

# COMFORT ONE ANOTHER:

Strength from Those Who Care

Edited by

Darlene Franklin

From the Authors of Winged Publications

All Bible quotations taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

Other Bible translations used:

The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# 1

Tomorrow's promise  
Mobilized in today's storms  
Mounting confidence

Darlene Franklin

## 2

### Isaiah 35:3-4 Prayer

*Strengthen the weak hands. And make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be Strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."*

Isaiah 35:3 – 4 (NKJV)

Father God, Take this fear away from me. I know you are in control of everything across this earth, but I am still afraid. I am afraid for loved ones who are healthy becoming exposed to the virus. I am afraid that those already sick with it will not recover. Though I normally do not live in fear because I trust in you, I find myself giving in to the whispers of the world. These times are frightening, but I know you are still on your throne. Can I lay my fears at your feet? For you, Heavenly Father, Lord of Lords, Prince of Peace, are the only one who can truly put my heart to rest. Please protect us, your children, your sheep, from the illness that plagues our world. Heal those that are afflicted. Open the hearts of the unbelievers and use this time of fear and uncertainty to bring us all closer to you.

Christy LaShea

# 3

## Grounded

*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*  
Hebrews 13:5-6

"You are grounded," my niece said over the phone.

"Grounded?"

"You are eighty-four and high-risk. Stay home, except to walk in the fresh air around your quiet cul-de-sac. Visit with neighbors but keep your distance. And no hugging!"

Sigh. I've lived in the same home for forty-two years. Little kids run to me. Teens and adults, even my yard service guys, greet me with, "Where's my hug?"

Yet God is still in control. Hebrews 13:5-6 states, "—I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

My prayer journal is filled with "Trust Me." My 3-17 Reece's Ramblings post, "Faith in Times of Trouble," (<http://colleenreece.blogspot.com/>) encourages others. So do e-mails with funny or inspirational graphics and my assurances that "this too shall pass." Neighbors, some I barely know, bring groceries. A friend came and took my car to gas up.

We cannot understand God's plans. All He asks is that we trust Him and serve others.

Colleen Reese

# 4

## Fear's yoke - Gone

Fear's yoke closed tight  
Crushing my heart  
Blocking his light

Truth paid my toll  
Soothing my heart  
Healing my soul

Heaven's Grand Song  
Freed my heart  
Fear's chafing yoke—gone

Joe Bowden 2020

# 5

## Kayla's Prayer

Lord, so many comforts we thought we had a right to have been taken from us. This virus has cut us off from family and friends and put fear into our hearts. We are at a loss for words as to how this has happened.

Dear God, now more than ever, we need you. You are the only Source we can draw near to. Your hands are the only medicine we need.

Whisper to us through the panic and help us find peace. Give us the strength and patience to band together with family and stay hopeful. Help us love one another when we want to turn on one another.

Have mercy on our world and forgive us our sins. Heal our land.

Kayla James

# 6

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

*Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*

(Psalm 46:1-5)

Suggested by Sherri Stewart



# 7

Romans 5:1-3

Faith places hope where it can't disappoint,  
though it arrives at unexpected times,  
upon reflection, seeing it on point.  
In darkest trial, faith is wont to climb  
while singing songs of joy expressed in rhyme.  
Such faith holds fast e'en when deep sorrow nears.  
That's when its light most brightly shines  
in hearts and homes of those we hold most dear

Darlene Franklin

# 8

## D.L.'s Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, I come to you now with all reverence, praying for those lives who are touched by this coronavirus. Release your mercies and mighty emergency intervention. Touch those families who have lost loved ones, helping them in their grief. Give them what only you can provide—abiding love and peace that passes all understanding. Be with our health-care workers and first responders. Give them great wisdom, compassion, strength, and keep them safe. Be with our leaders. Help them to make the right decisions and seek your guidance. And be with those who are working to keep our essential businesses up and running. Place your fiery wall of protection around them.

Lord, you are our refuge. Shelter us.

My God, I humbly ask for you to release your miracles around the globe, putting an end to this virus. May it leave faster than it has arrived. Heal our lives and our world, allowing us to see your light shine bright through the darkness that surrounds us. You have promised never to leave us or forsake us. May we cling to your promises and hold them dear.

In your precious name, I pray. Amen.

D.L. Lane

# 9

## What Are Your Idols?

*[A]n idol has no real existence, ... there is no God but one.*  
1 Corinthians 8:4 (ESV)

I admit it. I went to church during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there is a shelter in place order in Florida, churches are classified as essential services if they can operate with less than ten people. So I social-distanced myself from the only other person brave enough to attend, aside from the minister himself.

After the service, we were talking about whether God has a purpose behind this pandemic. The minister commented, “God has taken away peoples’ idols, such as playing sports, shopping for other things than food, going to movies, concerts, and other events, and going to the beach”

At least I can watch my beloved regular network programs on television, along with HBO, Showtime, Netflix, YouTube, or catch up on e-mails, I thought.

Last night the internet and cable television went out. The only electronic device still working was my phone.

An idol is someone and/or something taking your focus off God. The realization I came to was that my “idols” were gone last night. So, I prayed and had a nice talk with my Heavenly Father.

What are your “idols”? Do they take your focus off having a closer relationship with God?

Susan Fischer

# 10

## Glorious Holiness

*Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?*

Exodus 15:11

God's holiness is glorious.  
He holds power in his right hand,  
fighting beside his holy band.

We're in awe of it, splendidous.  
He brings heavenly hosts with him,  
blinding those whose eyes aren't open

Watching God work, wonderous.  
Our foes behind us, defeated.  
Promise lies ahead, completed

Darlene Franklin

# 11

## Genesis 25:21 Prayer

Prayer is . . . Bringing the deepest needs of your family to god.

*And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

(Genesis 25:21)

God our Father, this current lockdown is hard on families. We can't see our families in person! How we thank you for technology that allows us to talk by video.

As difficult as separation is, togetherness can be even harder. As much as we love each other, many of us are unused to spending 24/7 in each other's company. I pray for closeness and peace among our families as our routines are so radically changed. May our family bonds be renewed and strengthened. In times of shortages, provide for our daily needs.

Give parents wisdom, patience, and creativity as they manage space and resources. Guide those who teach their children at home. I pray for the children conceived during this lockdown, that they will be a blessed and holy generation who will impact our world for good for years to come. In the name of your beloved son we pray, amen.

Darlene Franklin

# 12

## Hope as We Rest in Him

*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

Isaiah 41:10

During this time of crisis, we need hope that can only be found in God. I've been reading through Isaiah the past few weeks and believe the verse above speaks of the hope we have in our Lord. He is always with us; therefore, we can rest in him.

The biblical definition of hope includes a confident expectation regarding God's promises in the Bible and ultimately in Christ's return. During these difficult times, we can rest in the assurance of his love and his coming.

With the Lord helping and holding us, we can rest in hope. He's got this—whatever “this” is for us—the virus, other health concerns, a family situation, our job, or our finances. Trust him.

*Father, we come to you in thanksgiving for your love, grace, and faithfulness. We ask for your protection and comfort during this difficult time. May our trust in you grow as we rest in the promises found in your Word. In Jesus's name. Amen.*

LuAnn K. Edwards

# 13.

## HIDDEN

*Inspired by Psalm 31*

I'm hidden in the shelter of your presence.  
You are my cloak, protecting me from danger.  
Your mercy comforts me when I'm in death's presence.  
I need your strength renewed in legs and fingers.  
My future's in your hands, my eternal God

Darlene Franklin

# 14

## Genesis 32:11 Prayer

Prayer is . . . pleading with God for protection.

*Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.*

(Genesis 32:11)

Almighty Lord, if there was ever a time we need your protection, this is it. I plead with you to protect our homes, stores, medical facilities, group homes, and places where the elderly and disabled live.

How we thank you for those who risk their lives to serve the rest of us: delivery workers, factory workers, sales personnel, medical personnel. I thank you for the workers who brave exposure and risk their lives to serve the rest of us. I pray for divine protection on those working up close and personal with the illness, with inadequate precautions as supplies dwindle. I thank you for their cheerfulness and sacrifice.

Protect our leaders, as they make decisions that effect millions of people. Keep us safe from mob rule. In the name of the King of kings, amen.

Darlene Franklin



# 15

## In My Father's Arms

When I was about six , Dad took my brothers and me to a local ice-fishing derby on a nearby lake. We loved slipping and sliding around on the ice, racing to the next trap as soon as a flag tipped. When it came time to leave, however, the ice near the shoreline had melted a bit, leaving standing water in some places. I freaked out. I just knew I'd break through and drown.

Dad must've sensed my reluctance because he swung me up into his very-capable arms and carried me across the slick section. Secure in my father's embrace, I had no fear.

He's been gone for eleven years, but I know he would've faced the COVID-19 pandemic with a cool head and a faithful heart. One of his favorite Bible verses was Psalm 118:24: *This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it* (NKJV). And he *did* rejoice even through years of Parkinson's disease.

*The eternal God is your refuge and strength, and underneath are the everlasting arms...* (Deuteronomy 33:27, NKJV). There's no safer place to be.

Sophie Cuffe

# 16

## Skipping Stones

(Ecclesiastes 3)

A time for everything under the sun.  
Scatter stones and mourn, dying, weeping.  
A time for dancing has begun,  
laughing, gathering, mending, keeping.

With each day's start, I choose to say,  
"I'm leaping and rejoicing on my way.  
There I will know as I am known,  
when I've soared beyond life's end."

Like a lamb skipping over stones  
At play in the fields of the Lord

Darlene Franklin

# 17

Hair 2020

*But there shall not an hair of your head perish.*  
(Luke 21:18)

I'm losing hair—it's in my brush, in the shower... Is it because I'm a certain age? Unknown. But that worry got stashed in the freak-out junk drawer of my brain.

When COVID-19 exploded, I got a different take on it. As in "...the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30 KJV). Jesus' words. I can fixate on one hair and miss the forest still alive and growing on my head. I can view the pandemic as an all-powerful enemy, so big it eclipses all else; or I can see God—His lovingkindness, His perfect plan so huge. So all-in-all, there's no room for doubt.

I can choose to see beyond the panic to the Truth ... this catastrophe didn't surprise God. He's got it handled, because faith is the evidence of all His power and grace. And a blessing—to rediscover what's important, reconnect with family, reach out with the peace of God, which passes all understanding—to those who are afraid.

Folks may see this as evil, but God will use it for good because He is ALL GOOD.

Sadie Cuffe

# 18

## Keeping the Peace

(Isaiah 26)

God will keep me  
in perfect peace,  
imagination fixed  
to trust Him.

Inside God's fortress,  
I dwell in peace,  
my imagination sheltered

One key unlocks peace's door.  
Trust in God,  
my mind never wavering

I'm fixed yet kept.  
God protects me.  
I pin myself on him,  
at peace

I've peace within  
if not without,  
where'er my mind may roam,  
trusting God

Darlene Franklin

# 19

## Exodus 9:29 Prayer

Prayer is...asking for help during natural disasters.

*And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD's.*

Exodus 9:29

Lord, when you sent the plagues against Egypt, Moses prayed, and you removed the plagues, one by one. The coronavirus is a natural plague, but today I pray for deliverance as Moses did. You have allowed the virus to reach people and spread across the globe. May all humanity bow before you with humility, recognizing our need for you. May people from every tongue and nation turn to you by the millions.

As the virus spreads, I ask for health and protection for us all. I pray that you provide food and shelter for those who need it. May we as a people raise money corporately and individually for those who are financially vulnerable, for those devastated by the lockdown.

Darlene Franklin

# 20

## Waiting on God

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

(Matthew 11:28)

My cell phone rang. I answered.

Dad's familiar voice breached the miles. "Is your phone off the hook? I've been trying to call all evening, and all I get is a bunch of beeps."

I checked the landline. Dead. After our conversation I called the provider on my cell.

A computer-generated voice "listened" to my problem, gave me a ticket number with the assurance of a fix by the next day, and disconnected.

I had no choice but to rely on the "voice" and wait for results completely beyond my control.

This mild inconvenience reminded me of God's greater command to "wait on the Lord."

In the throes of the coronavirus pandemic, we have more than an unknown "voice" generated by a phone company's computer. We have a loving and powerful God who listens to our concerns and stands ready to act on our behalf.

He invites us to bring Him our worries and place them before the One who loves us most and is capable of handling all situations beyond our control.

Let's accept that invitation today.

Judy Goodman Howard

# 21

Call on the Lord

Isaiah 55

Call on the Lord  
while he is near,  
in truth,  
because he hears your thoughts.  
Mean it!

Call on the Lord.  
He is worthy to be praised.  
He answers everyone,  
And saves all who call.  
Do it now!

Call on the Lord.  
He is the Lord your God.  
You're made right with him.  
He's given you like-minded companions.  
Enjoy it!

Darlene Franklin

# 22

## Exodus 10:17 Prayer

Prayer Is ... Asking God for Someone who Doesn't Know how to Pray

*Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God only to remove this death from me*

Exodus 10:17 (ESV)

Father, I thank you and praise you for the multitude of your faithful followers in the United States. May this outbreak find us on our knees before you.

It's our duty and privilege to pray for those who don't know how to pray. For those who do not yet have speech or understanding. For those with limited mental capacity or mental illness. Although I suspect much of the purest prayer comes from people like the ones I've mentioned.

I also pray for those who have refused you in the past. While you are sustaining their physical lives, open the eyes of their hearts. Use the fright of the virus to convince them of your reality and their need.

Darlene Franklin



# 23

## It Is Finished

*When Jesus received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished,"  
and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

John 19:30 (ESV)

Verse 28 in John says, "Jesus, knowing that all was now finished...

You may be asking yourself, "What was finished?"

One of the footnotes about this verse says: "'It is finished' proclaims that all the work the Father sent Jesus to accomplish was now completed, particularly his work of bearing the penalty for our sins."

This means that there is no more penalty left to be paid by us for our sins, because Jesus' beatings, scourging, humiliation, pain, and suffering paid for all of humanity's sins in the past, present, and future.

God sacrificed his son, Jesus. His perfect son, who was without sin, was sacrificed by God to give us eternal life because of His love for us. But our work, as the body of Christ, has just begun. Jesus gave His life for us. At least we can go and make disciples for Him.

Susan Fischer

# 24

## Runaway Comfort (Isaiah 53:6)

Into His runaway comfort I will leap  
I'm wandering, lost, a wayward sheep.  
Despair and loneliness cause me to weep.  
He finds me; on my heart His blessings heap.  
On Him rely while crossing waters deep

Darlene Franklin

# 25

## Judges 13:8 Prayer

Prayer Is ... Seeking Wisdom for Raising a Child.

*Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "Pardon your servant, Lord. I beg you to let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."*

Judges 13:8 (NIV)

Lord, the lockdown is harder on children than on the rest of us. They don't understand the need for restrictions and for not seeing friends. Social isolation is even harder on our teens and young adults. Give them wisdom beyond their years to stay safe. Protect parents who are still little more than children themselves, as they bear responsibilities for two generations. May your name be lifted up in our homes. May our children and parents adapt to online schooling and home schooling. May our family lives make a permanent change for the better through this experience. In Jesus' name, amen.

Darlene Franklin

# 26

## Hakuna Matata

*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.*  
Proverbs 17:22

Today marks day # 9 of staying at home alongside our middle son, Zachary, who has Down Syndrome. Working from home has its advantages, but I confess I'm having a hard time concentrating. Perhaps it's because for the first eight days of the lockdown, Zachary watched the *Lion King* over and over and over and over... Can you say, *Hakuna Matata*?

This morning Zach decided to watch the movie *Frozen*. Who can forget the song, "Let it Go"? Perhaps the song is more relevant than I care to admit. As we continue to come to terms with the current global pandemic, social distancing, and working from home, it is good to remember to count our blessings.

Maybe you've just left the grocery store, and you're scratching your head over grocery carts filled to the brim, leaving you to pick up a can of salmon and a roll of single-ply toilet paper. Can we agree to be thankful there was no SPAM?

I believe that laughter is good for the soul—Let's remember to do so and to count our blessings.

Kimberly Grist

# 27

Possibilities

(Mark 10)

All things  
are possible,  
but not as I have planned,  
nor at the times that I desired,  
but according to God's will for my life.  
Things I didn't know I wanted,  
never even dreamed of.  
I rejoice in  
all things.

Darlene Franklin

# 28

## Judges 16:28 Prayer

Prayer is ... asking for Strength

*And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.*  
Judges 16:28

Lord, I pray for those who have the virus, that they will be healed and return to full strength. I pray for those whose immune systems are weakened for whatever reason—cancer, heart disease, lung issues, AIDS, and all the many diseases that attack our bodies. Lord, make us healthy, keep us strong, so that we can withstand the virus if we catch it. I pray for our infants and our elderly, those who have not yet developed an immune system and those whose immune system is failing. Be their strength. Undergird our people, our nation, our economy, with strength during this time of vulnerability. Give our leaders strength and clarity to do the right thing, whether or not it is popular. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Darlene Franklin

## Wrapped in Secret Shelter

An unseasonable fog wraps the budding landscape as I shelter-in-place at home. Knowing the viral risk could be right outside my front door, I wonder if God will intervene in his vast mercy, until I realize that he dispatched the fog to declare his presence everywhere. What a manifest wonder, as if Psalm 91 has come to life in an answer to my prayers. He is the shelter we seek. Hide in him and have faith.

*He who abides in the secret shelter of the Most High lodges in the shadow of the Almighty. His faithfulness is a shield and assurance of security. No need to fear the night terrors, nor any arrows slung by day, nor the pestilence that stalks morning, noon and night. Though a thousand fall at your side, and even ten thousand within arm's reach, you will remain unscathed. Take heart for he has posted angelic guardians to keep watch over you to protect your passage and reflect his unfaltering love. Live a long life in honor of the One who knows you by name.*

Psalm 91 (abridged and paraphrased)

Dear all-surrounding Heavenly Father, help us abide in you as we hide at home. Amen.

Cindy M. Amos

## Hope in the Rainbows

God brings the hope, the sunshine and rain  
God is your refuge through trial and pain  
He will bring comfort, restore and guide,  
All is not lost; there is no need to hide.  
Bask in his love. The Good Shepherd is near.  
His love knows no limits; he says, "Do Not Fear."  
For his love is deeper and higher than all,  
His strong arm will keep you; in him you won't fall.  
Remember the Lord, Remember his Name,  
Take up His shield, stand fast and take aim.  
He is waiting, watching for you to draw near.  
His love never changes. To him, you are dear.  
So, while you wait for the world be right.  
Hope in God's promises, rainbows of light.  
In the midst of the rain, his umbrella he'll share.  
And life's so much better when under his care.

Stephanie Guerrero



# 31

## Psalm 69:13 Prayer

Prayer is ...Recognizing our Need for Mercy

*But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.*

Psalm 69:13

Sovereign Lord, If not for your mercy, we would be consumed. You halt the spread of disease. You give us centers of peace and joy in the midst of turmoil. You've given me confidence and comfort that whatever happens, I'll be with you. There are worse fates than death—death of my body means I'll be with you in glory! Hallelujah!

I pray that this virus will be a wake-up call for those who don't yet have that assurance. May millions turn to you in unprecedented numbers in our country and across the world. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Darlene Franklin

## There's Always Hope

The old lady watched as the dry leaves from the oaks and maple trees blew around the neighborhood, littered the ground, and heaped in piles. Her fingertips brushed against the window pane, but she drew them back quickly from the chill. A sparse glimmer of sun glinted in her eyes and made them water. She swept the moisture away with the back of her hand and turned away from her view. She sighed as the loneliness gripped her tightly. Maybe another day. She had other things to do.

A second glimpse a short time later showed green blades shooting up in the lawn. Robins tugged worms from the ground. Spikes of tulips and crocuses from the flowerbeds poked up and blooms followed. The glass was warm to the touch, and she slid open the patio doors to walk onto the deck. The sky was bright blue with clouds floating by, and sunshine brought everything into focus. The kids and grandkids were staying away to keep any chance of the virus from drawing near. She missed them so but was glad for Facetime to see their sweet faces. Her hugs she would save for another day.

This is another season. It will pass too.

Linda Siebold

God is So Very Mindful

God is so very mindful,  
He cares for his children everywhere,  
He faithfully bends his ear,  
To all of our cries and prayers.

He blesses us with answers,  
When we cannot see,  
He leads us through the darkness,  
His word is a lamp to me.

God is so very mindful,  
He watches after each of us,  
He gives to us the faith,  
To have hope in him and trust.

Lacey Greer

# 34

## Meditation on Joshua 1:9

*“Have I not commanded you: Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

Joshua 1:9 NIV

Fear is something that we, as Christians, should be able to conquer because of God’s promises to always be with us. He promised to never leave or forsake Joshua and the people of Israel.

He provides for every need, and he loved us enough to die for us. John reminds us that perfect love will cast out fear. Paul tells us not to be anxious about anything. We take our cares and petitions to the Lord and he takes care of us. Trust the Lord and he will provide.

We can be careful with what we do and where we go, but we shouldn’t give in to the fear and paranoia seen in some. The Lord numbers our days, and when the day comes, he will call us home.

No one can take his place. No enemy can fight against him no matter how hard they try. He will be with us all the days of our lives until we depart this world to spend eternity in his presence.

*Heavenly Father, we seek your love and protection in these days of uncertainty. Guard our hearts and minds and ease our anxieties with your perfect love.*

Martha Rogers

# 35

## Nehemiah 1:11 Prayer

Prayer is ...Delighting in God's Name

*Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant  
and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name.*

Nehemiah 1:11 (NIV)

The Great I AM, you were there when the plagues struck ancient Egypt. You protected your people, the Israelites, from those plagues. You were also there when the bubonic plague raged in the Middle Ages and when the Spanish flu swept the world in 1919. You have allowed the coronavirus to strike us in 2020. It didn't take you by surprise, and it won't last a minute after the day you call it to a stop. I take comfort in the long view you have, aware of my short, insignificant life against all of history.

Yet you care about each and every person ever born. With a mind like a computer that stores every nanosecond of every life, with the wisdom to differentiate between then and now, and the one versus the all, I trust this epidemic to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Darlene Franklin

# 36

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

*His love endures forever.*

Give thanks to the God of gods.

*His love endures forever.*

Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

*His love endures forever.*

to him who alone does great wonders,

*His love endures forever.*

Psalm 136:1-4 (NIV)

## God Loves Forever

I woke today to the sound of birds chirping a cheerful springtime song. When I raised the blinds, the sight of colorful flowers blooming in my yard greeted me. Warm temperatures beckoned me outside to join in the celebration—reassurance that God’s creation is still alive and on schedule. I know that I did not make this creation. Even the seeds I planted grew through a miracle I did not perform. However, I believed and trusted God to do the work to bring the blooms to life, just as I can trust Him to bring spring after winter. I can rejoice knowing He is sovereign, that whatever happens, He is still in control, so I can trust Him for the future.

Marilyn Turk

## Weary Souls Need Rest

Bright sun rising to blue skies overhead.  
Dark skies, churning with fear and doubt.  
Dark skies, deep and dreadful.  
Birth and death.  
Sickness and health.  
Where do we go when the way yields weary souls?  
In the beginning, God.  
In the pause before it all began.  
In the breath of ending, even so come, Lord Jesus.  
From beginning to end,  
His power stretches through pain,  
Through our fear and joy. Through our laughter and tears.  
Rest in his power.  
Even so come, Lord Jesus.  
Lead and lift us with love always lasting. Agape.

Laurie Boulden

# 38

## Matthew 6:9-10 Prayer

Prayer is ... Petitioning for the Advance of God's Kingdom

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.*  
Matthew 6:9-10 (NIV)

Our Father who dwells in heavenly places, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. May your will dictate the decrease of the virus. That people will heed the warnings of the government and doctors and not put themselves and others at risk. That all people everywhere will take this time to grow closer to you. Open the eyes and ears of those who haven't heard or who haven't listened. I pray for the many organizations reaching out to those who are hurting during these difficult days. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Darlene Franklin



# 39

## Isolation Doesn't Have to Be Lonely

*The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*  
Psalm 145:18 (NIV)

In our online church service, our minister spoke about “Prayerful Solitude.”

He defined loneliness as the absence of people, the opposite of prayerful solitude, which is the presence of God. While Jesus was on earth, He practiced prayerful solitude, separating himself intentionally from others to spend time with God. Throughout the New Testament, there are many examples of times He did this, such as Luke 5:16, Mark 6:31, and Matthew 17:1-9.

During this time of isolation, we too, can practice prayerful solitude. Just as we are intentionally staying away from others, we can intentionally meet with God. We can make appointments with Him, just as we would with others. We can turn out the noise of distractions and tune in to God. We can enjoy a two-way conversation with Him by not doing all the talking; instead, listening for what He wants to tell us. Perhaps this is what He wants you to do during this time, to draw you to Himself for closer communication.

You are not alone because He is always near.

Marilyn Turk

# 40

## Hope in the Storm

There is hope in the darkness  
And light in the storm  
Not from good news or changes;  
God's Spirit brings warmth

The hope that we look for  
Isn't found in desire,  
or persons, or health  
or careers to aspire.

For hope, solid-true hope,  
Is found in One Name  
And the heart of his Character  
Not money or fame.

For hope is just confidence  
That God's Word is true  
I know, for I've seen it;  
With faith, You can too.

For hope is believing  
Our Lord does not lie;  
His Word NEVER fails;  
Therefore, hope does not die.

Stephanie Guerrero

# 41

## Meditation on Isaiah 41:10

*Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*  
Isaiah 41:10 NLT

No one else can help us fight the “giants” in our life like Jesus. The Holy Spirit dwells within us to give us the strength, courage, and wisdom we need for whatever is given to us to bear. What is going to happen if we make the wrong decision, or the right decision leads to heartbreak? The last two lines of this verse give us the answer.

When God is holding us in his victorious, strong hand, nothing can defeat us. Circumstances may seem to be pressing us down to defeat, but when we look up into Jesus' face, he will give us the strength because he's holding us tight, and his strength flows into us.

Kneel down and look up into his wonderful face and let the things of this earth fade away in the light of our Lord's glory and grace.

*Heavenly Father, as we face giants of fear, disappointment, discouragement, defeat, disease, or death of a loved one, may we feel your strength flow into us from your victorious right hand as you hold us up.*

Martha Rogers

Sanity

She's only been alive for months,  
Not years, not yet,  
So fascinated,

I watch her  
Scoot along the hardwood floor,  
Butt up, head down,  
Sharing food  
And everything  
With the gray-brown-yellow cat.

From my perspective,  
Higher up and balanced differently,  
It occurs to me  
That sanity  
Is highly overrated.

Florence Witkop

## Modern Day Miracle

In 1991, my husband and I, along with three of our children, rededicated ourselves to the Lord. A date for our baptism was set. I had already been baptized when I had accepted Jesus all those years ago but wanted our family to do this wondrous thing together.

I wear glasses, and on the morning of our baptism, found myself standing with my family at the edge of the pool that our church had rented for the occasion. I took off my glasses and couldn't see a thing. In my excitement, I had forgotten to wear my contacts. I prayed to God for a miracle. I wanted to "see" my children baptized.

My husband went first—then it was my turn. The pastor turned to him and asked whether he would like to be the one to baptize me. My husband's smile was answer enough. When I came up out of the sparkling water, I turned and watched my children baptized.

That's right. I **watched** them baptized. I could see them clearly. With tears running down my cheeks and a face that was hurting from my wide smile, I could see them clearly. Only when I exited the pool did I have to put my glasses back on.

Although I had spent years away from God, He stood firmly where I had left Him. He waited patiently for my return. When I did return, God answered the simple prayer of this wayward child of His. The simple prayer of, "God, I want to see my children baptized."

I hold fast to God's promise in Proverbs 22:6: *Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* My parents, while they may not always have joined me in church as a child, did teach me to love the Lord and instilled in me godly morals. I see now that the choices I made as an adult were never enough to cause God to forsake me.

Since that time long ago, He has continued to bless us. We now have three adopted children whom we are teaching to walk with Jesus. Our adult children are now giving us beautiful grandchildren, and I am looking forward to the day when I can "see" them all baptized.

Cynthia M. Hickey

## Corona Crest

I'm  
shut in,  
like Noah.  
God closed the door  
for my protection,  
the ending date, unknown.  
Forced to depend on others,  
family of peers, not by blood.  
Kids and grandkids just a call away,  
waiting for a dove to sound the all clear.  
We ride the coronavirus crest  
in an ocean filled with lifeboats,  
choosing hope instead of fear.  
Although some boats may sink,  
the fleet's captain will plot  
a cautious course,  
bringing us  
safely  
home.

Darlene Franklin

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

Author **Cindy M. Amos** currently celebrates 34 book releases with Winged Publications. She writes both contemporary and historical romances with a common theme of man living close to the land. Her booklist can be found on her website at <http://cindymamos.wixsite.com/natureink>

**Laurie Boulden** is an aspiring author with a love for good storytelling. Writing genres of interest include contemporary romantic comedy and fantasy/fairy tales. Laurie is also an educator, currently teaching education majors at Warner University. In addition to degrees in education, she recently graduated with a Master of Art in Creative Writing and English. Her book, *Weighed Down*, was a 2017 finalist with Cascade Writing Contest. She has placed in multiple categories in multiple years at the Florida Christian Writers Conference, winning Writer of the Year in 2016. Connect with Laurie through <https://www.amazon.com/Laurie-Boulden/e/B07VNTJC2L>

**Joe A. Bowden Ph.D.** is a biochemist, a former university professor, a storyteller, poet and a technical writer. He is currently settling into semi-retirement. He has produced hundreds of technical documents and reports, edited and published technical books. He is published in cookbooks, guidebooks, and anthologies. He recently published *Murder by Stem Cells - The Phoenix Project*, articles and books for children and has a draft of a middle-grade mystery in the works. As a father and grandfather 'Papa Joe, Ph.D.' has a keen sense of mystery and the technical background to make his stories come alive within the setting of a research environment. [www.joebowden.com](http://www.joebowden.com) (under construction) – [joebowden@frontier.net](mailto:joebowden@frontier.net)

Born and raised in coastal Maine, **the Cuffe sisters (Sadie and Sophie)** bring the strength of a living sisterhood to their writing, as well as the spice of differing perspectives on everything from cloud formations to classic lyrics. They've written for numerous magazines and newspapers, and authored over twenty novels and novellas. They run a small farm in Unorganized Territory and bring Jane-of-all-trades life experiences to their novels. They write squarely to the heart of real women who aren't twenty-something, don't wear a size two; and prefer boots and flannel to high heels and little black dresses. Contact them at [sscuffe@yahoo.com](mailto:sscuffe@yahoo.com), or on facebook: *Sadie and Sophie Cuffe*.

**LuAnn K. Edwards** writes Christian contemporary romance for women who enjoy a wholesome love story that inspires faith and hope. She grew up in Ohio, lived in Tennessee for many years, and currently resides in New Mexico with her husband of forty-four years. LuAnn adores her children, grandchildren, puggle Pebbles, and cat Paka. A former mathematics teacher and administrative professional, she enjoys reading, hiking, traveling, and spending time with her family. You may find her online at [www.luannkedwards.com](http://www.luannkedwards.com) to learn more about her *Love Comes Again* series, or follow her on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/luannkedwards](http://www.facebook.com/luannkedwards). She also invites you to check out her debut novel, *Only A Glimpse*, on Amazon: [www.amazon.com/author/luannkedwards](http://www.amazon.com/author/luannkedwards).

**Susan Fischer** is an author, Christian Mediator, and a speaker with several ministries. She leads a worship service at a local retirement center, is active in the Peacemaking Ministry, and leads a Bible study group at her church. She practiced Personal Injury Law in Michigan and Florida for over 30 years and resides in Bradenton, Florida. Contact her on her website: <https://www.susanfischer.org> Her books in the Dancing into Romance Series are: [Her Next Dance](#) and [Dancing with a Cowboy](#).

(as seen on ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, and A&E) **Darlene Franklin** is a warrior woman who happens to live in a nursing home. She lives in Oklahoma City near her son's family. Ms. Franklin is a prolific novelist, magazine writer and poet. She expects to publish book #75 this year. Her most recent books include *Coffee Club Mysteries*, *Drummer's Angel* and the newly released, *In God's Hands*. [www.darlenefranklin.com](http://www.darlenefranklin.com) (under construction)

**Kimberly Grist** has enjoyed writing since she was a young girl; however, began writing her first novel in 2017. She finds it especially gratifying to write a happy ending.

"I believe you should come away refreshed and inspired after reading a book. In my personal life, I wear so many hats working inside and outside the home. Despite my best efforts, sometimes life just stinks. Bad things happen. I need and want an outlet, an opportunity to relax and escape to a place where obstacles are met and overcome."

Combining History, Humor, and Romance with an Emphasis on Faith, Friend, and Good Clean Fun. <https://kimberlygrist.com/about-me/>

Multi-published and Amazon and ECPA Best-Selling author **Cynthia Hickey** has sold close to a million copies of her works since 2013. She has taught a Continuing Education class at the 2015 American Christian Fiction Writers conference, several small ACFW chapters and RWA chapters, and small writer retreats. She and her husband run the small press, Winged Publications, which includes some of the CBA's best well-known authors. She lives in Arizona and Arkansas, becoming a snowbird, with her husband and one dog. She has ten grandchildren who keep her busy and tell everyone they know that "Nana is a writer". Website: [www.cynthiahickey.com](http://www.cynthiahickey.com) Sign up for my [newsletter and receive a free short story](#). Se



**Judy Goodman Howard** was born and raised in Southeast Missouri. She loves to write Christian Historical Fiction set in her native Missouri, but has written a bit of Contemporary Christian Fiction as well. She has a six-book series in progress, Bluebird Valley Series. The first five are available on Amazon at this time. Her Contemporary Christian novella, Campaign for Justice, is also available.

It is her wish that her writing will bring honor and glory to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. If even one person finds a closer walk with Him through her stories, then it will all have been worth it.

**D.L. Lane** is a wife, musician, a graduate of Liberty University, and a member of American Christian Fiction Writers who lives in beautiful Tennessee. While D.L. has been an author since 2010, she changed the path she was on penning secular romance to put God first in her life where He always should have been. The first two books in her contemporary, inspirational romance series, Cedar Point, are available now, with her standalone novel, *The Sinner in Mississippi* releasing in May of 2020. You can find out more about D.L. at <https://www.dllaneauthor.com>

Publishing novels is a dream come true! **Christy LaShea** writes heartwarming southern romance and prays her stories lead to happy readers. Though Christy's day job requires roof climbing and crawling under houses at times, it also gives her the opportunity to see the north Georgia landscape which continues to inspire her writing. She loves to hear from readers, so please stop by and say hello! Connect with Christy online at <https://christylashea.com/>

Born in a home without electricity or running water, logger's daughter **Colleen L. Reece** learned to read by kerosene lamplight and dreamed of someday writing a book. God has expanded her "someday" book into 160+ titles, six million copies sold, an amazing example of what an extraordinary God can do with an ordinary person. Eighty-four and deeply grateful, Colleen continues to glorify God through her writing and personal testimony that He lives.

**Martha Rogers** is a retired English teacher and professor who began her writing career late in life and has since seen over fifty manuscripts published. She is a wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who uses her life experiences to write the stories God lays on her heart. She lives in Houston with her husband Rex where they are active members of Houston's First Baptist church. A long time member of ACFW, one of her greatest pleasures is writing the Verse of the Week devotional for the ACFW loop. Links: [Martha Rogers, author and speaker](#)

**Sherri Stewart** loves a good suspense novel, sprinkled with romance and a strong message that challenges her faith. She spends her working hours with books—either editing others'

manuscripts or writing her own. Sherri loves traveling to the settings in her stories to experience the culture, walk the locations, and sample the food. Sherri lives in the Orlando area with her son and lazy dog, Lily. She loves to chat with readers about their ideas. Contact her at [www.stewartwriting.com](http://www.stewartwriting.com).

Multi-published author **Marilyn Turk** calls herself a “literary archaeologist,” because she loves to discover stories hidden in history. Marilyn wrote the Coastal Lights Legacy series, *Rebel Light*, *Revealing Light*, *Redeeming Light*, and *Rekindled Light*, featuring Florida lighthouses. She has also written two WWII novels and several novellas, including *The Christmas Gazebo* with Lenora Worth. Marilyn wrote *Lighthouse Devotions*, and she also writes devotions for *Daily Guideposts*. She and her husband live in Florida where they enjoy boating, fishing, and playing tennis when time permits (and it’s below 100 degrees).

Website: <http://pathwayheart.com>, [www.marilynturk.com](http://www.marilynturk.com).

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MarilynTurkAuthor/>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/bluewaterbayou/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MarilynTurk>

**Florence Witkop** has been a ghost writer, written confession stories, done editing, been a book doctor, written advertising copy, written some non-fiction articles, written literary and science-fiction short stories, written both novellas and novels, written many romances, and won the only literary contest she ever entered, becoming Minnesota's Region 2 Literary Person of the Year.

She now writes for Winged Publications and, yes, her stories always have a romantic element and they always end happily. Always. Guaranteed.