

RWD

Remembering
Robert David Wolgemuth

FEBRUARY 28, 1948 – JANUARY 10, 2026

“The LORD gave,
and the LORD has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Job 1:21 NKJV



MEMORIAL SERVICE
Friday, January 23, 2026

Community Baptist Church
South Bend, Indiana



“My greatest desire is that people who drive back to their homes after my service will remember me as a broken and sinful man who, by God’s grace, was ushered into His presence.”

—Robert Wolgemuth, *Finish Line*

Robert's Life Passage



PSALM 27 NKJV

¹ The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The LORD *is* the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid? . . .

⁴ One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.

⁵ For in the time of trouble
He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall set me high upon a rock. . . .

⁶ Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD. . . .

¹³ *I would have lost heart*, unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of the LORD
In the land of the living.

¹⁴ Wait on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!



From Nancy's Heart . . .

Precious friends,

On behalf of Robert's and my extended families, I want to express how deeply grateful we are for your presence today and for the outpouring of love, prayers, and grace we have received over these past weeks.

In times of grief and loss, it is good for us to be together. Though our eyes may be filled with tears, it is good to read and proclaim His Word together. And it is good to sing together words that affirm His Truth and that anchor and counsel our hearts.

Many of the elements in this service (including the verse on the cover of this program, songs and hymns, and participants) were selected by Robert and recorded in a document on his laptop—one of countless ways he was intentional about preparing to reach his “finish line.”

My prayer today is that together we would acknowledge the grief we are experiencing over “losing” our beloved friend Robert; we would honor his memory and recall the ways the Lord has used him in our lives; we would be inspired to run our own race more faithfully, all the way to the finish line; those who do not have assurance that they will be in Heaven when they die would come to Christ and trust Him for salvation; and above all, we would worship the Lord who does all things well.

Heaven rules.

Jesus is near.

Today. Tomorrow. Forever.

In Loving Memory

Robert David Wolgemuth, age 77, left his earthly body and entered into the presence of Christ on January 10, 2026, following a brief but intense battle with complications from pneumonia.

Born February 28, 1948, in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, to Samuel and Grace Wolgemuth, Robert grew up in a vibrant Christian home and came to faith at his mother's knee as a young child. After graduating from Wheaton Central High School (Wheaton, Illinois) in 1965, he attended Taylor University (Upland, Indiana), where he graduated in 1969 with a degree in Biblical Literature and later received an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters.

Robert met and fell in love with Barbara ("Bobbie") Gardner when he was a college student and they married in March of 1970. Two precious daughters followed: Melissa ("Missy") in 1971 and Julie in 1974—planting the seeds for Robert's first book, *She Calls Me Daddy*.

After 44 years of marriage and a thirty-month battle with cancer—and with Robert by her side—Bobbie went Home to Jesus on October 28, 2014. Robert often said of Bobbie: "The way she handled her own imminent death removed from my heart any fear of dying. She showed us how to do this with grace."

Although he worked his way through college as a contractor and maintained a lifelong love of building projects, Robert spent his career in the publishing industry. Journalist Warren Smith said, "Robert Wolgemuth has been one of the most influential evangelicals you've never heard of. . . . He was the president of Thomas Nelson Publishers, one of the oldest and most successful Christian book publishers in the world. In 1992, he became a literary agent, representing some of the most successful evangelical writers in the country."

Robert also held significant positions at *Campus Life* magazine, Word Publishing, and as co-founder with Michael Hyatt of Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers. He authored or co-authored some twenty-five books, several of which received Silver Medallion Awards. He served as Chairman of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association and founded his own literary agency, Wolgemuth & Associates.

As a literary agent, Robert represented author Nancy Leigh DeMoss for a few years, during which time he and Bobbie became dear friends of Nancy. Unbeknownst to Robert, as Bobbie neared death, she told a couple of close



friends that she hoped Robert would marry Nancy after she was gone. Some time following Bobbie's Home-going, Robert initiated a relationship with Nancy who, to that point, had joyfully served the Lord as a single woman. The Lord opened Nancy's heart to receive Robert's kindness and love and the couple was married on November 14, 2015, in Wheaton, Illinois.

In his final book, *Finish Line*, Robert wrote about finishing life well—with preparation, peace, and purpose. He challenged his readers to live fully for Christ all the way to the end, all the way to “the dazzling splendor of Jesus. A blinding sparkle. A brilliant finish, to be sure. What an amazing goal for you and me. To *finish* well . . . with a beautiful, burnished, God-honoring *finish*.”

Robert lived what he preached, investing his last years on earth to the full: serving tirelessly alongside Nancy at *Revive Our Hearts*, writing, teaching, praying, mentoring younger men, caring for his neighbors, enjoying his family, and loving Jesus, Nancy, and others in a way that was infectious.

Robert joins his late wife, Bobbie, in Christ's presence. He leaves behind his wife, Nancy; two daughters and sons-in law: Missy (Jon) Schrader and Julie (Christopher) Tassy; five grandchildren and two grandsons-in-law: Abby (Ben) Quirin, Luke, Isaac, Harper (Durham) Martin, Ella; and four great-grandchildren: Ezra, Ruby, Frances, and (soon to be born) Penelope. He also leaves behind a loving extended family (including five close siblings and their mates and children) and an army of friends who treasure his love and life.

Robert's friends and family will remember him as a faithful man of God, devoted husband, loving father and grandfather, wise servant-leader, relentless encourager, and spiritual role model. His absence is sorely felt, but even now in death, his life continues to point to his one great Hope: everlasting life with his Savior in the new heavens and the new earth, surrounded by God's people forever.

*And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* —Isaiah 35:10

“Crossing the finish line is going to be a celebration like you cannot imagine. Even better. It's Christmas morning when you were a kid. It's your honeymoon. It's the birth of your first child. Or grandchild. Or great-grandchild. It's your favorite team winning the championship. The word is way overused, but this time it fits: one day your finish line is going to be awesome.” —Robert Wolgemuth (*Finish Line*)



Order of Service



PRELUDE

JACK SCHRADER

PROCESSIONAL

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

“AS WE SAIL TO HEAVEN’S SHORE”

STEVE GREEN, ACCOMPANIED BY DICK TUNNEY

CALL TO WORSHIP

DR. JOSEPH FANT

STATEMENT OF FAITH

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

“CHRIST OUR HOPE IN LIFE AND DEATH”

ABBY QUIRIN, ACCOMPANIED BY JACK SCHRADER

TRIBUTES

ERIK WOLGEMUTH

GREG THORNTON

JANINE NELSON

“FIND US FAITHFUL”

STEVE GREEN

TRIBUTES

DAN WOLGEMUTH

LUKE SCHRADER

WILL ELLERMAN (REBECCA)

JONI EARECKSON TADA

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

REFLECTIONS

NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH

“SAFELY HOME”

STEVE GREEN, ACCOMPANIED BY DICK TUNNEY

MESSAGE

DR. DAVID SWANSON

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISMISSAL

DR. JOSEPH FANT

CLOSING PRAYER

DR. GEORGE GRANT

DOXOLOGY

STEVE GREEN AND CONGREGATION
ACCOMPANIED BY DICK TUNNEY

RECESSATIONAL

DICK TUNNEY





FROM ROBERT'S HEART

*R*obert was intentional about being ready to die. If he could speak today, he would want to urge you to do the same. He knew that his “finish line” would actually be the start of an unimaginably magnificent eternity with Christ. He would want you to know that you can have this same assurance about your finish line as you call on the Lord, repent of your sin, and trust in Christ to save you. May it be so today.



“Someday folks will be counting the ‘many seeds’ . . . and the harvest . . . that will be produced when I ‘fall to the ground and die.’ At least I hope they will. You may be reading these words after that happens, and if you’d care to look into it, you may discover, by God’s grace, some of those seeds. And the fruit. I’m truly trusting there’s some good stuff. This is both sobering and comforting for me. As it should be for you. So I have a question I’m hoping I have your permission to ask: When you die and your ‘kernel of wheat’ falls to the ground and dies, what will your harvest look like?”

“When you and I know with absolute certainty that our end is near, God Himself will be our refuge. Our strength. The Lord Almighty will be with us.”

“Say it loud. Say it with all your heart. Say it because you mean it. I’m going to say it right here instead of goodbye. And I’m going to say it every time I have a chance, until I can speak no more. Ready? I love you.”



“Jesus is my Savior. My hope. My security. A carpenter by trade, He has promised an eternal dwelling place built for me when I die. . . . I’m expecting a huge family room with comfortable furniture where we can gather and celebrate—forever.”



Service Participants

Officiants

Dr. Joseph Fant — Pastor, Community Baptist Church, South Bend, Indiana

Dr. David Swanson — Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Orlando, Florida

Music

Abby Quirin — Oldest grandchild; mother of Robert's first two great-grandchildren. Abby is expecting her third—Robert's fourth great-grandchild.

Jack Schrader — Missy Wolgemuth Schrader's father-in-law; arranger, composer, conductor, vocalist, and organist and pianist; interim music minister at Shell Point, Fort Myers, Florida

Steve Green — Friend and Christian singer/recording artist

Dick Tunney — Pianist and arranger

Tributes

Erik Wolgemuth — Nephew and longtime colleague at Wolgemuth & Wilson

Greg Thornton — Longtime friend of Robert; Nancy's publisher at Moody Publishing for many years. When Nancy shared that she was considering signing with Robert as her agent, Greg assured her there was no agent he would rather see her work with. Greg serves on the *Revive Our Hearts* Board.

Janine Nelson — Ministry friend of Robert's for many years; serves on the *Revive Our Hearts* leadership team

Dan Wolgemuth — Robert's brother; president of Youth for Christ, 2005–2021; vice chair, Taylor University Board

Luke Schrader — Robert's oldest grandson, representing Robert's grandchildren and their mates

Will Ellerman (Rebecca) — Robert and Will have shared a special relationship for several years. Some months ago, Robert told Nancy, "I want Will to speak at my funeral." His mother, Rebecca Ellerman, serves on staff with *Revive Our Hearts*.

Joni Eareckson Tada — Friend of Robert and Nancy for many decades; Christian author, speaker, and disability advocate; founder of Joni and Friends

Prayer

Dr. George Grant — Prayer partner with Robert for nineteen years; Pastor Emeritus, Parish Presbyterian Church, Franklin, Tennessee

Pallbearers

Jon Schrader — Son-in-law

Christopher Tassy — Son-in-law

Luke Schrader — Grandson

Isaac Schrader — Grandson

Ben Quirin — Grandson-in-law

Durham Martin — Grandson-in-law

Andrew Wolgemuth — Nephew

Erik Wolgemuth — Nephew

Austin Wilson — Friend and colleague

Hymns and Sharing Memories

Bob Lepine, Host — Longtime friend of Robert; Pastor, Redeemer Community Church, Little Rock, Arkansas; chairman of the *Revive Our Hearts* Board

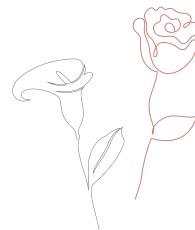
THE FLOWERS

When Robert and I were married in 2015, we desired for our wedding to give people a vision of the love and the loveliness of Christ. That same desire has been on my heart as we gather for Robert's funeral.

We chose to use red roses and white calla lilies for our wedding. In the Song of Songs, the bride says to her beloved: "*I am [merely] a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys*" (2:1). To which the groom responds: "*As a lily among brambles, so is my love among the young women.*" Throughout our ten years of marriage, I never lost a sense of the wonder that Robert would have chosen me. And Robert never ceased to remind me how precious I was to him.

Today I have chosen to use *roses* and *lilies* to remember Robert, as they depict the most enduring realities of his life. Lilies are a symbol of resurrection and new life. Though the bulb lies dormant in the earth, it is not an ending but a beginning—for new life will soon emerge. The lily reminds us that death is not the final word. It points to the promise of the resurrection and the hope of life beyond the grave for those who are in Christ.

The trumpet-shaped blooms remind us that “*the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first*” (1 Thess. 4:16).



THE COLORS

White symbolizes Christ's purity and holiness and the beauty of a soul made clean and new through Him. Scripture reminds us that those washed in Christ are clothed in His righteousness: “*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow*” (Isa. 1:18).

Red speaks of love and sacrifice. It recalls the blood of Christ, poured out for our salvation, and His steadfast love which endures forever. In the red rose, we are reminded of “*Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*” (Rev. 1:5–6).

—Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

Statement of Faith

WHAT IS YOUR ONLY COMFORT IN LIFE AND IN DEATH?

That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.

Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 1



GONE FROM MY SIGHT

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship, at my side,
spreads her white sails to the moving breeze and starts
for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength.
I stand and watch her until, at length, she hangs like a speck
of white cloud just where the sea and sky come to mingle with each other.

Then, someone at my side says, "There, she is gone."

Gone where?

Gone from my sight. That is all. She is just as large in mast,
hull and spar as she was when she left my side.
And, she is just as able to bear her load of living freight to her destined port.
Her diminished size is in me—not in her.

And, just at the moment when someone says, "There, she is gone,"
there are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices
ready to take up the glad shout, "Here she comes!"

And that is dying . . .

—Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933)





*A*s we sit here today, we have no idea what our future may hold. Our story is still being written, and He has not given us an inside track on what the next chapters look like. But our trust is in the One who holds our future—the Author and the Finisher of our faith. That gives us freedom and peace, even when we cannot see what lies ahead.

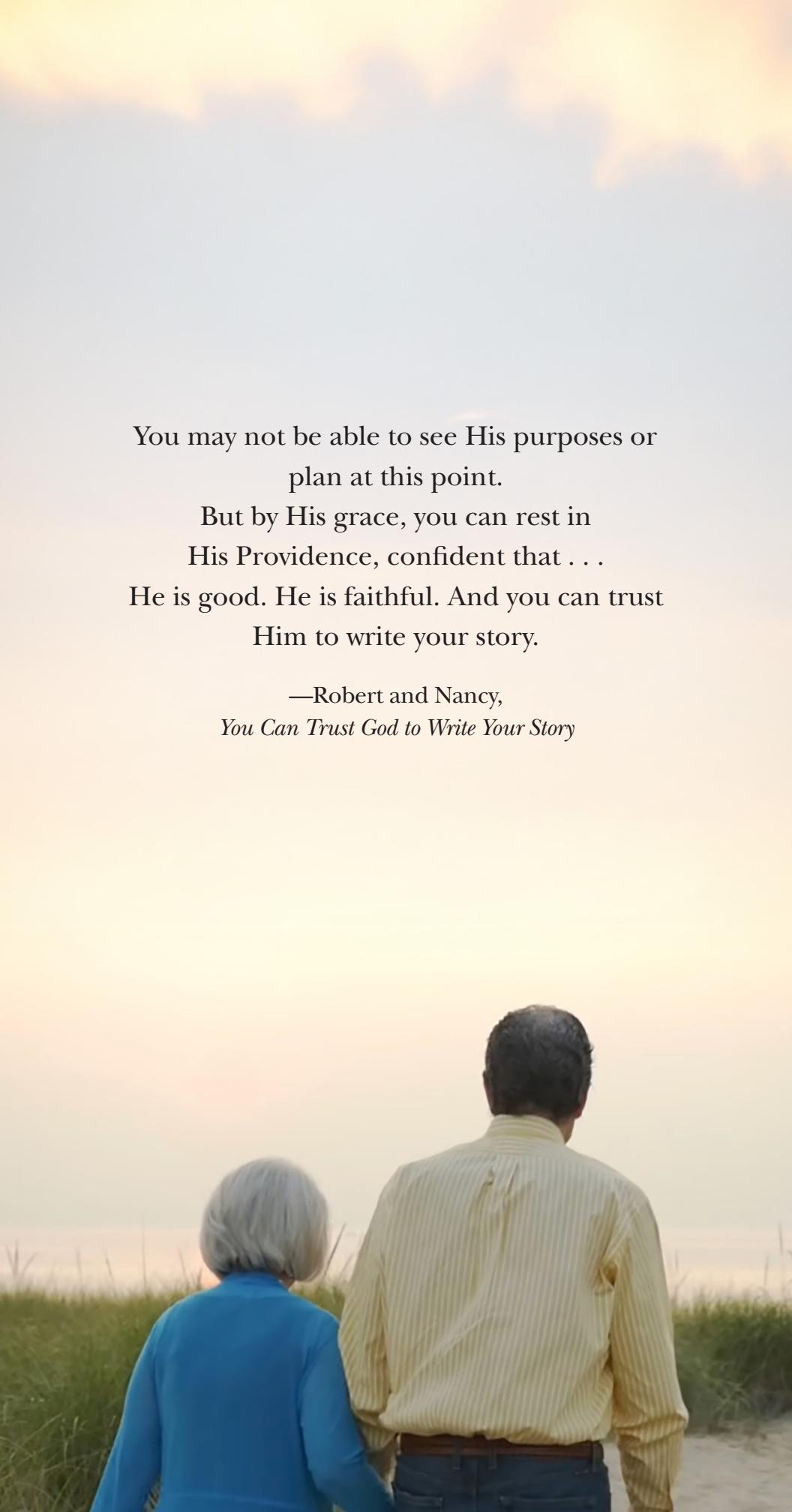
As we've listened to some of the painful stories dear friends have shared with us for this book, we can't help but wonder what rocky paths we may yet be called to travel. (We know it's impossible to become like Jesus apart from testing and trials.) We may yet face serious health issues, the loss of a mate, and/or other crises known only to Him.

But we know He has been faithful in each chapter thus far. And we know He will be faithful in each one yet to come, and that His grace will be sufficient for wherever He leads us.

We don't want to tell Him how to write our story; we trust Him to write our story for us. Our goal is not to make a name, a ministry, or a reputation for ourselves, but to make much of Him and to finish the race He has marked out for us to run.

Above all, our desire is that our lives will showcase the beauty and the goodness of His Story.

—Robert and Nancy, *You Can Trust God to Write Your Story*
(Moody Publishers, 2019)



You may not be able to see His purposes or
plan at this point.

But by His grace, you can rest in
His Providence, confident that . . .
He is good. He is faithful. And you can trust
Him to write your story.

—Robert and Nancy,
You Can Trust God to Write Your Story

Heaven rules.
Jesus is near.