

New England and Canada!

**A 2017 Devotional Book for
Fall Cruising**



***This is the day that the Lord has made;
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!***

Daily devotions by Diane Jordan, Susan Griffin, and David Jordan

WELCOME!!

I am so glad to be with you on this incredible journey to see the colors, experience the history and enjoy the scenery of an amazing part of God's world. Traveling together on this magnificent ship, we will have the opportunity to be surrounded by ocean and sky, great social events, excellent music, fun people and so much to do it will be almost overwhelming.

But I also hope this little book can assist us in a quiet discipline each morning (or each evening), when we can precede our busy days with some moments of reflection, meditation and prayer. I'd like to view this trip, not only as a vacation to enjoy, but also as a journey to grow, to learn, and to be a little more challenged in our spiritual selves. Let us be open in these times and on this trip to God's spirit moving in our lives. I hope this becomes a journey for you that is both extraordinarily fun, and deeply meaningful.

I want to thank Susan Griffin, Diane Jordan (my mother), and Virginia Whilden for their contributions to this devotional book. Mom wrote "Focusing on Jesus" for Boston along with the prayer; Susan wrote on "Anne of Green Gables" for our time in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; and Virginia wrote the prayer following our devotion for Day Two, "Cruising at Sea."

So enjoy! May the words and thoughts on these pages stimulate an openness to God's spirit moving in you during these traveling days. And may we conclude this journey exceedingly thankful for all that we shared together.

Gratefully,
David Jordan

DAY ONE: September 30

New York, New York

If you haven't already felt it, New York City is an amazing place. Native Americans lived and thrived all around the area, living, working, fishing, and utilizing the rich soil of the abundant farmland all across the island the first European inhabitants would call Manhattan.

The actual settlement that would become our place of departure was founded by the Dutch in 1624 as New Amsterdam. It began as a place to trade beaver pelts with the Native Americans. Remnants of those original Dutch places, words and ideals remain. And as our ship sails, we will be passing right by many of those streets and locations whose names have become familiar and originate from those Dutch beginnings.

When the English conquered the Dutch forty years later, in 1664, New Amsterdam became New York. In those days, the city only extended as far as Wall Street, where the Dutch had fortified the growing town from both Indian and English incursions. The main road through the settlement needed to be wide enough to accommodate to or three lanes of wagons coming in from the fields. It was called Breede weg (Broadway). The road led through the wall with a gate on through fields, farms and forests to another village farther up the island the Dutch had named Haarlem.

New Amsterdam was protected by Fort Amsterdam and Battery Park where the battery of cannons faced the harbor. Behind the fort was Bowling Green, an area where the Dutch sold their cattle. The river flowing past the island to the east became the East River dividing Manhattan from Lange Eylandt (Long Island) where existed another Dutch settlement of several villages called Breukelen (Brooklyn). Staaten Eylandt (Staten Island) served as

the small settlement at the head of the harbor that would become one of the most famous in the world.

Four years after the *Mayflower* and six years ahead of the Puritans' arrival, the Dutch would begin the foundations of an area in our country that would rise to quick prominence as a place of wealth, commerce, creativity, free trade, mad debate, free speech, international deal making, global banking and in good Dutch form, the beginnings of a stock market on Wall Street ... and then the rest of the city that would grow and evolve and now where almost anything goes at all hours of the day and night!

Though our time here was brief, more like flying in and sailing out, know that we leave in a historic way. For centuries, the New York Harbor has been the port of entry or exit for more people, goods and capital than almost any other international port in history. And it all began with a small trading settlement made on the lands of early Native Americans.

David's Traveling Rules:

- 1. Kindness is Contagious*
- 2. Flexibility is Essential*
- 3. Happiness is a Choice*
- 4. Gratitude is Transformative*

Musing on the Statue of Liberty ... and the Bible

*Whoever pursues righteousness and kindness will find life and honor
(Proverbs 21:21).*

As we embark on our New England and Canada cruise, we will pass right in front of this great lady we know as the Statue of Liberty. This is a powerful symbol for our country and for all the millions of immigrants who have entered the land hoping for a better future. She also stands a valuable reminder of some very biblical principles.

The complicated dynamics of our current time should not be minimized, nor should the legitimate concerns of the many caught up in the maelstrom of confusing policies and inappropriate behaviors on all sides diminish the power and necessity of welcoming the stranger. At the bedrock of our nation's character (and inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty) are these words from Emma Lazarus' "The New Colossus":

***Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore;
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!***

These sentiments correspond well to what Jesus repeated in stories and teachings, even in the face of harsh opposition. He continued to reinforce the ancient biblical standard that God had called for from the very beginning of the Covenant with Moses: "Love the alien as you love yourself; for you were once aliens in the land of Egypt..." (Leviticus 19:34).

In Matthew 25, Jesus spoke of welcoming the "stranger."

The tendency for many, and the constant temptation for all, is to blame problems on those who are new or different or those we simply don't understand. Yet, consistently in this country and throughout Christian history, we remember the legacy of the stranger, the heroic actions of the unwanted, the new insights and contributions of disregarded and even despised.

Let us “pursue righteousness and kindness and find life and honor” and live out biblical wisdom—together—as we seek those new insights so necessary for our spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth. Watch carefully around you today—at the store, in the office, around the neighborhood, on the news—and look for positive signs of compassion, openness, courage, and new insights about living together in harmony. And as you do, consider another passage from the Bible:

But this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit (Isaiah 66:2).

Just as the Statue of Liberty represents the spirit of human hope and the ideal of this nation and democracy, this verse from Isaiah is a bold reminder of our biblical hope – and spiritual goal. God’s expectation is for our humility to exceed our suspicion. Though tempted to criticize and look down on those not in our circle of friends, the biblical calling is to bless, welcome and empower “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40).

Now, let’s look at the full text of Emma Lazarus’ poem. She, by the way, was from a Jewish immigrant family originating from Germany and Portugal. Notice in her sonnet the echo of this biblical theme of humility and welcome while alluding in comparison to the ancient Colossus of Rhodes:¹

The New Colossus

***Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name***

¹ One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The statue stood over one hundred feet tall on a pedestal that was reported to have been over fifty feet tall. Built in 280 B.C., it was destroyed in an earthquake in 226 B.C.

***Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”***

Let us together, with genuine humility, ponder what this means. In our churches and in our nation as a whole let us deliberate with mutual respect: How wide is the door? How humble and contrite is our spirit? Consider the role of a Christian regarding the various social issues of our day, whether the ongoing controversies with immigration, how we respond to refugees, relationships with the Muslim community, concerns about the those without homes ... These and many other issues remain highly charged within and outside the Christian community. Without a coherent and well-articulated message from active citizens who are also committed Christians, all of us will continue to struggle.

Let's face it, humility, kindness, righteousness and welcoming the stranger ... these are tough in today's political and social climate. They are also very biblical, and remain as necessary today as they have ever been.

Now, as we cruise past this massive icon of the American experience, let her be a reminder to us all of our amazing American experiment, and the exciting journey we are so privileged to enjoy!

PRAYER FOR THE DAY: Lord, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

—Reinhold Niebuhr

DAY TWO: October 1

Cruising at Sea

Living Water

... give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over ... for the measure you give will be the measure you get back (Luke 6:38).

From the earliest days of the Old Testament, “living water” emerged as a vital concept for the community and for individuals. The idea had to do with stagnant water in a pool (or the Dead Sea) versus moving water, running, clear, cold and useful. This water was called “living water.” This was because living water comes from God and flows in a refreshing way that can not only bring life, but also can wash away dust and residue. Our concept of baptism in Baptist life comes from this tradition. Sin and the accumulation of the mess and complications in our lives become washed off by God’s grace, carried away, and cleansed in this living water so we are refreshed and renewed for new life and new perspectives. And therefore, we are ready to be used by God in new and exciting ways.

In his book *The Life Cycle Completed*, Developmental Psychologist Erik Erikson speaks of what he calls “Generativity.” We are generative, and generally more fulfilled, when we are creating things and contributing to others and society. On the other hand, stagnation results when we feel unproductive, fail to contribute, or are unable to offer our efforts to something or someone beyond ourselves. We feel stuck.

What Jesus seems to be saying in this passage from Luke is, if we are not generative and offering ourselves in some way or another to others, then we are missing out on why are here; we are going nowhere—we stagnate.

On the other hand, the renewal that comes with God's presence is life-giving: *A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over ...* This is living water that offers a new sense of generativity. We can be generous with our time, talents, resources, hopes and dreams when our lives become washed and cleansed and made ready in God's spiritual renewal in us and around us. Further, we feel like we are going somewhere. But not just anywhere – somewhere good and with a purpose.

Today we are on the move. We are going somewhere good. Notice the moving, living water all around you today. Notice the breeze and the waves and the feeling of forging ahead, slicing through the cold but beautiful blue waters of the Atlantic. Now be ready for something good and renewing to change you. Let this experience remind you again of what generosity of heart and spirit can offer!

Consider: “At the end of the day, it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished. It's about what you've done with those accomplishments. It's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It about what you've given back.”

—Denzel Washington

PRAYER FOR THE DAY: *Dear Heavenly Father – Thank you for who you are and that you are always with us. Thank you for:*

Calm seas, blue skies and war breezes;

Butterflies and other insects sipping nectar from all kinds of flowers;

Birds in flight and feeding and for friends talking and sharing.

For the mounting roar and pushing of the of the wind;

The crashing seas and the darkness of night;

The sun arising from behind the receding dark storm clouds;

*The calming winds and quiet morning dawning;
The hope of rising new life;
The smiles of family, friends and strangers – and of helping hands.
You God are with us in our fears, our awe of your might and power in the storm,
the warm assurance of your presence in everything we do and experience.
We love you Lord and thank you for all your gifts – even your Son. Amen.*
By Virginia Whilden

DAY THREE: October 2

Boston, Massachusetts

Here we are in the quintessential American city. It was Boston where the Puritans began their great American experiment. This would lead to new great dreams, interesting issues and future conflict, including run-ins with some contentious folks who were becoming known as Baptists! In fact, the first Baptist on American soil was in Boston and he was named Roger Williams. A pastor committed to soul freedom and God's movement in the individual heart, he was summarily kicked out of the city and ended up living with a kind and gentle people known as the Narragansett tribe of the Algonquin Indians.² Boston would go on to be a place of revolutionary events with famous names like The Freedom Trail, The Old North Church, Paul Revere, Benjamin Franklin, Abigale Adams and John Adams. Let us enjoy this great city filled with vital and fascinating history. Read more about the broader area surrounding Boston and the legacy of that followed in Colin Woodard's fine book *American Nations*. He calls Boston and the area it spawned and controled over many decades as "Yankeedom."

² The area was in what is now Rhode Island. Roger Williams, this exile from Boston, began the settlement he would call "Providence." It was to be a place of peace and would welcome any and all who needed a refuge.

Focusing on Jesus

By Diane Owen Jordan

So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him.
(Matt. 14:22-33, esp. vs.29-31a)

In this familiar story, we're reminded of what can happen when we lose our focus on Jesus. Like Peter, we're in danger of sinking beneath waves of trouble, sin, and doubt. But what does it mean to "focus on Jesus", and how can we keep him at the center of our lives? Our usual "Sunday School" answers, - worship, pray, read the Bible, etc., are all true and helpful, but let's go a little deeper. When we worship and pray, are we really 'listening' for God's will or just laying out our own requests? And do we actually READ the Bible, paying special attention to Jesus' teachings, or do we simply find passages that comfort and strengthen us, as good as that may be at times? If we Christians would focus on what Jesus really said - treating others as we want to be treated, loving our enemies, denying ourselves, following him with our lives and actions (not just our words), how wonderfully different our world could be!

As we enjoy our time in Boston, we're reminded of struggles for freedom in the past and of recent peaceful protests against hate groups. May we join these "better angels" in focusing on Jesus with radical discipleship lest we sink beneath waves of discord and division. And, thankfully, when we call on him, he responds with love and help for us just as he did for Peter.

PRAYER for the Day:

Lord, please help us pay attention to your teachings and follow you with humility, being open to your will. We so easily lose our focus on you, so please forgive us and help us look to you. As we tour Boston, may we remember those

who put their lives on the line for freedom and those who stood against hatred. May our focus on you lead us to be as willing as they. In your Name we pray, Amen

DAY FOUR: October 3

Bar Harbor, Maine

I've always heard about this jewel of the Northeastern Coast, but I have never been here before; so I am as excited as any of you to be here! Bar Harbor has a long history of beauty, wealth and artistry. Painters from the Hudson River School in the 1840's discovered these unique surroundings nestled between water and islands, earth and sky; and they knew that they wanted to capture these brilliant scenes on canvas for the rest of the world to enjoy. And the more who saw the land and waterscapes of their work, the more visitors (like us!) began to descend upon this fantastic place.

As we prepare to soak in the magic of Bar Harbor, let us consider these words from our scriptures from today.

Different Waters

...give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over ... (Luke 6:38).

As we churn through the lovely northern waters of the Maine coastland and islands and bays of Bar Harbor, I'd like us to consider today another kind of body of water. This one, instead of bay, ocean or river, is a lake – but one of a very unusual kind. And it is one that some of you have been to before, or might be going to one day in the future. It is known as the Dead Sea. We shall find out why in a moment. But first ...

I have never really been able to float. I can swim fine. But when I stop moving my arms and legs, I sink. This was never much fun when training for becoming a lifeguard. My trainer insisted we all participate in the “drown

proofing” technique. The upper torso is to float on the surface, face down, relaxed with arms also floating and legs dangling easily and perpendicular to the surface. When a breath is needed, one gently strokes downward with the arms, lifts the head, takes a deep breath, and then returns to the original position. It sounds easy enough. And it almost killed me. My legs have no buoyancy – at all. While the rest of my body might float, my legs sink. So this drown proofing came very close to drowning me. Each time I wanted to take a breath, I had to swim back to the surface. And this, I came to learn quickly from my angry trainer, wasn’t supposed to happen, especially to lifeguards.

So, I was very happy to discover the magic of the Dead Sea. This is a special and very salty body of water at the end of the Jordan River in Israel. Given that it has a salt content of around thirty percent, everything can float—even me (the seawater surrounding us right now has a salt content of about three percent). When swimming in it as I get to do every time I take a group there, I am actually able to recline in the chest high water and hold a newspaper in both hands, read it casually, and still float effortlessly. I always enjoy watching the surprise of my fellow travelers when seeing how buoyant they feel in this fascinating place.

The water, you see, is trapped in the giant basin of this vast desert into which the waters of the Jordan River flow. From the sparkling clear, deep, and pure waters of the Sea of Galilee in the north, the Jordan River runs into the Dead Sea. With nowhere to go, since the Dead Sea is almost fourteen hundred feet below sea level, the water is left in what amounts to a giant puddle. It is thirty-four miles long and between eleven miles at its widest to two miles at its narrowest. It is also fourteen-hundred feet deep.

Because of the unique conditions of this location, the only thing left for the water gathering here to do is evaporate. Further, high temperatures and exceptionally low humidity create the conditions for an evaporation rate that is one of the most rapid in the world. The result is this remarkably high salt content that allowed me to float as never before. But for the water, the larger result is, literally, a *dead end*.

Now let us hear again what today's scripture says:

...give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over ... (Luke 6:38).

The amazing geographic and topographic anomaly of the Dead Sea offers us an insight into what it is that God seems to be hoping for us. God has created us to be channels of blessing, not dead ends for grace. What we receive we are to pass on, not hold to ourselves. The Dead Sea is an apt metaphor for the dangers of spiritual hoarding. Without an outlet to allow the water to flow to the sea, this most essential element has no alternative but to evaporate, rising through the atmosphere back to where it began. This substance from God returns untapped, unused, and unfulfilled. Beware of this danger in your own life today. Share your blessings.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY: Continue to teach me, Lord. Use me in ways on this trip and beyond, that will serve your purposes for my life. Allow me to fulfill my potential. Let me pass along the blessings that you so abundantly give to me. Give me the recognition and the thankful heart I need for my own spiritual strength. And allow me the gift of generosity – help me to convey a sense of your blessing with a gladness that is both genuine and contagious.

“Gentleness, self-sacrifice, and generosity are the exclusive possession of no one race or religion.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

DAY FIVE, October 4: Halifax, Nova Scotia

Welcome to Nova Scotia, Canada! Halifax is a vibrant, exciting city that boasts one of the best natural harbors in the world. The city is also famous as the rescue point for the survivors of the Titanic disaster in April 14 and 15, 1912. The kindness and compassion shown by the people here became a symbol for many over the ensuing years.

Nova Scotia itself has a long and rich history. The original people of the land, what Canadians call “First Nations,” welcomed the early Europeans and openly shared the land and techniques for survival. The first to begin European settlement were French speaking refugees, some Catholic, some Protestant, but all who in some way had become alienated from their original homeland.

Channels of Blessing and the Dykeland of Nova Scotia

*Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift,
is from above... (James 1:17).*

Nova Scotia was first settled by French settlers in 1605. They soon became known as Acadians after Acadia, the newly named land they inhabited. The name Acadia is believed to have come from a First Nation’s word for “land of plenty.”

The hardworking farmers had been refugees from persecutions in seventeenth and eighteenth century France. Finding a place among the kind Mi’kmaq people of Nova Scotia, they learned from the farming techniques and skills of those native people. Then, through trial and error, they also began to do something the native people had not tried. They discovered the rich, fertile soil of the marshes of western Nova Scotia. Slowly, they began to build dykes

and to drain these vast marshes. Then, realizing how the soil of these marshes had collected centuries of organic life that had biodegraded into eight or nine feet of incredibly fertile hummus-like dirt, they began to farm with a success found nowhere else in those early colonies of the European settlers.

Their dykes formed fields of bumper harvests and channels beautiful blessings. Also unlike their other European settlers, these Acadians maintained good and kind relationships with the native Mi'kmaq people, and for as long as they lived and farmed the land, did what they could to thrive collectively with those surrounding them. They were generous and saw their bounty as a gift from above that should be shared. The channels of blessings these Acadians found among the hard-build dykes and long seasons of draining and cultivating the marshes became a means of giving thanks and celebrating life.

This stands in stark contrast to a story that Jesus tells. It is in Luke 12 and is about a rich fool who is pleasantly surprised to find that his crops have yielded far more than he anticipated. He has no idea what to do with his surplus. "I know what I will do," he says. "I will build bigger barns so that I can store up all this extra stuff. Then I will say to my soul: 'Soul, now we can eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him 'Fool! This day your soul is required of you!'"

In other words, God seems to be saying: "You haven't used your soul, so I want it back!" The implication, according to Jesus, is profound. That part of ourselves that seems to be most fully us—our soul—is made to be shared, to be with others, to act and interact on a holy level that involves both relationships with others and our relationship with God. Failing that, hoarding

this sense of holy and communal connectedness, abuses the very foundation for our existence. The best part of ourselves goes unused.

Remember the sad lesson the Rich Fool missed: "... one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions" (Luke 12:15).

Instead: *Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above...*

PRAYER FOR TODAY: *Lord, help me see the beauty of this place with new eyes. As I notice the lovely scenery of the Nova Scotia landscape and recall the hardworking people who have toiled the land, allow me to also recognize in myself the potential to change my own home landscapes for goodness. Starting today, like the Acadian farmers of old, let me be a channel of blessing. Amen.*

DAY SIX: October 5

Sydney, Nova Scotia:

Listening as a Spiritual Gift

A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth.

The Lord opened her heart... (Acts 16:14).

My father once told me, "If you ever wonder what you should pray for, pray for discernment." The compliment to discernment is "keenly selective judgment," and, I would add, very good listening skills. It is using wisdom to make important decisions. Discernment integrates knowledge and facilitates wise decisions.

Today and for the next few days, let us consider a figure Luke presents in Acts who was very discerning. She was a woman named Lydia. I like having her as our model for the next few devotions for a couple of reasons. The first

simply has to do with the fact that she is female. As you might have noticed already, our group is filled with women.

Secondly, Lydia was also a traveler. She owned a home in Philippi, where this scripture takes place. But she also owned a home in a textile town called Thyatira in what is now modern-day Turkey. She operated a very important business and was apparently pretty wealthy.

And finally, she also traveled back and forth by boat, since Greece and Turkey were and still are separated by the Aegean Sea. I'm sure she traveled to many other places, too, selling her wares and learning how to improve her business. So she has much in common with us. But for the next few days, let's learn from her about something valuable she discovered.

As we hear in the scripture for today, Lydia was already a worshipper of God. She was on the right track. But she needed to know more, to live more fully and believe more thoroughly. She "was listening," Luke tells us.

Since childhood, I've been told: "You have two ears and one mouth for a reason—listening is more important than speaking!" Obviously, Lydia understood this well.

For today, concentrate on listening and make note of what you hear—the good and the bad. This is not to say that you eavesdrop. Just be quiet and hear carefully about what comes to your attention. Make this listening a part of your prayer life for the day. Can you hear the waves more clearly? What about the birds or the wind? What devotional wisdom arises from your silence and the chatter around you?

PRAYER FOR THE DAY: Help me to listen today O Lord. Give me an eager spirit so that what I hear can help me to grow, to learn and to become closer to what desire for my life and purpose. Let me be ready to be helpful; give me the grace

to be kind and patient. And keep me focused on all that is good and right and beautiful. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Consider: "Govern everything by your wisdom, O Lord, so that my soul may always be serving you in the way you will." —Teresa of Avila

DAY SEVEN: October 6

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island:

Anne of Green Gables

By Susan Griffin

*The Lord opened her heart ...
(Acts 16:14).*

I have been very excited to visit Prince Edward Island. I feel a connection. That connection is based on fiction, but nevertheless, it is there. It's hard to believe that its been twenty-five years ago since I was introduced to P.E.I and Charlottetown through a fictional video series called "Anne of Green Gables" which takes place there. After our daughter Elizabeth was born, my husband and I decided to stop paying for TV. No TV? How would we survive? My best friend was staying with me and said that we could watch a video instead and she just happened to have the perfect 8-hour video with her!! 8 hours? I had low expectations. She popped in the video and with Elizabeth asleep in my arms we pressed the play button. From the second I saw Anne with and "E", I was hooked! I went the next day and purchased my own copy and that video was the best purchase of my life at the time. I would watch and begin again. I couldn't get enough of the story line and characters. It ended up that it just played all the time until Elizabeth discovered "Barney", the purple dinosaur. Then, I had to share the VCR!

But what was it about “Anne of Green Gables” that drew me in? Anne, an orphan, was accidentally adopted by an elderly couple who at first wanted a boy. She was a skinny girl, with red hair and freckles who was wanted by no one. But she could imagine being wanted by everyone. When she had nothing, she could imagine having everything. Her infectious personality and her ability to talk incessantly made the couple curious enough to allow her to stay. Anne was in trouble all the time, making her fair share of mistakes, even without trying. She had one humiliating incident after another. At first I was sympathetic toward her, but, as she blossomed, there was no need. She always figured out how to brush off the embarrassment and carry on. She read incessantly, taking in all the knowledge her brain could hold, yet leaving room for as much imagination she could also squeeze in and then share with others.

She was brave, respectfully speaking her mind even though it might not sit well with others. She dared to dream big, even after she selflessly sacrificed her dreams for others. She learned how to begin each day with a clean slate, with no mistakes in it yet. She demonstrated love, loyalty, and forgiveness to those in her life. She looked for and found several “Kindred spirits” which became her lifelong friends, trusting them with her innermost thoughts and dreams and knowing there are few in this world in which to do that. Sometimes I was jealous of Anne, wanting to be just like her, and sometimes I was just in awe of her. I admired her gumption and optimism and I loved her imagination!

“Anne of Green Gables” is a family friendly series, where characters often quote scripture, and teach wholesome lessons that are also taught by our Lord. I have learned how to get through thorny territories where mistakes are made often and forgiveness is a must. I have learned to be kind to all

because kindness matters. I have learned ways to be strong, brave, selfless, loyal, open-minded, and visionary. I have learned to be a better person, wife, and parent. I have learned that its not what the world holds for me, its what I can bring to it. I have learned to find the “kindred spirit” in others and I have learned that today is a gift!

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! We, on this exciting journey this week, are kindred spirits with shared loves of travel and adventure and the shared love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Enjoy the gifts of this day in Charlottetown!

DAY EIGHT: October 7

Gulf of St. Lawrence (Cruising):

Openness as a Spiritual Hope

A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth.

*The Lord opened her heart...
(Acts 16:14).*

Lydia was wealthy. She was a trader and businesswoman. She interacted with the aristocracy of the day. She owned a home large enough to serve as the first Christian church on European soil. She had no husband (at least that we hear about!).

These subtle pieces of information allow us to put together a probable back-story to the beginnings of our expanding church heritage that Luke relates in the text (Acts 16:14-15 and 16:40). She had done well for herself. She had to have been savvy and intelligent to compete with the largely male-

dominated Greco-Roman world. But what occurs in this story has little to do with intelligence and much to do with her wisdom to honor the movement of God in her life. She was listening to what was being said. Then, “The Lord opened her heart” (Acts 16:14). Lydia became open to a new way of viewing the world and open to these new people around her. Her life changed that day.

As the Lord continues to inspire you with good things, open your heart today. Like Lydia, are you ready? Can you be honest with yourself, with what you need, and with how God can help? Let these days of communing with water, color, and loveliness guide and inspire you further. Let your heart and spirit be opened to new ways of seeing the wider, more beautiful world God is hoping to offer you. Be open to God. Be honest with yourself.

Consider: “Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.”
—Thomas Jefferson

PRAYER FOR TODAY: *With the wind in our faces, the cold Atlantic spray around us and Bay of St. Lawrence and the river coming upon us, allow us this day to feel your spirit in quiet but tangible ways. Guide me, O Lord, and allow me to bless someone in a way that allows them to feel your presence, too. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

DAY NINE: October 8

Saguenay Fjord, Quebec:

Eagerness as a Spiritual Passion

The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly...
(Acts 16:14).

I like the wording here: “to listen *eagerly* ...” At first, she was overhearing what was being said by Paul, Luke, Timothy and Silas were saying about the

gospel. What she heard intrigued her. She “was listening to us” Luke says in this sixteenth chapter, but it wasn’t until “the Lord opened her heart” that she began “to listen eagerly.” She could have simply been interested in what was being said and gone on with her routine. She was successful and busy and likely had a schedule to keep. But her mere listening was transformed into *eager* listening by God’s intervention. Something was happening to her heart by what she heard; and she wanted to hear more – and to do more!

Sometimes, maintaining a routine and keeping a schedule is the one thing that keeps us sane. With the many demands on us and the pushes and pulls from a variety of directions, maintaining consistency often is a survival strategy. But it can also squelch the movement of God in our hearts. Lydia was able to put aside her schedule to be somewhere and to do something and make her next appointment. She began to listen with a passion and earnestness that signals to us a new excitement for a need in her existence being suddenly awakened. As a result, her life and the lives of many others were changed.

As we experience more of the beauty of God’s creation and learn more about the history of this remarkable part of God’s world, make it your mission today to be eager to learn, to discover, and to experience something new. Be eager with passion for what God has in store.

Consider: “It is not that I’m so smart. But I stay with the questions much longer.”
— Albert Einstein

PRAYER FOR THE DAY: *Let me be wise enough, O God, to see Jesus in others. Let me be loving enough, so that others might see Jesus in me. Amen.*

DAY TEN: October 9
Quebec City, Quebec:

Responding as a Spiritual Expectation

*If you have judged me to be faithful, come and stay at my home
(Acts 16:15).*

Interestingly, in this simple conditional statement Lydia poses to Paul, Luke, Timothy, and Silas, we witness the beginning of an entirely new era in the life of the church. In this moment, according to Luke's telling, the church moves from Asia to the continent of Europe. Lydia's home, then, becomes the site of the first Christian church on European soil. "And she prevailed upon us," Luke says. She was, after all, a trader and salesperson accustomed to making deals and "prevailing" upon her customers. The eagerness with which she heard the gospel preached, she now begins to live. She offers hospitality to strangers. But more, she opens her home to be used by God as a sanctuary, a place of worship, a refuge, a hospice, a place of recovery.

When we return to our homes, are you aware of situations with which you could assist? Do you know about opportunities for God to use your time, talents or resources? Like Lydia, consider options for assisting; look for possibilities; listen for opportunities. Act with same eagerness that a change of heart through gospel calls for.

Now listen to what happens next in our scripture:

After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home; and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed (Acts 16:40).

Paul and Silas staggered back to Lydia's home for refuge. They had just been released from prison after being flogged. Imagine their being welcomed

by their fellow believers all gathered in her house. How long were they there? How often did they come? Exactly what was her role as hostess and owner of the house that doubled as the church? We don't know. But we can speculate. Her home was large enough to accommodate many. Her hospitality was warm enough to keep the faithful returning. And her house was safe enough that following an arrest, Paul and Silas, nor the others would be harassed by authorities.

How hospitable are we in our circles of friends? How willing are you to offer hospitality in the name of Jesus? Today, think of some ways you might be hospitable on behalf of a significant cause. See if, by your thoughts on Lydia and prayers for discernment, God might be calling upon you to offer hospitality in some way.

Consider: “There is no hospitality like understanding.”

— Vanna Bonta

PRAYER FOR THE DAY: Thank you, Lord. How fortunate I am to be a part of these people and in this lovely place. Thank you for your beautiful world and for the people who have been a part of my life over these last ten days. Give me the wisdom to be the kind of person you need me to be as we experience the final part of this amazing trip. Open my eyes to what you need me to see today. And open my heart, so that I might be as compassionate as you need me to be. Amen.

DAY ELEVEN: October 10

Quebec City, Quebec:

Count Your Blessings

*Present your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and acceptable to God...
(Romans 12:1).*

In the classic movie, “White Christmas,” Bing Crosby sings the famous and very insightful song by Irving Berlin, “Count Your Blessings”:

*When I'm worried and I can't sleep,
I count my blessings instead of sheep
and I fall asleep counting my blessings.
When my bankroll is getting small,
I think of when I had none at all,
and I fall asleep counting my blessings.*

I hope you have have felt as blessed on this trip and Beth and I have. We have been so blessed to have been your traveling companions, and blessed to call each of you friends. As we prepare to go back to our homes, I also hope that you have learned something very special during our time together. Beyond the beauty and incredible scenery, I trust you have gotten a good sense of history. Both and American and Canadian stories ought to continue to impact the way we now see and understand the world. I also trust that you have gained some new friends, and perhaps have gone deeper with some old friends. I hope these relationships will continue to add richness to your life.

Finally, as we prepare to return to our homes and to the real world, let us remember some basics that ought to continue to inform our Christian pilgrimage.

I like what Paul says in Romans:

“Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God...” (Romans 12:1).

Every day, we are blessed by the gift of God’s presence in our lives; we are offered grace for our journeys, and love for our relationships. None of these begin with us. And they are not supposed to end with us. We are conduits, channels for these blessings to and on behalf of the lives of others.

Acknowledge what God dreams for you. You are called to be a living sacrifice. You are holy and acceptable to God! Remain vigilant and determined to be a glad and willing channel of grace. And in case you are worried when you get back home, and you can’t sleep: “count your blessings instead of sheep.” And then wake up to be a blessing. Your life will make a lot more sense in the long run!

Now may you live and travel with joy in the service of God. Amen.

With much love and gratitude,

David Jordan

Fall, 2017