

# Heart & Hand

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

Reaching for a hand, and touching a heart

Vol. 13, Ed. 4, December 2017

## Greetings from Chaplain Liz

Greetings from the Spiritual Care Support Ministry Center where we believe that God designed the healing process to be delivered via our relationship with Him and our relationship with others. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2 NIV).

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

Amazing life changing work takes place through faithful and humble men and women who are willing to be available in life's most difficult seasons. Our pastoral, grief and lay counselors and Spiritual Care Support Ministry volunteers are here to listen, pray, and offer support according to the needs of those who request our help. Our volunteers are also available to meet other needs we have at the Center.

We have a number of different opportunities to serve that can be found at [www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv), as well as in a brochure at the Center. We would be blessed to have you use your talents to help us so that we can help others. Together we become the eyes, ears, hands, feet, and voice of a loving God who seeks to comfort and heal. Sometimes the challenges that people endure do not go away quickly. They learn as they walk with God and put their trust in Him that He can give them a song of victory even in the midst of chronic illness, grief, job loss, aging, divorce, etc. A



life line enables people to survive a crisis by providing an essential connection. I believe that Spiritual Care Support Ministries is that connection.

Our mission is to "Provide support to those who are ill, dying, grieving and experiencing personal losses and to those who journey with them"

We are here to train others so they can effectively give support to others. We have been excited about the programs and events that we have planned this year. "Dunkin with Chaplain Liz" has proven to be a fun hour as we eat donuts, drink coffee, and just fellowship with one another. Yes, it proves that in spite of what we are going through we can still care and laugh together. We are praying about offering some new programs for children and teens in the New Year as well as other programs for adults. You can visit [www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv) to get up-to-date information on what we offer. If you cannot come to our center, we can come to you via Facetime or Skype. You can also always connect with us via email ([ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv](mailto:ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv)), Facebook, or phone (540-349-5814).

Would you pass the word around? Better yet, would you pass this newsletter to a family member or friend? The stories are proof that God is alive and still transforming lives and offering hope. It is proof that as people find their purpose again, they find a future for themselves that has meaning.

We are so thankful to God for His sustaining power, giving us wisdom each day. We are also thankful for you who is reading this newsletter. God loves you so much, and

He wants you to know that as this year ends there is a future for you. He desires your obedience in taking your first steps towards healing. You are the only one that can make that decision.

What a privilege for all of us at the Spiritual Care Support Ministry Center to be a part of this amazing ministry. We are all on a journey together to become more like Christ. My prayer is that His love will pour out of us on to others as we serve Him. If you would like to be a part of this ministry or need help in understanding God's plan for your life, please contact me at [ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv](mailto:ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv).

*Chaplain Elizabeth Danielsen*

## Chat with the Chaplain

### Can You See Any Beauty in the Holidays?

In the famous lace shops of Brussels, there are special rooms devoted to the spinning of the world's finest lace, all with the most delicate patterns. The rooms are kept completely dark, except for the light that falls directly on the developing pattern from one very small window. Only one person sits in each small room, where the narrow rays of light fall upon the threads he is weaving, for lace is always more beautifully and delicately woven when the weaver himself is in the dark, with only his work in the light. Sometimes the darkness in our lives is worse, because we cannot see the web we are weaving or understand what we are doing. Therefore, we are unable to see any

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## A Father's Love by Birgit Gerwig

I am telling you my story from thousands of miles away. I am connected to SCSM because many years ago Liz was kind enough to meet with me over a cup of coffee to help me with my current situation.

The story I want to tell you about dates back to 2006. I know the exact day and the exact time. I call it "the day," and my life became a two-part life. The one before and the one after "the day."

The details of the story included huge negative effects that were so deeply disturbing and destructive that it seemed I would lose my life over it. With every call, every letter, and every day this dragged more and more into the ground, it let my heart bleed and hurt so much that my physician was concerned about my health. It took what I believed to be right, my morals, my ethics and my beliefs, to a level where I had no access to it. I became this being emptied out by the heartless actions of the man I once had chosen, a man I left my friends and family thousands of miles away for.

Over the years I had changed into someone that ignored her own needs and wants. My life became the role of an actress playing a part that did not match her soul. As I was trying to grasp for hold, safety, and peace, I stumbled over my own feet trying to relearn how to live a life. Not necessarily my life, but simply how to function day by day. My children, friends, and my church family were there trying to stabilize me. Looking back, that kept me somehow on this track.

But one thing, and in my eyes the most important thing, is that minutes after I was told what he had done, I heard in my mind that I must forgive him in order to survive. Since I was traumatized so severely, I blindly followed that advice.

Over the years it softened the blow many times. With all the challenges that followed, that was my first life saver. My second one was that soon after the first weeks were over sleeping pills laid in my hand, simply because my body could not find any rest the natural way. To this day, I know all the details of this incident. As I



looked at my hand with the pills in it, again I heard in my mind that my children had gone through so much already and I should not add to it. This alone stopped me.

So, as the years went by and I built my new life, "the day" and that man caused much anxiety. Despite having moved back here, the fear had still imbedded itself into my heart. Every year when "the day" would approach, come, and then slowly fade away, it caused anxiety attacks. Last year on year #10, I decided to change that. I had planned for positive events for myself and with my new husband. And wouldn't you know, I received a call for a job interview on "the day" which I couldn't resist. When I walked in, I heard in my mind, "You belong here."

Again, I followed that voice and was simply myself, got the job, and one year later I am telling you it was more than worth it. Listen to the voice and don't ignore it. It was my Father in Heaven talking to me. He took my heart in His hand which I felt. He gave me His shoulder to lean on, through others, and He taught me how to listen to my heart and its wishes. Before "the day" I believed in Him, but since then I am His child. He is the Father I had longed for, and He did not criticize me for being lost. If you are looking for a relationship that will do nothing but surround you with love, then ask my Father and He will be there with and for you.

Newsletter Editor - Dorothy Slaga  
Associate - Cheryl Reynolds

## Thank You

Bobby Delach for cleaning the Center; The Orthopedic Center for use of their parking lot; Diane and Jim Fritz for donating coffee; Warrenton Bible Church for funding for our Clergy and Ministry Leaders luncheon each month; Liz Shaw for donating the book *Paws from Heaven, True Stories of God's Amazing Animal Angels* in memory of "Mr. Mini", and Princess, and in honor of Tiger; Pam Dudley for water, tea bags, candy, paper towels and post-its; Liz Shaw for subscription to Allcreatures magazine from Guideposts.

## Honorariums and Memorials

*In Memory of* Nicholas Daymude, given by John and Debbie Daymude, Copper Hill, VA; my son, Glenn Grossarth on his birthday, September 7, given by Hillie Grossarth, Staten Island, NY; Sgt. Jason A. Shaffer and newborn Jennifer Nicole Shaffer, given by Roger and Gwen Shaffer, Huntly, VA; Scott Neth, given by John and Joyce Neth, Flower Mound, TX; Jamie J. Strauss, given by Toni DeLuca Evans, Amisville, VA; Freddie Cammeron, given by Jean Lambert, Marshall, VA; Joe Lepre, given by Barbara Lepre, Manassas, VA; Joe Huryk, given by Kathy Huryk, Woodbridge, VA; Patrick Ryan Gay, given by Pam and Tom Gay, Warrenton, VA; Terry Smith, given by Carolyn McCauley, Waco, TX.

*In Honor of* Jake Conti Danielsen, given by Helen Danielsen, Roseland, NJ.

*We receive the SCSM newsletter,  
and are inspired by the  
testimonies of people that have  
gone through the loss of a spouse  
or a family member.  
It truly is a powerful ministry!*

*Blessings to Liz Danielsen  
and the SCSM Staff!*



Richard Geer

# Disappointments or Blessings in Retirement

by Rev. Tom Moore

We make elaborate plans for retiring. I'm going to fish or golf or travel. I have never had enough time before, but now? The real fact is that we will probably spend much of our time sitting in a recliner dreaming about the joy of being retired or missing the things we used to do. You see, unless everything works perfectly, all your friends are still punching the clock. Many times even your mate is still working.

So, what are the losses of retirement? What is your position now that the duties of the workplace are set aside? We tie our identities to our work. We are no longer an administrator, plumber, janitor, boss, accountant, etc. We are just retired. And with that comes a certain subtle change in our identity.

Our own view of our importance changes too. No longer having an office to go to or a clock to punch, somehow diminishes our identity. No one can tell us what to do, when to do it, or how long it should take. We can sleep late, eat when



we want, play solitaire all day, watch TV, nap in our chair, and have no responsibility. This is what we have dreamed about during our working life. Or is it?

Soon the reruns get old, and you begin to miss the gab around the water cooler and the day to day events that you had to deal with. The commute that you hated also was a source of conversation. The memos you wrote and received are no more, and the importance or lack thereof have lost their luster. Boredom replaces the joy that you hoped for. Many who retire begin to look for something part time at this point. That too can become a loss; loss of retirement. You become a temp, a part timer, someone not quite as valuable as you once were.

There are four main losses: Income, Identity, Importance, and Schedule.

Income: Unless you are very fortunate or an extremely good planner, your income will be reduced. You may have to budget for things like dinner out or a vacation. Even a movie can make a dent in your budget.

Importance. You are no longer the guy or gal in charge. All the bucks stop at your

desk now. Your clearly identified role from the workplace is not as clear in retirement. You may make all the decisions, but all the consequences are yours too.

Schedule. Accustomed to having a 9 to 5 work schedule with an hours' commute, you are suddenly thrust into no schedule at all. Get up at nine, drink coffee until eleven, watch a few TV shows, and take a nap. The day may drag on for a seeming long time or you may find that it speeds by, not allowing for you to accomplish anything.

Identity. In retirement, it becomes easy to lose your identity. No one is asking your opinion because you are no longer a part of the team. Who am I? What am I supposed to do? Am I just in the way now? What is my role and does anybody care?

Retirement. Blessing or disappointment? Are we suddenly lost and wandering or searching for meaning? Or are we filled with anticipation of the next move of God in our lives? It is our choice to make. Let's leave the losses behind and focus on living the life ahead of us.

Retired and available to be used by God.

## Introducing Diana Unciano, Intern



I have been married 26 years this past November. We have a wonderful son, Brandon, who is 21. Conrad and I attend Chapel Springs Church in Bristow and have served together in ministry there for many years. Conrad currently serves as a Deacon at Chapel Springs and is a Cloud Engineer. Brandon, while finishing his degree at Southeastern University in Criminal Justice, is a Marine reservist. The other member of our family is Kona, our Shetland Sheepdog.

As I became an empty nester and asked the Lord what He would have me do in the years ahead, the answer became very clear. He wanted me to minister to those who are hurting and to help people walk in wholeness and healing. Ministering to others is what my heart beats for.

The last couple of years the Lord has

My name is Diana Unciano, and I am the new intern at Spiritual Care Support Ministries. It is a joy and blessing to partner with SCSM and the call they have to minister to those who are hurting.

I have lived in the D.C. Metro area my entire life. My husband, Conrad, and

been shifting and redirecting things in my life. That redirection led me to apply for the internship at SCSM. I feel the Lord is calling me and preparing me for His purpose and interning at SCSM is the next step in the process. The internship will allow me to build on the ministry skills I have learned at Chapel Springs Church. I believe SCSM will help take me to another level in ministry and give me training I could not achieve otherwise.

SCSM embodies the heart of Christ for the hurting. It is a place where the unconditional love of Jesus and His message of hope and healing flows through the staff and volunteers every day. I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to learn and train with those who walk this out on a daily basis!

# Living Out the Tested Faith by John W. Kennedy

The three Mayer sisters looked forward to participating in the wedding ceremony of their only brother, Joey. Joey's fiancée, Bree O'Connor, seemed like a sister to Krista, 19, Nikki, 17, and Jessica, 12.

That Thursday, New Year's Day 2004, the three sisters took off around 4 p.m. for a 125-mile drive to confer with Bree at dinner two days before the big event. Parents Joe and Debbie Mayer planned to make that drive to Willmar, Minnesota, from New Brighton on Friday.

When younger, all three daughters made commitments to follow Jesus as their Savior. They regularly invited non-Christian friends to youth

group at Redeeming Love, an Assemblies of God church in Maplewood. All the girls had mercy on the lonely and outcast. For instance, Krista worked as a child-care provider, while Nikki cared for women with physical and mental disabilities.

Around 6 p.m. that Thursday, Nikki — who 18 months earlier served as matchmaker with Krista between her brother and Bree — called Bree from her cellphone to say she and her sisters would arrive at the restaurant in about half an hour. But by 8 the girls hadn't shown up. Bree repeatedly tried calling Krista and Nikki's cellphones, but couldn't get an answer. Bree then phoned Debbie and Joe to ask if they had heard anything.

A concerned Joe tracked down the phone number of the Willmar hospital. The county coroner came on the line with devastating news.

All three daughters had been killed in a traffic crash.

Upon hearing the news Debbie ran out into the snow barefoot, her mind unable to process such a shock. As friends and family arrived to offer comfort, for an hour Debbie remained inconsolable, pacing outside and through the house. Then her eyes fixed on a bookshelf containing photos taken of the girls during their elementary school years.

"I felt great peace because I realized they had gained heaven," recalls Debbie, 62.

Later that night, Debbie and Joe experienced further consolation when they surveyed their daughters' bedrooms. Journals, poems, and song compositions revealed the depth of



the girls' commitment to the Lord.

Nikki attempted to pass on an unmarked curve on a dark unfamiliar two-lane road a mile east of Willmar. The Dodge Lancer sedan Nikki drove collided with a Plymouth Voyager minivan driven by 15-year-old Katelyn Schalmo, accompanied by her mother, Patricia, an uninjured front-seat passenger. Katelyn sustained only a broken ankle.

Joey and Bree decided to go through with the wedding, only two days after the wreck because they believed the sisters would have wanted it that way. Three bridesmaids' spots were left vacant. Instead of a honeymoon, the couple helped with funeral preparations.

Four days after the wedding, 2,000 people attended the combined funeral. As he closed the service, Redeeming Love Church Pastor Mike D. Smith reiterated the reality of Philippians 1:21 to attendees.

"For those who are living for so many other things besides Christ, to die would be a loss," Smith said. "Only when you live for Christ is it a gain to die."

As he invited the assembled to make a public profession of faith, about 200 people, primarily teenagers who had known the girls in school, streamed to the altar, along with several relatives of the Mayers.

Joey, 35, felt called to ministry after the deaths of his sisters, but not until reaching his lowest point.

"The first three months I really wrestled

with my faith," says Joey, who had to identify his sisters' remains for authorities. "I was angry at God."

Joey says he shut down emotionally, putting thoughts of his younger siblings out of his mind.

"I tried to isolate, to push away from God," Joey told PE News. "But Bree wouldn't let me. She forced me to talk about my feelings."

Not until his newlywed bride encouraged him to visit the grave sites and verbalize memories of his sisters did Joey start to recover. Subsequently, he returned to North Central University after transferring from the University of Minnesota. After he and Bree graduated from North Central, Joey became youth pastor at what is now Emmanuel Christian Center in Maple Grove.

Joey and Bree have been on staff at Canvas Church in Northfield, Minnesota, since it launched in 2011. Joey is communications director and Bree is worship director.

In a first time of sharing together, Joe, Debbie, and Joey publicly talked about their experiences in a tear-filled service at Canvas in May. The surviving family members believe they are well equipped to help others cope with tragedy.

Joey and Bree say they have learned that acknowledging others' pain is preferable to merely blurting out platitudes about God's sovereignty. Bree, who has an older brother and a younger brother, says enduring the aftermath of the deaths helped her cope with seven years of infertility after her wedding. Joey and Bree now have a 5-year-old daughter, Vivien.

Despite the pain and stress of a Job-like loss and an instant empty nest, Joe and Debbie say the disaster resulted in a stronger commitment to each other and to the Lord.

"I'm not in a place of living angry at God," Debbie says. "I get over being mad when I quickly express it out loud."

"Joe and Debbie are able to show that God really does heal broken hearts," Smith says.

"They have a platform to share the powerful love of God."

Debbie says they have been able to help others with losses — health, finances, relationships — because of the intense heartache they endured.

"Our grief is a perfect opportunity for

# Celebrating Christmas with SCSM!

God to refine us," Debbie says.

"I am sad quite often, because I really miss my girls," says Joe, 62. "But at the same time, I have a supernatural anticipation and grace that God has placed within us to go on."

Joe, a certified commercial heating and air conditioning tester, points out that everyone's days are numbered in God's Book. While it may not seem fair that some lives are so short, life on earth isn't the end for those who put their faith in Jesus, he declares.

"It's more important to trust in the Lord than to try to understand His purposes," Joe says. "Jesus told us in this world we would have trouble, but also that we will overcome. Overcoming isn't about changing our circumstances; it's about changing our perspective."

*(Article published in PE News, July 14, 2017. Used by permission of the author.)*

Join Spiritual Care Support Ministries' joyful Christmas celebration on **Saturday, December 2, at 3 pm** to honor personal heroes and the memory of loved ones. There will be music, inspiration, light refreshments, a time of remembering loved ones, and the reading of the Christmas Story.

Santa Claus will be visiting, and you may take pictures of your children with him.

After the program, we will adjourn to the SCSM Center for the **Christmas tree lighting ceremony**. Santa will be there to bless the children and worship the King.

Participate by dedicating a light, or sponsoring a tree or a star.

Look for the beautiful Willow Tree Loving Angel, 5.5" tall, gift boxed and wrapped. She would make a wonderful gift for a donation of \$50. We have a limited number of angels this year, so order early. **You must indicate on the form that you want an angel(s) so we will know to prepare it for you. Add \$10 for each angel you want to be shipped.**

**This is SCSM's primary annual fundraising program.** We hope you will participate by remembering your loved ones and offering generous support to SCSM at the same time. You can donate by either filling out this form and returning it in the envelope provided, or you will find the form online at [www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv). The deadline for names to be submitted for the program is Monday, November 27. If you wish, we will also notify a person that you are honoring or remembering a loved one. Remember your loved ones and support SCSM this Christmas.

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION CLEARLY!

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to SCSM or Spiritual Care Support Ministries. All donations are tax-deductible.

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| ___ Tree Sponsorship (\$1,000)         | \$ _____ |
| ___ Star Sponsorship (\$500)           | \$ _____ |
| ___ Individual Lights (\$10 each)      | \$ _____ |
| ___ Set(s) of three Lights (\$25 each) | \$ _____ |
| ___ Christmas Angel (\$50 donation)    | \$ _____ |
| ___ To mail angel, add \$10 each       | \$ _____ |
| ___ Other Gift                         | \$ _____ |

TOTAL ORDER \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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- In Memory (white)
- In Honor of Military Person (blue)
- In Memory of Military Person (blue)
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- In Honor of Child (green)

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LOVING ANGEL**

***You must specify that you want an angel on the form!***



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please Notify \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(If you want to include more than one person, please use a separate sheet and PRINT clearly!)

In the midst of the holidays and all that you will be doing as your family and friends gather together, our prayer for you at Spiritual Care Support Ministries is that you will experience God's love, peace, joy, and hope.

Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas from all your friends at SCSM.

Visit our webpage!  
**scsm.tv**

# Five Cries of Grief

by Judy Jones

Four years ago, we lost our son in a horrific accident. He was only 23. He had just graduated from college and had his whole life to look forward to. We were and



Greg and Judy Jones

still are so proud of him. Our family, our priest, fellow church parishioners, friends of ours, his friends, and even strangers shared in our overwhelming grief. Our faith has guided us daily since that devastating day. Our Lord has kept us standing and enabled us to put one foot in front of the other.

I found Spiritual Care Support Ministries from their post in the local paper. The post was about the program, “Five Cries of Grief”. I wanted to understand

better how my husband and son were dealing with their grief. It was different than mine, and I wanted to help them if I could.

I did find out how men can compartmentalize their thoughts and grieve on their own terms and time. When I attended the “The Five Cries of Grief,” I had no intention of participating in the dialogue. I just wanted to get to the part about men’s grief. Instead, when I saw and heard of the losses and pain of each person there, the bond was formed. They spoke so tenderly and proudly of their loved ones.

It was an amazing AH-HA moment for me. Through all the tears and pain, I realized that we all were so blessed to have had our loved one in our lives, even if for a short time. It was time for me to share and celebrate my son’s life and cherish the mark he left on so many other lives. He lives on in the hearts of others. I am very grateful and thankful for the amazing support, compassion, guidance, and love from Reverend Liz Danielsen and the staff and volunteers at SCSM.

Here is a portion of a poem I received that was written by E. Brenneman:

“And think of him (her) as living in the hearts of those he (she) touched...

For nothing loved is ever lost—  
and he (she) is loved so much!”

the holidays. That is understood. My heart goes out to you right now. Your pain is very real.

May I suggest that you open up your heart to embrace the holidays as you remember the reason we have them. Thanksgiving is a time of giving thanks, perhaps not for the loss you are experiencing but for that person that you loved that is no longer physically with you. Can you think of other things to be thankful for? Food? Clothes? Family or friends who care? The list may not be very long at first but be patient with yourself. Then there is Christmas. A time of remembering the birth of Jesus Christ. God

# Praise and Prayer

## We Praise the Lord

For God’s healing power that is available to everyone.

For the prayer and financial support that we receive for the ministry of SCSM.

For the grant we received from Loeb Foundation.

For God’s Word that transforms lives.

For all our SCSM volunteers and our Executive Board members for their partnership in ministry.

For our new part time Staff Volunteer Coordinator that we were able to hire.

## We Pray

For us to stay teachable and humble as we serve others that come to us for help.

For those who have experienced natural disasters, that they would receive support and help as needed.

For children and teens who are suffering from divorce.

For the safety of all those who are constructing our new SCSM center.

For new SCSM volunteers that would be willing to facilitate groups. Training is available.

For us to be aware of others experiencing spiritual pain because of loss so that we can be God’s hands extended to bring hope.

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beauty or possible good thing arising from our experience. If we do not give up, we will know that the most exquisite work of our lives was done during those days when it was the darkest.

Every difficult task that comes across your path during this holiday season, every one of those tasks that you would rather not do, that will take the most effort, cause you the most pain and be your greatest struggle, could bring a blessing with it that you may miss. When your heart is heavy with sadness because of loss, the last thing you want to do is celebrate

sent His son to earth because He loved us and had a plan so that we would have purpose and meaning in life as well as the opportunity to have a relationship with Him every day of our lives. I believe there is beauty in the holidays, and my prayer is that God would help you open your eyes to it.



## Fauquier Ministerial Luncheon

All clergy and ministry leaders are invited to the SCSM Center

1st Tuesdays, Noon

# Creating a Circle of “Forever Friends”

by Nan Zastrow, CoFounder, Wings – A Grief Education Ministry



Ten years ago, I wrote an article for my journal about our fortieth wedding anniversary. And here it is, another ten years later—and we are celebrating another milestone. I wrote then that the article wasn't about grief, but rather about the outstanding people who helped us survive before and after grief. It was a tribute to the friends, family and amazing people we've been privileged to know in our lives. It demonstrated a remarkable lesson of looking back and realizing you are who you are today because of your experiences and because of those people in your life that stuck by you and shared them with you. On June 17, Gary and I celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary. And I'm so blessed to still be here and still have my amazing family and friends in my life. The past ten years have carried with them many ups and downs, joy and sorrow, sickness and health just as the decades before. But the one outstanding thing that I'm grateful for—is the opportunities Gary and I have had to appreciate our relationships with old friends and gain new friends through all the phases of our lives. As I was reviewing my address book from ten years ago, I was startled at the number of friends who were no longer in our lives on a regular basis. Many had died, and when it happens a little at a time, you don't realize how many it has been. Initially, I felt like our world got so much smaller. In addition, there are quite

a few that moved away (to warmer climates, I'm sure) or are not actively involved in our lives as they were before. At first, the realization seemed scary. Then I began to recreate my list adding a whole new circle of friends that shared our current thoughts, experiences, and future dreams. It was a picture of life going forward.

I accept that our friendships are often based on our “stage of life.” The accumulation of friends over the years from jobs, activities, and community involvement changes. Not all of our friends will remain from one stage to another (i.e. college to young adult to retirement). Keeping in touch as the pool of friendship grows becomes a challenging experience, because all of us are affected by life changes and responsibilities that take us down different roads.

So again, I can connect my observation to grief. In grief, our “address book” often changes. Friends know about our loss. Some know how to handle it and others don't. The friends you make after loss only know you the way you are at the present time. They probably don't know what you were like before your loss and before they met you. They don't even consider that you have a new identity as you emerge from a life-changing experience.

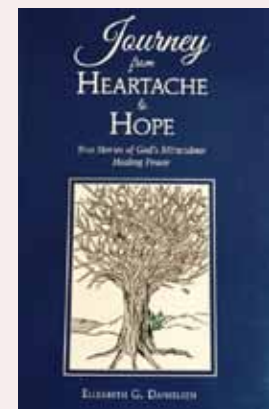
They see you as you speak, interact, and live now. They don't know your grief story until you choose to tell them. You are living in a new chapter of: “life goes on.” As I look at our list, I realized that we don't have “fair-weather” friends. We have friends who know our story, know our pain, and appreciate our passions about grief.

Fair-weather friends are those who can be depended upon only when everything is going well. I realized our list of friends are “forever” friends!. They know our losses,

our disappointments, and our life experiences which may be very different from theirs, but they value our association nevertheless. Wow! How much more blessed can we be?

Good grief is about looking back and recognizing who sticks beside you when you've been faced with life's hardest blow. Good grief is about recognizing that even though years pass and lives changes, good friends will always be there. Good grief is about memories that never fade, but become the glue of relationships that last for an eternity. Celebrating fifty years of marriage puts a new perspective on our meaning and purpose. Things happen for unknown reasons. People we meet are part of the plan of life and are meant to be in our story for however long is appropriate. We appreciate the time we spent together. We value what they have taught us and hope that we have shared something purposeful for them. We know that each has a story in our memory book, and we will forever consider them friends.

*(Used with permission; Wings newsletter, Summer 2017, wingsgrief.org)*



**Christmas shopping?**

**\$15 (including s/h)**

**Here's a GREAT gift idea --**

**and you will be supporting**

**your favorite charity,**

**SCSM!**



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**December 2017**

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 donations!**

**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

*My 12 year old granddaughter died. I felt powerless as my daughter wept in the hospital room as she leaned over her daughter's body. I felt like I was experiencing two deaths at that moment and prayed to God for help. I found it hard to help my daughter as I was in pain for the loss of my granddaughter and grieving for my daughter. I always felt strong enough to help her in the past, but I felt powerless at that moment. Am I a terrible person?*

I am so sorry for your deep pain. No, you are not a terrible person. Many grandparents share similar stories with me. In fact, we tried starting a grandparent's grief support group and no one came. We found out that they could not come because they were giving support to their family member who had the

loss that they had no time to find the support that they needed.

Hopefully, those who are reading this will give more support to grandparents. The following are some ideas of how to support grandparents. Send sympathy cards. Pray for them. Make calls and visits brief unless they indicate they want a longer conversation. Listen but don't give advice. Since the primary focus is their child, it would be thoughtful to offer help with mowing lawns, shoveling snow, running errands or being willing to drive them to appointments. Remembering anniversaries of their grandchild's birth and death is usually appreciated. Let them mourn and share stories of their grandchild.

Even now, my prayer is that you will find the support you need.

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, 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.