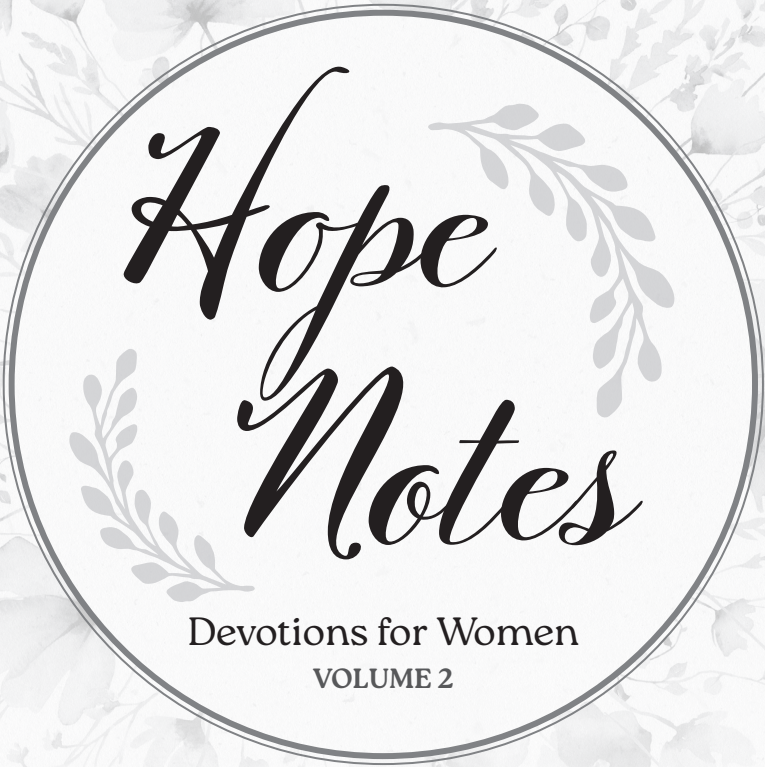


*Hope
Notes*

Devotions for Women

VOLUME 2



Hope Notes

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Presidents of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League

Ida Mall, 1991-95

Janice Wendorf, 2007-11

Gloria Edwards, 1995-99

Kay Kreklau, 2011-15

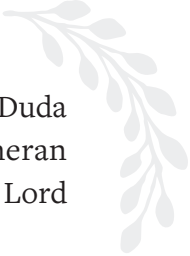
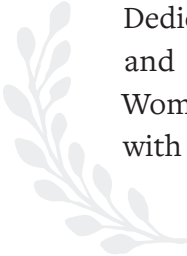
Virginia Von Seggern, 1999-2003

Patti Ross, 2015-19

Linda Reiser, 2003-7

Debbie Larson, 2019-23

Eden Keefe, 2023-27



Dedicated to the memory of Betty Duda
and to all the members of Lutheran
Women in Mission, who serve the Lord
with gladness. To God be the glory!



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INTRODUCTION

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, I started a project: writing out Bible verses about hope and promise on index cards. Sometimes I practiced simple calligraphy or fun lettering. Sometimes I used words cut from the pages of magazines or printed verses I found online. I added backgrounds of pretty paper or artwork from a grandson. It was fun being creative, but the point of recording the promise in this way was to slow down and enjoy the process—to reflect and focus on God’s gifts.

In this book, you will find devotions and prayers by LWML presidents based on many of those “hope” verses. Our prayer is that when you get discouraged in our sinful world, you will be *encouraged* by God’s Word and promises.

Eden Keefe, LWML president 2023–2027



Lutheran Women *in Mission*

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) was established in 1942 as the official women's organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Today, as Lutheran Women in Mission, we honor that history and focus on affirming each woman's relationship with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries, by serving their community at home, and by funding missions around the world with grants.

lwml.org



*Ida
Mall*

Life in the Blood

The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.
(1 John 1:7)

Are you afraid of medical needles or blood? A male engineer friend who can fix almost anything is frightened at the sight of a needle or blood. He has fainted several times.

For Christians, blood covers sin. But not just any blood—the blood of Jesus Christ. Throughout the Old Testament, God directed His people to follow very specific ways of acquiring and using the blood of a one-year-old lamb to cover the sins of the people. During many years of trials and tribulations, through prophets and other means, God told His people that another special lamb would come.

Jesus, the Lamb, came to earth in human form. The baby Lamb's coming and purpose for coming are detailed in Matthew 1 and Luke 2. This Lamb was perfect. The giving of His one-time substitute blood for us on the cross covers and takes away our sins. Peter, the disciple who could not keep his promise to stay with Jesus when things got tough, wanted the world to know that his and our sins are forgiven not with silver or gold “but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

When we take Communion, we hear, “Take, eat; . . . take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins” (LSB, p. 199). Do these words have special meaning to you?

During surgery several years ago, I received four units of blood that helped save my earthly life. But it is the blood of Jesus that saves my life, my engineer friend’s life, and your life—for eternity. True life is in the blood of Jesus. Amen.

*Lord God, give me the steadfastness
to count every hour as a gift from You.
Strengthen my faith through Your
Word today and grant peace to all in
Your church. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

Encouraging Words

Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep.” (John 21:17)

We never know when an encouraging or hopeful word is the medicine someone needs.

How can “feed My sheep” be encouraging words? Peter must have rejoiced to hear Jesus say these words. In the ongoing conversation recorded in John 21, Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” Each time, Peter’s response is a positive yes. Peter must have realized that Jesus was forgiving him for denying three times that he was one of Jesus’ disciples. With His words “feed My sheep,” Jesus was entrusting forgiven Peter with proclaiming the message of salvation to the world. Jesus ends the conversation with the same two words used when they first met: “Follow Me” (Matthew 4:19).

God speaks encouraging words to us just as He spoke them to Peter. We read them in the Bible, from John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son,” to Joshua 1:9, “for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go,” to Lamentations 3:22, “The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end.”

God tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 to “encourage one another and build one another up.” How can we do

that? a smile? pat on the back? brief note or text? phone call? greeting card? prayer? In the way that works for each of us, let us share Jesus with others. We are tasked only with sharing the love of Jesus with others. The other person's faith development is not our responsibility—that is the work of the Holy Spirit, who calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies.

I literally used to feed sheep when I was young and lived on a farm. Today, am I concerned with figuratively feeding the sheep with encouraging words drawn from God's encouraging Word, the Bible. Let us pray:

Dear Father, remind and help us to use encouraging words to reflect Your everlasting love to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.