

December, 2004



December's Meeting

The Greenville Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will hold its annual Candlelight Service in memory of our children during our regular monthly meeting on Thursday, December 9th from 7:30 to 8:30 pm at Pelham Road Baptist Church, 1108 Pelham Rd, Greenville.

Light refreshments will be served following the meeting.

We are now meeting in the new "Family Life Center". We will have greeters out front to direct you to the meeting room.

The following poem is submitted by Judy Moore in memory of her daughter, Karen Hayden.

Tomorrow

If I had known it was the last time I would see you fall asleep, I would have tucked you in tighter and prayed to the Lord your soul to keep. But surely there is tomorrow.

If I had known it was the last time I would hear your voice, I would not have let the last day slip away. But surely there is tomorrow.

If I had known it was the last time I could spare an extra minute or two to say I love you instead of assuming you knew I did. But surely there is tomorrow.

Now we know that no one is promised tomorrow and today may be the last time to hold your hand, kiss your lips, say I'm sorry, please forgive me or it's okay.

There will never be another day to say how much we love and wish we were there for you in more, in every way. To say how sorry we are that we did not know that there surely are no more tomorrows. The last time we talked to you, did we say I love you before hanging up or closing the door? Please know that you were truly loved and you are missed every tomorrow.

It will be 5 years. I can't believe it. I thought I would have surely died not seeing you in so long a time. There are times I wish or think I have or could. I miss you as much today as I did after the first tomorrow.

Love Mom



LOVE GIFTS

A love gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends, Greenville SC chapter. It is usually in memory of a child who has died by their parents, but it can also be from friends or relatives who want to honor your child as well. It can also be from someone who simply wants to help in the work of our local chapters. If you or someone you know would like to make a love gift in memory of your special loved one, please fill out the enclosed card and mail back to the indicated address, or better yet, bring it with you to our December meeting and a basket will be available to collect these "greatly appreciated" gifts. Your gifts help to offset the cost of mailing the monthly newsletters, provide new books for our library and many other expenses incurred for our outreach to the bereaved parents. "All Love Gifts" are acknowledged in our Newsletter.

Flexibility for the Holidays

As the holidays approach, many of you will be anticipating nervously what lies ahead in the next month or six weeks. Some of you are newly bereaved and will

be struggling to put one foot in front of the other, dazed by the bewildering reality that confronts you. Some of you have been through the holiday period a few times and are wondering what you need to do this year, to just get it behind you. Some of you are farther down the road in your grief, having moved through a number of holiday experiences, feeling some of what the more newly bereaved feel, but with more structures in place to make the season tolerable.

No matter where you are in your own grief, whether it be only a few months or ten years down the road, your holiday time will be colored in a way that many can't understand and some refuse to understand. Out of a common bond many of you will gather at the "Candle light Service", choosing to share the light, rather than to be alone in the darkness.

The critical question to be asked at this time of year is "what do I need and what does my family need over this extremely difficult period of time?" What works for one may not work for another. What worked last year may need to be re-evaluated and revised this year. What's needed most now is "flexibility" and by that I mean the self permission to do whatever works for you and yours at this particular time. That may be going away this year; it may mean staying home; it may mean going to church or synagogue or not. It may mean attending a family gathering or it may mean declining. Whatever works!

Flexibility attempts to respect others as well as self needs – but with one condition – and that is that if you are sensing that you are getting in over your emotional head, then you need to back away! Flexibility may be hard for others to let you have, but if they are truly friends and if they are truly close family members then they will give you this most important holiday gift – the flexibility you need to allow you to be able to move into the New Year.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
 Post Office Box 583 Taylors, South Carolina 29687
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The December newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Amanda Williams by her mother, Julia Muirhead and to all our children loved, missed, and remembered:

Jeremy Davis – 12/30/82 ~ 5/14/03
 Cindy Esterl – 11/4/77 ~ 12/26/88
 Devin Fowler – 12/22/90 ~ 3/2/02
 James Howard II – 5/15/70 ~ 12/19/97
 Christopher Howard – 6/15/73 ~ 12/19/97
 Kyle Jenkins – 12/5/84 ~ 10/15/97
 Deborah Jolley – 12/27/61 ~ 7/4/99
 Bobby Jones – 10/16/86 ~ 12/22/03
 Cory A. King – 12/14/83 ~ 1/2/94
 Joseph Kofod - 9/10/95 ~ 12/18/95
 Eli Labbe – 12/31/85 ~ 4/14/02
 Greg Lackey – 2/8/76 ~ 12/4/00
 Brian Martin – 12/13/78 ~ 6/26/01
 Kyle Smith – 12/5/84 ~ 10/15/97
 John Turner III – 12/19/76 ~ 9/5/02
 Stetson Watson – 4/23/86 ~ 12/30/2003
 Amanda Williams – 12/4/79 ~ 7/25/99
 Timothy Wilson – 12/12/82 ~ 3/25/01
 Chad Withered – 4/13/79 ~ 12/30/94

We acknowledge the following gifts with sincere gratitude and deep appreciation in memory of:

- **Amanda Williams**
~by Julia Muirhead
- **Lynn Cobb Watson**
~by Bennie and Cheryl Cobb
- **Tina Collins**
~by James Leitke
- **Tommy Strange Jr.**
~by Tommy and Sara Strange Sr.
- **Roger Strange**
~by Pierce and Becky Strange
- **Christopher “Tadpole” Teems**
~by John and Kathy Wilson
- **All the children gone too soon:**
~by Mr. & Mrs. John McAfee

2004 Worldwide Candle Lighting
 December 12, 2004

The Worldwide Candle Lighting is held every year on the second Sunday in December, at 7:00 PM, in every time zone. As candles burn down in one time zone, they are lighted in the next, creating a 24 hour wave of light that encircles the globe in a virtual 24 hour memorial.



In connection with the Worldwide Candle Lighting, our *Community Candle Lighting* service will be held on Sunday, December 12th at 7 PM at Thomas McAfee’s Downtown Chapel, 639 North Main Street, Greenville. Candles will be provided.

Remember... anyone not able to attend may participate by simply lighting a candle at home alone or with family and friends

THANK YOU



A very special note of “thanks” to Kathy Wilson for hosting a “Pampered Chef” party and donating the proceeds from the party to our Chapter in memory of her nephew, “Tadpole. She hosted the fundraiser on Tadpole’s birthday, October 14. We are honored to accept this donation and sincerely appreciative.

A Poem to my Son
 Author Unknown



Another Christmas has come and gone,
 And still you were not here.
 With every package that I wrapped,
 I shed a silent tear.

How I longed for days gone by,
 To have you by my side;
 To watch you trim the Christmas tree
 And see you smile with pride.

There were no lights at our house
 The decorations, few.
 For no one wanted to do the job
 That once belonged to you.

The Christmas shopping I did alone,
 I missed you help there too.
 I baked the Christmas cookies
 And my thoughts remained with you.

I signed the Christmas cards we sent
 With love and tender care.
 The thing that really hurt the most
 Was your name was not there.

We made our Christmas visits,
 I smiled and tried to hide
 All the pain and sorrow
 That I have deep inside.

No one seems to understand,
 I live from day to day.
 And if I live a hundred years,
 The pain won’t go away!

Love, Mom