

# Heart & Hand

Quarterly Newsletter of the **Spiritual Care Support Ministries**<sup>sm</sup>

Reaching for a hand, and touching a heart

Vol. 12, Ed. 2, June 2016

Issuing four times yearly - March, June, September and December

## Greetings from Chaplain Liz

Greetings from the Spiritual Care Support Ministry Center where we are excited about the creative and new ideas of support that we are offering this year as God directs our steps and efforts. We have been waiting on God to give us new and creative ideas to support children, teens, and adults that have lost their way because of illness, grief, and personal losses. When our new SCSM Center is built, we will have more room to offer a lot more programs. For twelve years at the SCSM Center we have heard the cries and seen the tears of those who have entered our doors and trusted us to hear their physical, emotional, and spiritual pain. Not everyone understands what they are feeling and going through, and that is alright. We understand, and more importantly, God understands. Since He understands the needs of every human being, He made available the ministry of SCSM to give support so that they can find a way to heal. We are so grateful to all of the other ministries and agencies in the community that are helping others as well. We know what God has called us to specifically do, and when there is a need that we cannot meet,

there are others that we can refer people to, and we are grateful for them. Partnership in caring for others is what it is all about. Let's get rid of the word "competition." Competition divides and weakens us. Together we can be strong, and people can be supported the way God intended. May the Lord bless all our efforts, which we pray will bring hope and



transform the hearts of those who come to us for support. **It is not about being busy and filling up our calendar. It is about our hands reaching out to those who are suffering in creative ways so their hearts can feel the healing touch of God and find meaning and purpose again.**

Our "Dunkin with Chaplain Liz", Men's Grief group, Young Widow's group, and support groups for those who are left behind from suicide, for those with children of disabilities, for children who are suffering from divorced families, and interest groups that bring fellow-

ship and new friendships are just some of our new programs being offered throughout the year. I will be offering the Suicide "Pair" Certification Program (from the American Association of Christian Counselors) on Thursdays in June that will help people understand how to assist those who are contemplating suicide. There is nothing better than gaining

knowledge so that you can be prepared to help others. "Five Cries of Grief" will be in July, and our Family Grief Camp will be held October 1. Visit our website [www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv) to see what we will be offering that you might like to attend.

Everyone's need is different, and what brings healing to one person differs from others. Our ministries at SCSM are free, but we are always grateful for any financial donations. If you have any questions, please call 540-349-5814 or email me at [ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv](mailto:ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv).

## Chat with the Chaplain

### When You Cannot Pray, Pray the Scriptures

So often when I visit the chronically or terminally ill, caregivers, those grieving the loss of loved ones, and people in hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities, people share that they find themselves having difficulty praying. They feel that they cannot connect to God which brings frustration, fear, and often anger. Medicine, change of environment, surgery, physical pain, losing a loved one, and other emotional, physical, and spiritual changes in their lives can often be the culprit that causes them to feel disconnected from God and unable to pray. It happens to all of us at some point in our lives. Teens even express that they often cannot pray. Once the teens feel that they are not connected, they give up and do not try again. We really need to show them

how they can stay connected. Every person and situation is different. With good listening ears, lots of love, and compassion towards others, we can find out why they cannot pray. However, there are times when it is hard for people to find words to express what they are feeling.

I encourage them to pray the scriptures. When I was a teen and attended the Evangelical Free Church, I was taught during my confirmation classes to memorize scripture. The Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23, and many other scriptures became my favorites, and when I could not pray and my world was out of control, I would pray back God's own inspired words to Him. Eventually, maybe not right away, God's Word encouraged me, and before long, I felt connected to God again and could pray. We cannot rely

on our feelings, but we can rely on the words of God to empower us to face whatever we are facing and before long, we will be able to pray.

Let me remind you that even in your silence when you cannot put the words together, God knows what you are thinking and knows your heart. In Psalm 139:4 it says, "Before a word is on my tongue, you know all about it Lord."

For those who are having difficulty praying, let's practice together. Read the words of Psalm 121:1-2, "I lift my eyes to the mountains - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth." Amen! Keep repeating that verse throughout your day, and I am certain by

(Cont'd P2, Column 1)

# Introducing Jim Presley

I was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. I was a typical southern boy who joined the Army and served in Vietnam. I am now retired after working in a federal government job for 27 years, serving both overseas and back home, settling in Marshall, Virginia. I am a widower who was married to a wonderful woman for 38 years when, like many others, my life was changed forever in a matter of hours. I first found out about SCSM because my youngest daughter asked me to attend "Five Cries of Grief" with her. I didn't believe I needed it but reluctantly went anyway. "Five Cries of Grief" made a huge impact in my life and actually opened my eyes as to what I was experiencing

(Chat, cont'd from P1)

the end of the day the Creator of the universe, God himself, and you will be speaking to each other again. If you need more help with this, please feel free to contact me at ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv. Check out my new blog on our website at www.scsm.tv.

and helped me to understand and accept what I was going through.

I enjoy my volunteer time at SCSM. Some work here and some volunteer here. However, each and every one is filled with love and the unwavering desire to help others. When I started volunteering here at SCSM, I only assisted with the quarterly mailings (did you know they feed us pizza when we are finished?). I quickly realized they had many volunteer opportunities. So, I started helping around the office doing things like changing light bulbs, rearranging the attic space, and inventorying equipment and office furniture for the upcoming move. I also attended the Coffee and Conversation on Thursdays (free cheese and crackers, sweets and coffee - hmmm...do I see a pattern here?).

One day during the yard sale I was asked



to take a look at the "OPEN" sign because it would not come on even though I was told it was plugged into the wall, and also to check one of the lamps in the room where the Christmas items were displayed. They said the bulb was probably burned out. I set out to investigate and soon returned and said all is fine now, and when asked what was wrong, I told them that one end of the "OPEN" sign's electrical wire was actually plugged

into the wall, but the other end was laying on the floor not plugged into the sign. And the lamp? The bulb was good, but its electrical wire was plugged into an extension cord, and the extension cord was plugged into itself! We had a good laugh at that! I like that when I am around we all can have a laugh. Sometimes laughter can make the difference in how your days go. SCSM truly is a family. I love you all for who you are and all that you do for others.

## A Man's Grief by Dave McElhiney

First, I'd like to thank the men who came and participated in the grieving group in October at SCSM. Each of these men had far greater loss than me and shared their story knowing that it would bring back such painful memories. They spoke of the death of a soul mate or child after many years of family bliss, of happy experiences, and of what should have been. Realization of the finality of death had everyone feeling powerless and paralyzed to move in a new direction without the loved ones that meant so much and were the driving force in their lives. It was encouraging to see these men express their grief and slowly begin the process of healing.



My discovered grief had centered on anger over the irreversible decline of multiple family members, including myself, through poor life choices that have robbed us of hope and life fulfillment. Chronic illness plagues many of us today. Who could have foreseen the thievery that robs us of the satisfaction of entering what should be our golden years, assuming we reach them. The consequences of unexpressed or denial of grief seems to me now is a prelude to negativity and depression.

I've since been more conscious of these

indicators that it is healthy for us to grieve a loss. Life isn't fair. We strive after so many vain pursuits and sometimes come up empty. I can take comfort in Solomon's wise words, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. But because the preacher was wise, he taught the people knowledge...to find out pleasant words, and an upright writing, even the words of truth."

I've learned what grief is from my 22 year old son who I've poured my life into and given the knowledge and opportunity to do great things. He had other ideas and is now homeless, living in Florida day to day craving only to be "free" and to obtain drugs to get his illusive highs. He had rejected the pursuit of learning and rejected the recovery institutions that failed so completely to shake the addictive behavior.

I experienced the painful first-hand feelings of anguish, emptiness, sorrow, despair, and hopelessness; not to mention guilt, shame, and, of course, anger.

It is a day-to-day struggle with God to turn over the drive to step in and try to do something about it. My wife and I had "turned him over to God" when we adopted him, beginning when we received custody of him at two months old.

We realized that ultimately only God can impress upon him what he should be and what he should do with his life. We hadn't realized how maddening an oppositionally defiant child could be and how unbreakable he could be. Day after day the battle would rage.

The problems were at home, at school, at church, at business, and at the marketplace. The lying, the stealing, the trespassing, the bad friends, the damage, the threatening, and the punishing weren't what we bargained for.

We know that no situation is too late to turn around, but the prior twenty years leaves us wondering what else is possible. So, now we have to look at it as a time to grieve, a time to pursue closure, and to move on with what is left. It feels like a lost war, and now we have to struggle just to maintain our own lives. The scriptures instruct us to always have hope, so we will hope against hope that all will be worked out in the end and all issues will be put to rest in a just manner.

If things are to change with our son, God will have to bring that opportunity to our attention, and we will proceed by His plan. We have all been given the natural drive for self-preservation and so this must continue. We only hope that others who are going through like experiences would know that they are not alone and that others like us empathize, and there are times that we can support each other.

# Two and a Half Hours with Audrey by Pam Woody

Angie Smith looked forward to her 20-week ultrasound. As she waited for the technician, she thought of how the images would thrill her husband, Todd, a vocalist for the band Selah, and excite their three daughters. But when the ultrasound machine began capturing images, the technician's composure changed, and Angie sensed something was wrong. The doctor's words confirmed her worst fears.

"Your child, she has many conditions," the doctor said. "Her kidneys are polycystic, and her heart is much too large. Each of these is a lethal condition. There is no amniotic fluid; her lungs are not developing. ... You will have some choices to make."

Instantly, Angie's belief in the sanctity of human life collided with the reality of a fatal prognosis, a prediction that her baby would die soon after birth. Angie and Todd sought the counsel of another doctor, who had performed abortions earlier in his career but devoted his later years to serving God. His position was clear: Taking the baby would be destroying a human life.

As Angie and Todd left the hospital, they knew what they needed to do. Angie would continue her pregnancy, and the baby she was carrying would stay with them until the Lord's appointed time. They also chose to live life fully as a family during the coming weeks rather than grieve over an uncertain future.

## **A family experience**

Thus began their journey of joy and sorrow as Todd and Angie prepared for the birth and burial of Audrey Caroline. They chose to include their 5-year-old twins, Ellie and Abby, and 2-year-old daughter, Sarah-Kate, in this soul-changing experience. To help their daughters understand what was happening, Todd and Angie purchased a stuffed bunny that had a black mark on its chest. They took it home and explained to the girls that the bunny had a boo-boo, and so did the baby. Together, they put Band-Aids on the bunny's chest.

As the weeks passed and the pregnancy progressed, Todd and Angie were intentional about making memories while Audrey was still with them. The family went to Cinderella's Castle at Walt Disney World, to the ballet, to the zoo, to the symphony and to the beach. Although they continued to believe and pray for a miracle, they understood that prayer was not a guarantee that God would heal Audrey.

## **Audrey's arrival**

On April 7, 2008, Angie's cesarean section was performed as planned. Fear and apprehen-



sion gave way to peace. Todd and Angie sensed God's presence in the delivery room. Audrey's breathing was not labored, and she did not have any visible signs of suffering, so Todd and Angie sent for her three big sisters. God graciously gave the Smiths two-and-a-half hours with their baby before she passed away.

"I knew I would love you when I met you," Angie later wrote in a letter to Audrey. "I knew you would become a part of me. What I didn't know was that instead of feeling like it was a brief encounter, I felt like the world stood still. . . . I didn't feel like I lost a baby; I felt like I said goodbye to someone I had always known."

Ellie, Abby and Kate took turns holding their "baby doll" sister, unabashedly loving and caring for her. After the nurse motioned to Todd and Angie that Audrey had passed away, the girls asked how they, too, could get to the beautiful place where Audrey had gone. Because of Audrey, heaven became a real place to their daughters.

## **Unanswered questions**

Faith, however, did not eradicate their grief. Todd and Angie openly discussed questions their daughters asked about death, honestly admitting that they didn't know why Audrey's life was so short.

"There are a lot of things that are just unanswered," Todd says. "And it is just as simple and as hard as trusting Him because I don't have another option."

Todd and Angie encouraged their children to draw pictures to express their grief, and they allowed their daughters to talk freely about Audrey. Angie says she once believed that if she could shield her children from the harsh realities of life, she could protect them from hurt or disappointment. But she's discovered that she cannot shelter them from every heartbreak, and in fact, life's painful experiences often bring tremendous growth.

Still, losing a baby has stirred up Angie's fear of loss. Sometimes she worries about the well-being of her other children, but when anxiety threatens to overwhelm her, she remembers what the previous months have taught her about trusting God.

"I firmly believe that Audrey's life was always going to be exactly what it was," Angie says. "There was not a second about it that was a surprise to God. And if I accept that fully about Audrey, then I have to accept it about Abby, about Ellie, about Kate, about Todd."

## **Finding strength**

Todd and Angie's journey of grief has influenced not only their parenting, but also their marriage. They are honest about the strain that Audrey's death has put on their relationship. Because Todd felt ready to move forward with his life before Angie did, he had to learn how to show compassion even when he could not understand what his wife was feeling. Angie was tempted to believe that Todd didn't love Audrey the way she did, but as they talked honestly with one another, she came to understand the differences in how men and women grieve.

Todd and Angie have learned how to give each other space, even as they hold tight to one another. In retrospect, they wish they had sought marital counseling from the time of Audrey's diagnosis so they could have avoided taking the pain out on each other.

Almost two years have passed since Audrey's birth, and the Smiths have settled into a "new normal" for their family. Not a day passes that the girls don't talk about Audrey, and the family has found new strength as they walk through grief together.

They still have unanswered questions, of course, but they take comfort in the simple truth of God's sovereignty — a truth expressed in the song "Unredeemed" on Selah's latest album, *You Deliver Me*. In this very personal melody, Todd and his bandmates sing:

We live in the shadow of the Fall

But the Cross says these are all

Places where grace is soon to be so amazing

They may be unfulfilled

They may be unrestored

But when anything that's

Shattered is laid before the Lord

Just watch and see

It will not be unredeemed

*From the Focus on the Family website at focusonthefamily.com. © 2010 Focus on the Family. Used by permission.*

# Mike's Musings: Unfinished Business by Mike Taylor

Mike Taylor wrote letters to some of his friends in Red River, New Mexico, during the last twelve months of his life. These musings are a heritage he left to them and his family. Mike was a West Point graduate, very successful businessman, husband/father/grandfather, and "a really fine brother" as described by his brother, Ed, who gives us permission to reprint these articles. Mike passed away September 5, 2013, at the age of 66. We have included the last three which were written after the cancer returned. This is the last article, written shortly before his death.



Mike and Janie Taylor

worse, unmet promises that seemed to propel me to seek one more "bite of the apple" to quote a Neil Diamond song.

Up to now, I've had my fair chances at those bites but confess I have unfinished business in most categories.

And as with Moses, there is really no one to blame but myself. A faltering will, a selfish spirit, and disobedient attitude (including, at times, anger like Moses) has resulted

in my standing in a thickening twilight wondering what could have been. What does the future hold for my son and my daughter and their children? Have I given parenthood my best shot? How will their careers work out? Will the grandkids realize my expectations, hopes, and prayers for them? Was I ever the kind of friend a person really would want to have? Husband? I wonder how many apologies I owe?

And, yes, there are some good memories, too, but there could have been more.

Then I think about how cool it was that God gave Moses a peek. He saw the land and its vastness. In an almost merciful way, God spared Moses a lot of pain. He could have told Moses,

"My son, this is the promised land, but there will be hell to pay for the next three thousand years to hold it." Instead, God buries His friend in a private service in the mountains, and we don't see Moses again until The Transfiguration. God picks him and Elijah to strengthen Jesus on the night before another mass exodus, the exodus of souls potentially and eternally lost to hell without the redemptive act of Christ. As Max Lucado says, the transfiguration is where "Jesus decides He would rather go to hell for us than to heaven without us." Unlike Moses and me, Jesus finished His business, and He did it with a cosmic obedience to the will of His father, and Moses was there.

It is cool to realize that Christ's finished work that we remember this Easter week covered my sloppy work, too. There may or may not be time to fix a career, to undo some bad parenting, to be more loving to my wife, but there is time to be more obedient every day, every hour, every breath through the power of His Spirit.

I confess to wanting to enter the "Promised Lands" to which I alluded above. I want to see how things will work out. I want more time with Janie, kids, g'kids and you guys, but I've been given the "gift of a glimpse," and we'll all likely see each other soon after our own transfiguration!

Bueno Camino! MT

## SCSM Honorariums and Memorials

*In Memory of:* Scott Neth, given by Joyce and Jack Neth, Flower Mound, TX; Leslie Ramey, given by Rebecca Ramey, Culpeper, VA; Maurine Linn and Dan Baker, given by Patrice Mixon, Houston, TX; Sgt. Jason A. Shaffer and Jennifer Nicole Shaffer, given by Roger and Gwen Shaffer, Huntly, VA; Vergie Edwards, given by Sandy Martin, Culpeper, VA; my son, Rob Christiansen, given by Ann Marie McCarty, Catlett, VA; Yvonne King, given by Patrick and Carolyn Doran, Gainesville, VA; Nicholas Daymude, given by John and Debbie Daymude; Barbara Mayberry, given by Virginia Wright and Chris Rapin, Hume, VA; Bettie C. Heflin, given by Ronda Cheatham, Remington, VA; Mr. Zeb Goodwin, given by Allen and Tamara Terwilliger, Amissville, VA; Ragna and Tom Daniels, given by Helen Daniels, Roseland, NJ; Joe Lepre, given by Barbara Lepre, Manassas, VA; Arthur L. Walsh, given by Irene Walsh, Sparta, NJ; Peggy Stone, given by James Stone, Midland City, AL; Beth Bowen Merritt, given by Dr. Sandra-Joy Gray, Manassas, VA; Homer Hoskins, given by Lynn Weber, Warrenton, VA.

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# Praise and Prayer

## *Praises to the Lord*

- For our summer interns from Liberty University.
- For God's faithfulness and giving us a voice of hope to those who are suffering.
- For all those who pray and financially support us.
- For our new SCSM Center that will be built.
- For our new Volunteer Coordinator Assistant who is helping Danette and me with the 100 volunteers we have.
- For all of our new volunteers.

## *Prayer Needs*

- For our country and all our leaders' hearts to be right with God.
- For our military and all those who are fighting for our freedom, and for the needs of their families that are left behind to be met.
- For those in other countries that are persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ.
- That God would bring us people willing to be trained and facilitate groups.
- That pastoral and licensed counselors would be willing to give some of their time each month to meet the needs here at SCSM.
- For our first responders that are so needed when there is a disaster of any kind.
- That our SCSM volunteers and staff would stay healthy in body, mind, and spirit as we support those who are suffering.
- For those who are grieving the loss of loved ones.
- For the chronically ill who are in pain every day.



### Fauquier Ministerial Luncheon

All clergy and ministry leaders are invited to the SCSM Center

1st Tuesdays, Noon

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# Hide the Pain, Suffer Longer

by Dr. Karl Benzio

## Transformational Thought

Most of us are very selective about the parts of our lives we voluntarily bring into God's presence. We hesitate to bring traits that we consider shameful, partly because we believe He doesn't see them, some because we are trying to hide them and partly because we are ashamed to even think about them. Some of us are so used to living with pain, loneliness, guilt, fear, anxiety and stress that it never occurs to us to ask God to help us deal with various elements of these problems. We assume help is not available. We think the pain is an unavoidable punishment from which there is no relief.

Sometimes we act as though we can accumulate degree-of-difficulty points (like in diving) for overcoming hardship and pain. This is sometimes called the martyr syndrome or victim mentality. I often notice people trying to one up each other by making their own path seem harder, and even bragging about it. "You think your life was tough...wait till you hear this!"

For many, pain of some kind has been such an integral part of growing up that, in a weird way, it is hard for them to navigate life without the pain. They are waiting for the other shoe to drop, and feel they don't deserve a break. If it weren't for bad luck, they'd have no luck at all. People like this will actually sabotage situations when they do experience some level of success. Others will go out of their way to create problems to get back into their comfort zone of facing adversity. When preoccupied with our struggles, we tend to forget God is with us and wants to help.

God's desire is to heal the hurting parts of your life. However, sometimes pain has been with you so long, it becomes part of your identity. When you are addicted to painful patterns, it's difficult to break free from them. Only repeatedly exposing them to God's healing presence and applying His instructions from the *Bible* will bring you long-term healing and freedom.

Have you figured out if you are someone who occasionally precipitates disruption? Maybe instead of making a situation better or resolving it, you actually worsen it. We all fall into these traps. Not many of us manage our pain well. There aren't many role models. Few people teach us how to properly deal with pain. Most adults deal with it internally and hide that process from their children, but expect kids to know what to do.

Today, turn to your Lord when you are hurting. He will share and reduce your pain. Remember, the Bible is *the* book about suffering, especially spiritual suffering. The Bible tells how God loved us so much that He miraculously provided a way



for ultimate healing. He also has many promises for the smaller daily sufferings we experience. Turn to your Lord when you are in pain and rejoice in these circumstances while remembering that He is with you. He has joy, peace and comfort, as well as a message for you. He is communicating to you through your pain. The Lighthouse Network resource, "Comfort At All Cost", will help you understand God's plan for your pain. If you or a loved one needs a residential situation, call our Helpline

at 844-Life-Change (844-543-3242). Whether you turn to God to deal with your pain or you turn to a limited, powerless and finite object — it's your decision, so choose well.

## Prayer

Dear Father God, I am so grateful that I can come to You no matter what my condition is. I come just as I am. Thank You, Father. I am relieved that I don't have to "clean up my act" beforehand. You already know the worst about me. When I am hurting, I want to be with someone who understands me without condemning me. When I am happy, I delight in being with someone who loves me enough to celebrate with me. I pray that You will help me bring more and more of myself to You. I pray this and all prayers in the name of the One who divides my pain and multiplies my joy, Jesus Christ. And all God's children say AMEN!

## The Truth

"The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." Psalm 126:3

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." 1 Peter 5:6-10

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to set the captives free, and recover sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18

*(From Dr. Karl Benzio, Lighthouse Network's Stepping Stones Daily Devotional, September 15, 2015. www.lighthouse-network.org, used with permission)*

# It is Blessed to Receive by Vicki Smith

Has God blessed you lately, my friend? He gives abundantly in ways too numerous to count. He gives us our life, our salvation, each beautiful day, our health, and every pleasure of life. Everything we have comes from Him. Giving is part of who He is and a sign of His great love for us. How do we respond to the giving? A great hymn of the church sums it up.

## Now Thank We All Our God

Now thank we all our God,  
With heart and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In whom His world rejoices:  
Who, from our mothers' arms  
Hath blessed us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.

We respond with great thankfulness and rejoicing.

Sometime we tell God, "It's just too much. I insist on paying you for it. I don't want to bother you. You have so much to do," or "I can't accept it but thanks for the thought." To respond to God in any of these ways would be ridiculous.

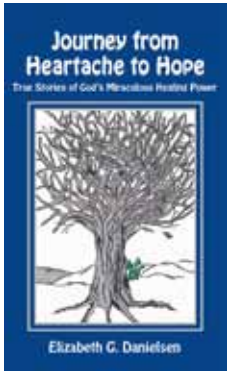
Likewise, when we are in trouble, we can run to Him for help, asking, praying, beseeching, and calling out or we can think, "I'll handle this myself. I refuse to ask for help. If I can't work this out, I'll just have to live with it and continue to suffer." It is a simple and evident truth that we ask God for His help, and we receive His blessings with joy and thanksgiving.

Consider how the giving-receiving dynamic plays out in your daily life with your fellow man. We want to be godly, so we want to be givers. Yet there can be no completion of giving without a thankful receiver. There can be no fulfillment of blessings and no help without a willing and thankful receiver. Giving and receiving must exist together. Giving is made complete in receiving.

God gives to us directly, but most often He gives through other people. My friend calls this "Jesus with skin on". His Holy Spirit inspires, leads and enables people to give. Nearly two years ago, I was going through a very difficult trial. Even though I had been a volunteer at SCSM for several years, I did not follow the advice I am giving to you and reach out for help. I had known Kelly Kern, Chaplain Liz's assistant, for about three years. That is 26,280 hours. She had never dropped in unex-



pectedly at my home to visit. At the hour of my greatest need, Kelly, a licensed counselor and trusted friend, showed up at my doorstep. The world may say, "That was a lucky coincidence!" but I know for sure it was the hand of the living God reaching out to me by His Holy Spirit acting through his servant. Praise be to God! When she knocked at my door, I said, "I am so glad you are here!" Do not let pride, feelings of unworthiness, or anything whatsoever obstruct the work of the Holy Spirit offered to you through God's servants. Rejoice and say, "I am so glad you are here!" Be a cheerful receiver.



**Journey from Heartache to Hope**  
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Elizabeth G. Danielsen

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[www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv)

# Thank You!

Bobby Delach and Theresa Wharton for cleaning the Center; The Orthopedic Office and Kitchen & Baths for use of their parking lots; Diane and Jim Fritz for donating coffee; Warrenton Bible Church for funding for our Clergy and Ministry Leaders luncheon each month; Warrenton Presbyterian Church ladies for prayer shawls.

# Thank you for the Prayer Blankets



The Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus from St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Warrenton has made prayer blankets for the children at the Family Grief Camp and for other children to whom SCSM ministers. Pictured are some of the blankets and their creators (l-r) Liz Shaw, Mary Guyant, Mary Winholtz, Martha McNichol and Barbara Graziano. Thank you so much! What a blessing you are!

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*Words cannot adequately express my love of Liz and this ministry. It has healed my heart and helped restore my soul.*

*Pam Stilton*

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## Miracles by Amy Furr

When I was 25 weeks pregnant with Ezra, he was diagnosed with premature atrial contractions, and a hole in his heart. At a routine OB appointment, we heard his heart skip several beats, then speed up, repeatedly.

That same week, my husband, Shawn, and I followed up with a pediatric cardiologist. Walking into the office was scary. As a parent, you're thinking to yourself that places like this shouldn't exist. Then you realize your child is the one who needs this place, and you're grateful they do exist. The cardiologist talked with us extensively, then she did an echocardiogram to look at our baby's heart. She referred to Ezra by his name, and did her best to calm our fears. The fact that she used his name and didn't refer to him as a fetus, or any other term, was important to us. It meant that she saw him the way we did, as a real person. It also helped knowing she is a mom too.

When your child's health is a concern, you start thinking and worrying too much, often imagining the worst case scenario. You don't want to think about any reality other than a good one, but your mind goes there anyway. Hearing the missed beats was one thing, but watching the screen as his heart repeatedly stopped, then sped up, was another frightening thing entirely.

Throughout the next weeks and the diagnostic process, God gave us Ezra's first name, Jonathan, which means Gift of God, and He also gave us his life verse, Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; Do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous



right hand." That verse became our strength.

We had one more appointment with the cardiologist before Ezra was born. We notified our pediatrician, and our OB required a NICU nurse to be present for his delivery. Ezra's heart did not handle the stress of labor well, so we had to have an emergency c-section. He immediately saw the cardiologist at the hospital, where he had a third echo and his first EKG. Bringing him home was scary; we watched him like a hawk, always vigilant for any changes in his breathing or behavior.

At our appointment with the cardiologist when he was a week old, he was diagnosed with a murmur, in addition to the previous diagnoses. A fourth echo showed the hole still hadn't closed, nor had the PACs resolved. We took our newborn home with a 24 hour monitor that day.

We were given statistics meant to comfort us, but when you're talking about your child's heart, few things give you peace. Shawn and I wondered what this would mean for Ezra's health, and ultimately, his future.

We leaned on God, relying on Him to heal our child. God had seen fit to give us this miracle child in the first place, and we had to know He would make sure Ezra would be okay. Ezra had so many people praying for him during this time, we knew he was well covered. It was all in God's hands. At the beginning of December, our church family prayed over Ezra during an altar call. The following day, we had another follow up with our cardiologist, and we received amazing news! More tests showed the hole in Ezra's heart is closed, the PACs are gone, and the murmur was undetectable.

Right there on the screen was a perfectly normal and healthy beating heart.

Just like that, it's over. His heart is healthy and healed. No more tests, no more cardiologists, no more worries. Once again, our greatest healer took care of it all. God has given our sweet little boy an amazing testimony, and he's only 8 months old. We are so grateful for this healing, and so grateful to all who prayed! Most of all, we are grateful to serve a loving

Father who still performs miracles and keeps His promises.



## Introducing Heather Huryk, Volunteer Coordinator Assistant

Hello, my name is Heather Huryk, and I am the new volunteer coordinator assistant for Spiritual Care Support Ministries (SCSM). I also have the distinct honor of being the 100th volunteer at SCSM, which only speaks to the tremendous growth of this ministry since its inception in 2004. I just wanted to take a few minutes to introduce myself and to share how I became aware of SCSM.

I hope to have the privilege of working alongside the SCSM volunteers in the next weeks and months.

"Hokie, Hokie, Hokie, hy. Tech, Tech,



VPI." This chant may or may not be familiar to you, but I am a proud member of the Virginia Tech community and a 2008 graduate. It was during my time at Virginia Tech that I first became aware of SCSM and the support that it offers to those who are ill, grieving, and experiencing personal loss. After losing 32 classmates and professors in my junior year, SCSM and, more specifically, Liz Danielsen, provided support and perspective on this senseless act of violence, and of course, lots of prayers and hugs. Liz has continually supported my family through times of illness and extreme personal loss, so

it is a great honor and privilege to be able to donate my time and skill set to such a great organization as SCSM.

I am excited to work with each and every volunteer, to hear their stories and feedback, and to connect them with volunteer opportunities that contribute greatly to the continued success of SCSM.

On a more light-hearted note, my idea of a perfect day is one where I am snuggled up with my nine-year-old schnoodle (schnauzer + poodle), Zoey. I often have to remind myself to view things like sunsets and sunrises through my own eyes rather than through the lens of a camera. I love sitting on grassy hills listening to country music and munching on cheese. I hope to travel the world someday; my first stop is Ireland.



## Spiritual Care Support Ministries, Inc.

Reaching for a Hand, and Touching a Heart  
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### All SCSM services are provided free of charge!

SCSM is non-profit and non-denominational. Donations are welcomed. Perhaps you would like to give a gift in memory of a loved one or in honor of someone special. Checks may be written to SCSM, P.O. Box 643, Warrenton, VA 20188.

## Dear Chaplain Liz

*Dear Chaplain Liz, Everybody is telling me how I should grieve after losing my wife of thirty years. How can I stop them from interfering in my life?*

Being married for thirty years is very special, and no one will understand the relationship you and your wife had except for God. Many family and friends mean well, and there will be times when you will be grateful to them for caring so much, but right now it sounds like they are causing you more grief. Just as there are a "Bill of Rights" when you visit a hospital for patients, there are also "Rights of the Bereaved" for those grieving losses. Perhaps you can share some of them with those who are causing you more pain. You have the right to experience your own unique grief. You have the right to talk about your grief when you want to. You have the right to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits which means you cannot always do what everyone wants you to do. In

other words, you have the right to choose how you will need to heal from your grief. Find those family and friends who are good listeners so you can share your pain. Prayer from others is a gift that all of those who are grieving treasure.

*Dear Chaplain Liz, Is there a difference between grief and mourning?*

Yes, there is a difference between grief and mourning, but many people do not realize this. Everyone grieves but not everyone heals because they have not mourned. Grief is a normal emotional response to loss. Grief is the feelings and thoughts that are experience WITHIN oneself upon the death of someone. Mourning is the expression of grief. It is taking the internal experience of grief and expressing it OUTSIDE OF ONESELF. It is grief going public! To truly heal, you must mourn.

Do you have a question for Chaplain Liz? Send your question to "Dear Chaplain Liz", SCSM, 76 W. Shirley Ave, Warrenton, VA 20186. All correspondence needs to include your name, address and telephone number to be considered. All correspondence becomes the property of SCSM and receipt of the same constitutes writer's permission to publish any portion of the material in the H&H Newsletter or any other media, at the sole discretion of SCSM. Only first names (or an alias if you so indicate) will be included in the use of the material.

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### SCSM Mission Statement

Providing support, education and a Biblical perspective to those who are ill, dying, grieving and experiencing personal loss, and to those who journey with them.

### SCSM Vision

To establish a local, national and international resource center to provide ministry, training and a retreat for those who are ill, dying, grieving and experiencing personal loss, and to those who journey with them.

**SCSM Values:** God's Word, Prayer, Value Every Human Life, Integrity, Confidentiality, Excellence in Everything We Do.