



# The Branches

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## Memories to Meditate On

Some memories are obviously going to be favorites, or at least the first ones listed when anyone is asked: births, weddings, family holidays. But we are not just photo albums that keep track of “big” events, we are human! God has not only given us those grand events to bring us joy as we look back on them, but He grants us the memories that are not so “big.”

A saying that my mother framed long ago has stuck with me over the years: “Simple pleasures are the best, much more fun than all the rest.” How true! The uncomplicated, unpredictable, daily joys are those that make up our lives. Even though so many people and moments are taken for granted, God provides us with these little things each day to enjoy.

“Not every day!” I hear. Right. Some days it *seems* as if the little joys are absent. Let us consider Paul’s life and his circumstances as he wrote the verse at the bottom of the page. The words don’t sound like someone writing from prison. This is because Paul was not despairing, as many of us tend to do, when things are a bit tough. He drew on memories God provided him in days past to find joy, encouragement, and reasons to thank his Lord. A man persecuted and in prison writes to his brethren who are free: “Rejoice in the Lord” (3:3).

Our favorite memories are among those things that Paul instructs the Philippians, and us, to reflect upon. “Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate of these things” (4:8). Of course we immediately try to think of the most important things Paul could be speaking of, such as the Gospel. And of course that is what he speaks of also, but he says “whatever things.” I believe we can safely say that the best of our memories—as long as they are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, praiseworthy, and have virtue—fall under this category.

—Abby Matzke, St. Peter’s, Stambaugh, MI

## Inside

- Favorite Memories**.....page 1–5
- A Look Ahead** .....page 4
- News & Notes**.....page 4, 11
- Tips & Advise** .....page 5
- Book Review**.....page 5
- Women of Faith**.....page 6
- CLC Postcard** .....page 7
- Delicious Dishes** .....page 7
- Encouragements**.....page 8
- Coping With Grief** .....page 8–9
- Favorite Hymn**.....page 10

*“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.”*

—Philippians 1:3–5

# Homemade Memories

**F**avorites - there are so many! Favorite colors, seasons, holidays, clothes. But lately it seems my thoughts have not been so much on those categories. In the past months, the Lord in His wisdom has called home both of my Grandmas. One of them just after Christmas, and the other just two weeks ago. As in all times when we learn of a loved one passing away in faith, we grieve for our loss and celebrate their victory. We praise God for the memories He has blessed us with and take comfort in them. "Favorite memories" come to the front of our minds.

Some of the memories I have of my Grandmas are from the kitchen - the homemade donuts, pudding with whipped cream, homemade buns, and pie!! Other memories are from the living room—learning to quilt and crochet, going over new patterns and yarn, playing games, and hearing the stories of days gone by. There are outside memories of picnics, flowers, ground cherries and strawberries. It is not difficult to have a flood of those memories come through our thoughts.

There seems to be a pattern, though, that once they have been laughed and cried over, those "favorite memories" become a different kind of memory. I can picture my Grandma in tears at a Thanksgiving dinner, as we each shared what we were thankful for; she gave thanks for having her family—happy and healthy—all gathered around her table. I can hear my Grandma's voice break over the phone line when we called to tell her our first baby had arrived and she realized he was named after Grandpa, who had passed away just a few weeks before our Carl was born. You begin to think of the lessons taught through the life that they lived and the love they so naturally showed for their family and Savior. The little stories that they shared over the years suddenly become a guidebook for life—in the personal realm, raising a family, loving one's neighbor, and serving the Lord. And you realize that the marvelous promises granted to us through our Savior do indeed hold the strength and power and sureness of a God that will not fail, nor let us fall from His loving arms.

These two precious women followed God's Guidebook in their lives. They studied and served, thus praising Him and teaching us in ways they will never realize. Our Lord kept His promises during their lives to uphold, preserve, provide, and love them all of their days. Through them He granted their families and friends lifetime Christian examples as well as many favorite memories to cherish. But most of all, He fulfilled His gracious promise for them in granting them each a crown of life. As my children say, "God had Grandma's spot ready." May we each hold dear our own "favorite memories" and learn from them, thanking the Lord for providing them for us through those that hold a special place in our hearts by their stories and examples of days and years gone by. May we always treasure most of all those accounts and examples of our Savior Jesus, who promises to bless us all through faith. "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children," Psalm 103:17.

—Lana Strike, St. John's, Okabena, MN, written September 4, 2004

## Priceless Smiles

**I**t always surprises me that the memories we hold on to come so unexpectedly. As I was making my young daughter Emily's bed the other day, she crawled underneath to let the sheet land on her. I flashed back to being about 5 years old, a Saturday night clean from a bath, jumping in at just the right moment and maintaining a rigidly pleasant stance in my own bed as my mom paused making the bed—just long enough so the crisp sheet floated down on me. I can still see the light on my bedroom ceiling and smell the freshness of sheets newly off the line (carefully checked to insure there were no spiders!). It was a pleasant memory indeed.

I don't remember seeing the exhaustion that must have been on mom's face from a day of cleaning, cooking, and laundry; I only remember a loving smile...and it brought that same smile to my own face as I saw my daughter, eyes clenched shut, arms tightly to her sides, grinning as she was enveloped by the soft coolness.

—Laurie Marzofka, Luther Memorial, Fond du Lac, WI

# Decades of Memories

"Memories are made of this" –  
A verse of song from earlier days  
So many memories touch our lives  
From each decade, in many ways.

The first 10 years, remember them?  
School days, friendships, places lived!  
Our parents sacrificed for us.  
They shared God's love, how He forgives.

My special joy was watching Dad  
(With prayer, Mom said, he'd find the Lord)  
Lean o'er the baptismal font of life  
Confirm his new found faith in God.

The next decade—the adventurous teens  
When hormones flow and dreams begin  
We learn to drive and then leave home  
For college, work, and hope within.

For me those years had one main theme -  
I met the man God chose for me  
To share my life, to be my rock.  
He shared his faith – I'm blessed indeed.

The 20's offer personal growth  
The chance to use what we have learned  
To build our lives and share our gifts  
A family new for which we yearned.

We married and began careers  
Financial soundness was our hope.  
Two children came, we'd planned it well!  
A brand new home with friends to cope.

For many people 30 plus  
Life fills, with children on the move,  
Family vacations, runs in the park,  
Promotions at work – 'fit in the groove.'

But two more children God had planned,  
This gave us four to tend and nourish.  
A church to build, though time consuming,  
Helped us and congregation flourish.

The 40's usually take their toll  
With purses open many ways.  
Those "busy" years the kids are in,  
Cars and new drivers, College days.

Our drives to schools near and far  
Included stops to tend to parents.  
Alas, the Lord delivered mine,  
We thank Him for their times well spent.

The fifth decade is plus and minus.  
Kids leave home, engage and marry.  
Alas, again the hormones change!  
Kids return-their own kids carry.

Once more the Lord called out to take  
My husband's parents, up in years.  
My cancer brief, our family grows,  
More grandkids come, and our God hears.

Life is said to begin at 60-  
Retirement, trips, and projects many,  
Ment'ring, grandkids, church work, too.  
You have more time-and yet not any!

As I begin this new decade,  
I look ahead with eagerness.  
New babes to come, new lands to visit,  
My husband with me is the best.

And decades that may yet unfold  
Will still be blessed by God above  
If first we seek to do His will,  
The rest will follow from His Love.

—Jacquelyn Radichel,  
Grace, Fridley, MN



## Weddings and Wallets

**M**y sister and I bought our wedding dress together. Of course it was on sale. It cost \$35.00 in 1957. We wore the same size. She got married first, so she paid \$20.00 and I paid \$15.00. It was a typical long, full, lacy dress. I used it a few years later and then my husband's sister wore it a few years after that. My mother was caring for a number of foster girls and yes, two of them wore the dress for their weddings.

The dress then went into a long period of retirement in the attic. My daughter Anne decided many years later that she too wanted to wear it. It was very dirty and dusty. I contacted a number of dry cleaners but none of them were really interested in taking on the job, so I decided to wash it myself. I soaked it in mild detergent in the bathtub, and after several repeats it started to look pretty good. Then on sunny days I hung it on the wash line for further whitening by the sun. It turned out great. Anne is quite a bit shorter than the previous brides, so we had to cut quite a bit off the bottom. Her wedding was its grand finale!

I think we got our money's worth, don't you?

This past summer, my husband and I spent a few days vacationing in the Springfield, Illinois area. From there we traveled to lower Michigan to visit our daughter, Sarah, and her family. On the way we made a fuel stop in Indiana close to the Illinois line. Not long after we reached our daughter's place, our pastor in Eau Claire called and asked my husband if he had lost his wallet that day. He said "No," but then felt his back pocket and indeed it was missing! He could hardly believe it.

Our pastor had received a phone call from a couple in Kankakee, Illinois, who apparently had found it in the gas station restroom. There was a small business-type card about our church in the wallet with our pastor's phone number on it. So they called our pastor and asked him if he could get in touch with us and let us know that the wallet was in safe hands and would be mailed to our home address. Prior to leaving on our trip, I had a conversation with our pastor's wife and mentioned where we were going on our trip, so they knew where to reach us. Amazing! My husband's wallet was found and was on its way back home again before he even knew he had lost it. God certainly played a part in having honest people find it. Upon its return we sent the couple a reward of the amount of cash that was in the wallet—we know that big problems could have resulted from credit card use and identity theft.

—Susan Lau, Messiah, Eau Claire, WI



## A Look Ahead

### News & Notes

Look forward to reactions from the CLC Women's Retreat in Trego and an article covering the events of those first three days of April! Also, don't hesitate to send in any announcements, news, and notes that might be of interest to the rest of us! This would include—but is not limited to—articles pertaining to happenings in your own church and life.

### Upcoming Themes for *The Branches*

Only one theme suggestion has been received this issue! That means our upcoming theme for July will be: "The Attitude of A Servant and Ways to Serve." We are all anxiously awaiting your articles and ideas!

If you have an idea for a single issue or for a series, send them to the editor's address as found below.

**Send to:**

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# To Laurie On Her High School Graduation

Another step today, mortar board carefully balanced,  
No other day will be quite the same as this.

Everything blurs,  
As you watch friends you may never see again,  
Wishing you could hold time,  
And yet, not really.

Your life is waiting to be lived,  
How can you know if you're ready?  
Can you be as soft and gentle as a feather,  
and yet as resilient?

Can you be as strong and independent as a rock of granite,  
and yet willing to be shaped and formed,  
to be used in the foundation of a home?

Can you determine the right time,  
for walking away, when you'd rather not,  
for staying, when you'd rather not,  
for understanding someone who disagrees with you,  
when you'd rather not?

Can you start as you are,  
in the fast, exciting waters of the high mountain stream,  
and flow with it,  
through the twists and turns,  
into the valleys, where it joins others,  
becomes a full, rich river,  
busy with the currents of living,  
until it reaches its final destination?

These things I wish for you,  
the love of a man without whom you can't imagine life,  
the love of a child such as you have given me,  
the love of your Lord,

Without Him, nothing else would matter,  
With Him, every day of your life is secure.

—Eunice Roehl, *Messiah, Eau Claire, WI; Written in 1980.*

## Book Review

### A Sweetness to the Soul

I've just begun to read an author that I've never heard of before. My daughter Laurie recommended her to me. I finished *A Sweetness to the Soul* written by Jane Kirkpatrick. It is a novel based on true characters and events from the 1800's in Oregon. It's excellent writing from a Christian perspective, but without a sermon on each page, which some authors tend toward. If you haven't yet heard of Jane Kirkpatrick, you may enjoy some of her work.

—Eunice Roehl, *Messiah, Eau Claire, WI*



## Tips & Advice

Sorry to disappoint, but no tips or advice this time! We do have a few questions that need answers though.

**How does one deal with loneliness or isolation from fellow believers?**

**What are some ways that we can apply Titus 2:3-5 and bring the older women together with the younger women?** Titus reads: "The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, teachers of good things— that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."

## Women of Faith

The article by “The Tie Lady” was intriguing because, like her, I am on the road with my work. I sell duffel and travel bags at trade shows and markets around the country. Some day we hope to have my husband retire and join me on the road, but for now I travel alone much of the time. Don’t get me wrong; I love to see the country, meet people, and get a taste of other hobbies and interests from the variety of shows that I do. The point of my writing is to share a slice of life for a Christian woman who cannot be in church every Sunday!

Frequently, when I have done a show on the weekend, on Monday evenings when I am home, we listen to a sermon from the internet. We jealously protect our Wednesday evenings for Bible class whenever possible. Our pastor is conducting services occasionally on a Tuesday morning at a retirement center nearby, so I attend those when possible. Even then, I feel rather alone there because I don’t get there regularly and know everyone. There is something so special about a church “family” and the feeling I get when “at home” in my worship setting. We should all think about that when we have visitors at church or when we do a mission outreach. It takes awhile for people to feel comfortable and ready to share.

Last year my husband and I vacationed for a few days in Tennessee. We contacted Pastor Mayhew from Atlanta about the mission effort in Tennessee and he put me in touch with a lovely CLC lady who has become a wonderful friend and inspiration for me. Donna lives alone in the woods in a beautiful home and she is in a wheelchair! She does not drive anymore. We spent some time with her and the thread of Christian fellowship did its thing. I returned alone while on my travels and we became better acquainted. I found that she relishes the time when people join her for fellowship with a church video service or a Bible class. I relish the time with someone who relates to not being in church every Sunday and not knowing all the news and people.

And she is a most positive, upbeat, cheerful person who does not complain about her situation, even having lost her husband and care-giver. She thanks God for her blessings and thoroughly enjoys life’s little pleasures like music and nature. So I work alone for a few days...she’s alone most of the time and she has the self discipline to stay with her Bible study and worship. And then she is there for people like me who wander into her life, not knowing that we can take as much from our time together as she does, like a gift. I am grateful to have found this very special retreat in the woods where I can draw strength and encouragement from “girl talk” with one of God’s daughters. She is doing His work all alone and from home. This is a very special kind of mission work.

So I may be alone on the road, but I know that I am not really alone. Our Lord goes with me, taking care of me and giving me some opportunities to witness and draw on the strength of fellowship with other Christian women that I meet along the way.

—Barb Templeton, Messiah, Hales Corners, WI

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**“The memory is perpetually looking back when we have nothing present to entertain us. It is like those repositories in animals that are filled with food, on which they may ruminate when their present pastures fail.”**

—Joseph Addison (1672-1719),  
English essayist, poet, and statesman



# CLC Postcard



*A glimpse of our family from...*

**Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, West Columbia, South Carolina**

Smiling Faces, Beautiful Places...that is exactly what you will encounter on a trip through my state. Our church is located in West Columbia, a suburb of Columbia, the capital and largest city in South Carolina. We are nestled in the center of the state, just two hours from the ocean, two hours from the mountains, and surrounded by some of our nation's most historic monuments. Southern hospitality is not just a statement, but a way of life, here at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church.

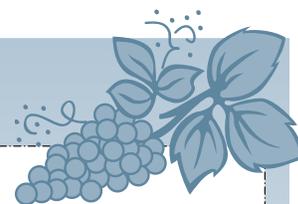
For you Northerners out there, next winter, when it's -7° F and you have three feet of snow on the ground, I encourage you all—that's *y'all* for Southerners—to pack your bags and come for a visit. Our average winter temperature is around 50° F. Of course, for those of you that can't wait, come this summer and help us celebrate forty years of God's blessings at our church, school, and daycare.

While in South Carolina you must visit downtown Columbia's historic capitol building (one of the few buildings that survived the burning of Columbia by General Sherman and his troops during the civil war). Today, six bronze stars mark the impact of shells from union cannons on the capital building. If you like that, then you must also visit the fighting Gamecocks at the USC Horseshoe on the original campus of the University of S.C., chartered in 1801. For those of you interested in more modern buildings, Williams Brice Stadium is packed with eighty thousand plus fans several Saturdays a year during football season. If you haven't seen a SEC football game for yourself, you are definitely missing out. Of course, along with thousands of other things to see and do here in South Carolina, you must sample the delicious Southern cuisine, take a dip in one of the many 80° lakes, rivers or, of course, the ocean. But most of all you must visit our beautiful church. What a blessing it is to walk into any CLC church across the nation and join with others in praising our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Please come join us!

—Bekki Ridgell, Holy Trinity, West Columbia, SC

**Please send in a "postcard" description of your own congregation—we'd love to hear from you!**

## Delicious Dishes



### Pecan Crunchies

Graham crackers      1/4 lb. butter  
1/4 c. honey            3/4 c. butterscotch chips  
1 c. chopped pecans

Lightly oil a 9 × 13" pan and line it with graham crackers. Melt butter; add honey and chips and melt on very low heat or in a double boiler. Add pecans; spread mixture over the crackers. Bake at 325° for 10 minutes. Cool, cut, and freeze for 1 hour. Do not omit the freezing step—that's what makes them crunchy!

—Beverly Hasse, Immanuel, Mankato, MN

### Reuben Casserole

1 lb. sauerkraut  
2 diced tomatoes  
4 Tbs. Thousand Island dressing  
1 lb. Polish sausage, browned and sliced  
8 oz. grated Swiss cheese  
8 slices Rye bread, cubed

Layer the ingredients, in order, in a 1½ quart casserole dish. Sprinkle a little more Swiss on top if desired. Heat through at 400°. This is a great pot-luck dish!

—Ruth Mueller, Immanuel, Mankato, MN

# Encouragements

## Pity Party

*“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,  
because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does...”  
Ephesians 6:7-8*

I've been in a partying mood lately!! Unfortunately, it's been a pity party. The Lord has needed to remind me of the many blessings in my life that I do not see when I'm moaning about something. I say “This laundry will never get done!” The Lord will say to me, “You have a beautiful family to be doing laundry for.” I'll say, “Ray is so busy, it is calving season, and he is tired when he comes home.” The Lord will say, “You have a wonderful, hard working, Christian husband that is providing for his family, and by the way Julie, you're welcome for all the healthy baby calves!”

I believe that I have become so used to complaining that I'm missing the blessing of serving others. When I adopt my “poor me” attitude, it becomes nearly impossible for me to see clearly the blessings. It does not come naturally as humans for us to pour ourselves out to others. Yet when I strive to do this, I get a tremendous peace that I know is from God. If I can look at serving others as serving the Lord, that puts a whole different perspective on things.

The greatest benefit reaped from learning to serve others is that it is no longer “all about ME”– how something affects ME, or what's in it for ME. It is very easy to get caught up in the world view of putting myself first–making sure that I always get a fair deal, and get what's coming to me, what I deserve. Thank the good Lord that I do not get what I really deserve! Jesus was merciful and served others by sacrificing himself. When I put myself aside and serve others as Jesus did, that allows a light to shine through that was hidden before by selfish darkness. We, as Christian women, have an incredible opportunity to serve others and let God's light radiate from us. God be with you!

*—Julie Schopp, St. Luke's, Lemmon, SD*

## I Will Go to Him

For a short time a tiny baby came into our lives, unseen, but yet loved. We anticipated the time when we could hold you and raise you to know the love of the Lord. Your tiny life brought us joy.

The time was cut short. It was a shock, and brought sadness to our lives, but not despair. For we know that our loving and merciful God is in control. He is the same God who promised that “in all things God works for the good of those who love Him” (Rom. 8:28). He is the God who with His almighty power created the world. He is the God who offered up His own precious Son to save the souls of all the wretched sinners on earth. “He who did not spare His own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32).

How can we question the love and mercy of God?

“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him...As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.” (Psalm 103:11-13)

*Continued on page 9*

## *I Will Go to Him—Continued*

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.” (Jeremiah 31:3)

How can we question the wisdom of God?

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!

Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor?

Who has ever given to God that God should repay him?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.

To Him be the glory forever!” (Romans 11:33-36)

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.”

The greatest comfort is knowing that your existence did not come to an end. Your life on this earth seemed cut short – but in reality you took a shortcut to heaven. When King David lost his infant son, the Holy Spirit inspired him to say: “Now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him but he will not return to me.” Saint Paul writes: “We don’t want you to...grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.” (1 Thess. 4:13-14). We know that our Redeemer lives, our baby lives, and we will all meet face to face in heaven.

Some people may think that your short life was insignificant or that it did not accomplish anything, but we know that God had a plan for you. Your life and death were not an accident or tragedy, but part of God’s purpose and plan.

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.

When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,

Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Your short life was created by God, in His loving mercy He called you home early. I believe He has a special plan for babies like you whose lives were cut short before some would say they had even started. You are real, you are loved by those of us left behind, and by God. We will see you in heaven beloved child.

*—This is something I wrote in 1998 following a miscarriage. I dug it out when I saw you were asking for “coping with grief” articles. These beautiful Bible passages gave me so much comfort I wanted to share them with friends at that time and it was very therapeutic for me to write this.*

*—Gloria Wilke, Gethsemane, Saginaw, MI*

P.S.: I had three beautiful healthy boys at the time of the miscarriage—and God blessed us with one more in 2000. God is so good!



# A Hymn Holds Memories

From the time I was a child and now as a grandmother, my favorite hymn has been the same: “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” I remember well going to church on Sundays and singing praises to my Savior. I remember seeing and hearing my mother sing hymns as she quietly sat in the rocking chair; me picking up the hymnal and doing the same. I remember learning hymns on the piano, first one handed, then using both, and finally being able to play “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

1. What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit, Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry Ev'rything to God in prayer!

I would turn to the first stanza and read the last two lines. Yes, instead of turning to my Savior, I would moan and groan and complain about what was happening or not happening in my life. When I finally realized that what I did would not help, I would turn to the Lord in prayer. Why is it that our human nature tricks us into thinking ‘I can work this out’? Satan is always working to deceive us. I shudder to think of it! Singing or reading this stanza reminded me to pick up the Bible and pray to my Savior for guidance and peace in Jesus, even as a child.

2. Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged, Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a Friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness – Take it to the Lord in prayer.

How I waited too long to turn to this stanza as a young adult. How I am thankful that the Lord kept me in His arms and kept me safe from evil. Temptations came my way and I fell into many. This hymn reminded me that my friend Jesus was not happy with my behavior, but He loves me anyway! Imagine, I was in trouble and Jesus did not turn away; He remained faithful, even when I didn't. Praise to the Lord!

3. Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our Refuge – Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.

Looking back on my life as an adult, I can see how the words to this hymn would calm me when I felt alone or troubled, for troubled I was and can be. I have dealt with clinical depression for many years. At first I had the misconception that if I were a Christian, I would not be mentally ill. Later, I realized if my body could become sick, so could my mind. Satan would tempt me to stay home from church and not to read God's Word. I would cry out in the middle of the night, “Get behind me, Satan!” For I know deep down that Jesus would not allow the Evil One to hurt me. Jesus does give me solace and keeps me free from harm.

I have a special memory of this hymn that I left last, the reason I chose this hymn as my favorite. As my mother lay dying of cancer and in between her hallucinations (she was on morphine), she chose this hymn as her prayer. It comforted her and me. We sang for the last time together. The words took on a whole new meaning. Mother went to heaven less than two months later. Hers is the Victory and Jesus is our Friend.

—Karen Strike, Luther Memorial, Fond du Lac, WI

## Letters to the Editor

I have some ideas, but maybe these have been thought of already:

- **CLC organists/pianists**—stories, suggestions of music to use during services. Always looking for *more* good music!!
- **CLC teachers**—stories, suggestions
- **CLC camp counselors/campers**—I'd think there would be lots of good stories here, like the time I went to Roughrider camp back in the 70's and we went on a nature hike and came back so tick-infested that we had to take our clothes off and leave them outside the cabin!!
- **CLC 20's-30's singles groups**—might there be an interest in this? We have a group formed in our church that does some fun things.

Since the pen pal thing worked out so well with us, I was just wondering if there would be anyone else who would like to participate. We could put a list of CLC kids in *The Branches* with their name, age, address, and interests. I realize that some people don't like to publicize things like that in this day and age, but I guess I would. I remember reading kids magazines when I was that age and seeing the lists of kids in the back of the magazine who'd like pen pals.

—Vickie Schreyer, Immanuel, Mankato, MN

## News & Notes

### Subscription renewal time is here!

Renew your subscription to *The Branches* magazine for 2005-2006! Issues run July, October, January, and April. Only \$12.00 for the whole year. Please send checks and information to the Business Manager (address on page 12). Include your name, mailing address, email, phone number, home congregation name, and any hobbies or expertise you would be willing to provide information on if the occasion arises. We hope to hit 500+ subscriptions this year and ultimately expand the length and offerings (we have almost 300 subscribers currently).

Also, if you know someone who wants this first year's worth of issues, about 30 paper subscriptions remain...first come, first served! The July 2004 version is electronic only, then October 2004, January 2005, and April 2005 are paper or electronic. Catch someone up on all the great writing and work that has been done over the last year from women around the country! This annual set is also \$12.00.

Finally, think about your witnessing and sister-building opportunities for the coming year. Is there someone in our midst whom you would like to minister to at this time? Any writers who are generating flowing words from the heart and soul? How many different ways can we minister to someone? Prayer, shared Bible study, conversation, worship, activities, and so many others. All of these and more are supported through a subscription to *The Branches* magazine. Think about your younger ladies, your college women, your mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, and friends. Who needs to be lifted up in the Spirit? Let's do it together and across the miles.

Rest comfortably in the Savior's Keeping!

—Tina Eichstadt, Business Manager



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***I am the Vine,  
you are the branches.  
He who abides in Me,  
and I in him,  
bears much fruit;  
for without Me  
you can do nothing.***

—John 15:5

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**Certainly it is one of the most blessed things about “the faith that is in Christ Jesus,” that it makes a man remember his own sinfulness with penitence, not with pain—that it makes the memory of past transgressions full of solemn joy, because the memory of past transgressions but brings to mind the depth and rushing fullness of that river of love which has swept them all away as far as the east is from the west. Oh, my brother, you cannot forget your sins; but it lies within your own decision whether the remembrance shall be thankfulness and blessedness, or whether it shall be pain and loss forever.**

—Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910),  
British preacher and writer



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