



DAILY DEVOTIONS

A thought to comfort and encourage you



Light Lutheran Church
Pastor Geoff Kuchel

May 2026
Sunday 24th -Saturday 30th

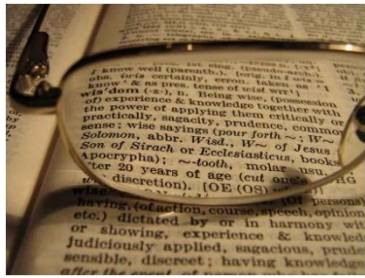
This week's Devotions are by Jane Mueller

Jane is a former Lutheran school principal and now serves as the Governance Leadership Director for Lutheran Education SA/NT/WA. Jane has a keen interest in psychology, hiking, learning new things and trying new things.

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A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



HELD

By Jane Mueller

Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me ... (John 17:11b).

Read [John 17:1-11](#)

Jesus prays this when everything is about to unravel.

The teaching is finished. The meal is over. The room will soon be empty. Jesus knows what's coming. Arrest, betrayal, confusion and fear are just hours away. Everything that had begun to make sense is about to collapse.

And yet, he does not rush. He does not scramble. He does not strategise or issue final instructions.

He prays.

Jesus lifts his eyes and speaks to his Father. He doesn't cry out for escape; he calls for care. He doesn't plead that his followers be spared from what's coming; he pleads that they be protected through it – kept in the Father's name. He prays that they would be held.

The Christian life is about being held. The disciples are held before they understand. Held when their faithfulness falters. Held before they find their footing again.

Jesus does not pray that his followers will hold it all together. He prays that they will be held. Held when fear strips away certainty. Held when unity is strained. Held when security seems distant. Held when the next step feels unclear. Held when tomorrow feels unthinkable. Held when praise comes slowly, and trust has to be relearned.

This is the beginning: God holding us. It's not about our grip; it's about God's.

The Bible readings for the days ahead will speak of peace in noisy places, provision in dry ones, unity under pressure, confidence without control, faithfulness in the ordinary and praise that moves at an unhurried pace. Every one of these readings flows from this same starting point. We do not keep going by gripping harder; we keep going because God is already holding us.

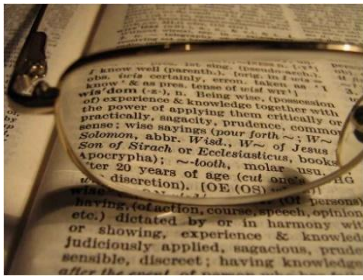
We are held.

Heavenly Father, when I feel overwhelmed, unsure or afraid of what lies ahead, remind me that I do not have to hold everything together. Hold me when my inner world feels unsteady, when fear gets loud, and when trust has to be relearnt. Amen.

THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU

DO NOT DISTURB

By Jane Mueller



My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places (Isaiah 32:18).

Read [Isaiah 32:14–20](#)

Putting your phone on 'do not disturb' doesn't make the world go quiet. Notifications still arrive. Messages still stack up. The noise doesn't disappear. It's just that it no longer governs you. Moments are no longer determined by a device.

Isaiah speaks of peace in a similar way. He describes a scene where things are not as they should be. Palaces are abandoned, the city is levelled, and the land is overgrown with thorns. And yet, into this disorder, God speaks of quiet resting places, secure dwellings and peace that abides.

This is not the peace of everything being fixed. It's the peace that allows you to stay present instead of shutting down or running away. It's the peace that doesn't silence the noise but refuses to let the noise run everything. It's the peace of being held.

It's not when circumstances finally cooperate that peace appears. Peace comes when God's Spirit is poured out. It is not the reward for getting things right; it is the gift that allows us to endure while things remain unresolved. It comes before anything is resolved, and it holds even when chaos doesn't let up.

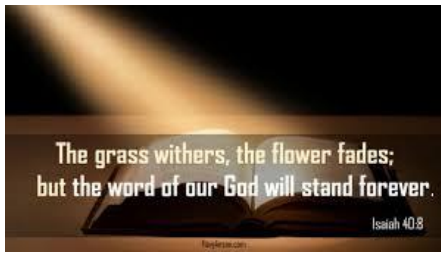
This kind of peace doesn't shout, announce itself or demand a response. Like a phone set to 'do not disturb', it simply refuses to let every disruption take control.

Isaiah describes people living quietly, not because they are free of threats, but because they are grounded in God's care and provision. God's peace holds when life is disordered, noisy, uncertain or unfinished. Peace is often felt when attention shifts from everything that clambers for a response to the God who is already holding us.

God's promise of peace is not about escapism. The peace he promises is the ability to remain in this world – with all its obstacles, troubles and challenges – without being defeated.

God of peace, when my mind is noisy and my attention is pulled in too many directions, help me rest in you. When messages pile up, expectations press in and nothing feels settled, remind me that I am held in your care. Quiet what needs quieting and keep me grounded in your presence today. Amen

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



RIVERS, NOT RATIONS

By Jane Mueller

I will open rivers on the bare heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water (Isaiah 41:18).

Read [Isaiah 41:17–20](#)

Water appears throughout Scripture.

It appears early, in creation, where God's Spirit hovers over the waters. It reappears in the wilderness when thirsty people discover that survival depends on God's provision. (Think: water from rocks, streams that appear, wells discovered just in time.) Water flows through the psalms, the prophets, the gospels and the final vision of Revelation, where a river of life runs clear and unending.

In Isaiah 41, water is urgent. The people Isaiah describes are poor and needy. They are parched. They are searching – not for abundance, but for just enough. Into that desperation, God speaks a promise that feels excessive: rivers on barren heights, fountains in valleys, pools in dry land.

These are not places where water should be.

Throughout Scripture, water is rarely just about hydration. It signals that God is near. It marks moments when life is sustained, boundaries are crossed, and futures are renewed. From the rock in the wilderness to the River Jordan, and from the well where Jesus meets a Samaritan woman to the living water he promises, water appears wherever God is creating life where it seemed unlikely.

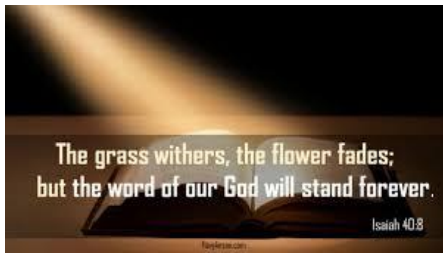
Isaiah insists that this provision is not accidental. 'That they may see and know ... that the hand of the Lord has done this' (verse 20). This water becomes a sign of who God is.

When people are stretched thin, God meets their needs out of his generosity. We are held by the God who provides, often in ways we don't expect.

The promise of water does not imply that life will never be dry again. But it does announce that dryness will not have the final word.

Gracious and abundant God, you know where I feel dry, stretched thin, or running on empty. Meet me with what I need today – not what I can manufacture, but what only you can give. Open streams of life where I see no way forward, and help me to trust that, even now, I am held by you. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



PULLING ON THE MAROON JERSEY

By Jane Mueller

... that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me (John 17:21).

Read [John 17:11b-26](#)

I grew up in South Australia, where football meant AFL.

Footy was played with an oval ball, and jumpers were sleeveless. Winter weekends revolved around long arguments about umpiring decisions while kicking a Sherrin in the backyard. Rugby league was a term used by foreigners. It felt like something that happened somewhere else, to other people. Then I moved to Queensland. And it didn't take long to be re-educated. I learned that rugby league isn't just a sport; it's a cultural commitment. State of Origin is not 'just a game'. It doesn't simply appear on the calendar; it shapes it. Organisations wait for the State of Origin dates to be released before setting their own meeting dates and events. After all, expecting attendance at anything unrelated to rugby league during a State of Origin game would be foolishly naïve and wildly optimistic. For most of the season, men play for rival clubs, where they train separately, chase different trophies and zealously try to beat one another every week. But when State of Origin arrives, club loyalties are set aside. Players who spend most of the year competing against one another pull on the maroon jersey and play together as Queensland. Differences remain, but they are laid down for something bigger. The Maroons play as one, not because they are the same, but because they are committed to a shared purpose. In today's reading, Jesus prays for something like that – only deeper, and for the sake of the world. Jesus prays for all believers. He doesn't ask that his followers all think the same, agree on everything or lose their distinctiveness. He prays that they may be one – grounded in love, shaped by relationship and held together by God.

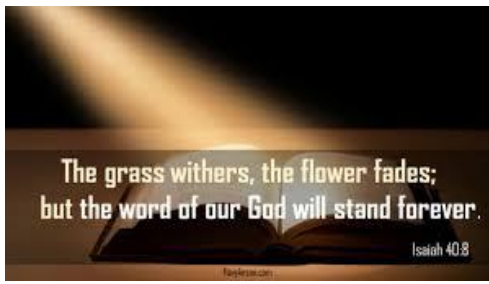
And Jesus names what is at stake: 'So that the world may believe.' Unity is not an institutional church aspiration – it's missional. The way followers of Jesus live together communicates something about God to the world.

This kind of unity is not easy because it runs counter to the habits our world rewards. It grows as fruit where love is already at work, forming humility, patience, forgiveness and restraint. Unity is not about winning arguments, but remembering what we're playing for and who we belong to.

Jesus prays this on the eve of betrayal and abandonment, when everything that could hold his followers together is about to give way. He knows unity will be tested. Still, he places his followers into God's care and asks that his love – not rivalry – would define them. In a fractured world, unity shaped by love becomes a powerful witness – not because it's easy, but because it's rare.

Lord Jesus, you know how easily difference turns into division. When patience runs short, when relationships feel strained, and when unity feels costly, hold us together in your love. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



CONFIDENCE WITHOUT CONTROL

By Jane Mueller

... for we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Read [2 Corinthians 5:1-10](#)

On this day in 1932, Amelia Earhart landed in a field in Northern Ireland, having flown solo and nonstop across the Atlantic. Historians write that she was exhausted,

cold and unsure about where she was. Still, she had made it.

Earhart didn't fly with certainty. She flew with resolve. The weather changed, instruments failed and visibility dropped. The journey carried risk from the moment she took off. Confidence, for her, meant stepping forward anyway.

Paul speaks of a confidence like that.

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul describes life as fragile, like a tent – temporary and vulnerable. Bodies age, plans unravel and outcomes remain uncertain. Paul knows this firsthand, and yet he says, 'We are confident' (verses six and eight).

Confident. Not because life is predictable. Not because the future feels secure. Not because everything can be seen or measured.

Paul's confidence does not rest in worldly knowledge and strength, or in what he can personally secure or manage. It rests in the one who holds him. He writes, 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' Faith is trusting that God is already at work beyond what we can see, even when we cannot forecast how things will unfold. Or, as Philip Yancey wrote in *Disappointment with God*, 'Faith means believing in advance what will only make sense in reverse.'

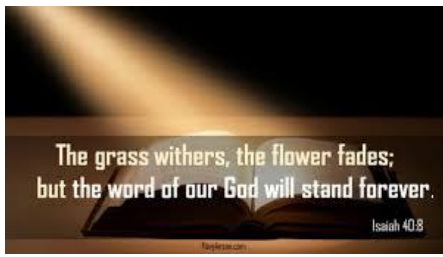
Like Earhart, Paul doesn't deny risk. Rather, he acknowledges it without being ruled by it. He refuses to let uncertainty have the final word or to let fear speak louder than God's promises. Confidence, for Paul, is not bravado; it's keeping going when the risk is real, because he knows his life is already held.

This kind of confidence doesn't eliminate fear. It carries us through it.

And so, I ask myself: What am I avoiding right now because I'm afraid? Where have I mistaken caution for faithfulness, when it might actually be fear? What decision could I approach today with trust rather than fear, remembering that the outcome does not rest on me?

God of grace, when the path ahead feels unclear, and the outcome isn't mine to manage, steady me. When I'm weighing decisions, juggling responsibilities or quietly wondering how much energy I have left, remind me that I am not alone. I am held by you. Amen

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



ESSENTIAL LESSONS IN VEGEMITE APPLICATION

By Jane Mueller

Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you (1 John 2:24a).

Read [1 John 2:24–29](#)

It's taken me years to master the art of Vegemite

application.

This is not a skill you acquire in childhood and then forget about. It requires discipline, focus and a surprising amount of self-control. It takes patience, restraint and a willingness to learn from mistakes. Too much Vegemite, and you've ruined perfectly good toast. Too little, and you're left wondering whether you're even trying. I've had seasons of confidence, moments of regret and the occasional identity crisis when I thought I'd finally nailed it, only to discover I'd drifted off course again.

But as a proud Australian, applying Vegemite to toast is an essential life skill. You don't dabble with Vegemite. You don't improvise wildly or freestyle your way to success. Vegemite doesn't reward experimentation. It demands commitment. You learn the basics, you respect them and – crucially – you stick with them.

In today's reading, John is writing to a community where sticking to the basics is becoming increasingly harder.

New ideas are circulating. New voices are claiming authority. Some teaching sounds impressive, even sophisticated. There's no pressure to abandon faith altogether, but certainly to adjust it. Tweak it here, update it there. Make it fit more comfortably with what feels new or fashionable.

John's advice is remarkably simple: 'Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you.'

Stay. Remain. Stick.

This isn't fear of change or resistance to growth. John isn't warning against learning, reflection or being reshaped – he's cautioning against forgetting Christ himself. Abiding means continually returning to Christ and trusting him to keep doing his work in us. It is not about clinging tightly but trusting that we are already being held.

Abiding takes patience. It means resisting the urge to constantly upgrade, rebrand or improve what was already given as a gift. It means trusting that God – who held us from the beginning – is still enough.

This brings us back to Vegemite. It doesn't need experimentation or reinventing. Nor does it require upgrading or rebranding. Spread too thin, and it disappears. Tinker too much, and it loses its point. But used as it was intended, it does exactly what it's meant to do: it nourishes. John's advice is just as practical: stick with what you heard from the beginning. Stay. Abide. Don't drift.

Faithful God, when I am tempted to chase what is new, impressive or fashionable, draw me back to the life you give. When I drift, help me return. When I complicate faith, remind me of the grace I first received in Christ. Hold me steady in your love and keep me grounded in you. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



SLOW PRAISE

By Jane Mueller

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures (Psalm 104:24).

Read [Psalm 104:24–34,35b](#)

Today is World Turtle Day.

It's one of those observances that feels quietly charming. Turtles don't rush. They don't demand attention. They simply move at their own pace: slow, steady and unbothered by the noise around them. They have been doing this for a very long time.

Psalm 104 invites us into that same unhurried posture.

This psalm doesn't argue for God's existence or try to prove anything. It simply notices. The psalmist looks at the world – the seas and creatures within them, the cycles of life and breath, the rhythms of work and rest – and responds with awe. Creation is not frantic. It's ordered and sustained. Held.

Again and again, the psalm returns to one thing: life depends on God's ongoing care. When God gives breath, creatures live. When God sustains, creation flourishes.

Nothing is self-made. Nothing is self-sustaining. And we rejoice knowing that God not only sustains creation now, he also promises its renewal – a future shaped by resurrection, a promise secured for us in Christ.

In a society that rewards speed, efficiency and constant output, Psalm 104 slows us down. It reminds us that wonder takes time. Praise requires attention. Trust grows through noticing what God is already doing.

Even creatures like turtles – ancient, steady and unremarkable by modern standards – bear quiet witness to our Creator, whose wisdom is deeper than our impatience.

To pause and delight in creation is not an abuse of precious time. It is faith. It is choosing to see the world as something sustained by God and worthy of praise, rather than something to be conquered or consumed.

And so, our week of devotions ends where it began: not with control or worldly certainty, but with lives quietly held by our Creator God.

Creator God, slow me down when I rush past wonder and overlook your care. Open my eyes to the beauty around me, my heart to praise and my spirit to trust your sustaining presence. In a world that demands speed and output, remind me again that, along with all creation, I am held by you. Amen.

A THOUGHT TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE YOU



PEACE BE WITH YOU

By Mark Lieschke

Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (John 20:21,22).

Read [John 20:19-23](#)

The Christian faith is rejected by most people in the world today. Its truths are no longer generally believed or followed. And it can seem to many, both outside and even to some within the church, that the Christian faith is no longer the power it once was or an effective force in the world.

Maybe, in the back of our minds, there's the same nagging suspicion. We look around us and see the many other things in the world that influence people, and we can wonder just what kind of influence the church has today. Has it lost its power? Have we lost our way? Are we becoming more and more of a lost cause?

On the day Jesus rose from the grave, the disciples gathered behind closed doors, and there was a good deal of confusion in *their* minds.

Their hopes about participating in a glorious kingdom lay shattered; their Lord and friend had been put to death. The years they had spent following and listening to him may have seemed wasted.

But when Jesus appeared and stood in the middle of them and said, 'Peace be with you', their fear was changed into joy. Doubt and confusion were transformed into belief. Despair and anxiety were replaced by excitement and a desire to share what they had seen and heard.

A change took place within them that would have a lasting impact on their lives, and in turn, on the lives of millions of others.

That power is still at work – despite what we may see and experience. The Holy Spirit continues to come today to empower, encourage, equip, transform, strengthen and motivate us.

The peace of the Lord Jesus be with you today. May your life be enriched as you receive this peace. And may the Holy Spirit give you courage as Jesus sends you to share that peace.

Merciful God, your Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, who gives hope and joy even as we live and serve in a world that can seem to oppose us at every turn. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and empower us to share your peace with those around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mark Lieschke is a retired pastor living on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland and is a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church Buderim. He served in parishes in Adelaide SA, Palmerston North and Marton in New Zealand and Wagga Wagga NSW (school and congregation), before being elected as bishop of the LCANZ's New South Wales District. He and his wife, Meredith, have four children (two of whom live in Canada) and two grandchildren. Mark enjoys spending time with family and friends, travelling, walking on the beach and resting.

SERMON PENTECOST

A WORD FROM THE WORD

No one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

WHERE DO I BELONG?

This is a question that I have had to face as a PK and a pastor almost all my life. A couple of weeks ago, I referred to our journey home to Aseki in 1984. *“Are we home yet?”* That question had to be decided again when we were trying to work out where to retire. That decision was made in 2015. We had this discussion with our children when we asked the question, Which Son-in-law has enough money to pay us to retire somewhere else?

Far more significantly, it is an eternal question; a question that Saint Peter highlighted when he wrote that we are aliens and foreigners waiting to go back home. Some have used this thought to treat everything in our world as foreign and alien, and to abandon any connection with the communities in which we live. Some lived as monks and nuns to meet this very objective. Others have formed closeted communities for the very same reason.

Yet, for the moment, we live where God has placed us. This is our community and our sense of belonging is very strong. But, as with all people, we share our lives with many communities. For me, it was the Gawler Wheelers and the Mischelle’s Pilates group. Now that is an interesting community. What about you? Which communities do you participate in? I can think of a few in Freeling: Fat Farmers, Freeling Football Club–The Demons, The Liberal Party, The Men’s Shed, Care and Share! I could go on.

Do you consider yourself to be part of those communities? Why? What benefits do you gain from being part of those communities?

With each community there are privileges and responsibilities, or if you like, benefits and burdens.

A COMMUNITY OF THE SPIRIT

But we also belong to a community of the Spirit. It is a community created by the Spirit, so that the Spirit can nurture our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I belong, here in this community of Light Lutheran Church because I was chosen by God to be here. This is where I was placed. For some, God’s Spirit was given to me here and the Holy Spirit has inspired faith, hope and love in my life, in the midst of this community. There was no choice in that experience. This is the community that nurtured your faith and taught you what that faith means. It is in this community that the spirit now encourages you to nurture the faith of your children.



Saint Paul, in his letter to the community in Corinth, was focused on the significance of community, for our faith journey, for our trust in God. To emphasize the importance of the Christian community, St Paul described us as The Body of Christ. "***The Body of Christ***", indicates how God's Spirit works in and among us. This Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, we focus on the significance of the gifts found in this community for my journey, for my faith.

The first and most important gift is the faith which the Holy Spirit has inspired in my heart. As St Paul stated: ***No one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.***

That same Holy Spirit has provided for us all the gifts needed for our community, for the benefit of our faith and growth. Our relationship with each other in this community is a direct consequence of the work of the Holy Spirit in and among us. Our relationship with each other is directly beneficial for our individual faith journeys.

Each of us has been blessed by the Spirit of God in this community and in this community of believers the Spirit continues to bless us with everything we need to live as the people of God.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

A LETTER

FROM THE PASTOR

SO WE HELP EACH OTHER

1 CORINTHIANS 12:3-7

No one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

Among all the theological and philosophical thinkers Saint Paul described the most complete sense of community. He expressed his understanding of community using body image; not body image as we understand it today, but the experience of the body working in a completely coordinated and harmonious manner.

For our bodies to function that way we have to have our head in the right place, so that it can organize everything for the benefit of the whole body. For our body, Jesus is the head and everything he does is for the benefit of the whole body and all its individual parts.

Saint Paul begins this conversation by speaking about how the Holy Spirit works in our lives and in our community. In 1 Corinthians 12 his particular observation is that God blesses each of us with gifts that will benefit the whole community.

We often speak of spiritual gifts, as does Paul here and elsewhere; and those gifts are a result of the changes which have affected our hearts. The same language is also related to what we might describe as our natural abilities.

*Over the last few months I have been observing a body which is making every effort **to help each other**, for the benefit of everyone. We have been working together to help Light and its five doors serve Christ as a community of believers, even in the event that a pastor is not among us as a shepherd.*

Not everything has turned out as we had been planning, but we continue to move forward. Our efforts have revolved around Worship, Spiritual Care, and bringing Christ to our extensive community. The Committee of Management, the Call Committee, the Spiritual Ministry Team, the Worship Committee and Worship Planning Team have all made significant steps forward. And the important skills that our office secretary brings to the table have been critical in our efforts.

I was stunned last night to watch people with a wide variety of skills working side by side with encouragement and enthusiasm, even if there was some confusion. It was glorious to see.

We are facing a lot of change and the resources and abilities that we each bring to the table will play a bit role in strengthening this body of believers.

Your shepherd-servant and brother in Christ.

Pastor Geoff