



LIFE CONTINUES ON ...

Devotions for Widows

*Featuring 22 devotions written by widows for widows,
and those who love them.*



LIFE CONTINUES ON ...

Devotions for Widows



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FOREWORD

The Christian Life Committee rejoices that they can provide *Life Continues On ... Devotions for Widows*, a sequel to *Life After ... Devotions for Widows* published in 2023. This sequel again brings together 22 devotions written by widows for widows. Some of the authors have been widows for over 30 years and some for barely over 30 days. They all want others who are grieving to know God loves them and offers His peace and comfort. God restores the aching heart and strengthens each downcast spirit so each day can be endured.

We thank our dearly loved sisters in Christ, Lois Anderson, Marilyn Bader, Carolyn Blum, Marge Bruning, Judy Carlson, Phyllis Haflinger, Deaconess Laura Jostes, Cheryl Keithly, Linda Koch, Ruth Koch, Kay Kreklau, Amy Scholz, Karol Selle, Dr. Jamie Spikes, and Carol von Soosten, who have so willingly shared their stories.

As you share this book, you are sharing God's love to the grieving. May God continue to provide comfort, peace, and strength to all widows and all who mourn their loved ones.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God: I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

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HE SUSTAINS ME

by Lois Anderson

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved (Psalm 55:22).

The meaning of the word sustain is powerful with great significance. When I read its description in the dictionary, my mind drifted to how these meanings also describe the mighty works of our Savior Jesus Christ. Slowly read these definitions and see if you agree with me:

- keep supplied with necessities
- provide for, support
- carry the weight of, strengthen the spirit
- give courage and comfort; endure

Jesus does all this for us and more!

During the past 27 years, I have experienced the effect of these words and phrases. When I first embraced the term “widow,” my Lord helped me to carry the weight of a broken heart. One Sunday during our worship service, we sang the hymn, “Blest Be the Tie That Binds.” This hymn verse provided me comfort knowing others were sharing my grief: “We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear, and often for each other flows, the sympathizing tear” (*LSB* 649, vs 3). With each tear we shared together, the weight of grief began to lift, and my spirit was strengthened with the support of those in my congregation. God provides strength through our relationships with other believers.

King David wrote in Psalm 13:2a, ***How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?***

I also wondered how long my heart would ache; I wanted the joy to be restored as it once was. God's Word in Psalm 147:3 began the healing process. ***He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds.*** Read the entire chapter and be comforted and strengthened in spirit with the promises of God.

As I journeyed a little further, I realized I was being supplied with the necessities of life — being sustained. My career provided financial care for me, and my coworkers gave me support I needed during my grief. When I decided to retire and begin the next phase of my life, I wondered when the time was right to say, "I'm outa here!" and bid my friends and my career a fond farewell. Please don't take this in a negative way! My co-workers were like family, and I loved my work. God had a plan of how to use my work experience and guided me down another exciting path. He had given me the support and training needed to step out with courage and with a happy heart into the next chapter of my life.

God's sustaining love continued to shower me with blessings. He opened the doors to serve Him in the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) and provided me with the opportunity to travel to various parts of the country to worship and to become acquainted with another circle of friends. In earlier years, my husband and I enjoyed traveling around the United States and as I began to do more traveling, my heart ached as I wished he could be with me. Then I thought about his life with Jesus, and I couldn't even begin to compare that with what I would experience on my adventures to Germany and the Holy Land: ***For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us*** (Romans 8:18).

Through the past 27 years I have realized that while grief is a part of life, it does not last forever. God restored my aching heart and has strengthened my spirit so I can endure each day He

gives me. Yes, I may go my own way at times, leaning on my own strength, but then He pursues me and holds me close to Him.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God: I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10). God will hold you close to Him and slowly heal your heart, filling it with joy as He did mine. Turn to the One who can comfort you; He will sustain you!

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I give You thanks and praise for guiding me throughout my days, granting me comfort and sustaining me in my grief. When I wander and feel alone, please bring me back to You and hold me close. Forgive me and assure me of Your constant presence. Grant me faith to cling to You and to see all the blessings you have given me. All praise and glory be to Your holy name. Amen.

