

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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Monthly Meeting

December 14, 2006

Always the second Thursday of the month

Our December 14th Chapter Meeting will include a **Slide Show Presentation** honoring our children. We've had these in the past during different times of the year and it's always been a beautiful and moving experience for all who attend

Facilitated by:

Dick Renner

Meeting Time & Location

7:30 P.M.

Pelham Rd. Baptist Church,
Family Life Center
1108 Pelham Rd., Greenville, SC

Please note that our Chapter's December meeting will be a regular meeting and will not be the candle light service as in the past. We will be participating in the Worldwide Candle Lighting on Sunday, December 10th at the Thomas McAfee downtown chapel.



We acknowledge "Love Gifts" with appreciation in memory of:

- **Amanda William's Birthday** ~ by *Julia and Wally Muirhead*
- **Schuyler Raiford** ~ by her *grandparents, Norm and Alice Raiford*
- **Kim Dacus** ~ by *Shirley Herd*
- **Russell Baldwin** ~ by *Edith Bailey*
- **Scott West** ~ by *Bill and Helen West*

The following was written by Karleigh Hayden and submitted to us by her Grandmother, Judy Moore. Karleigh's mother, Karen died Dec. 22, 1999.

She's Listening. But Just Can't Answer

My favorite place is my mom's grave. My mom's grave is where my whole life can come together and I feel like nothing ever went wrong. Even though I know it did. I have never had a feeling as I do when I am there. It is so peaceful and composed. It's almost as if she is still here. It's a distressing feeling but at the same time so surreal.

This place, my mother's grave, that is so close to my heart, was created from a total stranger's egotistical actions. My mom was murdered on December 22, 1999. That day will remain in my mind every day of my life. It is something that I can't stand to think about but can't help it when I do. I have the most poignant memory of it. When I am at her grave, all the reminiscences, laughs, and jokes that I have, come back. I can't say it's a terrible feeling because I, as an individual don't think so. I can't say it's a terrible feeling because that's all I have left, the memories of her. There are nights that I stay up thinking about how diverse my life would be if she were here. That's the reason I love her grave so much, because it helps me think clearly. Thinking about her or going to her grave helps me go on each day. I have gone to my mom's grave just to talk, even though she can't answer. I know she is listening.

People may think I'm weird for having a grave as a favorite place, but what is better than going somewhere where you know someone you love is watching over you? I might cry, I might laugh, or I might even be irritated. Through the bundle of mixed emotions, I know that if it weren't meant to happen, then it wouldn't have. Maybe the way it happened wasn't right. I have learned to always trust God's choices that he makes for me. There are many reasons why my

favorite place is my mom's grave, but mainly because I know she's there and I know she is watching over me and I also know she loves me.



My Wish for Santa

What would I ask of Santa this year if any wish that I wished could come true? The ultimate wish is that you would come home and I could spend one more Christmas with you.

The tree lights would seem so much brighter; your laughter would fill the air. It would take us back through the twenty two years, when you were always here.

You would come through the door bearing gifts, but not the seasonal Christmas toys. You would bring what I have missed the most, the laughter and the noise.

Our home has seemed so quiet, since you have gone away. So when it was time for you to leave, would I beg for you to stay?

Or would I try to go with you when you went back up above? But surely I could never leave behind the ones here that I love!

So with a tear I'd let you go, and as I turned around. The echoes of your laughter would fill the house with sound.

This sound would last a lifetime. I would understand that you're okay. And that we will all be together again, on a future Christmas Day.

He's spent the last five years in heaven, through which I've shed many a tear. Please Santa let my one wish be granted...let him come home for Christmas this year!

*Linda McInturff
TCF-Southern Maryland*

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**The December newsletter is dedicated
to the memory of all our children.
May their light always shine**



Our Children Remembered:

Tina Collins – 4/10/64 ~ 12/16/01
Jeremy Davis – 12/30/82 ~ 5/14/03
Clifford Gammons – 2/4/68 ~ 12/21/04
Karen M. Hayden – 10/17/69 ~ 12/22/99
James Howard II – 5/15/70 ~ 12/19/97
Christopher Howard – 6/15/73 ~ 12/19/97
Jennifer Hower – 6/23/75 ~ 12/27/04
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
Eli Labbe – 12/31/85 ~ 4/14/02
Greg Lackey – 2/8/76 ~ 12/4/00
Allison Leslie – 11/24/80 ~ 12/18/98
Brian Martin – 12/13/78 ~ 6/26/01
Malinda Massey – 12/14/53 ~ 5/31/80
Sam McCall, Jr. – 12/16/71 ~ 6/23/05
Christopher Parker – 12/29/66 ~ 1/25/04
Randall Rainey – 6/29/59 ~ 12/7/03
Jason Smith – 12/16/89 ~ 5/25/06
Matt Taylor – 8/16/86 ~ 12/9/03
John Turner III – 12/19/76 ~ 9/5/02
Amy Wilkinson – 12/3/67 ~ 11/5/00
Amanda Williams – 12/4/79 ~ 7/25/99
Chad Withered – 4/13/79 ~ 12/30/94

LOVE GIFTS

A “Love Gift” is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in memory of a child who has died, but can also be from individuals to honor a relative or close friend – a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work

of our Chapter. The expenses of printing and mailing the chapter’s monthly newsletter are solely dependent upon these “Love Gifts”. If you would like to contribute – please use the enclosed form. It will be greatly appreciated!



Christmas Thoughts

Beyond the Christmas trees, the angels and the stars and beloved carol, beyond the presents, the shopping, the baking and cooking, beyond all of these sights and sounds of Christmas....beyond all of these...there is HOPE.

HOPE...for the bereaved parents, even at Christmas, one of the most, if not the most painful times of the year, there is a small essence of hope. Hope...it is hope that sustains us through the days of grief and anger and frustration and loneliness.

The hope is that someday the pain of the deaths of our children will be eased. The hope is that someday our smiles will be real. The hope is that once again we will laugh and love and cry completely without the fear and hollowness. It is the hope that someday we can remember our children with a tenderness merely tinged with sorrow and not overwhelmed with it.

So it is that for each of you, I would hope...Peace, Compassion, Love, Sympathy, Understanding, Sharing and Listening. In the sharing of our grief

with one another, and in the emotional support we give to one another, we receive and understand all of these gifts.

TCF ~ Terre Haute, IN



How Many Stockings Shall I Hang?

What a torment! Funny how you worry what your friends will think. For days I worried...and finally hung three stockings on the fireplace and laid one gently on the mantle.

But that was last year. This year I shall hang all four above the fireplace. For this year, the confusion of my mind has found new answers with conviction. Whether my oldest daughter lives in Tucson, or my youngest son is dead – these are my children – our family – and as long as we hang the Christmas stockings, we shall hang them all – with love.

Shirley Melin ~ TCF-Hinsdale, IL

A Christmas Wish
By Lily de Lauder, Hollywood, CA

I’ll miss you at Christmas when laughter’s everywhere. When church bells chime in merry rhyme and frost is in the air...I’ll think of you at Christmas, of when you were with me. Of simple joys and silly toys and days that used to be.

I’ll miss you at Christmas, when children’s faces glow. And gaze in childish wonderment at lights and mistletoe.... I wish a Christmas miracle could bring you back to me. And we could be together for one more Christmas day.