

Heart & Hand

Quarterly Newsletter of the **Spiritual Care Support Ministriessm**

Reaching for a hand, and touching a heart

Vol. 14, Ed. 4, December 2018

Greetings from Chaplain Liz

Greetings from the Spiritual Care Support Ministry Center where we understand that suffering is never easy, but it produces in us perseverance; with perseverance comes character and with character comes hope. God knows that we easily get weary, but we believe the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the earth. God will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. That is His promise!

Those who entered the Spiritual Care Support Ministry Center this year, 2018, or have contacted us by email, text, phone, Facetime, Facebook, Skype, etc. have suffered great loss through chronic illness, death of a loved one and many types of personal loss. Only God knows what they have gone through. For many it is hard to even find the words to express their pain and suffering. We have seen and spoken with caregivers who are exhausted as they care for their loved ones. We meet with the elderly who are feeling abandoned and lonely. We see children once smiling and enjoying life who are now sad and discouraged. Teens are going in all the wrong directions because of the losses they have experienced. Couples come who are divorcing because of the losses they have experienced in their relationships. They are not willing to work through their difficulties together as God intended. Blended families are giving up because they do not have the right support. It takes seven years



to establish a new identity for a blended family, and they have lost their way because of a lack of understanding the process of healing that needs to be done. Those who are chronically ill feel that they are of no value to anyone because they are unable to do things that they used to do.

Then there are those who have loved ones that have died because of car accidents, disease, etc. Young and old alike wonder where God is and question His love for them. They question if He even exists. The answers that they are searching for cannot be found in alcohol, sex, gambling, drugs, a new husband or wife, or buying a new home, car or location. They are searching for peace, purpose, and hope of a future for them and their families. They want to know if heaven is real and how they can be sure that they can be in heaven. They want to understand how their suffering can be used for good. They are searching for that which will be lasting and transformational.

That is why we are doing what we are doing at Spiritual Care Support Ministries. We believe that God can and will bring hope back in to the life of a person who has lost hope. We are here to give the support that is needed. As people are given the tools to understand what they are struggling with, they can then make the right decisions to find healing and hope. We are here to listen, pray, encourage, and offer resources that can be life-changing.

We are now preparing for 2019 classes, and we hope that you will join us. You can go to our website (www.scsm.tv) for any

information you may have about classes, seminars or trainings, or to sign up for my blog.

I am praying that in 2019 we will be able to offer classes for teen grief and classes to help children of divorce. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact our office and ask to meet with me. As a young girl, I learned from others that I could survive no matter what was happening around me. I was given the tools that made the difference, and we can do the same for the children and teens that come our way. Will you join me and others? Our children and teens need us.

If you enjoy reading our newsletter, please pass it to a family member or friend. If you want to have the newsletter sent via email, please contact our office. We would love to hear from you telling us that you are praying for this ministry or if you have been changed by the stories you have read.

I want to give God praise for meeting our needs this year at SCSM. We are believing that we will end this year again financially in the black. At the end of the year we wait to see how God moves on the hearts of people. We pray that you will be moved to give financially. On our website you will find information that our treasurer has put together for you so that you can see how we spend the money that comes to the ministry. Thank you so much.

I want to end with Psalm 118:1 that says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever." Will you join me in thanking God for the privilege we all have at SCSM to serve Him by reaching out to those who are suffering? If you desire to join the team, please contact me at Chaplainliz@gmail.com.

Blessings to you and your family this holiday season.

Chaplain Elizabeth Danielsen

I Am Ready by Susan Payne

I am ready. As I rock my baby in daddy's chair and admire the beauty of the outside scene from my front window, I am ready. As I sit in silence amongst my own thoughts, I am ready. I am ready to be honest with myself and others. I know that this will come as a shock to many family members and friends, but I am ready and that's all that matters.

Today, June 16, 2018, I released a dove at the park in memory of my dad at an event. My dad took his own life on October 6, 2016. He suffered for many, many years with mental illness and the struggles of his own mind whether he (or others) wanted to admit it or not. He was not able to see a way out of the pain he was going through as a result of his stroke on October 9, 2015. His health continued to deteriorate, and I believe he was ready at that moment. The loss of my dad has been the worst journey of my life. The type of death has caused a daily whirlwind of emotional sadness and depression.

The dove represents peace of the deepest kind. It soothes and quiets our worried or troubled thoughts, enabling us to find renewal in the silence of the mind. The dove's singing is most prevalent when the veils between the physical and spiritual worlds are thought to be at their thinnest – first thing in the morning and last thing at night – again representing a link between two divergent domains.

My dad was my hero. Plain and simple. He will NOT be remembered by the way in which he died, but the way that he lived. The way he loved and by the way he made us laugh. He always gave me sound advice and was so very proud of my accomplishments in life. He was especially happy for me when I met Jason, and he called my dad to ask my hand in marriage. Jason tells it like this, "Jason, we would love to have you. You will be a great addition as my son-in-law. Now you can't give her back! Ya hear? There are no returns!"

My dad was surely a jokester, but he meant that in the most loving way. He finally saw his little girl happy! I will never forget the day he gave me away. He walked me down the aisle, one hand on his walker



Daddy and me, summer 2016

and one hand over mine. The dance with my dad was the best moment of my relationship with him. He smiled once again, and he knew that day I would forever be taken care of.

I believe my dad was ready to see Jesus that day. He was ready for no more mental and physical pain. I do not agree with how my dad left this earth, but I do know that in the Bible it says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Although Jesus was not happy with my dad's choice on how to die, He did take his hand in death as my dad was a child of God. The truth hurts. This is my truth. I live with my truth every day. Sometimes in outward grief, sometimes in painstaking silence. Sometimes in sadness or peace. Any given day can be any given way.

Today, I share this with you not for any new sympathy or attention. I share this not for you, but for me and my own healing. It's not about you, it's about me. I share with you not for you to be mad at me for sharing what you think should be a secret, and definitely not upset with me for not sharing sooner. You certainly don't get to determine how I deal with this loss. I share this with you because I am ready to break the silence. I share in order to allow you to know that everyone goes through pain. Some pain we may never know about. Some people are good at hiding it, and others are not. I share this with you so that you will come to me or someone else in your life if you

are struggling. Someone out there WILL listen. Someone cares about YOU! This is my story. What is yours?

Please contact someone you trust today if you are in need of help. So many people in your life will be so glad that you did.

May was Mental Health Awareness Month, but I want every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every month to be a time when we can raise awareness. Be the person someone can come to. Be the person someone can talk to. You never know anything about a person's thoughts and feelings beyond the mask.

*My goal in writing this is to be truthful and to not feel like I am hiding something or feel ashamed of what has happened in my life. My goal is to release my hurt and place it in God's hands just as the dove was released from my hands. In a world full of anger, sadness, and daily suffering, I want to be a part of the change. I want my 7-month-old daughter to grow up knowing she can talk to me about anything, knowing that she is cared for and loved in the deepest of ways. On a daily basis I speak to Elizabeth of her wonderful Granddaddy West, and one day when we feel she is ready to hear the truth, we will share the truth with her. Yes, the truth does hurt, but I believe that the more we are truthful and open about mental health, the better our world will be.

1-800-273-TALK
(National Suicide Prevention Lifeline)

I am willing to have a conversation with people who have been through this same kind of hurt. This type of loss is very unfortunate and leaves us with so many unanswered questions. I definitely do not have those answers but talking with someone who understands what you are going through is healing. Contact Chaplain Liz if you are interested in getting together or possibly starting a small group with me.

Newsletter Editor - Dorothy Slaga
Associate - Cheryl Reynolds

A Young Widow's Journey by Karen Angell Duby

'Til death do us part. Such a common phrase that we hear in many weddings. When you're marrying for the first time, and/or as a young adult, those words just glide by. You don't ever stop to think that they were really meant for you. Intellectually we know that we will all die. Emotionally you are swept away with the joy of a new beginning with the person you love. We're not thinking about death.

It happens though. Sometimes through an illness. Sometimes it's because of an accident.

On August 12, 2002, I had just returned home from getting a haircut. I was gearing up to begin a new year of teaching. With five children aged 7-14, I had to make sure everyone was ready to start school off right. I was getting ready to make dinner, awaiting my husband and two of our children to return home. They were later than I expected. But four in the house was much quieter than all seven of us, so I enjoyed the ease of the evening.

Then the phone rang. As I stood speechless, my eldest son knew something was wrong. I struggled to comprehend the voice on the phone telling me that two of my children had been in a car accident and they were at Fairfax Hospital. They were both in serious condition, and the hospital needed to know if they could do



some tests and perform surgery. I answered, "Of course. Whatever needed to be done." And then I asked about my husband. There was no record of him. He had not been transported to Fairfax, and they knew nothing of him.

Just then, a knock came to the door. I answered it and a Sheriff's deputy was standing there. He told me that my husband had been in an accident and was medivacked to Fairfax Hospital. I said I was on the phone with them, and they had no record of him. Time stood still. All the thoughts that might race through your head, began to. What had happened? Where had it happened? How had it happened? Where was

Mike? Was he alright? What would happen with the children? Who should I call? What do I tell the three children at home?

For what seemed like forever, the nurse on the phone, the deputy and I waited for anyone to tell us where Mike was. The boys were being taken care of in one of the finest hospitals. I had no control of that. But who was taking care of Mike? Finally, it was communicated that Mike was at UVA Medical Hospital. I felt he was in good hands there.

And so begins my journey. I had two sons an hour away to the north. My husband was an hour away to the south. With five children, I had faced many times where I had to be in two places at once. Remarkably, a calmness came over me. I weighed my decision. I called my older brother who lived about 15 minutes from Fairfax Hospital. Since the boys were in surgery, I couldn't do much there, so I asked him to go to that hospital. I called a neighbor to take my three children still at home. And then I decided to go to UVA with the deputy. Long ago, Mike and I had made a pact that although we adored our children, we would put each other first. Since no one would or could tell me his specific condition, I needed to be with him.

In a frenzy, I had left the house without my wallet. We stopped at a local restaurant owned by a friend. I asked her to help me and she emptied her cash drawer and gave me the contents. As we drove to UVA, the miles whizzed by, but it took a lifetime to get there. When I arrived at UVA, I was taken to a room all by myself.

If you've ever watched any cop TV shows, doctor shows, or hospital shows, you know that a policeman at the door and a hospital waiting room by yourself, is not the place to be. As I sat in that room by myself, I prayed. It was certainly not the first time I prayed along this journey. As a believer, I knew then and I know now that God was all I had to lean on, but my prayer was different at this point. I had been receiving phone calls from my brother telling me the boys were

Introducing Rebecca Sareen, Intern



Hello, my name is Rebecca Sareen, and I am a graduate student at Liberty University working on my Masters in Pastoral Counseling. I live with my parents in Northern Virginia and am really excited about this opportunity to intern here at Spiritual Care Support Ministries. When I was looking for a place to intern, a family friend recommended that I look into SCSM, and I am so grateful God led us to that conversation.

I might be required to do an internship to complete my graduate program, but this has become more than just a school requirement for me. I love working here so far and am very grateful for the opportunity to continue learning and growing during my time here.



Chaplain Liz with Pastors Felicia and Tyrone Champion, sponsors and speakers at the True Deliverance Ministry Marriage Seminar

critical, but OK! I had spoken to my parents and in-laws, and they were all with the boys. They were all praying. As news spread throughout our small community, I knew everyone would be praying.

I sat alone, in the room, with just God. No, not just God... GOD! I knew I needed Him now more than any other time in my life. I talked to Him, asking if this was my 'Til death do us part moment? I actually asked God to give me Mike back as a whole, capable man, or to take him to heaven. Mike was a vibrant, active, energetic man. Unless he was watching a movie or favorite TV show, he was moving. His spirit was full of life and to be anything less than that...well I told God that I did not think I had the strength to deal with it.

I either wanted him to walk out of the hospital with me or walk through the gates of heaven.

Shortly thereafter, three doctors came into the room and shared with me the trauma Mike had faced, and that he had died. What I know is he was crushed from the waist down. To know more than that wasn't necessary. I asked to see him. As I looked at his perfect face, not a scratch on it, I recalled sweet memories that we had shared together. I thanked him for a life well-lived and five beautiful children. I chastised him for leaving me. We had another pact that I would change all the diapers, and he would take care of the kids in their teen years. He didn't live up to that bargain.

I knew that Mike was on his way to heaven. Certainly not a perfect man, Mike did put God first in his life. He knew of where his blessings came from, and he was proud to share that. Mike had many goals that he wanted to reach, but he always would say getting to heaven was the most important one. No more challenges to face, he was on his way to meet Jesus!

I, on the other hand, had a new leg on my journey. Knowing that I could do nothing more for Mike, I had to get to

my sons. The deputy drove me North, to meet my brother. I will always be grateful for my brother. He was tasked with telling Mike's parents that he had died, as well as my parents and my two sons. He's such a kind, calm, wise man, and God chose the

member, no friend, no enemy. It has been a painful, endless struggle. When you think you are over it, grief rears its ugly head and the pain and tears flow again. The love you shared is measured by the pain you feel.



best person for that role.

The night was long. My sons had broken bones, a lacerated spleen, fractured hip socket, and glass shards in their faces and hands. All these would be repaired over time. What could not be repaired was the loss of their father. No words could heal my five children. But God could.

This journey of ours has so much more to it, than just this one day. There have been so many trials and missteps along the way. I relied on many people and things to help me along the journey. I tried very hard to keep God at the center and lean on Him for guidance. I continued to ask Him why this had happened. Why did you need to break up our marriage, our family, our home? Why did 'Til death do us part have to knock on my door? Why me? Why us? What did you need Mike so badly for? Was it more important than mine and my children's needs? I was never angry with God, but I was persistent, and I just wanted answers.

His answers came when I chose to listen to Him and follow His guidance.

One day along the journey, I no longer asked God, "Why me?" I began to ask, "Why NOT me?" God could have chosen anybody's husband to die. He chose mine which means that God chose ME! Now what was I to do with that? That's an awesome responsibility to be chosen by God. Understand that this has not been a journey that I would wish on anyone. No family

Through it all though, I knew that God had a purpose for me. So, I volunteer with Spiritual Care Support Ministries to let others know that there is hope. Through God's help, there is a better tomorrow. There is a day when laughter will be heard, and pain will be less. Love can enter your life again and memories of the past will be sweet and heart-felt. Life can be joyful again.

My purpose is to show others that through my trust and faith in God, His plan is good.

I wasn't ready to lose Mike. I didn't expect to be a single mother of five, but God has equipped me with all the tools I needed. I just need to accept the help He sends to me, pray for His guidance, and listen to His word. In the end, the glory is given to Him for this journey.

In conclusion, I'd like you to know that my children are now ages 24-30. Two are happily married. Four have graduated college. The fifth served our nation in the Army for 6 years and is pursuing his degree now. They live in Los Angeles, Dallas, Palm Beach, Arlington, and Alexandria. They are employed, healthy, and happy.

I am celebrating 5 years of marriage this year. I continue to teach 2nd grade and enjoy my quiet life in the country...in the same home that Mike was providential about buying 25 years ago.

The journey is long. The struggle is real. With faith in God, there is always hope for a joyful, purposeful tomorrow. God bless you.

**WE ARE MOVING
AND NEED YOUR HELP!**

If you are interested in specifically knowing the needs we have or would like to help when we move, please call the office at 540-349-5814.

Chat with the Chaplain

All I Want for Christmas is Jesus

When your heart is heavy with sadness or sorrow, the last thing you want to do is celebrate the holidays. The carols and bells, the tinsel and evergreens, serve only to remind you of the burden weighing so heavily on your spirit. While you weep, wrestling with the realities of life without the one you love, or the pain you experience from chronic illness each day or caregiving for those who are suffering, the world goes right on with their celebrations. Rather than being times of family togetherness, sharing and thanksgiving, holidays can bring feelings of sadness, loss

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Celebrating Christmas with SCSM!

Join Spiritual Care Support Ministries' joyful Christmas celebration on *Saturday, December 1, 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 Angel of Love, 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. The deadline for names to be submitted for the program is Monday, November 26. 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 \$ _____

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

**WILLOW TREE
ANGEL OF
LOVE**

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

Honorariums and Memorials

In Memory of Rob Christiansen, given by Ann Marie and John McCarty, Catlett, VA; Nicholas Daymude, given by John and Debbie Daymude, Copper Hill, VA; Scott Neth, given by Jack and Joyce Neth, Flower Mound, TX; Peggy Kilgo, given by Carol Brinegar, Manassas, VA; Carol Dubinsky, given by Keith Clifton; Omar Lee Barnes III, given by Connie Barnes, Midland, VA; Carol Dubinsky, given by Cindy Greene, Warrenton, VA; Carol Dubinsky, given by G. Douglas Hitchcock; Warren Loveland, given by Jane Loveland, Culpeper, VA; Carol M. Dubinsky, given by John and Nancy Allen, Remsen, NY; Sgt. Jason A. Shaffer and newborn, Jennifer Nicole Shaffer, given by Roger and Gwen Shaffer, Huntly, VA; Tim Maahs, given by Sydney White, Culpeper, VA; Donna Meade, given by Sandy Martin, Culpeper, VA; Joseph Huryk, given by Kathy Huryk, Woodbridge, VA; Carol Dubinsky, given by Shirley Zurek, Warrenton, VA; Carol Dubinsky, given by Ruth Arcand, Remsen, NY. Karen Stanley, given by Ray Gilbert, Midland, VA; Bobby Satre, given by Scott Satre, Jeffersonton, VA; Carol Magee Dubinsky, given by Robert Marchesani, Winchester, VA.

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

In Honor of Arvid and Liz Danielsen's 50th Anniversary, given by Bobby, Charlotte and Pamela Reynolds, Front Royal, VA; Alpha and Omega Group, Inc., Great Falls, VA; Frank and Eileen Mooney, Sparta, NJ; Carol Brinegar, Manassas, VA; Ed and Alice Abrahamsen, Mount Bethel, PA; Margaret and Bill Trum, Branchville, NJ; Lorraine and Robert Tammera, Warrenton, VA; Lea Solecki, Sparta, NJ; Kathy Huryk, Woodbridge, VA; Roy and Renate Garms, Sterling, NJ; Scott and Marie Price, Bristol, VA; Rose Hernandez, Manassas, VA; Pam and Gary Dudley, Warrenton, VA; Vicky and Nerius Cordova, Staten Island, NY; Sylvia Leggett, Manassas, VA; Helen Danielsen, Roseland, NJ.

Thank You

Bobby Delach for cleaning the Center; Diane and Jim Fritz for donating coffee; Anaiz Stinson for printer paper; Angie Wilson for pizza for the mailing day lunch; Eric and Danette Jennings for the new microwave; Linda Spencer for cleaning the Center; Victoria Beers for Bibles and books; Karen DUBY and friends for financial support for Family Grief Camp

CHAT, from page 5

and emptiness. This Christmas God has promised to walk with you, steadying your feet and imparting a new song of hope in your heart. He wants to give you a reason to celebrate. Love is the gift of Christmas, the gift of a loving God who embraces us when grief and hurt seem to push Him away. Love is the gift of Christmas, who understands everything you are going through. God's love gift to you this Christmas is Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world, that He gave us His one and only Son that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). I will never forget the day at the church I was attending when I was eleven years old. I felt so alone and did not believe that anyone cared or loved me, but then I heard about the baby in the manger named Jesus. I heard that He not only was to be

born, but He went to the cross for my sins and the sins of the whole world which made me understand that He understood suffering. I heard that Jesus loved me, had a plan for my life, and would be all that I needed in the good and not so good times. I learned that day that the scriptures would guide me and I could trust Him. I heard that as I confessed my sins to Him, He would forgive me. I heard that I had the promise of heaven. I will receive many gifts this Christmas, but there is one gift I want more than any other gift. All I want for Christmas is Jesus! He has been my constant companion, and He has never failed me yet. Love is the Christmas gift that God wants to give you. All you have to do is receive the gift of Jesus, and it is free. He is only a prayer away. May your Christmas be filled with hope and meaning as you experience His love.

Praise and Prayer

We Praise the Lord

- For the Old and New Testament that guides us each day.
- For God's strength, wisdom, and discernment that He gives us to accomplish the vision of SCSM.
- For the privilege of serving our community, our country and the world.
- For the new SCSM volunteers that God has been sending us.
- For the new SCSM Center that is being built and those who are making it happen.
- For our prayer intercessors who commit to pray regularly for this ministry.
- For the financial support we are receiving from individuals and faith communities so that we can do what God has called us to do.

We Pray

- That we would be attentive to the needs of those who are suffering physically, emotionally, relationally, financially, and spiritually.
- For God's provision for the furniture and other needs we will have as we move to a larger facility.
- For more volunteers (pastoral counselors, licensed counselors, group facilitators, bakers, etc.).
- For our country and those who are willing to defend our freedoms and their families who are left behind.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Facilitators
- Marketing help
- Baking for Care Café.

How Will Your Movie End? by Dr, Karl Benzio

Transformational Thought

Today, I want to teach you an important concept that has helped transform my life and I have used to help many others God brings my way. We all tend to put premature finish lines on situations. "I will never talk to him again." "Nobody will ever love me." "If I don't get any money by the end of the month to pay my bills, I'll be a failure." "Cancer (or insert your chronic medical illness) is a death sentence." I know many people who have lost all happiness in their lives and they wonder if they will ever have joy again. Sadly, suicide is the ultimate premature finish line. Their unhappiness is usually an outcome of being in a bad situation. So my prayer I teach them to pray is, "God, please reveal the good You have planned for me in this bad situation."

Why is this prayer always so difficult to say when we're in the midst of a horrible situation like illness, death, divorce, depression, anger, an addiction, or financial trouble? The list goes on and on and there are so many reasons to be unhappy. We typically don't ask God to bring good from the bad because we are in the midst of suffering. It's almost impossible to consider all the wonderful outcomes that God could have in store for us. So, for those of you who have lost all hope for happiness and are in the middle of a storm, pray this simple prayer, "Dear Father, please allow me to see the good You will bring from this bad situation."

We experience our present painful circumstances for a reason. Pain sharpens us, shows us valuable skills, and reveals us vital information about God, life and ourselves. Your present painful circumstances aren't the end of your movie. There are so many more glorious scenes yet to come. Even though it's painful at times, do what you need to do, so when God opens the door, you are ready to walk through and take advantage of the upcoming exciting and triumphant scenes of your movie. Oftentimes, we blow off or skip the "training time" God



desires from us in a task or hardship. Consequently, we don't learn the important skills, process, or information we need to be successful when the opportunity to shine presents itself.

Today, don't believe that your current struggle is the final act of your play and holding you in suspended, tortured animation. The end of your movie is not now. Accept that this is the beginning of a great movie

that ends in restoration and healing. What is your role in the movie that turns around the plot? God will show up and do His part. Will you? Follow Him. Complete the preparation and training He is giving you now. This will allow you to manage this present difficult experience and have peace, comfort, and success through the adversity. Then you will have a front row seat to appreciate the daily miracles He delivers in your life. Whether you realize this is just the opening scenes of your movie or are tricked into thinking you are living in the end of your movie is your decision, so choose well.

Prayer

Dear Father God, I know that evil does not come from You, but that You have the power to make good come from a bad situation. I pray, Father, that you give me the strength to endure this storm and to build my belief that You will bring good from the bad. Most days I feel like I will never be happy again. I pray that You replace this sadness and hopelessness with Your joy and hope. I confess that I have made choices that have created this situation; forgive me, Lord. There are also bad circumstances that are out of my control and that I do not understand. I accept, Lord, that my ability to understand is so limited. But I trust that You will bring good from this bad. Lord, help me reflect Your light and hope to others who are in the midst of what appears to be an impossible situation. I pray in the name of the One who patiently waited on You while enduring persecution, Jesus Christ; and all God's children say – AMEN!

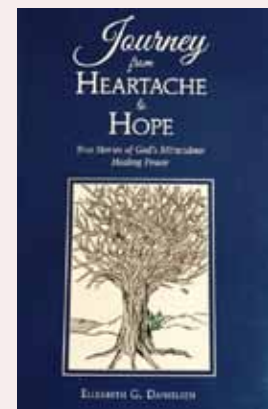
The Truth

then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you! ... I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions." Daniel 6:16, 26-27

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4

(From Dr. Karl Benzio, Lighthouse Network's Stepping Stones Daily Devotional, August 22, 2018. www.lighthousenetwork.org, used with permission)



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Dear Chaplain Liz

Dear Chaplain Liz,
The holidays are coming, and I don't think I will be ready. The question really is, "Will I ever be ready?" Since my sister who I was very close to died a few months ago, my life has changed. I don't even know who I am anymore. The holiday decorations are everywhere. The music is playing and all I want to do is scream. My sister and I loved the holidays. Our conversations about our plans for the holidays would begin in late October. We would go Christmas shopping for presents and enjoy every moment we were together. Now she is gone, and I am alone and I feel angry. I am angry at God, my friends who don't seem to understand, and the life I have now without her. Will the holidays ever bring me meaning?

When you lose someone as close as your sister, the holiday season can be a painful reminder of the loss you are experienc-

ing. It is normal to feel anger and, yes, there are friends who do not understand the pain you are feeling. They did not know your sister like you did, but as you talk about her and share stories about her when you are ready, there are people who will listen. The best advice I can give you is to mourn. Find someone you can trust and just talk. Someone who is a good listener. It is hard at first but mourning brings healing. Holidays will never be the same, but it can have meaning again. The journey of grief is a process. Be patient with yourself. Find a good bereavement support group. Many of them have special events to help those who are grieving survive the holidays. God understands all that you are going through, and He wants to remind you even now that God sent His son Jesus Christ to be born. Jesus came to bring meaning to our lives. It's God's love gift to you. Search for Him and you will find meaning.

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