

September 2025

# BROADCASTER

*A magazine of Worship Anew*



*Joseph's story of*  
**FORGIVENESS**

# Reconciled & Redeemed



## *Living the Gospel of Forgiveness*

Ted's ministry helped many Lutherans live out the Gospel through confession, forgiveness, and restoration. Just as Joseph forgave his brothers, and as Christ forgives us, we are called to extend that same grace — before it's too late. This grace is clearly shown in Genesis 50:20 (ESV), when Joseph tells his brothers, who betrayed him: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." His words reveal a heart transformed by faith in God's plan. He doesn't deny the hurt or injustice but acknowledges it while also recognizing a higher plan: God's work is evident even through betrayal. At that moment, Joseph chose forgiveness, responding to suffering with faith instead of bitterness — trusting in God's mercy to heal the deepest wounds.

Forgiveness is one of the most difficult — and most important — actions we are called to as Christians. It asks us to release those who have wounded us, to trust that God can redeem what was broken, and to believe that His grace is greater than our pain. In a world that often encourages holding grudges and seeking justice on our own terms, the Gospel offers a different path: one of

mercy, reconciliation, and hope. A modern echo of Joseph's forgiveness can be seen in the story of Anita Smith. In 2013, her husband Ronnie was tragically killed while serving as a teacher in Libya. Just days after his death, Anita publicly forgave his killers, saying, "Jesus calls me to forgive you, and even Ronnie would have wanted that." Her words, spoken in a culture where retribution is expected, reflected a radical trust in God's grace. Years later, she acknowledged that forgiveness is not a one-time act but a journey of grief, obedience, and faith. Her story reminds us that forgiveness is trusting that God understands and redeems even our deepest wounds.

Forgiveness is never easy. It's choosing to release the debt. It's trusting that God can redeem what was broken, and it's believing that we, too, are welcomed by a God who forgives.

Joseph's story reminds us that forgiveness is God's work. He had every reason to hold a grudge. His brothers betrayed him, sold him into slavery, and left him for dead. Yet when they stood before him years later, vulnerable and afraid, Joseph didn't seek revenge.

**Matthew F. Leighty**  
Executive Director

**I**n a conversation several years ago with Ted Kober, former president and now senior ambassador emeritus of Ambassadors of Reconciliation, he shared something that has stuck with me. Based on research at that time, one of the biggest regrets people express near the end of life isn't unfinished goals — it's unreconciled relationships.

**Worship  
Anew**

September 2025 | Vol 3 Issue 9

Worship Anew  
5 Martin Luther Drive  
Fort Wayne, IN 46825  
(888) 286-8002

### EDITORIAL STAFF

MATTHEW LEIGHTY  
Executive Director

ASHLEY WIEHE  
Director of Communications

THOMAS MOLL  
Director of Content & Innovation

SHEILA BANKS  
Communications Specialist

KATELIN MOQUIN  
Copy Editor

PEYTON SWEET  
Content Specialist

*Worship Anew engages and equips aging adults with resources to live a full and abundant life in Jesus Christ.*





He offered grace. He saw God's hand in the pain, and chose mercy over bitterness.

Joseph's forgiveness points us to Jesus. Betrayed by one of His own, abandoned by His friends, and crucified by those He came to save, Jesus responded not with wrath but with love. "Father, forgive them," He said. And in that moment, the greatest act of forgiveness the world has ever known was poured out.

As we age, we carry many memories — some joyful and some painful. We remember words spoken in anger, relationships strained, and regrets that linger. But the Gospel invites us to release those burdens. Forgiveness enables us to see how God can use even the most difficult chapters for good.

Charlotte Elliott understood this. In her quiet suffering, she wrote "Just as I Am, Without One Plea" not as a hymn for the strong, but as a lifeline for the weary. She came to Christ with nothing but need — and found everything in His grace. Her words have comforted countless people, reminding us that we are accepted, loved, and forgiven.

As we focus this month on the theme of forgiveness, Joseph's story shows us how grace can transform betrayal into healing, Anita Smith's witness reveals how Jesus' calling gives us the strength to forgive, and Charlotte Elliott's hymn gives voice to the soul's longing for our Savior. Together, they reflect the heart of the Gospel — that God meets us in our brokenness and welcomes us just as we are. This message is at the core of the vital ministry of Worship Anew, which continues to proclaim Christ's love to those who need it most — especially the homebound, the hurting, and the hopeful. May we, too, be messengers of that grace, living out the Gospel through forgiveness, compassion, and hope.

*Gracious Lord, Thank You for meeting us just as we are — wounded, weary, and in need of grace. Thank You for the forgiveness You have poured out through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to forgive as we have been forgiven, to release what weighs us down, and to trust that even in our pain, You are working for good. May Your Holy Spirit guide us to be people of peace, reconciliation, and hope. And may the message of Your mercy continue to comfort and strengthen us in every season of life. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

### "Just as I Am, Without One Plea"

Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood  
can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about  
With many a conflict, many a doubt,  
Fightings and fears within, without,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;  
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am; Thy love unknown  
Has broken ev'ry barrier down;  
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

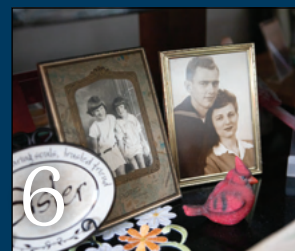
**As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.**

Genesis 50:20 ESV

## In This Issue

- 5 New Partnership**  
Worship Anew is blessed to be partnering with KFUO Radio to share our program.
- 6 Years of Memories**  
Centenarian shares about her life and her big birthday this month.
- 9 Program Summaries**  
See what is on Worship Anew for September.

- 12 Forgiveness**  
Learning from Joseph about how to forgive and to live with hurt.
- 18 QPR**  
Learning the Q-P-R of suicide prevention.
- 22 Bible Facts**  
Do you know your Bible facts? Try our game and find out!





# Airing Worship Anew through your local PEG Access station

*By Paul C.E. Melin*

**W**hat is PEG Media and how can a local church use this free airtime to broadcast/cablecast Worship Anew in your local community? Is there a cost?

PEG is an acronym for Public/Educational/Government Access. In Fort Wayne, Ind., AccessFW is managed through the Allen County Public Library system. PEG Stations are grouped together by regions through the Alliance for Community Media.

If you look at the history of PEG Access TV stations and where they originally received their funding, it was based on the size of the community and the cable provider for that city.

Cable franchises reported to their local city council on annual profit sharing. If the cable franchise reached above and beyond that projected profit, the remainder of the profit would go back to the city to maintain a free, PEG Access channel.

Typically, the government access channel would broadcast the city/county meetings. Educational Access stations would create student programming by teachers, students, and coaches based on educational objectives or “Game of the Week” for sporting events. Public Access is for any producer who can think up an idea to broadcast back into the community.

Today, some PEG Access stations are losing franchise





fees and funding to operate and maintain staff. There may now be a small fee or “membership fee” associated with broadcasting Worship Anew on your local PEG Access channel. A local resident must also act as an ambassador for Worship Anew for their local PEG Access station to accept Worship Anew programming.

The history of Worship Anew on PEG Access started at Access Fort Wayne in 1985. At that time, Worship for Shut-Ins (Worship Anew’s former name) was on PEG Access stations, including Lacy, Wash.; Port Washington, Wis.; Beloit, Wis.; and some other Midwest communities. St. Lorenz Lutheran Church would air their live, worship services and use Worship Anew in between their two live worship services. St. John Lutheran Church-Beloit, Wis., would air Worship for Shut-Ins on their local, college access channel. Port Washington, Wis., would air Worship for Shut-Ins on their local government channel. Today, Worship Anew can be found in many of those communities, including Fort Wayne; Frankenmuth, Mich.; Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.; Steven’s Point, Wis.; Sheboygan, Wis.; Gaylord, Minn.; Fergus Falls, Minn.; Erie, Pa.; and Dayton, Ohio.

Will you help broadcast Worship Anew on your local community’s PEG Access channel?

To find a PEG Access Station, viewers may use the ACM directory found at the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) at [www.allcommunitymedia.org/ACM](http://www.allcommunitymedia.org/ACM) or contact Worship Anew at (888) 286-8002 or [info@worshipanew.org](mailto:info@worshipanew.org) to learn more.

Please work with us to share Christ’s love in your community!

*Paul Melin is the retired Director of Video Production & Accessibility at Worship Anew.*



# LISTEN TO WORSHIP ANEW ON KFUO RADIO

## STARTING SEPTEMBER 7

We are blessed to be able to partner with KFUO Radio to air Worship Anew every Sunday at 7:30 AM and 1:00 PM Central, beginning September 7. KFUO is the broadcast voice of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

KFUO is available through radio broadcasting from St. Louis, Mo., on AM 850, 92.7 FM (St. Charles), 104.5 FM (St. Louis), and 105.3 FM (St. Louis). You can also listen live or on demand at [kfuo.org](http://kfuo.org), through the KFUO Radio app, or by asking your smart speaker to “Play K F U O Radio.”



Ruth Connor turns 105 this month. She lived in her own home until she was 100 and has since lived with her daughter.

# 100 years of memories

*By Ashley Wiehe  
Director of Communications*

**A**s she sat in the chair of the home of her daughter and son-in-law in Akron, Ohio, the memories began to flow — her husband serving in World War II, sitting in the church pew as a child with her sister, and trying (unsuccessfully) to learn how to drive a car.

There were decades of memories that were coming to the surface just like they had happened yesterday.

At 104, Ruth Connor's health is good. She spends her days at home, and she has been blessed with a long and healthy life.

"I'm very blessed," she said. "I realize that I've got a

wonderful, wonderful family and reasonably good health."

The blessings in Connor's life continue this month as she celebrates her 105th birthday on Sept. 20 — a feat that not many around the world can share.

"I really don't very often think about how old I am," she said. "I don't dwell on it because there's nothing you can do if you're fortunate to be able (to make it to this age). You are just thankful for it every day."

Connor grew up in a small town in Wisconsin where her father was a pastor. He actually came from a long line of pastors who started in Germany and then immigrated to



the United States.

Her father taught at two parishes. He would use a horse and buggy to travel between the two, which became more complicated in the winter months. Her mother played the pump organ, and Connor was responsible for watching her younger sister, Joyce, during the service.

“We sat together close to the pulpit,” Connor explained, adding that her father gave the sermon in traditional German. “She was a firecracker — up and down in the pews. And then I thought, ‘I can’t handle this anymore,’ but I didn’t have to because all of the sudden Daddy is teaching German. He stops. He says in English to me, ‘Ruthie, take Joyce out.’”

Connor laughed as she continued her story because her sister got what she wanted — not to have to sit still in church.

“She was delighted,” she said.

She smiled as she thought of her sister. She has since passed, but the memories were fresh in her mind.

She continued to share about friends and her husband, Roger — a true love story, according to her daughter, Alison.

They had grown up together from grade school on. Like many, when the War started, they wanted their love to last forever. Her soon-to-be husband was serving in the Navy so she went out to California where he was stationed, and they were married.

She taught high school English in her early years (before children), and both she and her husband were active in their church. Their love for God was evident throughout their lives.

“We both taught Sunday school. I taught confirmation classes. This is part of our lives. This is where we were, children and all,” she

said, sharing her “Genuine Antique Lutheran: Been There, Done That, Still Prayin’” sweatshirt.

Over the years, she was blessed to have four children with her husband during their 50 years of marriage. Those children have now given her six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Her family still fondly remembers all of the baked goods that she would make them. The smells of chocolate chip cookies and sweet rolls filled the home as they shared the memories of receiving these treats before church and on special occasions.

“All our friends remember her chocolate chips cookies now,” Alison said.

Connor’s life is simpler now. She enjoys the company with her family and watching Worship Anew on her television each Sunday. For now, she is enjoying her time — knowing that this may not last much longer. But, she holds close the message from one of her dad’s favorite songs, “Till We Meet Again.”



Ruth Connor shows off her “Genuine Antique Lutheran: Been There, Done That, Still Prayin’” sweatshirt.



# Holy Cross Day

## *A Celebration of the Cross*

*By Thomas Moll*  
*Director of Content & Innovation*

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24 ESV)*

On Sept. 14, we celebrate Holy Cross Day with Christians around the world. Many Christian feast days celebrate a person or event. It may seem odd to celebrate an instrument of death. And, indeed, the cross wasn't used as a Christian symbol for many years after Jesus ascended because of its gruesome use.

Celebrating the cross means celebrating that our God doesn't offer what the world has to offer. Instead of making us work for our own salvation and to earn our own glory, He did what we could not do. Amid our struggles with managing sin and trying to glorify ourselves, Jesus bore our sins for us on the cross so that we might die to sin.

As the cross was meant to wound and kill, we needed Jesus to suffer and die for us. As much as we want to turn away from our own suffering and pain, the cross is a reminder that God can make meaning out of suffering. Instead of our pain turning us away from God, He can use our struggles to strengthen our faith through patient endurance and trust in Him.

In the Lutheran Church, as well as in many Christian churches, the liturgical color for Holy Cross Day is red. It reminds us of the blood of Jesus Christ that has washed us clean of our sins but also of Christian martyrs who have died in the faith. This martyrdom is another reminder that God can use our suffering as witness to others, connecting our suffering to His.

Through baptism we have been connected to Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross. We can say that we have died with Him and that He has made us alive through the power of Holy Spirit. May we live every day with the confidence that we can bear our crosses and point to our God who loves us so much that He would suffer all for us.





# Worship Anew in September

Year 2025 | Series C



## Being Totally Committed

September 7, 2025 – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Scott Zeckzer

Being a disciple of Jesus is more than just contributing; it is being totally committed to Jesus. How far are you willing to be committed to Jesus? How far is Jesus committed to you?

*Sermon Text: Luke 14:26*

*Readings: Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Luke 14:25-35*

*Featured Choirs: St. Paul Lutheran School, Munster, Ind.;*

*Lincoln Lutheran High School, Lincoln, Neb.; Holy Cross Men's Chorus, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

*Featured Art and Architecture: Rivercliff Lutheran Church, Sandy Springs, Ga.*



## Zealous for Your Salvation

September 14, 2025 – Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

That you have been brought to faith in Jesus and have forgiveness and everlasting life is not by coincidence. No, this is because God is zealous for your salvation. God wanting you to be saved is seen in the history of Israel, in the earthly life of Christ, and in your own life. All this shows that you are precious to the Lord.

*Sermon Text: Ezekiel 34:11-16*

*Readings: Psalm 119:169-176; Ezekiel 34:11-16; Luke 15:1-10*

*Featured Choirs: St. Paul Lutheran School, Concordia, Mo.;*

*Concordia Lutheran High School, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

*Featured Art and Architecture: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gainesville, Ga.*



## The Buck Stops Here

September 21, 2025 – Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

Material riches are a wonderful thing ... rightly understood and ordered. Jesus teaches us to love the right things in the right order. Understanding this, we can faithfully say, "The Buck Stops Here!"

*Sermon Text: Luke 16:10-13*

*Readings: Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13*

*Featured Choirs: St. Paul Lutheran School, Munster, Ind.; Holy Cross Junior Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

*Featured Art and Architecture: All Saints Lutheran Church, Blairsville, Ga.*



## Heaven and Hell

September 28, 2025 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Shayne Jonker

So, who would you rather be? The rich man or Lazarus? We are all Lazarus: helpless and hopeless in our poverty, sick unto death, and longing to even eat the crumbs that fall from God's table. Lazarus is each of us, and unless we see ourselves in him, we cannot be saved. In fact, we won't want to be saved.

*Sermon Text: Luke 16:31*

*Readings: Psalm 146; Amos 6:1-7; Luke 16:19-31*

*Featured Choirs: St. Paul Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Holy Cross Men's Chorus, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

*Featured Art and Architecture: St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Dahlgonega, Ga.*

# LOOK IN LOVE

## *Tips for your ocular health*

*By Katelin Moquin  
Copy Editor*

*Oh, be careful little eyes what you see  
Oh, be careful little eyes what you see  
For the Father up above is looking down in love  
Oh, be careful little eyes what you see.*

That nostalgic Sunday school rhyme stings, doesn't it? There is big law in that little verse. God is watching. When eyes go astray, He knows.

But with the Father, there is forgiveness. It is important to see the brief flash of gospel: "The Father up above is looking down in love." In love. Sinful humans do not always look in love, but the good Father does. He always looks in love because of the forgiving, death-defying work of His Son, Jesus Christ. God the Father looks at His people in love.

This article is not about the omniscience of God (though that would be a great article!). Rather, the Sunday school rhyme is a reminder that sight matters. This article highlights the God-given gift of eyesight. When eyesight works the way God intended, it colors the world and connects people. Taking good care of one's eyes is faithful stewardship of God's craftsmanship.

According to the American Optometric Association's website, age-related vision changes begin around age 40 and include: "The need for more light," "Difficulty reading and doing close work," "Problems with glare," "Changes in color perception," and "Reduced tear production."

Dr. Hannah Vollmer is an optometrist with experience working at various healthcare facilities for older adults. Fun fact: She is also an organist, choir director, and custodian at her LCMS church in Ohio.

She lists the primary ocular diseases of older age:

**Cataracts:** clouding of the natural lens of the eye.

**Glaucoma:** a condition that causes damage to the optic nerve and can cause progressive, peripheral vision loss.

**Macular degeneration (AMD):** a condition that causes central vision loss through damage to the macula.



The inevitability of age-related vision changes and the increased likelihood of ocular diseases may feel daunting to older adults.

“There are, what medical professionals refer to as, ‘modifiable risk factors.’ In other words, there are things that individuals can do to reduce their risk for ocular complications, despite their genetic or demographic profiles,” Dr. Vollmer said.

Dr. Vollmer offers the following advice for better ocular health as years advance:

**Wear sunglasses:** Ultraviolet radiation creates oxidative stress which, over time, can worsen cataracts and macular degeneration (AMD).

**Eat a healthy diet:** Diabetes and hypertension are two systemic diseases that can cause irreversible retinal damage. A healthy diet, specifically one including lots of leafy greens, fish, healthy fats, and few dairy or red meat products, like the Mediterranean diet, may be beneficial for managing blood sugar and blood pressure, and has been shown in several studies to both reduce the risk of AMD and prevent progression in those already diagnosed.

**Don’t smoke:** Smoking is the number one modifiable risk factor for AMD. Smoking has been shown to increase the risk of developing AMD by 4 times, cause AMD to show up 5 to 10 years earlier, accelerate the progression of AMD, and limit the effectiveness of AMD treatments. The effects of smoking aren’t limited to the macula, though. Smoking also causes cataracts to form earlier and raises the risk of glaucoma by increasing intraocular pressure.

**Exercise regularly:** Several recent studies have pointed to exercise as a modifiable risk factor for both glaucoma and AMD — lowering intraocular pressure in glaucomatous patients and potentially

Dr. Hannah Vollmer is an optometrist in Ohio with experience working at various healthcare facilities for older adults.



preventing excessive blood vessel growth in those with AMD. Try getting 150 minutes of exercise a week. If that seems like a lot, don’t be afraid to start small. Any exercise helps.

**Visit an eye doctor:** Don’t wait to notice a vision problem. Many ocular conditions are insidious — they come on slowly. Patients cannot perceive increased ocular pressure in glaucoma or early

pigment changes in AMD. Visit an eye doctor at least once a year for a comprehensive eye exam.

For older adults who may face multiple health challenges, eye health can feel low on the list of importance. But oh, be careful. Those little eyes are a big gift from God.

Consider eyesight just as the Father would — in love.



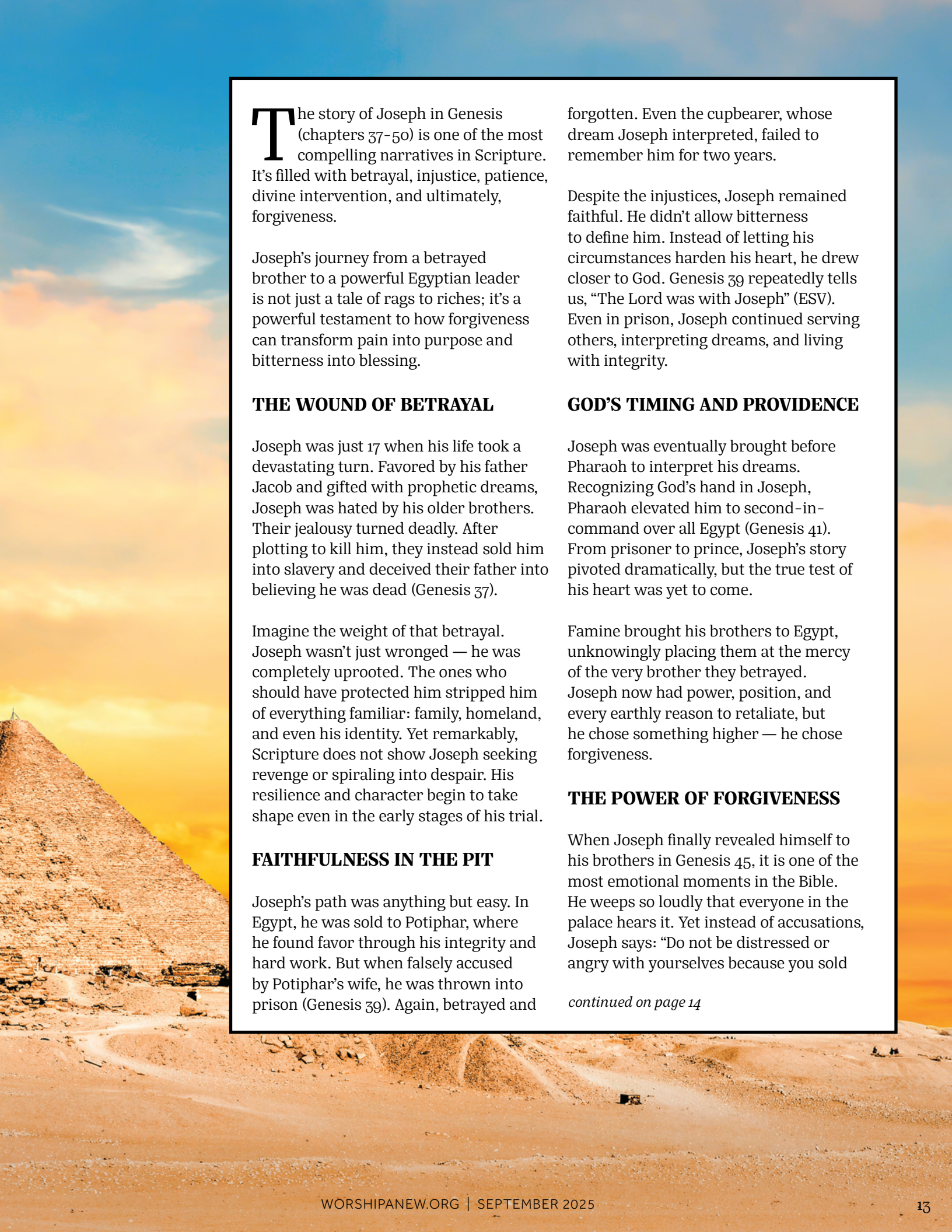
# **FORGIVENESS IN THE LIFE OF JOSEPH**

*A Story of Grace, Growth,  
and God's Sovereignty*

*By Donna Snow*







**T**he story of Joseph in Genesis (chapters 37–50) is one of the most compelling narratives in Scripture. It's filled with betrayal, injustice, patience, divine intervention, and ultimately, forgiveness.

Joseph's journey from a betrayed brother to a powerful Egyptian leader is not just a tale of rags to riches; it's a powerful testament to how forgiveness can transform pain into purpose and bitterness into blessing.

### **THE WOUND OF BETRAYAL**

Joseph was just 17 when his life took a devastating turn. Favored by his father Jacob and gifted with prophetic dreams, Joseph was hated by his older brothers. Their jealousy turned deadly. After plotting to kill him, they instead sold him into slavery and deceived their father into believing he was dead (Genesis 37).

Imagine the weight of that betrayal. Joseph wasn't just wronged — he was completely uprooted. The ones who should have protected him stripped him of everything familiar: family, homeland, and even his identity. Yet remarkably, Scripture does not show Joseph seeking revenge or spiraling into despair. His resilience and character begin to take shape even in the early stages of his trial.

### **FAITHFULNESS IN THE PIT**

Joseph's path was anything but easy. In Egypt, he was sold to Potiphar, where he found favor through his integrity and hard work. But when falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, he was thrown into prison (Genesis 39). Again, betrayed and

forgotten. Even the cupbearer, whose dream Joseph interpreted, failed to remember him for two years.

Despite the injustices, Joseph remained faithful. He didn't allow bitterness to define him. Instead of letting his circumstances harden his heart, he drew closer to God. Genesis 39 repeatedly tells us, "The Lord was with Joseph" (ESV). Even in prison, Joseph continued serving others, interpreting dreams, and living with integrity.

### **GOD'S TIMING AND PROVIDENCE**

Joseph was eventually brought before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams. Recognizing God's hand in Joseph, Pharaoh elevated him to second-in-command over all Egypt (Genesis 41). From prisoner to prince, Joseph's story pivoted dramatically, but the true test of his heart was yet to come.

Famine brought his brothers to Egypt, unknowingly placing them at the mercy of the very brother they betrayed. Joseph now had power, position, and every earthly reason to retaliate, but he chose something higher — he chose forgiveness.

### **THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS**

When Joseph finally revealed himself to his brothers in Genesis 45, it is one of the most emotional moments in the Bible. He weeps so loudly that everyone in the palace hears it. Yet instead of accusations, Joseph says: "Do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold

*continued on page 14*



*continued from page 13*

me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life” (Genesis 45:5 ESV).

This is not denial or dismissal of their sin. Joseph acknowledges their betrayal. But he places it within the bigger frame of God’s sovereignty. Joseph had every reason to seek revenge, but he saw God’s hand even in the suffering. That’s what forgiveness does — it shifts our gaze from the offense to the One who can redeem it.

## HEALING THROUGH GRACE

Joseph’s forgiveness not only spared his brothers but reunited a fractured family. He cared for them, provided for them, and even assured them after their father Jacob’s death, saying: “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good ...” (Genesis 50:20 ESV).

This verse is the cornerstone of Joseph’s theology of forgiveness. He doesn’t ignore the wrong. He names it — “you meant evil.” But then he lifts it higher — “God meant it for good.” Joseph didn’t need to pretend the hurt didn’t matter. He simply believed that God’s grace was bigger than human sin.

## LESSONS FOR TODAY

Joseph’s story is timeless because all of us have experienced wounds inflicted by others. Some betrayals may cut deep — by family, friends, and even people in the church. And yet, like Joseph, we are called to forgive.

### 1. Forgiveness is not forgetting — it’s trusting.

Joseph didn’t forget what his brothers did. But he trusted God more than he clung to his pain. Forgiveness is not amnesia; it’s letting go of bitterness and letting God bring justice in His way and timing.

### 2. Forgiveness often happens before reconciliation.

Joseph had likely already worked through forgiveness long before his brothers stood before him. Reconciliation requires both parties, but forgiveness starts with one heart. God enables us to extend forgiveness to someone even if they never apologize.

### 3. God can use what was meant for evil.

This is one of the greatest promises of Scripture. Your story doesn’t end at betrayal. Like Joseph, the very thing



the enemy meant to destroy you can become the stage for God's glory.

#### 4. Forgiveness frees the future.

If Joseph had stayed bitter, he may never have walked into the story that God had already written for his life. Unforgiveness chains us to the past. Forgiveness clears the path for future joy, purpose, and relationships.

#### 5. You're never alone in the process.

Just as "the Lord was with Joseph," God is with you in every painful moment. He sees the injustice. He collects every tear. He will redeem what was lost though it may look different.

### CHOOSING THE BETTER STORY

Joseph chose a better story than revenge. He trusted God and left the justice to Him. And we can too.

We live in a culture that applauds holding grudges, airing grievances, and canceling those who hurt us. But God calls us to something radical: forgive as we have been forgiven (Ephesians 4:32 ESV). Jesus Himself, on the cross, said, "Father, forgive them ..." (Luke 23:34 ESV). If Christ can forgive from the cross, we can forgive from our pain.

Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending the hurt wasn't real. It means trusting that God's healing is more powerful than the hurt. Like Joseph, we can forgive, not because it's easy, but because we believe God is good.

### CONCLUSION: LIVING JOSEPH'S LEGACY

Joseph's story is not just about a dreamer — it's about a forgiver. His legacy isn't his rise to power but his willingness to release pain and bless those who hurt him. That's the real miracle.

When we extend forgiveness, we echo the heart of God. We become instruments of healing in a broken world, and we testify that grace is greater than grief.

So, who do you need to forgive?

Maybe it's a sibling, a parent, a former friend, or even your child. Maybe it's a wound decades old, or one that's fresh and raw. Whatever it is, remember: The same God who was with Joseph is with you. He can bring beauty from betrayal. He can lift you from the pit. He can enable you to forgive.

When you do, like Joseph, you may just discover that what was meant for evil ... God meant for good.

*Donna Snow's passion is writing and teaching Bible studies. Donna has published eight Bible studies through Concordia Publishing House, and five video-based Bible studies through LWML. Her new Bible study on the Book of Joshua was released in April 2025. After serving 30 years in corporate America's legal field, Donna accepted early retirement in June 2021. She now devotes full-time to her writing, teaching, and speaking ministry through Artesian Ministries, a nonprofit ministry dedicated to Bible study. Donna is a member of Salem Lutheran Church in Tomball, Texas, a Bible study teacher, and an active LWML member.*

***Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending the hurt wasn't real. It means trusting that God's healing is more powerful than the hurt.***







# How long should I keep financial records?

By Jim Miller  
Savvy Living

**A**s we get older and our financial lives become more complicated, it can be challenging to know how long to keep financial records and paperwork and when it is safe to dispose of them. Some documents will need to be kept for your lifetime while others can be discarded after just one month. Here is a checklist that can help you determine what to save and what you can throw away.

## KEEP ONE MONTH

- ATM receipts and bank deposit slips can be thrown out as soon as you match them up with your monthly bank statement.
- Sales receipts can be tossed after you get your bank or credit card statement. However, keep these longer if you plan to return the item or need proof of purchase for a warranty.
- Credit card statements can be discarded once you review your statement unless there are tax-related expenses on them.
- Utility bills should be saved until the following month's bill arrives showing that your prior payment was received. If you track utility usage over time, keep your bills for one to two years. If you claim a home office deduction, keep these bills for three years.
- To avoid identity theft, be sure to shred anything you throw away that contains your personal or financial information.

## KEEP ONE YEAR

- Paycheck stubs until you receive your Form W-2 in January to check its accuracy.
- Bank statements (savings and checking account) to confirm your Form 1099s.
- Brokerage, 401(k), IRA and other investment statements until you get your annual summary (keep longer for tax purposes if they show a gain or loss).
- Receipts for health care bills in case you qualify for a medical deduction.

## KEEP THREE TO SEVEN YEARS

- Keep supporting documents for your taxes, including W-2s, 1099s, and receipts or canceled checks that substantiate deductions. The IRS has a period of three years to conduct an audit after you file a tax return. However, that period may be extended to six years if the IRS suspects you substantially underreported income. Keep documentation for seven years if you claim a loss from worthless securities or a bad debt deduction. If a tax return was not filed or a fraudulent return was submitted, the IRS has an indefinite period to pursue collection.

## KEEP INDEFINITELY

- Tax returns with proof of filing and payment. You do not have to keep them forever, but many people



do since they provide a record of their financial history.

- IRS forms that you filed when making nondeductible contributions to a traditional IRA or a Roth conversion.
- Retirement and brokerage account annual statements.
- Defined-benefit pension plan documents.
- Savings bonds until redeemed.
- Loan documents until the loan is paid off.
- Vehicle titles and registration information if you still own the car, boat, truck or other vehicle.
- Insurance policies.
- Warranties or receipts for big-ticket purchases to support any warranty and insurance claims.
- In addition to the above list, personal and family records like birth certificates, marriage license, divorce papers, Social Security cards, military discharge papers, and estate planning documents, including powers of attorney, wills, trusts, and advanced directives. Store these important documents in a fireproof safe or in a safe deposit box.

## DIGITIZE YOUR DOCUMENTS

To reduce your paper clutter, consider digitizing your documents by scanning them and converting them into PDF files so you can store them on your computer and back them up on a cloud storage service. You can also reduce your future paper load by switching to electronic statements and records whenever possible.

*Savvy Living is written by Jim Miller, a regular contributor to the NBC Today Show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book. Any links in this article are offered as a service and there is no endorsement of any product. These articles are offered as a helpful and informative service to our friends and may not always reflect this organization's official position on some topics. Jim invites you to send your senior questions to: Savvy Living, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.*

## Why are some books considered from minor prophets while others are from major prophets?

The words "major" and "minor" are not a description of the prophets but the size of their books. The major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel) are much larger than books such as Amos, which we'll be reading from in our Sept. 28 program.

## How are the stained glass and featured churches selected?

We have the pleasure and honor of visiting churches around the country to hear their stories and to take pictures and drone footage of their liturgical art and architecture. This was a passion of our previous program director, Paul Melin, and continues to be something we feature on each of our programs. If we have a guest preacher, we'll sometimes feature art from their church or community. If you're interested in having your church featured on our program, or if you have digital photos or video of your church, please reach out to us at [info@worshipanew.org](mailto:info@worshipanew.org) or (888) 286-8002.

## When did the cross become a symbol of the church?

The cross was not immediately used as a Christian symbol in churches. Crosses started appearing as a Christian symbol as early as the second century. A crucifix, depicting Jesus on the cross, was pretty rare before the fifth century. Could you imagine using any other tool of execution as a symbol of triumph and glory? Though it's hard to imagine how early Christians who had witnessed executions on a cross would ever want to use it as a symbol of their faith, we have passages such as Galatians 6:14 (ESV) where Paul says, "Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The cross is a constant reminder that Jesus did what we could not do to win our salvation and defeat death.

## A note from the Editor ...

In our letters to the editor section, we would like to answer any and all questions that you have about scripture, aging well, and our ministry. Please send your questions to [editor@worshipanew.org](mailto:editor@worshipanew.org). Please know that we will try to answer as many questions as we can. Thank you and enjoy!

# The 'Question, Persuade, Refer' of suicide prevention

*By Alicia Levitt*

**I**n the last 20 years, the rates of death by suicide in the United States have risen more than 30 percent. That shocking and steady statistical rise led the State of Indiana to enact a law several years ago requiring that all teachers receive training in evidence-based suicide prevention.

As the director for academic excellence at The Lutheran Schools Partnership in Fort Wayne, Ind., I initially became a suicide prevention trainer in order to help teachers in the northeast Indiana Lutheran schools meet that requirement. However, I now see that sharing this information with others as a part of my ministry can impact anyone, anywhere, of any age.

Suicide is one of the most preventable kinds of death. We can all provide care and hope to others who may be struggling.

I am trained to teach QPR, which stands for Question, Persuade, Refer. During QPR training, we first learn about some of the clues we may notice that tell us someone

is considering suicide.

We might notice behavioral signs, such as changes in mood, actions, or demeanor. We may notice situational clues, such as loss of a loved one, an unwanted move, a difficult medical diagnosis, or a loss of financial security. Someone who is thinking of suicide may also share direct or indirect verbal clues, such as "I just can't go on any longer," or "It would be easier if I weren't here anymore." When we see multiple of these things happening at the same time, it can be especially concerning. How can we respond?

QPR is an evidence-based training, meaning that studies have shown that the tools taught in the class are effective at helping to prevent suicide. The name intentionally sounds like CPR, because in both trainings anyone can learn to provide life-saving measures until professional help can be found.

When we are concerned that someone is thinking of suicide, we should ask them directly about it. Asking the question





is the “Q” in QPR. It can seem very difficult to ask someone, “Are you thinking of ending your life?” But it often opens a door for someone to share their struggle, and for us to let them know that there is hope. Just knowing that someone cares enough to ask can have a tremendous impact.

Many of those who have survived a suicide attempt report that they realized they did not really want to die, they only wanted the pain they were enduring to end, but they did not see another way to make that happen.

The second step of QPR is “P” for persuade. We want to persuade someone to see that there is hope if they get help. Help then comes through the “R,” which stands for refer. We want to go with someone, if possible, to get professional help. Offer to sit with them while they make a call or help connect them to someone they trust to walk alongside them. One of the best resources we have now is calling 988, the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Like calling 911 in a medical emergency, anyone can call 988 for mental health support and for resources.

Loneliness, isolation, and suffering do not discriminate. Suicide deaths occur among all ages of people and all demographics. In fact, the highest rates of suicide currently are among those aged 85 and older, a group who are typically well-acquainted with loneliness and loss.

We are commanded multiple times in Scripture to help

those in need. In Galatians 6:2 (NIV), we read, “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Matthew 25:40 (NIV) tells us, “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me,’” and in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NIV), Paul says, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

Providing hope to those who are thinking of suicide can be one way in which we fulfill the law of Scripture to love each other as we have first been loved.

What a privilege it is to be able to share the love of Christ with all those who suffer!

*Alicia Levitt is the director of academic excellence at The Lutheran Schools Partnership in Fort Wayne, Ind., as well as serving as a QPR suicide prevention trainer.*

**September is Suicide Prevention Month. If you or anyone you know is thinking about suicide, there is help. Please call 988, the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Like calling 911 in a medical emergency, anyone can call 988 for mental health support and connection to resources. Please know that you are not alone.**



# FREED TO FORGIVE

By Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

Ephesians 4:32 ESV

**T**he Lord surely has a sense of humor. While writing this article, I found myself suddenly faced with a situation so unfair and secretive that it stretched to the limits of my ability to forgive. In His wisdom, God pulled me down from the realm of theory and into the gritty, emotional reality of real life. I had to practice what I preach.

What I share with you now comes not just from study, but from struggle — from an experience that has been both heavy and healing.

Lewis Smedes once wrote in “Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don’t Deserve” that “To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” Those words have never felt more true. The image of a prisoner being set free beautifully captures the power and potential of forgiveness — a power that touches every corner of Scripture, worship, and human experience.

## FORGIVENESS AS FREEDOM

We see this vividly in Jesus’ parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18). When Peter asks, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus replies, “Not seven times, but seventy-seven times” (vv. 21–22 NIV).

And He concludes with this warning:

“So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart” (vv. 35 ESV)

Forgiveness, in Jesus’ teaching, is not optional. It is the fruit of a heart that knows what it means to be set free.

## HYMNS OF THE FREED PRISONER

From the 18th-century hymn “Jesus Shall Reign Where’er the Sun” by Isaac Watts: “Blessings abound

where’er He reigns: the prisoners leap to lose their chains.”

From Charles Wesley’s “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing”: “He breaks the power of cancelled sin, He sets the prisoner free.”

From Chris Tomlin’s modern addition to “Amazing Grace”: “My chains are gone, I’ve been set free, my God, my Savior has ransomed me.”

And from Zach Williams’ powerful anthem “Chain Breaker”: “If you need freedom or saving, He’s a prison-shaking Savior. If you’ve got chains, He’s a chain breaker.”

These songs proclaim one truth: forgiveness isn’t just an act — it’s a miracle that unlocks the soul.

## FORGIVENESS CREATES A FUTURE

Smedes also reminds us that forgiveness doesn’t erase the past — it transforms it.



“Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future.”

This is movingly lived out in the true story of Mary Johnson-Roy and Oshea Israel. When Mary forgave the man who murdered her son, she didn't just release him — she opened a path of healing for herself, as well. In time, they became neighbors and friends, telling their story to thousands across the country. It's a living parable of redemption, showing that forgiveness can give both the offended and the offender a future and a hope. Watch their story here: <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/how-a-mother-invited-her-sons-killer-to-be-her-neighbor/>.

Every preacher on Worship Anew prays The Lord's Prayer — a powerful moment of unity in Christ. I encourage you to take time to reflect on Martin Luther's explanation of the petition: “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

Luther reminds us that this simple line holds both a deep need and a profound gift — our need for God's forgiveness, and the life-changing power to forgive others that flows from being forgiven by our Savior. In those words, we don't just ask for mercy; we are invited to become instruments of it.

We've been freed to forgive — what a gift that is! Lord, I think I'm ready. Ready to bring healing to a broken situation by stepping out in forgiveness. Please give me the courage and grace to do it — for Jesus' sake.

*The Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer is the senior pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., and a pastor on Worship Anew.*

### **Prayer:**

Gracious God, You have forgiven me fully and freely through Jesus. Now, by Your Spirit, set me free from the chains of bitterness and pain. Give me the courage to extend the same mercy to others — not because they deserve it, but because You have shown it to me. Let my life be a witness to the healing power of Your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Reflection Questions:**

When have I experienced the freedom of being forgiven by God — or by someone else? How did it change me?

Is there someone I need to forgive — not to excuse the hurt, but to begin healing my own heart?

How can I become an instrument of God's mercy in a relationship or situation that still feels broken?

## **This month's study text:**

### ***The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant***

*21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” 22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.*

*23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ 27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ 29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ 30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ 34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”*

**Matthew 18:21-35 (ESV)**



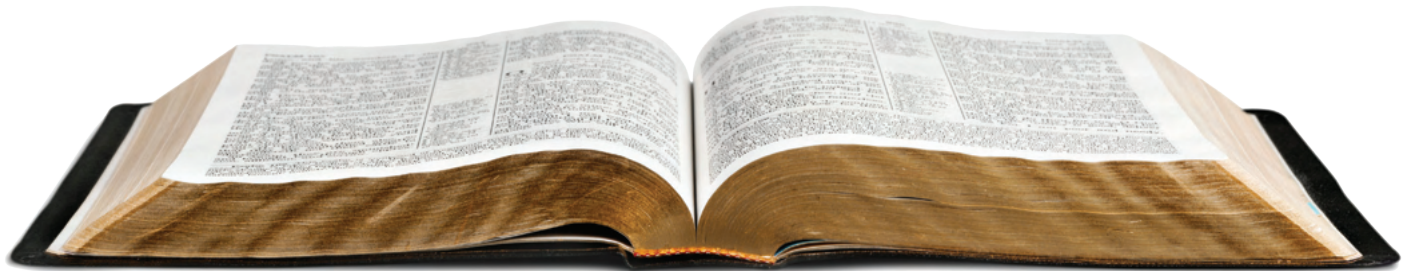
# Basic Bible Facts

Provide the answers for these Bible basics.

1. As a group, this is the name for the first five books of the Bible.
2. This man is generally considered to be the author of those first five books.
3. This man is considered to be the primary writer of the book of Psalms.
4. The Old Testament was written in this language.
5. The New Testament was written primarily in this language.
6. This book of the Bible is the longest by word count.
7. This book of the Bible is the shortest by word count.
8. We are unsure who is the author of this New Testament book.
9. This important collection of Bible documents was found in caves in Israel in 1948.
10. True or False. The chapter numbers and verse numbers were found in the original Bible manuscripts.

## ANSWERS BELOW

*Reprinted from Our Daily Bread "Bible Word Search & Activity Book" with permission.*



**Note:** In the original manuscripts, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles were together as one book. Each pair would be longer than Jeremiah or Psalms if they were kept together.

more words: both in the 42,700 range. words. In the King James Version, Psalms has about 50 whether you are counting Hebrew words or English answers. It depends on who is doing the counting — and 6. Jeremiah and Psalms would both be acceptable

1. Torah or Pentateuch
2. Moses
3. David
4. Hebrew
5. Greek
6. Jeremiah and Psalms would both be acceptable

□ SOUL	□ COMES	□ HONOR
□ FIND	□ TRULY	□ DEPEND
□ REST	□ ROCK	□ MIGHTY
□ GOD	□ SALVATION	□ REFUGE
□ HOPE	□ FORTRESS	

P	E	R	E	F	U	G	E	C	H	P
G	S	S	O	U	L	H	P	R	E	H
E	A	C	H	C	O	L	D	C	L	H
Q	L	C	C	L	K	N	T	J	T	B
Q	V	S	U	T	E	O	T	Y	E	N
Q	A	R	D	P	I	R	I	H	G	D
W	T	K	E	R	C	R	S	G	T	J
H	I	D	C	S	O	W	N	D	M	M
G	O	D	O	A	T	C	A	W	C	M
V	N	P	M	I	G	H	T	Y	M	R
Q	R	B	E	T	Z	U	E	F	I	N
D	U	S	S	L	Q	S	A	U	W	I

7. 3 John (220 words)
8. Hebrews
9. The Dead Sea Scrolls
10. False. Those were added by translators about 800 years ago.



# WORD SEARCH

*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him.  
He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.  
On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God.  
Psalm 62:5-7 ESV*

P	E	R	E	F	U	G	E	C	H	P	F
G	S	S	O	U	L	H	P	R	E	H	O
E	A	C	H	C	Y	O	D	C	L	H	R
Q	L	C	C	L	K	N	T	J	T	B	T
Q	V	S	U	T	E	O	T	Y	E	N	R
Q	A	R	D	P	I	R	I	H	G	D	E
W	T	K	E	R	C	R	S	G	T	J	S
H	I	D	C	S	O	W	N	D	M	M	S
G	O	D	O	A	T	C	A	W	C	M	O
V	N	P	M	I	G	H	T	Y	M	R	N
Q	R	B	E	T	Z	U	E	F	I	N	D
D	U	S	S	L	Q	S	A	U	W	I	F

## WORD LIST

- |                               |                                    |                                 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOUL | <input type="checkbox"/> COMES     | <input type="checkbox"/> HONOR  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FIND | <input type="checkbox"/> TRULY     | <input type="checkbox"/> DEPEND |
| <input type="checkbox"/> REST | <input type="checkbox"/> ROCK      | <input type="checkbox"/> MIGHTY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOD  | <input type="checkbox"/> SALVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> REFUGE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HOPE | <input type="checkbox"/> FORTRESS  |                                 |

ANSWERS ON OPPOSITE PAGE



Be kind to one another,  
tenderhearted,  
*forgiving one another,*  
as God in Christ forgave  
you.

Ephesians 4:32 ESV

