page 8*

## Ministry and Funding Plan

By Al Todd

The congregation's approved Ministry and Funding Plan for 2018 is broken out into nine (9) categories as shown below:

	2017	2018	DIFF	% Inc/Dec
<b>Income</b>				
General Fund Income	154,996	150,000	-4,996	-3.2%
<b>Expense</b>				
Total Advertising/Outreach	575	1,400	825	143.3%
Total Church Operations	30,226	16,570	13,656	-45.2%
Total Church Utilities	6,466	6,596	129	2.0%
Total Education Expenses	1,685	967	-718	-42.6%
Total Fellowship Expenses	786	895	109	13.9%
Total Pastoral Support	104,122	107,137	3,015	2.9%
Synod Missions	15,525	15,000	-525	-3.4%
Total Worship Expenses	605	500	-105	-17.4%
<b>Total Expense</b>	159,991	149,064	-10,927	
<b>Net Income</b>	-4,996	936	5,931	

For 2018, the total expenses for all categories total \$149,064 which is a 6.8% decrease over the actual 2017 expenses.

The General Fund income for 2018 was calculated by taking the average per month giving for the last 6 months of 2017 and multiplying that by 12. The decrease is primarily due to some active members of the congregation moving out of California, in addition to offerings not meeting our prayerful expectations.

As a result of the projected decrease in offerings, the Council was forced to eliminate the Capital Budget expense (part of the Church Operations category). This expense transferred \$1,250 per month into the Capital Fund to be used for upkeep and long term improvements to the Church buildings (including the Parsonage) and the Church grounds. Instead, for 2018, only income in excess of expenses will be transferred to the Capital Fund. Unless offerings are increased to cover normal consumer price index increases (currently about 2% per year) this could have a long term adverse impact on the care and maintenance of the church's property.

For example, the Capital Fund had over \$23,000 at the end of 2017. The Trustees have been considering potential plans to update the Sanctuary. After 40 years, there is a need new flooring, and the benches either need to be replaced or repaired because they are de-laminating. The Trustees are looking at several alternatives:

- 1) new pews or refurbishing existing pews,
- 2) replacing pews with chairs,
- 3) combination of pews and chairs.

We are also looking at replacing the carpet with a combination of "hard" flooring and carpet for easier

*Continued on page 4*

*Plan from page 3*

maintenance and enhanced acoustics. After the first look at the costs for each of these alternatives, it appears that \$23,000 won't be enough to accomplish the project, along with maintaining a reserve for "capital projects"—for example, future roof and parking lot repair. More information will be coming out on this in the months ahead and will take into account the state of the Capital Fund under this new budget.

The largest increase was in the Pastoral Support category. This category includes a 2.2% increase in Pastor's salary, a 6% increase in health insurance costs (\$1,344), and an 11% increase in Pastor's Synod pension plan contribution. The health and pension costs are mandated by Synod as part of their Synod-wide insurance coverage plans.

We pray that this 2018 ministry and funding plan will be more than fully funded so that we can continue to fulfill our mission in 2017 which is to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; to encourage one another in that faith; and to proclaim the gospel of Christ in our community.

If you have any questions regarding the 2018 budget, please don't hesitate to contact me or any member of the Church Council.

## 4th Quarter 2017 Voter's Meeting Minutes

By Carl Schueler

The Meeting called to order Sunday January 14, 2018, following the worship service by Greg Grunewald. Pastor Proeber opened with prayer. Eight voting, six non-voting members present.

**Unfinished Business:** There was none reported at this time.

**Board of Elders:** Jacob Martin

The new website is progressing toward a possible introduction this Spring. Work was also updated among our "inactive" and straying people.

**Board of Education:** John Favuzzi

Because John was out of town, there was no report; however, Sunday School statistics were shared in the Pastor's Report.

**Pastor's report:** Pastor Proeber

Advent attendance was just above normal, but Christmas worship attendance was low. Possibly family obligations and members visiting families out of town were the likely cause.

Wood Glen services continue at least three Sundays a month. There is a possibility of beginning another service at Maripossa at Elwood Shores.

A new church directory will be assembled during the first quarter of 2018.

A plan is in the works to host a Community Emergency Response Team program in April.

The congregation will need a lay delegate for Arizona-California District Convention in Scottsdale, Arizona. The dates are June 11th—13th.

**Property:** Al Todd for Frank Florez

Flower beds were weeded, cleaning supplies were replenished, church was cleaned, parsonage landscaping continued as time and opportunity permitted.

Dump runs with tree and shrub trimmings, clocks updated, furnace filters checked

*Continued on page 5*

Minutes from page 4

- Arranged repair of parsonage dishwasher
- Evaluating sanctuary pews and carpet for possible repair or replacement

**Financial Secretary:** Al Todd for Jim Everson

General fund 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter offerings	\$ 36,341
<u>Total 4<sup>th</sup> quarter offerings</u>	<u>\$ 43,620</u>
Total 2017 offerings	\$ 161,370

**Treasurer:** Al Todd

General fund balance Oct. 1	\$ 46,544
4 <sup>th</sup> quarter offerings	\$ 39,428
<u>4<sup>th</sup> quarter expenses</u>	<u>\$ 42,063</u>
General fund Balance Dec. 31	\$ 43,905

**WELS Investment Fund:** Al Todd

October 1, 2017	\$150,106
December 31, 2017	\$156,897

**New Business:**

A motion was made to adopt the proposed 2018 Ministry and Funding Plan. It was seconded, discussed, and unanimously approved.

**Announcements:**

The next Congregational meeting is Sunday, April 15th, following worship service.

The meeting adjourned with the singing of the Doxology at 11:45 AM.

**Editor's note**

For attendee convenience, Congregational meetings are held following refreshments after the regular Sunday service. The Council invites, and encourages, every member of Our Redeemer to participate in the congregation's ministry. Suggestions, questions, or concerns regarding ministry, property issues, or other issues will be addressed at the meeting. If needed, they will be referred to the Church Council for further consideration. Make sure you set aside time to attend the next meeting (April 15th following the worship service). Meetings are conducted in a timely and orderly fashion, and usually adjourn before noon.

**February Birthdays**

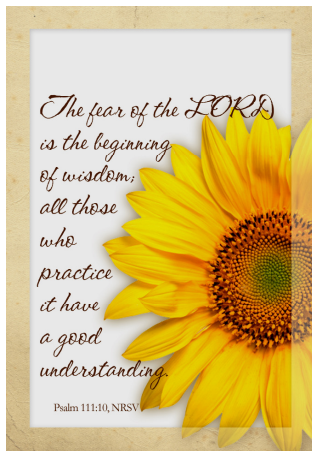


We rejoice in the many blessings God has given the members of our family of faith. May the Lord continue to bless them richly.

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Jameson S.
- 7<sup>th</sup> - Joel D.
- 11<sup>th</sup> - Michael J. & Janelle Y.
- 17<sup>th</sup> - Debbie A.

## “Famine of the Word in America?”

By Carl Schueler



“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord,  
 “when I will send a famine through the land—  
 not a famine of food or a thirst for water,  
 but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.”

Amos 8:11 NIV

Paul Eichmann (WELS), in the *People’s Bible Series* commentary on Amos, notes this prophecy was fulfilled among the Israelites because they followed other Gods. With emphasis on Darwinian evolution and humanism, and little Bible reference in current literature and entertainment, is Amos 8:11 again being fulfilled in the United States? Were there times here when the “words of the Lord” were more available? I think so, and relatively recently.

I was raised to the mid-‘60’s without religious training, but not without “words of the Lord.” Numerous television programs included reference to our Savior! I watched *Hopalong Cassidy*, *Roy Rogers*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Dragnet*, etc. Stories promoting good citizenship, honesty, and Christianity! References not just to “God,” but to “the Lord” were common.

An example is the 2<sup>nd</sup> episode of *The Rifleman* with a fine summary (see page 7) of the *Book of Job*! How well do you think a three-minute Bible monologue would fare in today’s television market? Such a script likely would not get past the recycle bin.

Watching programs like *The Rifleman*, an irreligious boy (me) could not avoid hearing “words of the Lord” sixty years ago, even with no church attendance or mention at home. Today, my grandson Jameson likely is not hearing many “words of the Lord” except in church, Sunday School, and at home. With the relative lack of the Word of the Lord, even in many mainstream churches, a “famine” exists now that I don’t think was nearly as severe a half-century ago.

Amos’ prophecy from the Lord: “I will send a famine throughout the land...a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.” This seems like something Satan would do, but he didn’t remove “the words of the Lord” from Israel! No, the Lord removed his words! Reverend Eichmann notes “people who refuse to hear the Word of the Lord finally *cannot* hear it, because God takes his Word away.”

Of Paul’s admonition “Now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2), Luther noted “the preaching of the gospel is not an eternal, lasting, continual teaching, but it is like a passing shower which travels on. Some ground is watered and another place stays dry. It does not return and also does not stand still. Then the hot sun comes and licks up the moisture that remains.”

I fear the “words of the Lord” may disappear as they did from the Israelites. Have the people of the United States strayed from the Lord since the ‘50’s? Is there a possible famine of the word on the horizon? It could happen. Nonetheless we have every reason to redouble our Christ-centered efforts to reach the lost! We need to go and tell!



*Famine of the Word, from page 6*

### **The Book of Job in The Rifleman**

Lucas McCain & son Mark in *The Rifleman* episode 2

[Chuck Connors as Lucas; Johnny Crawford as Mark. *Script: Sam Peckinpah*]

In the 2nd, 1958, *Rifleman* episode, a neighboring rancher's hired-hands burned down Lucas McCain's house to force him off the land. Stunned, his son Mark cries out "Pa! Looks to me like the Lord's dead-set against us!"

Lucas responds: "Help me saddle up, boy, I want to tell you a story. A long time ago in a country so far west it's almost due east of here lived a great stock-man with a beard so long it reached his belly-button. His name was Job. Job had seven sons, seven daughters and seven-thousand head of fine cattle and sheep. Not to mention a considerable amount of camel stock.



Job was top dog with the Lord because he was so hard-workin' and righteous. The Lord never lost a chance to brag on him! He made a point of tellin' the Devil about the old man. How he hated evil, avoided temptation, and most important: How he never lost his faith in God!

Well, the Devil switched his tail and laughed. He allowed that Job was such a good man because everythin' was goin' his way. Just give him some trouble and he'd switch sides in a hurry! Well, the Lord thought this over and then he said he'd give the Devil a Hog's dollar against a Penny's worth of brimstone that Job would keep faith with his maker no matter what trials he put on him.

Well, the Devil sent some rustlers on the old man's stock, and then he called up a big wind that knocked down his house and killed all his children. The old man's beard turned white with grief. But he held steadfast. So the Devil reared back and saddled him all over with festerin' boils. Mark, Job was as miserable as a man can be. He got himself a piece of broken jug, sat out in the corral doctorin' his boils and shakin' ashes over his head bewailin' his fate: Wonderin' why the Lord had forsaken him until finally three of his 'friends' came up. They told Job that wailin' about the situation only made it worse and it looked to them like he'd sinned somewhere along the line and 'Why didn't he repent?'

Job jumped right back at them! He said he'd repent when he had somethin' to repent about! He knew he'd been good and righteous and while he might complain about his lot, he'd not lost faith in the Lord: 'Oh, that my words were now written and printed in a book riven with chisel on granite rock forever, for I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand beside me later on.' That's how the old man put it.

Well, Mark: The Devil was plumb wore out, so he just tossed in his chips and quit the game. The Lord was so proud of Job that he restored all the old man's children and his house, his camels and sheep, and gave him over twice as many cattle as he had before! Job lived a hundred an' forty years happy as a bird-dog, and finally died bein' old and full of days."

Mark thought a moment, then said: "Makes our troubles look kinda piddlin', don't it?"

2015 WELS sermon on the famine of the Word in America: [http://www.lolaparklutheran.com/November\\_1\\_2015\\_Reformation.pdf](http://www.lolaparklutheran.com/November_1_2015_Reformation.pdf)

## Outreach Opportunities

The Outreach Committee continues to organize events and opportunities for members to invite friends and relatives to come and visit Our Redeemer. Some are conducted outside the formal worship service. There are also special worship services with food and fellowship afterwards. We hope these opportunities will encourage you to invite people you know to learn more about our church and to hear the message of God's undeserved love in Jesus Christ we proclaim. Plan to participate, and plan to serve!

On January 16th the committee finalized plans for the first quarter of 2018. There are always the "regularly scheduled" events and worship services, still the committee is interested in new opportunities and activities to add to our yearly calendar. Take a look at what is happening —

Midweek Lenten worship begins February 14th for 6 weeks and will follow the theme:  
"We have Something Better—Jesus!"

President's Day Pizza and Movie is schedule for Sunday, February 25th at 5:30 pm

Palm Sunday is March 25th

Maundy Thursday is March 29th & Good Friday is March 30th

Easter Sunday is April 1st with the traditional breakfast following

### Special Community / Congregation Event

#### Community Emergency Response Training

This will be for three successive Saturdays—April 7th, 14th, and 21st. The complete course is 20-24 hours (8 hours each session). The classes will cover disaster preparedness, fire suppression, medical operations, disaster psychology, as well as light search and rescue. More information will be forth coming, or you may contact Debbie Aitkins. We will need at least 15 people to hold the training course.

May and June are currently open with the exception of Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity

July 4th is our patriotic movie, barbeque and fireworks at Girsch Park

August 26th is the Beach, Bike and Barbeque at Goleta Beach

September 16th is the Festival of Friendship with barbeque

October 21st is the Luther movie, dinner and fellowship

October 28th is the Los Angeles Circuit Reformation Service in North Hollywood

#### *Reminder from page 2*

At the cross, our thoughts and our actions are purified by the shed blood of our Savior. Yes, Jesus died not only to take away the obvious sins which plague our life, he also died to take away those seemingly insignificant ones which over time can drive the same wedge between us and God. These are the sins against the First Commandment where we do not "fear, love and trust in God above all things." We also need to pray that God would strengthen the new creation through the working of the Holy Spirit: "Create in me a pure heart, O God. Renew an unwavering spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence. Do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to the joy of your salvation. Sustain me with a willing spirit. (Psalm 51:10-12).

As the Lord works freely in us, he also begins to work freely through us. This is finally what stewardship is—using our God-given gifts willingly and joyfully for God-given purposes. It is a life-long process, and there is always opportunity for growth. Good stewardship is a process in which we delight, and which we long to see take place in us. It is what we strive to attain as God's redeemed and heaven-bound people, because we want to do all to the glory of God!



## Reporters Wanted

Book review? Personal Story of Faith?  
Event report? Potluck-gathering? Party? Field Trip?

Half-page to three pages  
Reviewed for scriptural consistency  
Due by 25th of month to appear in next issue

Hard-copy or email to Carl Schueler (cfs\_home@hotmail.com)  
or Pastor Proeber (pastor@orlcsb.net)

***A simple and rewarding way to serve!***

Thanks to Al Todd and Carl Schueler for their additions to this month's newsletter. There is a standing invitation to provide material for the *Reporter*. Throughout the past volumes, articles authored by members have really made every issue more interesting. We pray that every member will consider providing an article for the new year—2018. If you have an idea, and you are not sure whether to act on it, please don't hesitate to speak to Carl Schueler or Pastor Proeber for advice.

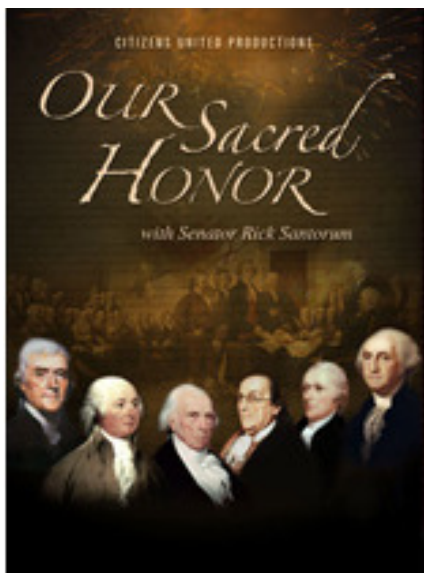
**Serve  
the Lord  
with  
Gladness**

### Meetings for February

Church Council	Tuesday, February 6th at 7:00 pm
Committees	Tuesday, February 6th at 8:00 pm
Outreach Committee	Tuesday, February 13th at 7:00 pm

*If you have a question regarding a specific area of ministry, please contact a member of the appropriate Board. He will be happy to help.*

### President's Day Movie and Pizza



On Sunday, **February 25th** at 5:30 pm, we will gather for our annual President's Day celebration. We will start with pizza and salad. Around 6:15 pm we will move to the sanctuary to watch the DVD, "Our Sacred Honor." It is a 2014 production of Citizens United.

In "Our Sacred Honor," former presidential candidate and Senator Rick Santorum asks the question, are we today a country that recognizes the level of commitment and sacrifice to which the Founding Fathers pledged themselves? The film presents a journey into our past that explains the meaning of our founding documents, the intentions of the drafters and signers, the origins of our rights, the difference between the French and American revolutions, and the relationship between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Come and enjoy an evening of education, good food and fellowship. As always, guests and friends are more than welcome. Please check the sign-up sheet on the table outside the church. Hope to see you there!

## Devotional Corner

### Never Alone with Jesus

“Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.”

*Mark 9:8*

The disciples must have been disappointed. One moment they saw a glimpse of heaven. Jesus allowed his glory as God to be seen. Moses and Elijah miraculously appeared. God the Father's praise majestically echoed from the cloud. The next moment everything was gone. All that remained was the familiar form of Jesus.

I have experienced the same disappointment. For a brief moment everything in my life seemed wonderful. There were no problems, no conflicts, and everything made sense. I was content because God was good and his blessings were clearly evident. All of a sudden everything changed. My life was filled with chaos, and I felt very alone. While I tried to convince myself of the Bible's promises, I couldn't escape the emptiness I felt.

Although I may suffer disappointment, loneliness, and emptiness, I need to understand I am never alone with Jesus.

I can be certain of his presence in my life because of his promise. "I am always with you," tells me there is never a time when I am alone. He is always there to guide me with his Word. He is always there to comfort me with his love. He is always there to encourage me with his kind embrace.

Even more convincing is the work he completed to assure me "nothing will ever separate me from his love." Jesus secured his Father's approval to free me from the tyranny of my sin-stained life. Jesus accepted his Father's just judgment to release me from the verdict of separation and punishment. Jesus endured the attacks of the devil and the horror of the grave to claim me as his own.

When I remember Jesus' faithful promises, his precious work, and his undeserved love, I can live with complete certainty and peace. I am never alone with Jesus.

### Prayer

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless; Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes; Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee; In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

*Christian Worship 588 st. 6 & 7*

Daily devotions can be accessed through [www.whataboutjesus.com](http://www.whataboutjesus.com) or [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net). Please follow the instructions to view daily devotions and to subscribe to them. They are also available as "podcasts."