



Even Closer to God *by Jewel Golberg*

"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." – **James 4:8**

God's gift of faith has been a major part of my life. The church was the center of my early family, who were sodhouse homesteaders. Their immigrant community in South Dakota struggled to build a small frame church on the prairie, and my mother was the first child baptized there in 1900.

The hardships we faced—the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression, and my father's early death (before I was born)—only served to draw us closer to God and His church. The concept of the "widow's mite" was very real for us.

An education at an Evangelical Lutheran Church college introduced me to my future spouse, who was in pre-seminary studies. After 38 years of parish ministry, we have been drawn even closer to God.

Tragically, our daughter passed away from liver cancer after receiving twelve years of new life thanks to a heart transplant. The message to her family, friends, Desert Hills Lutheran Church, and the world was her confirmation verse: "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." She planned her own funeral service while facing death and directed that the sermon's focus be on assuring everyone of God's love.

Journaling:

What role does your belief in the Holy Spirit play in enabling you to draw near to God?

What means does God use to meet us?

How does your life reflect God's nearness?

