



# Jesus, Our Friend

by Jill Munoz, Vice-President, Christian Growth

Can any good come out of a drowning accident? Water is so essential to life and yet it can kill. Drowning accidents happen.

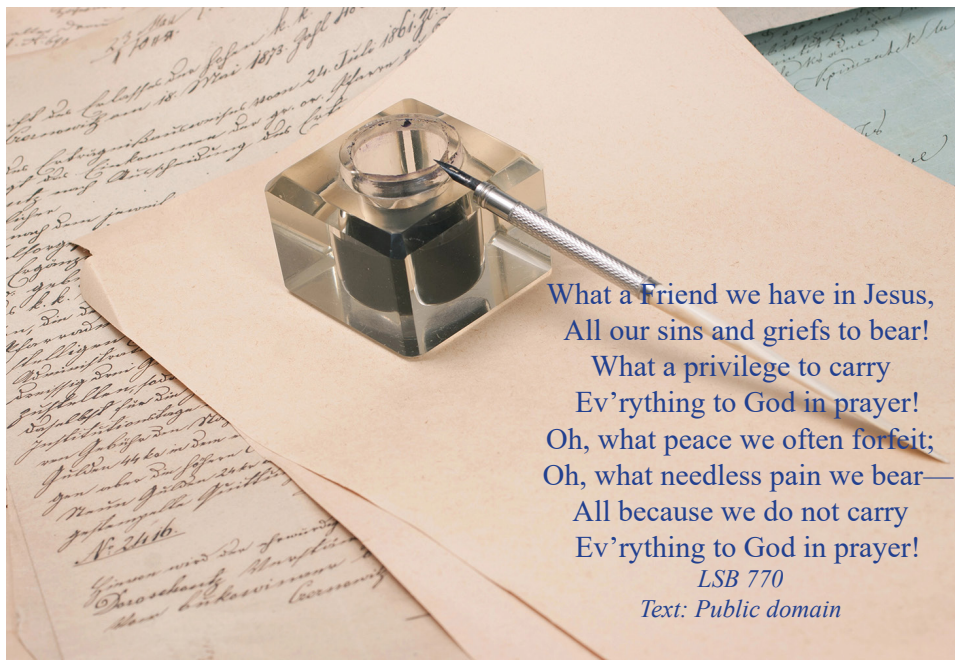
Joan Nathan, a nurse practitioner and Lutheran pastor's wife, living in New York, shared this story with me.

“My third great grandfather was Dr. John Sidey (1820-1892) from St. Catharines, Ontario. My third great grandmother was Agnes Sackville Sidey (1820-1910). Her family was from Port Hope, Ontario.

“The family had a friend who was not well. He was from Ireland and had suffered the loss of his fiancée in a drowning accident. Immigrating to Canada, he hoped to start a new life. But more grief ensued with the death of a second fiancée. Being emotionally fraught causing physical illness, he moved to Port Hope and stayed on the Sackville family farm with Joan's relatives.

“The family's friend was Joseph Scriven. He wrote words on a piece of paper that was later found in the drawer next to his bed. His faith, as evidenced in the words he penned, gave him hope in his Saviour, Jesus Christ, despite his losses.

“The poem was sent to Joseph's ailing mother back in Ireland. He called it “Pray Without Ceasing.” Joan states that the original paper with the words Joseph wrote was used to wrap up an item mailed to New York City. The person who found these written words when



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

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the item was unwrapped knew someone in the publishing world. Joseph Scriven's thoughts, written in great grief, are the lyrics to a famous hymn: What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

Are you drowning in despair? Is your pain causing physical illness? 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Look to Jesus, the friend who carried your sins and griefs to the cross and through His resurrection gives you eternal life in Him.

Sadly, many years later, Joseph died by accidental drowning in the Sackville Mill Pond on the farm.