



The Compassionate Friends

Eastern Jackson County Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Nov - Dec 2018

Chapter Leader: Theresa Phillips

24-Hour Help Line: (816)229-2640

Private Facebook Page: Eastern Jackson County TCF

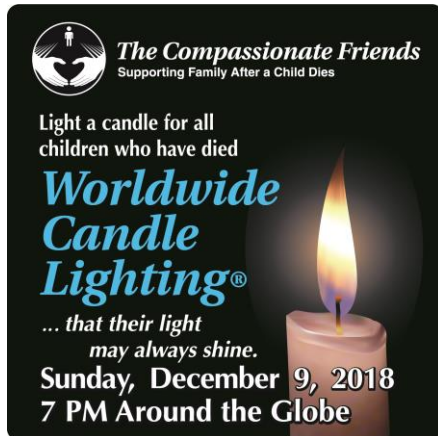
Website: www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org

TCF National Headquarters

PO Box 3696, Oak Brook, IL 60522

Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

630-990-0010



WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

December 9, 2018

Sponsored by:

The Eastern Jackson County

(Independence) and

South Kansas City Chapter of

The Compassionate Friends

In memory of all children who have died, but will not be forgotten . . .
that their light may always shine

In loving memory of all children who are no longer with us, The Compassionate Friends extends an invitation for you, your family, and friends to join us and other bereaved families around the globe for the 18th annual Worldwide Candle Lighting.

Sunday December 9, 2018 at 7 pm

At Walnut Gardens Community of Christ
19201 RD Mize Rd, Independence, MO

Our Guest speaker is Greg Pollock,

Author of *Pennies from Josh: Stories of a Father Dealing with the Death of his only Son.*

1. If you would like a picture button, come at 6:30 pm. Bring a picture on plain paper 2 ¼ to 2 ½ inches.

2. Also bring a picture for the memory table

3. A snack to share after the program

4. If desired, bring a gift for a needy child in memory of your child

5. Plus we will be having a raffle.

As candles are lit at 7 p.m. local time, bereaved families gather to honor their loved ones in a way that transcends all ethnic, cultural, religious and political boundaries. Believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the ceremony creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. Wherever you are at that time, we hope you will join us in this loving remembrance. A memorial message board will be available that day at

www.thecompassionatefriends.org.

Please allow time for sign in and find a seat before 7pm.

In the event of inclement weather please watch your emails and the chapter website

www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org

I Give Thanks

For Time - The time I had with Tim, time to grow and learn even when I'm no longer young, and time which will one day reunite me with my child.

For Friends - Those whom I've known that time has taken from me, those I cherish now, and those I've yet to meet.

For Answered Prayers - I asked for comfort and strength to face what I must face and You answered me - maybe not the way I wanted, but You always answered me.

For Family - And I find my family expanding with each day. I find relatives need not always be family, and family need not always be relatives. *Love makes families, not blood lines.*

For the Children - Those remaining-- mine and everyone else's. And for the ones that remain only in memory.

For Love - Love that's been given me so freely from hearts that were broken like mine, but still could offer me strength and hope.

For all of you, I give thanks.

--Judy Dickey, TCF, Greenwood, IN

The Empty Chair

I remember the first Thanksgiving after Tony was killed. I didn't know how we could possibly get through that dinner with his empty chair.

The solution that occurred to me was to fill his chair with someone else-- several someones. Grandpa came to spend the week; a newly widowed friend came for dinner, and so did her delightful young nephew and his bride, who had just moved to town. They brought the salad. And we were thankful--for each other, for the love among us, and for memories.

If this will be your first Thanksgiving, do something different. The pattern for your life has been broken. Break it some more! Have dinner at a different place, or with different people. Go away for the weekend. Be kind to yourself. You do not have it all, but you have something.

--Ronnie Peterson

Candle in the Night

I could not find her in the sky.
I did not see her 'neath the sun.
But when the shadows darken,
And the endless day is done,
Like a candle in the night
She gleams upon my sight,
And her whispered name
Warms me in the flame.

Vicki...in my prayer
Holds and loves me there.

--Earl Katz

Words from Sascha Wagner

The Other Season

Look to the season of your memories—
it fills the weather of your life
with mildness.

It turns to laughter what your love
remembers:
the sound of words, invented new for
singing,
discovery of all-important secrets.

Look to the season of your memories—
it sets an ordinary past to music.
It changes ordinary tears to treasure.
It gives your faded pictures shape
and color:

the touch of eyes, a walk in the foggy
twilight.

Look to the season of your memories—
how rich you were and be how rich again.

Look to the season of your memories:
mourn and recall the Child you love,
you love—
until you lose yourself—
to find yourself

To the Dead Infants

They are gone
these young hearts
these flawless souls.
They are gone
and we must grieve
their loss—
we must remember.

But when we begin to live again,
then we can be
each one of us
a heritage of humanness
a memorial of hope
a sign of closer understanding
in their name
who are gone,
these young hearts
these flawless souls—
in their name
let our lives grow

The heart knows many songs
and sings them well.

The heart knows images
and sees them,
even when life is much too dark
to light the eyes.

The heart knows many songs
we cannot hear.

The heart is wise.

Traditions

Have you been taught
to cry without a sound
(the tears descending
like a cutting edge)?

Have you been taught
to smile beyond endurance
(your throat an aching
lock around your heart)?

Have you been taught
to owe the world your service
until your mind
seems not to be your own?

Do not consent.

Truth teaches other lessons:
grief needs to sob aloud;
grief does not want to smile;
grief wants to serve
your inner healing, first.

In Time...

When we grieve and hurt, we seem to
be more aware of everyone's
shortcomings, mistakes and
limitations.

When we grieve and hurt, we seem to be
less capable of forgiveness and
understanding.

When we grieve and hurt, we must try
to realize that feelings of anger
and bitter frustration are natural.
We must also recognize that most of
this angry sensitivity is temporary.

In time, we will rediscover our ability to
understand and forgive
many people,
not only others in the world around us,
but also ourselves.

The important word here is "IN TIME"

Solace

In the smallest hour of your day,
when you are alone
with things remembered,
questions unanswered
and unfinished dreams, then:
give to yourself
the gifts of your kindness,
bring to yourself
the comforts of forgiving,
share with yourself
the mercy of your love.

Who Is to Say—

Love and death
are the most powerful events
in human experience.

Joy and grief
are the natural companions
of love and death

Who is to say
that we could have
love and joy
if we had not
death and grief?

Wish

I wish you gentle days
and quiet nights.
I wish you memories
to keep you strong.
I wish you time to smile
and time for song.

And then I wish you friends
to give you love,
when you are hurt and lost
and life is blind.

I wish you friends and love
and peace of mind.

Giving Thanks

I cannot hold your hands today,
I cannot see your smile.
I cannot hear your voices now,
my children, who are gone.

But I recall your faces still,
the songs, the talks, the sighs.
And story times and winter walks,
and sharing secret things.

I know you helped my mind to live
beyond your time with me.
You gave me clearer eyes to see,
you gave me finer ears to hear,
what living means,
what dying means,
my children, who are gone.

So here it is Thanksgiving Day,
and you are not with me.
And while I weep a mother's tears,
I thank you for the gifts you were,
and all the gifts you gave to me,
my children, who are gone.



The Perfect Circle

I wish for all parents the peace that
comes through the commitment to your
own growth. As we turn to help others,
we in turn are comforted and grow—the
perfect circle.

--Julie McGee, TCF, Louisville, KY

I'm Not Ready Yet

We should know better by now. It shouldn't keep surprising us, but it does. No matter how hard we try, no matter what we do to prepare ourselves, it still happens. Year after year, generation after generation, it arrives without hesitation or delay. It stays too long and never lasts long enough. It is filled with anticipation and dread, and we never learn enough, and we know far too much.

It is greeted with great joy and heavy despair. And it is always announced by the universal cry of **I'M NOT READY YET...** The HOLIDAYS are coming, and I haven't even cleaned up the fireworks from the Fourth of July. I'm still unpacking boxes (we've moved...again!) and the calendar says it's TIME for the annual migration of memories and the Great Stuff the Turkey contest (the turkey won last year). Because we're in another new place, there will be the dilemma of where to put the tree and how do we explain to the company about that one empty stocking?

Nothing fits this year! The kitchen is too small for the turkey and the flamingoes are going to freeze in the 20 below temperature. I haven't memorized my address and the grocery store is in the wrong place.

...I'm busy knitting little sweaters for the flamingos left over from life in the SWAMP and practicing with the snow shovel. I keep forgetting where I've hidden gifts, I bought last summer, and nothing seems to fit in the place like it did in the last one!

We were comfortable in the last place...but then I forget that is what we said when we first moved there too. We always seem to be more comfortable in the last place...at least we know where the memories are and where to put them and how to handle them. Here in the new place, no one knows our "story." No one knows our history...it is as if we have NO PAST. It's easy to blend in, and not so easy to settle in...and THE HOLIDAYS ARE COMING, AND I'M NOT READY YET....

I'M NOT READY YET...the universal cry of all living beings. I'm not ready yet for first grade, for crossing the street by myself, for sleepaway camp, for junior high, for getting married, for getting a job, for having children, for burying someone I love. **I'M NOT READY YET...** for grieving, for handling the holidays, for stuffing a turkey, for

finding a place for everything, for living where no one knows my story. **I'M NOT READY YET...** for Halloween, for Thanksgiving, for Hanukkah ...or for blizzards or frozen pink flamingos.

I'm not ready for the annual flood of memories that always spill out as we unpack the stockings from their tissue wrapped nest. I'M NOT READY YET...for the clutch of pain that still wraps my heart in grief as we place the ornaments on the tree. I'M NOT READY YET...for opening the door to greet strangers who are fast becoming friends but who may never know the effort it has taken to be who I am now.

I'M NOT READY YET to be "normal" and take my place among the normal people of the world. We look normal. For the most part we act normal. (We do, however, have sweater clad pink flamingos in the yard, holding our SEASON'S GREETINGS sign...) We are normal...except for OUR STORY and for the tears in our family fabric. But no one knows those tears anymore and I don't think I'm ready not to have a past just yet. I don't think I'm ready for no one to remember our hurt, let alone the joy our loved ones gave to us.

I unpack the silver today, intending to polish it and place it in the dining room so it would add its shimmer to the festive decorations. I wasn't ready for the flood of memories that came back when I traced my fingers over the delicately carved designs in the coffee pot, remembering my mother patiently teaching me how to polish good silver. I wasn't ready for the loneliness that swept over me as I placed the tea pot on the tray and suddenly wanted to call MOM and tell her I was, at last and again, home. She had taught me that silver always spoke of a comforting home...and now that I had found it and set it out, I wanted someone to remember with me all those talks my mom and I had shared.

I'M NOT READY YET... to live only on the surface of life. I want to share my history with my new friends, yet it seems unfair to me to spoil their holiday season. It's not the same for me; there is still a lot of empty in my heart. Not as much as before, but now the emptiness comes from being too new anywhere to really belong.

So...I'll just have to figure out how to handle the holidays I'm never going to be ready for in places I may never be settled in. As long as ...the silver is polished and ready, then let the holidays

come! We'll figure out how to tell enough of our history, so we won't be lonely and so people will understand about the flamingos and the tiny empty chair and the joy that lights up our life when we grasp hands together in the family circle.

We'll decorate our new house (your new life?) with the treasures that speak of our history, finding joy in the memories they spark. We'll bring with us some of the old, add a few pieces of new and practice the art of blending yesterday with today in hopes of creating another memory for tomorrow. I guess it doesn't matter if you have moved or have never left the same place for generations, it is still an unsettled feeling the first time no one remembers the journey you've been on. The first time no one mentions your child's name starts a hollowness in our being that leaves us empty and feeling alone. It is as if the world has bid its move again and everything that once was so awkward and out of place has now assumed a "normal" atmosphere and most of the world "forgets" the price we paid for this "near normal."

I'll hand the special ornaments, enjoy the silver tea pot and cherish the warmth of the love these gifts of remembrance bring. No one else has to know the story for me to acknowledge it and remember it. No one else has to know the pain for me to share the joy of having these things be a part of my NOW. We'll gather together and count our blessings, not only naming the ones around the table, but including those whose lives have touched ours in countless ways. One does not have to be present to be alive in the hearts of those who shared a few moments of the journey together. The heart never forgets ...even when the world does.

No, nothing fits this year, just like nothing fit last year or the year before. But it's getting better, improving either with age or experience or patience. Or maybe it's because it is simply becoming a thread in the continuing fabric of our lives. We will probably always be a bit unsettled, unnerved when the roll call finds a name missing or a chair empty. But, then why shouldn't we be a little sad when a light goes out in our world?

So, this holiday season, gather in your blessings and count them ALL, knowing that no one else has to know about them for them to be real for you. Just because no one else knows THE

STORY does not mean it is any less real. Count the blessings of the people in your story and find the peace that comes with counting a holiday of joy remembered & love shared.

Peace to us all... wherever we may be. --From *If I Could Just See Hope* by Darcie D. Sims

A Teenage 'Butterfly' Loses Her Final Battle

Kerry Magana died Thursday morning, Nov. 13, her life a testament to the difference a stranger can make.

The 15-year-old had been ill with leukemia for two years. In September, she received a bone marrow transplant. But the disease and the treatments had ravaged her body, causing problems with her liver and lungs. For the last few weeks of her life, Kerry was on a ventilator, sedated into a coma.

At Children's Mercy Hospital, she was known as "the butterfly" because she had a penchant for popping into the rooms of new patients, consoling parents and children and advising them on what to expect from cancer treatments.

By late summer, it was Kerry and her family who needed the assistance. Her single mother was exhausted from watching her daughter suffer and from virtually living at the hospital. Despite repeated attempts, she had been unable to secure a visitor's visa so that Kerry's Honduran grandmother could see the dying child.

But when Kerry's family members were at their lowest point, and her body at its weakest, others began to emerge as her butterflies.

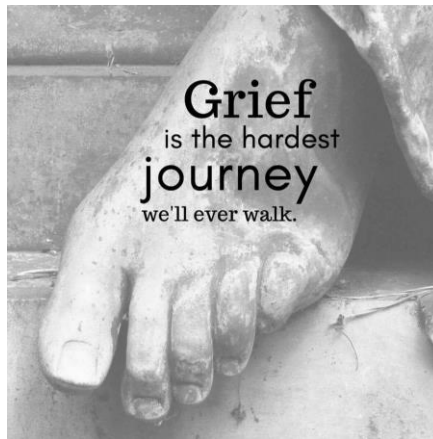
Some pressed the government to approve a humanitarian visa so that the grandmother could arrive. A local immigration attorney prepared the paperwork pro bono. A Kansas City man paid for the flight once the visa was finally approved. A Prairie Village man with connections in international travel ensured that people helped the grandmother as she caught a connecting flight through the busy Houston airport.

A social worker spent nights with Kerry's mother at the hospital, comforting her so she could be there for Kerry. The Dream Factory volunteer who planned Kerry's Quinceañera celebration last spring rushed to be with the family. Someone started a prayer chain.

A man whose own daughter is fighting leukemia helped the Magana family with upgrades to their small home. He posted the following to a blog

upon learning of her death: "*Kiss your kids today and hug them tight. Sickness isn't anything we think we are going to have to deal with. It happens to others, but I'm here to tell you that it can happen, and it does happen.*"

—Written by Mary Sanchez



All God's Children

Buying Christmas gifts isn't an unusual thing to do, but one year I couldn't stop. I walked into stores and compulsively threw toys into a basket. I bought hundreds of toys. "Somehow I have to do this," I told my husband. "It helps me." It helped me, but it didn't comfort me.

December, January & February were once our happiest months of the year—Christmas, New Year's and the birthdays of our three children. But on a snowy afternoon in January 1992, the world changed for us. Our children were killed in a car accident on the way home from school. Joshua, Kristen and Daniel were gone.... But the world went on, while John and I were stuck in time.

For months I didn't go into the kids' rooms. John continued showing up at his pool business. "Working, but not really working," he said. We often escaped to a friend's lakeside cabin. *Still waters to refresh our soul*, I told myself, but when the holidays rolled around, I couldn't be still. I had to do something. "I want to celebrate our children's lives," I said to John. "I can't lose my joy in giving for Christmas." That's when I started buying toys. Barbie dolls and teddy bears piled up in the spare room. Finally, John said, "It's time to take them somewhere."

Okay, God, I thought, *guide us*. I spread out our map of the world. John traced his finger across it. He stopped on Grenada in the Caribbean. "My dad has a friend who was there in the eighties," John said. He gave me a questioning

look. "How about Grenada?" I shrugged. ... We called John's dad and talked to his friend. He told us about the Sapodilla Home for children. "That's it," I said. "We'll give our toys to those kids in Grenada" I pulled out colorful paper to wrap the gifts, but I started to cry. So instead we removed the packaging and stuffed the toys into duffel bags. An angel must have guided that decision too. Going through customs, every package would have required unwrapping. A couple of weeks before Christmas we checked into a hotel in Grenada. It was our son Josh's birthday. Once again, I couldn't stop crying. John and I sat by the pool, unable to hide our sadness. The housekeeper saw us. "Is there anything I can do?" she offered. I poured my heart out to her. The woman sat down beside us. "I too lost my child," she said. We talked for a long while. Could we have had a more perfect encounter?

Parents who have lost their children are among the saddest people in the world. But when John and I went to the Sapodilla Home we saw another kind of sadness—children who had lost their parents. We sang with them and gave them our gifts. It was good seeing John playing with kids again.

Upon our return home, time seemed to move forward for us once more. A vision for our future took shape. "We might be suffering now," John said, "but we can still have hope for tomorrow." Hope. I'd almost forgotten. It was the greatest gift we had been given—the hope that was born in Bethlehem on that very first Christmas. The reason for our celebrating and gift giving.

John and I next visited an orphanage in Ghana, again with bags of toys and clothes... Our experience in Ghana confirmed our mission. As parents without children, we would help children without parents. In 1994 we established Hearts of the Father Outreach. In 1999 we built the JoshKrisDan Home in Ghana, an orphanage named in memory of our children. We have since helped 50,000 orphans in seven developing countries, guided every step of the way.

The holidays will always be gift giving time for me. I'd once thought life had no purpose without our children. How could we have known how many children John and I would one day number as members of our family. A family of little angels on earth.

--By Elizabeth Moritz

Walking in the Shadow of My Child

Wherever I go, I walk with his shadow on my being. I am clothed in a coloration not visible to the naked eye. It casts an unexpected influence on how I carry myself as I journey through life.

It clouds my way of looking at things; forces perspectives which I didn't know were a part of my psyche. The shade of grayness through which I now view things absorbs some of the radiances which I experience.

Yet my shadow comes not from the valley of death, but from my child being closer to the light.

--Ed Kuzela, TCF, Atlanta

*The days come and go
like muffled and veiled figures
sent from a distant friendly party,
but they say nothing,
and if we do not use
the gifts they bring,
they carry them as silently away.*

Winter Promise

The day slowly dissolved into dusk,
Leaving behind the newness of the morning
And the miracle of your birth.
Though winter brief the time that was left us,
Your love will remain with me always.
I gently kissed you one last time
Before you went with the day
To become a memory for me to hold
When I can't hold you any other way.

--Debbi Dickinson, TCF, Naperville, IL

Words Are But Dust

Words are but dust in the roaring wind
when they try to bring you relief,
And thoughts are but straws on the
raging sea when they seek
to soothe your grief.
But love is a light in the lonely night to
give comfort and show you the way.
And faith is a rock on which hope is
built that you'll meet again
someday.

--George D. Walley, NW Suburban, NY

Today I Light a Candle for You

During the holiday season, both Jews and Christians light candles in celebration of their respective faiths, and as they do so, even the darkest rooms become warmer and brighter from the glow of a candle. Then, we can ask ourselves, how powerful or sinister can the darkness be if it can be overcome by the light of one little candle?

There is then a message in this for all of us. When the darkness seems to overwhelm us—mental and spiritual darkness as well as the darkness of a winter night—we need to remember that darkness is powerless to withstand the smallest bit of illumination.

So as the world grows colder and darker during these winter months, we as bereaved parents must do what people of many faiths have been taught to do at this season. Light a candle in someone's life to help banish the darkness and fears. A little bit of light is all that most of us need, but, oh, we need that little bit so badly.

--Bettye & Sam Rosenberg, Louisville, KY

**BECAUSE OF YOU,
I LOVE A LITTLE MORE,
BECAUSE OF YOU I TAKE TIME
TO GIVE AN EXTRA KISS
GOOD-BYE.
BECAUSE OF YOU,
THERE MAY BE DUST
ON THE WINDOW SILL,
AND I DON'T CARE.
BECAUSE OF YOU, I LIVE TODAY,
BEFORE I WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW.
BECAUSE OF YOU,
I DON'T GIVE UP QUITE AS FAST.
BECAUSE OF YOU,
NOW I CAN HELP OR
LISTEN MORE.
BECAUSE OF YOU,
TODAY, I AM ME.**

*Deep in winter, my friend,
When life is darkest
it is very important
to try thinking
one small sunshine-thought
every morning, early—
try your best.*

Eternal Flame

The time that we shared was so beautiful, it brightened my world like a candle in a dark room; it ended all too soon. That candle was torn out of my hands. The flame of your life was cruelly snuffed out, just as it burned the brightest.

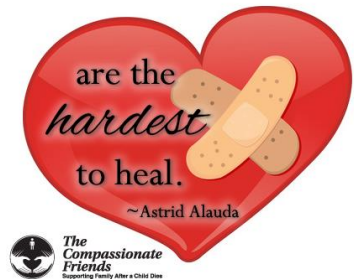
Until my eyes adjusted to the dark, I was stunned, but then I realized I was alone in the darkness. I cried for the

longest time. My heart was filled with anger, loneliness, and fear. How could I find my way without your light to guide me?

So, I sat alone for a while, overwhelmed by the darkness until I looked inside me. And there I saw your candle burning as brightly as ever. And from its flame, I lit a new candle and found my way out of the darkness. Now I know I will never be lost, for your light shines inside me forever.

--Julie Jetta

The scars you can't see



I'll Be Home for Christmas

“I'll be home for Christmas
You can count on me
I'll be home for Christmas...”

I hear the words
on the radio and in my mind.
I see your face,
your eyes, smiling at me.
I am filled with incredible sadness
knowing that
You won't be home for Christmas
Not this year, Not next year,
Not anymore years ever again,
no matter how many times
the song plays.

Everywhere people are getting ready
to celebrate the season,
while I am left to mourn your death
and wonder if it will ever
feel like Christmas again,
if I will ever feel happy again
without you home for Christmas.
This year I decorate the tree
for others, not for me.

I unwrap each ornament.
Reaching into the box one more time
I pull out a small piece of paper.
I unfold it and see a heart that you drew,
the words “I love you”
written underneath.
Though tears start to fall,
a hint of a smile touches my face
as I realize you really are
home for Christmas.

--By Deb Kosmer

Thanks for the Little While

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....

—Darcie D. Sims

Christmas Is the Hardest Holiday!

Why is Christmas the hardest holiday? Is it because of all those traditions that mean so much but NOW lie broken and empty in my heart? Is it especially hard NOW...because every time I try to roll out the cookie dough, tears drop into little salt pools on the counter? Is Christmas so hard NOW because of all the tinsel and tissue? Because of all the crowds dashing madly into and out of stores... buying something wonderful for someone wonderful? Is Christmas so hard NOW because I don't need to shop or bake or decorate anymore? Is Christmas so hard because I don't have someone wonderful anymore?

It's been a long time since I endured my first bereaved holiday season. But even NOW, my heart sometimes still echoes with emptiness as I roll out the cookie dough or hang his special ornament on our treasure tree. I think that hurt will always be with me, but now I know it only as a momentary ache—not like the first year when grief

washed over me in waves, each new wave hurling me deeper and deeper into despair.

And it's not like the second year's hurt when I found myself both surprised and angry that IT hadn't gone away YET. I grew anxious about my sanity in the third year when my hands shook as I unwrapped the precious ornaments. When was I going to get better?!! When was grief going to end?!! Was I doomed to suffer miserably at every holiday for the rest of my life?!!

The year the little satin balls wouldn't stay on the tree, I gave up. Even the Christmas tree died! As my daughter and I dragged the brittle (and shedding) mess out into the snow drift on Christmas morning, I knew we had reached the bottom. He had died, but We were alive. Had our grief so permeated our house, our lives, that even a Christmas tree could not survive? His death was more than enough...had we lost love, too?

That was the year we began to understand. And that was the year we decided to keep Christmas anyway. So, what if our now completely bare tree was stuck in the snowdrift, already waiting for the trash man? So, what if the cookies were still a bit too salty with tears?

So, in the middle of that Christmas day, now years past, we returned to that forlorn, frozen stick of a tree. And carefully, we hung the bare branches with popcorn strings and suet balls (not quite the same as satin!). I'm sure we were a strange sight that afternoon, but with a mixture of tears and snowflakes, we began to let the hurt out and make room for the healing to begin.

With each kernel strung, we found ourselves remembering. Some memories came with pain. Others began to grow within us—warming heart places we thought had frozen long ago. By the time we were finished, we were exhausted. Memories take a lot of work! At last WE had a tree (although it was not the one, we were expecting); but we had one, decorated with tears and memories, sadness and remembered laughter.

And now we've grown older (and maybe a little wiser) and we've learned that love isn't something you toss out, bury, pack away, or forget. Love isn't something that ends with death. Life can become good and whole and complete once again....not when we try to fill up the empty spaces left by loved ones no

longer within hug's reach, but when we realize that love creates new spaces in the heart and expands the spirit and deepens the joy of simply being alive.

We saved a tiny twig from that frozen tree...to remind us of what we almost lost. That was the year we chose to let Christmas come back. Now we don't have to wait for joy to return. For now, we know it lives within us—where Christmas is EVERY DAY.

—By Darcie Sims

Litany of Remembrance

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

In the opening of buds and the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

When we have joy, we yearn to share, we remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

—From *Gates of Prayer*,
Reform Judaism Prayer book

Love Gifts

Please help us help others. Make a LOVE GIFT today. Tax deductible Love Gifts may be sent to: TCF C/O Theresa Phillips 6200 Kentucky Ave, Raytown, MO 64133

For Remembrance dates please visit our website at

www.easternjacksoncountytcf.org

Find us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1582699755290182>

We have several volunteers who write remembrance cards to families on birthdays and death dates. Just a reminder if you have an address change please email phillipsplace@aol.com or mail a note to TCF, C/O Theresa Phillips 6200 Kentucky Raytown, MO 64133 so the roster can be updated.

Please remember that you can give to The Compassionate Friends through your United Way pledge at work or as a single gift, but you MUST WRITE IT IN.