



HOUSTON VISITING CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSE SERVICE, INC.

Our mission is to heal through practical, operative Christian Science.

February 2024

Loving others

My grandmother arrived on earth's scene one fine February day. She was named for the flower often associated with this month: Violet. Close friends called her "Vi." She was just "Gram" to me.

Symbolically, violets suggest loyalty and faithfulness—character traits that befit Gram. Violets also bring to mind grace and love—qualities Gram abundantly expressed.

Here's an example of Gram's grace. She noticed that "Pop," as I called my grandfather, threw himself into his farm work and that I, as his helper, scrambled to keep up with his brisk pace. One day she sensed her six-year-old grandson deserved a short getaway. She quietly proposed a day trip, just the two of us, to the Gettysburg battlefield, which was only 30 miles away. Of course, I was *thrilled*.

That was the first of several pilgrimages Gram took me on to the Civil War's hallowed ground. As I climbed up and down the giant boulders of Devil's Den, she sat with her notepad, Bible, and *Science and Health* at a nearby picnic table. Occasionally she glanced up from her studying to see where I was and make sure I was safe.

When Gram and I stopped for lunch at a Civil War-themed diner, I paused between bites of cherry pie to ask, "Gram, how did you decide to become a Christian Science practitioner?" This was a rare moment for her because, unless asked, Gram seldom talked about religion—preferring to live it.

She fixed her gentle eyes on mine and opened her heart. She told me about her older brother, George, whom I didn't know she had. Throughout their growing-up years, he was her dearest friend.

One day, when she was in her late teens, George was rushed to a hospital with a life-or-death illness. "I didn't know anything about God, but I prayed as best I knew how," Gram said. "I made a promise to Him: If you save my brother, I will

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devote the rest of my life to serving You.”

That’s precisely what she did. Countless people were blessed and healed through her commitment to God, made years ago in a hospital room by her brother’s side. (Incidentally, I was not surprised when, not long after our lunchtime conversation, Gram showed me a snapshot of my great uncle George blowing out candles on his 90th birthday.)

I was one of those countless people helped by Gram’s prayers. The May 2022 issue of “Good News” (available online) relates how I was healed as a result of her refusal to be impressed by the material picture of a growth on my arm.

So, for me, February is about much more than Valentine romance and red roses, candy and cards. It’s about selfless giving. It’s about loving others compassionately. It’s about Christian kindness. It’s about Christly healing works.

Interestingly, the Latin word *Februarius* means month of expiation. Its name comes from *februo*—“to purify by sacrifice.” On the 15th day of the month, a Roman festival was held for people to be purified by sacrifices and oblations.

In Christian Science, purification is an entirely spiritual, not material, washing—a silent, sacred communing with God.

Communion, or oneness, with our Father has its origins in the Old Testament and was again articulated in the New Testament in two great commandments given to us by Christ Jesus: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30, 31).

Gram humbly lived the two great commandments at all times and in all ways. She communed with God when washing dishes and cooking meals and hanging clothes on the line.

She remained in such faithful, steadfast communion with Him that patients knew they could call her at any hour of day or night for spiritual support and healing prayer.



Violet M. Keck (aka “Gram”)

Indeed, so attuned was Gram to our heavenly Father that she heard what must have been an unwitting silent plea from her young grandson for a needed break from unremitting farm work.

Our *Journal*-listed Christian Science nurse, Susie Petersen, brings the same mental atmosphere of pure love and devoted service to her clients, whether she is preparing a meal, reading the Bible Lesson aloud at a bedside, or cleaning a wound. She responds to each need with expertise, quiet listening, tender care, and confidentiality. She explains to her clients that financial concerns need never be a barrier to serving them, for funding from nonprofit organizations is always available for Christian Science nursing.

Susie and the Board of Directors wish you a February filled with the joy that comes from loving the Lord and your neighbor with all your heart. And we give each of you a festive bouquet of . . .



Financial Assistance Available

Any Christian Scientist relying upon the services of a Christian Science practitioner and/or a *Journal*-listed Christian Science nurse may obtain financial support by applying to the [National Fund for Christian Science Nursing](https://www.nfcsn.org) (NFCSN). You may contact The Principle Foundation, which manages this fund, by emailing info@nfcsn.org or by calling (800) 873-2843.

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Our service is grateful for the financial support from area Christian Science churches and individuals. Their contributions help us pay for our contracted staff and operating expenses.

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“Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee”

Christian Science Hymn 324