



# Awareness Window

A newsletter for those in recovery and their families

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## Points to Ponder:

### Step Two—HOPE

We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

We understand this to mean:

We've come to believe through the Holy Spirit that a power who came in the person of Jesus Christ and who is greater than ourselves can transform our weaknesses into strengths.

**James 1:21-22: "Get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. DO what it says."**

The source for sane living comes from the WORD. The Word can save you, but James is telling us that just listening to it is not enough; doing is the other part.

The sanity that we searched for in a bottle, pill, or shot had proved to be insanity for ourselves and for those around us. Each one of us at some time might have said or even promised, "I'll stop using; I know I can do it!"

We didn't stop until something intervened. Perhaps God allowed us to get seriously ill. Maybe a family member gave us an ultimatum from which we could not escape. Or did our conscience with the weight of our guilt lead us to admit we didn't want to be stuck in this life? We came to admit our powerlessness because things were not working out.

Listening to God's Word may have become less important or non-existent in our using years. We might have attended church just to save face or keep people from knowing our secret vice. Our families out of embarrassment may have kept our secret and not sought help from their sisters and brothers in faith. As you read further in James 1, you can see that with God's help, we can live a life that is pleasing to our God. Looking into the Word of God will give us the message of freedom and living according to his Word brings blessings.

Thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word, we know the values to follow. The world's value system centered on pleasure, money, and power is replaced with commitment to Christ and walking his paths in our recovery.

*Prayer: Breathe, oh, breathe your loving Spirit, into ev'ry troubled breast; Let us all in you inherit; let us find the promised rest. Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be; End of faith as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty. Amen.*

*Please share your story or materials you find helpful in your walk of recovery.*

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# Comfort Bible Readings

The Advent and Epiphany seasons of our church year are often looked at as the seasons of COMFORT AND JOY. Perhaps you have started your personal list of Scripture passages that bring you comfort and joy. A friend of mine carries a set of 3x5 cards in her purse on which she has written her set of "Comfort and Joy." She will often share a specific card with a friend who is going through a hard time, knowing she can always replace it in her set. Below are some passages you might include on your list of favorites.

Joshua 1:9: Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

Psalms 50:15: Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.

Matthew 11:28-29: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Romans 8:28: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:31-32: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

2 Corinthians 12:9-10: But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Christmas decorating uses so many symbols. As people slowly take their decorations down after Christmas, we can still see some of them and remember the glow of Christmas. One that even nature uses on a nightly basis is the star. Long ago one special star led the wise men to the home of their Savior and ours. The star pointed the way to the Savior, who continues to guide us all through the challenges of life. The poet in the poem below gives us a view into what the STAR says.

## *The Nail-Studded Star*

*One starry night our Savior came—  
A sinless babe, to take our blame.  
The stars above declared his love.  
The God who made the stars to shine  
Was born beneath these lights in time.  
His earthly life began with star  
And ended nailed upon a spar.  
The Light of freedom, undisturbed  
Was framed, preserved, by nail and thorn.  
The joy we have all unperturbed  
Was bought with pain—encircled crown.  
My Light, my life, is from God's gain;  
It, too, is sometimes wreathed in pain.*

*This star is studded with the nails  
To show the price God's glory hails.*

LLS 5-30-11



## Meet Jeff Richardson, CSAC—Christian Family Counseling's Newest Staff Member

I was born and raised in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, in 1971. I was baptized at Redeemer Lutheran Church and have been WELS since then, except for a wonderful experience in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) when I was stationed in Washington State.

I attended Redeemer Lutheran School for most of my childhood education, and once I entered high school, I attended Winnebago Lutheran Academy in Fond du Lac for my freshman year. I graduated in 1989 from Goodrich High School and immediately attended college at Fox Valley Tech. I graduated from there and worked at the Buckstaff Company out of Oshkosh as a woodworker.

In 1992, I decided that I wanted to see the world and enlisted in the US Navy. I fell in love with a hometown girl that I met through my mother. After much prayer and consideration, we were married after six weeks of knowing each other, and we celebrated our 18th anniversary this last May. We were blessed to share that, along with my retirement from the Navy with my our four daughters, family, and close friends. Through my 20-year career in the Navy, there has been so much that I have experienced, and I have truly enjoyed the ride—through the best of times and the worst of times—which is why I love my Savior who gave me strength.

In 2005, while on deployment in Japan, I was looking for a new command. A special program offered through the Navy caught my attention, called Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program (SARP). It reminded me of the days in high school where I studied and enjoyed psychology. I went through the grueling process of being accepted into Navy Drug and Alcohol Counselor's School (NDACS) in Point Loma, California. It was not an easy process, but I was determined to complete it. I learned many valuable lessons from this experience, and it helped me to identify my own character defects. Through reflection, discussion, and prayer, I finally understood the importance of letting go, submitting myself, and accepting my powerlessness over every facet of life. It was there that I learned it was OK to not be perfect and that God had a plan for me.

For the last three years, I have been in constant contact with WLCFS in the hopes that upon my retirement, I could become part of their family and share their goal of "healing and helping people in need through the ministry of Jesus Christ," providing drug and alcohol counseling using the faith that God has given me.

I have my own vices, but the addiction to alcohol or drugs has not been problematic for me. However, like so many, I struggle with everyday problems. Through the grace of God; training at NDACS; seven years' experience at a multi-level treatment facility in Great Lakes, IL; and being the Director of SARP onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, I offer my clinical knowledge, hard-earned experience, and faith in Christ to anyone who would like to share in the journey to recovery or to recover life.

A very skilled clinician once told me, "We are in a field to save lives." At first those words eluded me, but now I understand that the life we work hard to save is not just the essential minute-by-minute blood flow and respiration, but also the life of the person—that their plans, goals, dreams, and aspirations can be met through the freedom from addiction and the love of Jesus Christ.

**Jeff will be working out of our Fond du Lac & Appleton offices in 2013. Welcome to Christian Family Counseling, Jeff!**



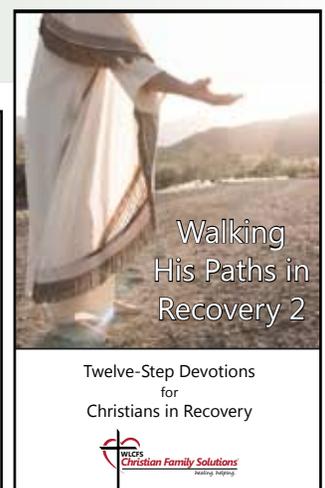
Jeff Richardson, CSAC, ICDAC

### ***Walking His Paths in Recovery 2 Now Available!***

Are you looking for an encouraging devotional book to accompany the 12 steps? ***Walking His Paths in Recovery 2*** is now available. This book features Scripture and three short devotionals based on each of the 12 steps. Also included are pages to write thoughts and reflections about personal recovery pertaining to each step.

The book costs \$7.00.

**Also available:** *Walking His Paths in Recovery 1* (\$7.00) and *Conquerors Through Christ* (\$9.00). To order any of the books, please contact Ann at 888.685.9522 or [ajahns@wlcfs.org](mailto:ajahns@wlcfs.org), or contact Elsa at [emanthey@wlcfs.org](mailto:emanthey@wlcfs.org). You will be sent an invoice along with the book(s).





## Retreat 2013 ~ "I Have a Life" ~ April 26-28

**Our Annual A&DA Retreat will be held at Monte Alverno Retreat Center in Appleton, WI. This will be the 29th A&DA Recovery Retreat. Life has meaning, humor, activity, and fellowship. All of these will be found at RETREAT 2013. Pastor Henke from Bethany Lutheran Church in Appleton will lead us in understanding the focal point of our life (John 10:10). Sheryl Cowling, a counselor from our WLCFS office in Germantown, WI, will also be a presenter. The Retreat brochure that you will receive in the next Awareness Window mailing will have additional information about the retreat.**

*Photos of the grounds of Monte Alverno in the spring, courtesy of a retreat participant.*

### A&DA Meetings

	<i>When</i>	<i>Where</i>		<i>Contact</i>
Sunday	7:00 p.m.	St. Paul's Lutheran*	Onalaska, WI	(608) 777-6329
Monday	6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	The Gardens of Hartford Mt. Zion Lutheran	Hartford, WI Missoula, MT	(262) 224-0483 (406) 490-9345
Tuesday	7:00 p.m. Call for times	St. Mark's Lutheran Ascension Lutheran	Watertown, WI Harrisburg, PA	(920) 262-8500 (717) 319-5424
Thursday	8:00 p.m.	Bethany Lutheran	Manitowoc, WI	(920) 684-9620
Friday	5:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Salem Lutheran (East Side) Mt. Olive Lutheran Church*	Milwaukee, WI Appleton, WI	(414) 964-7036 (920) 233-0437
Saturday	8:00 p.m.	St. Peter's Lutheran	Fond du Lac, WI	(920) 921-8075

\*also have Al-Anon meetings; call for details