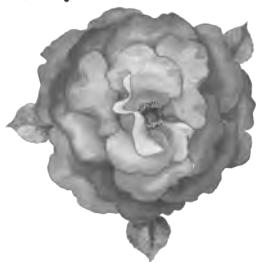




May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Romans 15:13



Hope Notes



*Dedicated to Betty Duda, whose passion
for living, heart for ministry, and zeal for her Lord
are an inspiration to all of us.*



Hope Notes



DEVOTIONS FOR WOMEN



CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS



Copyright © 2015 Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
1-800-325-3040 · www.cph.org

All rights reserved. Unless specifically noted, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House.

Written by Gloria Edwards, Linda Reiser, Ida Mall, Virginia von Seggern, Jan Wendorf, and Kay Kreklau.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations from the ESV Bible® (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations marked KJV are from the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible.

Hymn texts marked with the abbreviation *LSB* are from *Lutheran Service Book*, copyright © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Catechism quotations from *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, copyright © 1986, 1991 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Manufactured in the United States of America



Table of Contents

A Letter to the Reader	10
Devotions by Gloria Edwards (GE)	12
Devotions by Kay Kreklau (KK)	28
Devotions by Ida Mall (IM)	44
Devotions by Linda Reiser (LR)	60
Devotions by Virginia Von Seggern (VVS)	76
Devotions by Jan Wendorf (JW)	92
My Hope Notes	108



A Letter to the Reader

But I will hope continually and will
praise You yet more and more.

Psalm 71:14

The ladies who wrote these devotions are connected in a unique way: they share a common bond because they have all served as president of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML). Their work for the Lord as leaders has been a blessing to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, to the Church at large, and to people throughout the world.

Yet they also share a common bond with all of us who read this book: they, too, are children of God. They are sisters in Christ. They are women in mission so that the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection for all people may be shared to the corners of the earth.

As you read these pages, you will find that you have more in common with these faithful women. They have known pain and loss. They have known joy and blessing. They have helped the poor and

lonely. They have found joy in those around them. And through all these stories, you will see that they also share our hope—the hope we have in our God.

We can “hope continually,” even in the midst of tragedy. We can “praise [Him] yet more and more,” even when we are weary. As you will find in these pages, our hope is not a passing wish or a dim possibility. We have a *certain* hope; we can “abound in hope” (Romans 15:13) because our hope is in the Lord, who never changes, never fails, and never abandons us.

Women of all ages can connect with these women and find encouragement in their words, their stories, and their witness to the Lord.

We serve the Lord in different ways, and our journeys in life take different paths. But through it all, we know that we all share our Savior, our sure hope.

As you learn more about these women, find comfort in their stories and be refreshed by their words as they share with you their hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

—Lisa Clark

His Healing Hands

Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be
healed; save me, and I shall be saved,
for You are my praise.

Jeremiah 17:14

What causes you to go to God in prayer? When is it essential to turn to the Lord in prayer? Serious illness may be the number one reason for being in earnest prayer, whether it is personal, it affects someone near and dear, or even if it is a request for healing of an acquaintance. We plead. We beg. We want a cure. We want healing. We want that person who means so much to us to be whole again.

A Christian theologian, trained as a medical doctor, has talked and written about the prayer for healing. When cancer strikes or heart disease enfeebles, we ask for healing. We want the subject of that prayer request to get well. We want the person to be free of disease. If we have the choice, we want a return to full health. Are we asking for a cure or for healing? Perhaps the healing comes in a

different way. The healing comes in knowing that God is in control and that, in the end, all will be well.

We know that there are times when the disease does not disappear. The patient is finally in hospice care. Our loved one leaves this world. We endure the grief with faith in hope in Christ. But our sorrow turns to hope as we also rejoice that suffering has ended and that heaven is the new home. We have faith in Christ's work on our behalf to bring us to everlasting life.

So has the prayer for healing been answered? Yes. God answers all prayers. It is for us to trust in His answers. He holds us in His hands. Always!

Dear Father, so often, we pray for healing. We want to be well. We want to enjoy this life and all that it has to offer. We want our loved ones to be with us. Help us to accept the healing that You offer. Save us, and we will be saved. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

—GE

The Remote!

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7

Mark's celebration of life was over, and the house was quiet. After forty years of marriage, I had control of the remote to the television. Mark would have truly enjoyed the moment! My kids laughed; Lexi and Trevor offered to show me how to use it. The problem is that after they have gone home, Grandma forgets! Lexi tells me, "Grandma, just keep punching buttons." Sometimes it's just not worth the hassle.

Philippians 4:6–7 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but . . . let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which

surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

There it is: God’s promise. At God’s invitation, we take our problems to Him in prayer, and at the same time, thank Him for all the things He has already done for us. Life—and remotes—sometimes do not make sense, but God’s grace is always real. God promises to guard my heart and my mind and to give me His peace. Even if I can’t use the television remote, the Holy Spirit will lead me to serve our Lord wherever He has need of me!

Father, when life is too hard for us to understand, give us Your peace, which passes our understanding. Guard our hearts and minds in You. Amen.

—KK

Living in Christ's Hope Every Day

This is the day that the LORD has
made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24

In a hospital room, a very small two-year-old boy lay with a very serious condition involving the brain. The diagnosis of his situation and the prognosis for the future were in question.

As I traveled to visit the boy's family, my mind was troubled about what I would say or do. Upon arriving at the hospital, I located the boy's mother and gave her a hug and a greeting card with a note. The thought in the card included a Bible verse: Psalm 118:24.

Although the little boy experienced some difficult health issues, including twenty-two shunt revisions during his youth, he grew, was confirmed, and graduated from high school and college. Then, without warning, some twenty-eight years after his first hospital stay, this young man was called home unexpectedly by the Lord.

Of course, we may wonder why the Lord let him live for only thirty years and then took him. Why did he even have a problem in the first place? We can ask why. Even when no answer comes, we are reminded by the Holy Spirit that the great God of hope loves us. And we can be certain that our Lord sympathizes with our grief because He wept with the mourners at Lazarus's tomb. We know the rest of that story too. Jesus raised Lazarus from death and promises that He will raise all who believe in Him as Redeemer and Savior.

We can plan for the future, but this is the day to live for Him. How blessed we are to live every day in the hope of Christ.

Dear Lord, help us to trust and accept
Your will for us. May we live every day in
Your love, joy, and peace. Amen.

—IM

Rest Comes from Him

Come to Me, all who labor and are
heavy laden, and I will give you rest. .
. . You will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:28–29

Look at your calendar. Are holidays just around the corner? Are the plans for those holidays looming large in your thoughts and plans? Are the words *holidays* and *weary* synonymous in your thinking? Have you ever been so tired that when you finally got to bed, you could not quiet your mind enough to go to sleep? Being “weary” is not the same as being physically tired. “Weary” is being worn out physically, mentally, and spiritually. “Weary” is being resigned to feeling tired and discouraged and burdened on an ongoing basis.

And this is when Jesus speaks to us, as He always does, in His Word. There He offers peace for the restless and rest for the weary. “Come unto Me,” He says, “all you who are weary and burdened”—and that means everyone. It means you,

and it means me, not only if we are weary and burdened by monumental issues or serious problems, but also whatever our burdens, real or imagined. He assures us, “I will give you rest”—and not only rest for our bodies; more important, He says He will give “rest for your souls.”

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 “Come unto Me and rest;
 Lay down, thou weary one,
 lay down Thy head upon My breast.”
 I came to Jesus as I was, So weary,
 worn, and sad;
 I found in Him a resting-place,
 And He has made me glad.
 (LSB 699:1)

Dear Gracious God, thank You for the rest You provide when I am weary. Help me to cast my cares and burdens on You and to trust in Your mercy, love, and grace to provide rest for my soul. Amen.

—LR

Shoes of Healing

For I know the plans I have for you,
declares the LORD, plans for welfare
and not for evil, to give you a future
and a hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

The word *hopeless* comes to mind in this instance. As a registered nurse and as a mom, I've been involved in several hopeless situations.

After the death of our thirty-seven-year-old daughter, I asked her husband for the first thing he'd like me to do on that particularly hopeless morning. His answer: "Clean out the closet, and remove her shoes."

I didn't question him; I just went to work sorting and saving. Slowly, surely, the pile filled a large garbage bag. Who would receive these shoes? The only person who could possibly wear them was her little sister, living in another state—the grieving sister who simply hadn't accepted her sister's early and untimely death.

A few months later, her father and I took the bulging bag of shoes to Colorado, where Susan lived. She was puzzled at the sight of us on the steps with a big bag, looking like Santa Claus himself. We assured her it was a gift, to be used as a reminder of her sister's love and of the healing we all have in Jesus. Her sister's shoes did prove to be a gift of hope; once in a while, I'd see her wearing a pair, sporting them with love and telling whoever would listen, "These were my sister's." The shoes probably healed her heart, as they did mine when I was sorting and saving. Sometimes, what looks or feels like a hopeless situation turns out to be good, all with the help of God.

We know that God has plans for our good. It may involve some unexpected gifts, such as shoes, but He lovingly guides us to find our hope in Him.

Dear Lord, thank You for the gift of hope, given in a bag of sixty pairs of shoes—gifts of love for a needy soul. Help us share our hope in You through whatever means You give us to use. Amen.
