

# HEART & HAND

Reaching for a hand and touching a heart.

"Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, All is bright..."

## INTERRUPTING GOD

BY CHAPLAIN LIZ DANIELSEN

Do you ever feel like you are always interrupting people? I am wondering if others who are grieving their losses feel the same way. I do. People all around you, which can include family and friends, are not able to sit long enough to have a conversation with you. There is such a need for those who have experienced loss to talk about their loved one, to retell their stories repeatedly, and to share the memories of the times they laughed and cried together. They have a great need to share with others what is happening to them personally, emotionally, relationally, physically, and spiritually as they are on their own personal journey of grief, and much of their journey is new. After a while, who is really listening?

Do you ever make a phone call hoping the person at the other end is willing to listen, but there are all kinds of distractions that you hear? You decide to cut the conversation short as you realize that you are an interruption, and you feel lonelier than ever.

Those who are grieving loss have learned to keep things to themselves because they

never had permission or have never allowed themselves to mourn. Those around us live a fast-paced life. They are always so busy. Those who have had loss are tired most of the time that we cannot keep up with them so we get angry, feel lonelier, and begin to isolate from family and friends. I have had to work through those emotions. Have you? My attitude is not always good. There are reasons why people cannot understand how to meet our needs, and they find it difficult



"When I tell God what I need and praise Him for what He is doing in my life, it allows me to experience His peace."

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to listen and are insensitive.

They may never have had a loss. They may have never healed from their own personal losses. Remembering that loved one that you want to talk about can stir up emotions that they are not ready to manage. We may be expecting more from them than they can give us. Honestly, there are also people who just do not care.

As much as we may be disappointed and even frustrated at times with those who we reached out to, they may need support as much as we need it. I am learning patience with myself and with others. I am learning to intercede in prayer for them. I am realizing as I journey through grief that there are things in my life that only God can help me with.

The good news is that I never have to  
(Interrupting continued on page 4)



# Surviving The Holidays

By Richard B. Gilbert - Valparaiso, Indiana

Bereavement Magazine November/December 1998

My grandmother was like royalty to us. She had the stature of the "Queen Mum" and led us all with her regal presence. When word came from her doctor that he wanted to see her right away, we were all in a stunned silence.

Bad news? As it turns out, Gram had a mild heart irritation, requiring medication and a diet change. The doctor advised her to eat a banana a day. When Gram came out

of the doctor's office she announced: "The doctor said I should have a banana split every day. Let's go to the ice-cream stand." So, off they went.

Grief is a lot like that. Sometimes it is choosing banana splits, but more often it is facing each moment, each detour, each stretching of our sanity and awareness, each feeling (even feelings stripped raw to a level of pain never experienced before), by giving them meaning, value and purpose.

We certainly don't need (and shouldn't embrace) people telling us what to do and when to be "over this." Instead, we embrace those who are willing to walk alongside, to listen a lot, to speak when we ask, and - as we struggle to find some measure of meaning and hope - to struggle with us and for us.

Holidays and special days like Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, new Year's birthdays, seasonal days and anniversaries share common threads. They remind us of the way things were, and, at least for now, that may result in more pain with reminders of loss rather than lovely memories. There is pressure to choose what

to do (if anything) with these holidays; there is increased fatigue and sadness; and there is the sense that we are slipping deeper into the hole of loss.

When we are grieving, holidays and special days are much like the summoning Gram experienced with her doctor. They take what used to be our pattern for coping, the points of meaning and hope where we can "hang the hats" (and ornaments) of our feelings for at least a moment of peace and quiet. These especially difficult times can take anything that hints of sanity and good order and leave us feeling as if we are spinning aimlessly and hopelessly out of control.

It takes work to begin to grab a new pathway the way we would like things to be. The rituals and traditions often seem to be complicating factors rather than gifts. Holidays and special days often present decisions, tasks, and expectations that we feel too weak to tackle. When we are exhausted, why would we want to take on more work? Holidays can be gifts, they can be glimpses of peace, and they can be the chance to select new rituals, new customs, new ways to remember less and less about a death and more and more about a life.

Planning, organizing, and living in chaos are how most of us spend the holidays, which can either put us "over the top" or drive us deeper into the valley of despair. Still, we have the privilege of choosing what will or will not be part of our grief journeys. In your own time frame, you can decide which of the holiday customs you want to hold onto, what you want to set aside (at least for this year) and what new territory you want to explore.

Holidays usually include some expression of giving and receiving ... cards, cookies, homemade fudge, gifts, greetings, and visits. Healing can come when we risk giving. Don't try to buy your way to healing, but give something special as a remembrance. Be open to the deeper gifts and meanings of these special days. There could be a rare jewel in there somewhere and a glimpse of some new door that will lead you out of the valley of your loss.

Seek guidance. Shop wisely. Rest often. Spend cautiously. Think healthy thoughts. Commit to your need for healing and take the time to reach your chosen goals. Most of all, commit to survival. You will move closer to healing and hope, to remembering and living.

**"Be open to the deeper gifts and meanings of these special days.**

**There could be a rare jewel in there somewhere and a glimpse of some new door that will lead you out of the valley of your loss."**





## A Holiday Prayer

By Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D., CGC, CHT

Thank you for life. For its good times and bad.  
Thank you for love, even when I can't feel it.  
Thank you for the love I used to share,  
For the arms that held me tight.

Thank you for my family  
In faraway places,  
In different times.

Thank you for the songs we sang,  
For the dreams we saved,  
For the smiles we shared.

Thank you for the strength that eludes me just now.  
Thank you for the weakness that sends me to my knees.  
Thank you for the searching, the reaching, the hoping.  
Thank you for the bonds of memory that hold me in place,  
Even when I don't believe in it anymore,  
Or... forget what it is all about.

Thank you, most of all,  
For having been blessed with the love I have known,  
Even now when I fear I will forget it.

Thank you for memory and  
For filling it full measure for me.

It wasn't nearly long enough, but it will have to do.

Thanks for the moments we danced.  
Thanks for the little while...

Bereavement Magazine 1999

## WAYS YOU CAN HELP

### 1. Pray Regularly

### 2. Give monthly to help with

- Rent & Utilities
- Supplies & Training Materials
- Support Groups
- Community Events

### 3. Make a One-Time Donation



ENVELOPE



OVER THE PHONE



ONLINE



IN PERSON

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## FOLLOW CHAPLAIN LIZ'S BLOG

[WWW.SCSM.TV/BLOG](http://WWW.SCSM.TV/BLOG)

## 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 Life
- Integrity
- Confidentiality
- Excellence in Everything We Do

Everyone at Spiritual Care Support Ministries wishes you the blessings of peace, love, and healing this Christmas.

May your New Year be filled with beautiful moments with God, family, and friends.





## OPENING UP TO OUR EMOTIONS

BY DR. TODD ROBINSON, PHD



### Note from Todd to Chaplain Liz

I had a sister who was addicted to drugs and alcohol for many years and a daughter who has struggled with suicidal depression and still struggles with high anxiety. In addition to that, I minister to 20-30 men each day caught up in addiction, strongholds, and many emotional and mental struggles. These people have taught me more than I ever teach them. They expose my own struggles and insecurities and help me to seek God and examine myself on a deeper level each day.



The last four weeks have had me teaching a class at our church on emotions - depression, happiness, anxiety, and anger. When I offered this class as an option for church members (or anyone) to attend, I was unsure as to the response it would receive. Often people tend to shy away from venturing into classes or topics like emotions and mental health for fear others may see them as weak or unstable.

However, I was pleasantly surprised with the response. Each Wednesday has proven to provide a packed room, and it seems that more people show up each week. Many in the class have shed tears of joy as they receive fresh and new perspectives on emotions that once brought them shame. Others have opened great conversations around their own emotional struggles, while others have gained a greater understanding of how emotions, when properly addressed and handled, play a vital role in our lives.

All emotions are designed for our benefit,

even the hard ones like depression and anxiety. No emotion is without a positive purpose. We don't like the way that certain emotions make us feel, but that does not mean they are not beneficial.

The world has trained us to believe that uncomfortable emotions are bad and comfortable emotions are good. The Bible provides us a fresh take on difficult emotions when it states that sorrow is better than laughter (Ecclesiastes 7:3). Sorrow and sadness provide greater lessons for us than do the good times. Sorrow and sadness are often accompanied by difficulties, and difficulties are life's greatest teachers. All miracles require big problems. Championship teams overcome the greatest challenges. Successful business people are only successful because they learned to benefit from their failures, discouragement, and sorrow when others quit because of these same emotions.

Sorrow and sadness cause us to evaluate our pain and examine the things we need to change. Happiness rarely does this. Sorrow and sadness should cause reflection and promote rethinking our direction, circumstances, and relationships.

The challenge for us is to be open to and welcome the discomfort of sadness, sorrow, discouragement, and depression, and be willing to let them do their work in our lives. While our culture declares an openness to all things, it really isn't. Television, social media, and other forms of information continue to sell these emotions as abnormal and say they must be suppressed. They rarely, if ever, speak to the benefit of these strong emotions and their real intent.

### Be well!



"Frustration is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart" (Ecclesiastes 7:3).

(Interrupting continued from page 1)



"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had," (Rom. 15:5).

worry about interrupting God. He is available to me twenty-four hours a day. He empowers me during those challenging times in my day, my week, and in my life. When I tell God what I need and praise Him for what He is doing in my life, it allows me to experience His peace. I love my conversations with God especially as I sit in my gazebo in my backyard, which I feel is my own personal sanctuary. God and I have long conversations. As we talk together, I gain a new perspective. I gain HIS perspective. He reminds me that the enemy of my soul wants to discourage me. He wants me to think that no one really cares. I have a choice to not believe those lies and change my attitude towards others. I can see them as God would want me to see them. How is your attitude these days? May the God who gives you endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of minds towards one another that Christ Jesus had (Romans 15:5).

As I come to the end of this year, I am so grateful to the Lord for His faithfulness to me and to my family. "He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright, and just is He" (Deuteronomy 32:4).

## SOME ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOUR DAY!



### "I SPEAK JESUS"

Written by  
Here Be Lions &  
Darlene Zschech

SCAN TO LISTEN!



## THE TERROR OF JOY

BY JOEL SPENCER

There have been many people in my life lately challenging me to seek joy in the midst of being a cancer survivor and a soon-to-be-single guy. But can I tell you something? Joy can be terrifying. As I listen to sermons and participate in conversations about joy, I find myself recoiling. It's a confusing and unwelcome reaction. After all, my head knows that joy is a fruit of the Spirit, and that it is supposed to be a mark of the Christian life. I have often felt guilty for struggling with joy anyway, and so it's easy to feel even more guilty for being resistant and afraid of joy now. I have a complex relationship with joy that makes even writing this seem laughable. The legalism I was immersed in for so long makes me suspicious of joy, and I end up telling myself that I must be doing something wrong if I am feeling joy. At the same time, that legalism in me hears sermons on joy and judges myself for struggling to find joy in Jesus in hard circumstances. So, joy ends up being terrifying because of the doubt it can create in my heart.

Joy can also be terrifying because of loss. The experience or hope of joy can cause my heart to fear the next loss, to fear experiencing joy because it will just lead to loss again. I can be convinced that it will just



**"He does want joy for me, and that's why He embraced me in His love, and it cannot be lost."**

lead to the grief I find all-too-familiar. I've lost my mother, grandparents, child, father, uncle, father figure in my life, relationships with my family and friends over the years, and now the loss of my marriage. It can be overwhelming to consider all the grief and to consider opening oneself again to the joy that has been lost. Maybe you have felt the same reality - paralysis of loss is the very opposite of joy.

There is another fearful thing about joy. When the things you've lost are such blessed things (like family or marriage), it can feel almost blasphemous or sacrilegious to hope for or pursue new joy in a new chapter. It can feel that way for the people in your life as well. I can ask, "It is really OK for me to feel joy again?" And others who love me,

who have been involved in my life and have been close to me during loss, can ask the same thing. "Is it really OK for him to feel joy again?"

Maybe you can relate. Romans 8 offers us the Lord's comfort.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

"For I consider that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 38, 39).

If we are in Christ, we are His children and the recipients of His grace. His love for us is assured, and *it cannot be lost*. It can relieve us of self-condemnation, give us surety in doubt, give us hope for the future, and give us joy in the most dire of circumstances. I find myself, while terrified of joy, drawn to it because I trust its Source. He does want joy for me, and that's why He embraced me in His love, and *it cannot be lost*.

## RESOURCE CORNER

BOOKLETS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE

[WWW.SCSM.TV/RESOURCES](http://WWW.SCSM.TV/RESOURCES)

- SILENT PAIN OF CHRONIC ILLNESS
- UNRESOLVED ISSUES
- GRIEF & MOURNING

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**JOURNEY FROM HEARTACHE TO HOPE**

Filled with true stories of God's miraculous healing power told by SCSM clients and volunteers.

Your spirit will be renewed by the faith of people in devastating situations that should have robbed them of happiness and

comfort, but instead brought strength and courage to their lives.



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**Help spread the word for SCSM!**

**@spiritualcaresupportministries #SCSMCares**

**Spiritual Care Support Ministries Hours:**

**Monday - Friday**  
9 am - 2:30 pm

**Tuesdays & Thursdays**  
2:30 - 5 pm (by appt. only)

**540-349-5814**  
**[www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv)**



## MY DEAR JOY

BY CINDY MARTZ



My dear Joy,

It's been 1,095 days since you went to be with Jesus and even though I know I will be with you again someday, my heart strings are strained to the point they have broken because grief is a matter of the heart. It's messy, confusing, and painful.

I see your picture. I smell a smell. I hear a song. It takes me to a place when you were on earth with me. Thankfully, God, in His wisdom, built into me the ability to remember and reflect. It is a precious gift.

King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under Heaven."

Death and the return of the spirit to God is one of the cycles of life. Our life on earth is short in comparison to eternity. Death is the final stage of life on earth but for those of us who trust in Jesus as our Savior, death is not the final stage of life. I am thankful for the promises of God's Word that remind me just how wonderful it will be when we are together again forever - for in eternity there is no time.

For now, my sweet Joy, I can only imagine what it will be like when I arrive in heaven and watch you dancing with the angels. Until that day, I will never forget you, and I will always love you.

Mama



JOY IN HEAVEN



## Celebrating Christmas with SCSM

A full month online Advent experience

Nov 27 - Dec 24



Please join us for our annual Christmas Celebration online event!

We will honor personal heroes and the memory of loved ones and share the reading of the Christmas Story.

This year we will also have some other festive fun in store for you.

Go to [www.scsm.tv](http://www.scsm.tv) or call 540-349-5814 for more information.

## DEAR CHAPLAIN LIZ

**OUR TEENAGER IS GRIEVING OVER THE LOSS OF HIS FRIEND THAT DIED. HOW CAN WE AS PARENTS HELP HIM?**



Teens face many pressures, decisions, and problems as a normal part of growing up. When a death or other major loss occurs, it can turn their lives upside down. It is hard to be a teenager. Be available and listen. Let your teen express his feelings in a safe environment and please don't judge him. Teens need to know that their grief is respected and understood.



**"Teens need to know that their grief is respected and understood."**

Learn about the six central needs of the bereaved and the grieving process so you can be well prepared.

Expect to see changes. There will be physical, emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual changes. Understand that some feelings are scary for him as well as you. Teens need truth, love, clear, and reasonable boundaries, privacy, and space at times, familiar routines, time with friends, power, and freedom to choose, sleep, a good diet, and water. They also need you to pray continually and have lots of patience while they are going through this difficult time.



Spiritual Care Support Ministries support children through loss. Children's feelings are validated in grief counseling so they know what they are feeling is normal and okay. It will be a safe place where your child can express themselves. This alone can calm your child's fears. Here at SCSM, we can give a child support if needed.

Call 540-349-5814 to schedule an appointment or to get more information.



# PRAYER & PRAISE

## WE PRAY FOR . . .

- Families to have a meaningful Thanksgiving and Christmas despite the challenges they may be facing.
- Our military and their families and that their needs will be met.
- Our country and our leaders so they make good decisions for the people.
- More SCSM volunteers.
- Financial support from faith communities and individuals.
- Individuals that would be interested and are called by God to be on our SCSM Executive Board.
- More part-time staff as the ministry of SCSM is growing.

## WE PRAISE THE LORD . . .

- For He is good, and His love endures forever.
- Because great is the Lord and mighty in power. His understanding has no limit.
- That when we cry out to the Lord in distress, He comforts us and gives us His peace.
- For our prayer warriors that intercede for us daily.
- For the \$20,000 grant that we received from the Path Foundation.
- For our SCSM volunteers.
- For the opportunity He has given us to serve others.

## MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS, AND THANK YOU'S

### IN MEMORY OF

Scott Neth, given by Joyce and Jack Neth; Jason A. Shaffer and Jennifer Nicole Shaffer, given by Roger and Gwen Shaffer; Keith Lowe, given by Traci Lowe; Barbara Wolfford, given by Rev. Sandy Martin; Nicholas Daymude, given by John and Debra Daymude; Robert Mason and Rachel Underwood, given by Rev. Carl Griffith; Joe Huryk, given by Kathy Huryk; Joanne Moyer and John Tortorelli, given by Helen

Danielsen; Kathryn Jennings, given by Catherine Murphy; Nadine Balenger Verona, given by Joan and Harry Brown; Rob Christiansen (son) and John McCarty (husband), given by Ann McCarty; David Spangenberg, given by Sonia Spangenberg; Jack Grey Shumate, given by Gayle Shumate Harsh; Vincent Buonomo, given by Alan and Jane Kalleberg.

### IN HONOR OF

Elizabeth Danielsen, given by Sharon and Sam Rizzo; the marriage of Zachary and Makenna Reynolds, given by Marvin and

Sharon Strauzer; Jane Fitzgerald, given by Marlene Kennedy.

### THANK YOU

Sheila for always being willing to help and donating a book for the library; the "we team" Dan Reckley and Jim Presley for all of their help at the Center; Debbie and Gray Coyner for the SCSM Center that we are renting, their desire to build this center is glorifying God through changed lives; Ruth

Dominquez and Cathy Rogers for providing special lunches at SCSM; Diana Bird for always being ready to help and go the extra mile; Paula Miller for keeping the front porch clean; Liz Danielsen, for all the years of leadership and guidance in teaching the Bereavement classes in Bristow.

**A very special thank you to the**

**PATH FOUNDATION**

**for their ongoing support of SCSM and its ministry to all!**

**SCSM is thrilled to be one of the recent recipients of a \$20,000 grant from the Path Foundation!**

Funding will be used to upgrade our outdated phone system to one that will allow us to better serve our clients, including a line dedicated to prayer needs and uplifting messages.

[pathforyou.org](http://pathforyou.org)

## People need to hear your story!



Please let us know how SCSM has impacted your life.

Send in your stories or short testimonies to: [ahansen@scsm.tv](mailto:ahansen@scsm.tv)

### Newsletter Editor

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*God is Light*

IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL.

1 JOHN 1:5