



Comfort for the Grieving Heart

Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

February 2018

***When it is
dark enough
you can see
the stars***

Ralph Waldo Emerson

St. Luke's Hospice

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If you would like to be added to or removed from our mailing list, or if you would prefer to receive an electronic copy, please contact Dawn at 484-526-2499.

Have you noticed the winter sky at night? The drama of light, stunning against a back drop of the black night. The moon has its bewildering path across the sky with those recognizable phases that go from full brilliant, enough to cast shadows, to the new moon, hidden behind a shadow. And if you stare, sometimes with patience and stillness, you can actually see the moon float slowly behind the empty branches of the winter trees. But the stars! How they twinkle the most in the coldest nights. They tell us that the stars are still there in the day time, but it's rare to see them. We see them clearly only at night, when it is dark.

I wonder that grief is like that. In our darkest and coldest experience of life, in our grieving, we can best see the sparkle of the precious gifts hidden in memory of the relationship to our deceased. Where we might have taken for granted the presence of our loved ones in the light of day, after death, the irritating habits fade, the frustrations seem small, and some causes of argument become even laughable. What shines in the darkness of our grief is our connection to our partner; the talents or gifts received from a parent; the lessons finally realized that our grandparents modeled for us through their life; the shared living within a marriage bond. We see more clearly how we sparkled in their company. The shining values, the well-lit constellations of family history, the individual lights of memory: smiles, laughter, a comforting touch. These, light up the dark night of our soul.

When we are feeling lost in the dark of our grief, a simple memory recalled by a photograph, a post card, a birthday phone call can light our night. It remains dark. We can still feel lonely, lost and afraid. Both the stars and the night happen at the same time. It's interesting that so many people close their eyes when they pray. Doing so, they create a darkness in order to reach out to a Higher Power, the Great Mysterious, God, to find an inner light that brings comfort and strength. It's almost as though we know that in the darkness we can most clearly see the shining Light of something bigger than ourselves. Looking up at the night sky reminds us of that fact, too. With the appearance of stars, planets and the moon, so high above us and viewed by everyone else on the planet, now and through our all of past history, we can see the miraculousness of our existence. The stunning specialness of the appearance in our lives of other people who made us shine for them. A Buddhist teacher, Rabindranath Tagore said, "Isn't it comforting to know that we are part of something truly miraculous?" The stars remind me of that. And of the miracle that I loved an individual, that this person, who is now gone, was a special star to me and lit up my night sky. And I can be reminded of that in the stars at night.

-Nan

BOOKS FOR LONG NIGHTS

Children's book Grandfather Twilight by Barbara Berger is full of the most beautiful pictures. The story is about Grandfather preparing for bed, and choosing from a large chest of pearls a perfect sphere. He walks through the woods and releases the growing pearl to the night sky above the sea side where it glides into the night as the moon.

If you've never seen or read the book or noticed the pictures, take an opportunity to do so.

A Grief Observed by C. S. Lewis is the author's exploration of the spiritual journey of his grief after the loss of his wife in 1960. This is an important book and comes highly recommended.

When Bad Things Happen to Good People by Rabbi Harold Kushner remains a classic in bringing peace to those struggling with the question "Why?". Many have found his words a great source of reflection and solace.

MUSIC FOR COMFORT

Harp music has been reputed to resonate with the frequencies of the human body. Listening to string quartets or classical music can bring a visceral understanding of the beauty and complexity of life. Find a radio station, play one of your old CD's or vinyl records and let your favorite music brighten up your spaces..

Harpist Ariane Lydon has beautiful CDs. One is called The Open Harp.



**You, darkness, that I come from,
I love you more than all the fires
that fence in the world,
for the fire makes
a circle of light for everyone,
and then no one outside learns of you.**

**But the darkness pulls in everything:
shapes and fires, animals and myself,
how easily it gathers them! -
powers and people -**

**and it is possible a great energy
is moving near me.**

I have faith in nights.

Ranier Marial Rilke



Newly Bereaved Workshop

This one-time workshop is for those who have lost a loved one within the past 1-3 months and will provide education on the first few weeks and months of grief following a death. We will cover understanding common grief reactions, coping strategies, self-care throughout the grief process and beyond, and the uniqueness of your grief experience. These workshops are offered on a bi-monthly basis. We will meet on **Wednesday, February 21, 2018 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm** at the Priscilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA 18015 (building is located in front of Priscilla Payne Hurd annex of the hospital). ***Registration is required:*** please call the office at (484)526-2499

Lehighon News :

Lehighon Open Group: We meet for our Drop In/Open Group on the **Third Monday of every month** from **3:00 - 4:00 pm** at Dinkey Memorial Church, 1742 Dinkey Road, Lehighon, PA 18212. All members of the community

Open /Drop-in Support Groups

Our Drop-In groups are designed to offer continued support to bereaved individuals who have already attended grief and loss programs through St. Luke's Hospice. Drop-In groups afford participants the chance to continue with supportive services. This group is facilitated, but directed by group members in terms of content and discussion. We currently offer the following Drop-In Support Groups:

Easton: First Monday of every month from 4:00 -5:00 pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Anderson Campus, Medical Office Building (MOB), 1872 St. Luke's Blvd, Easton, PA 18045 in Conference Room A.

Quakertown: Second Monday of every month from 6:30-7:30 pm at St. Luke's Hospital-Quakertown Campus, 1021 Park Avenue, Quakertown, PA 18951 in Taylor B Conference room.

Bethlehem: Fourth Monday of every month from 9:00 - 10:00 am (please note new time) at St. Luke's Priscilla Payne Hurd Education Center, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem Campus, 801 Ostrum Street,



Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

This is a listing of free bereavement resources in the area. If you have a need for something and don't see it on this list, please call the Bereavement Office at (484) 526-2499 for referrals to other services.

Cancer Support Community of Lehigh Valley is a local non-profit organization providing emotional and social support to family members and caregivers. They offer support groups, educational workshops and mind/body classes in their Allentown, PA office. Programs are free, but registration is required. Call 610-861-7555 or email info@cancersupportglv.org to register or for more information.

The Compassionate Friends offers ongoing support groups for parents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling. www.thecompassionatefriends.org

TCF of Lehigh Valley meets at Sacred Heart Hospital, 2nd floor, 421 W. Chew Street in Allentown. The group meets the 2nd Monday each month at 7pm. For more information, call 484-597-0240.

TCF of Quakertown meets at St. Luke's Hospital, ground floor, 1021 Park Ave in Quakertown in Taylor Conference Rooms A&B. This group is held the 2nd Tuesday each month from 7:30 – 9pm. For more information, call 267-380-0130.

TCF of Easton meets the 2nd Thursday each month from 7-9pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2115 Washington Blvd. in Easton. For more information call 610-866-5468.

Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress, and Life Transitions offered by Wendy Littner Thomson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. First session offered for free to caregivers whose loved one recently received hospice services from St Luke's Hospice. For location, times, or more information, please call 610-730-1992 www.givinggriefavoic.com

Free Spirits is a group of more than 2 dozen older widows who go out to lunch once a month to keep active and offer support to each other and to newer widows. Most are members of Church of the Manger UCC, Bethlehem. Call 610-866-8223 for more information.

Soaring Spirits Regional Group Lehigh Valley social gatherings for widowed individuals to provide opportunities to connect with others in a positive, caring, and supportive environment. For more information, contact Sonja Handwerk at 610-297-0057 or soaringspiritslvpa@yahoo.com.

HALOS - CLC is for parents, grandparents and adult siblings who have experienced the loss of a child or sibling to suicide. The group meets every 4th Thursday from 6:30-8:30 pm at Hughes Library in Stroudsburg, PA. Register with Alice Keyes at (570) 236-1168, alicekeys00@gmail.com

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Center offers an Open Group on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 5:30-7:00 pm. Registration is required, contact Ariel at (610) 347-9988 or ariel@bradburiesullivancenter.org. The Center is located at 522 W. Maple St., Allentown, PA 18101. There is no charge for the group.

GriefShare Groups are a faith-based approach to grief and loss. GriefShare groups are provided at several locations in the Lehigh Valley. To find a location near you, please visit www.griefshare.org.

GRASP - For families who have experienced a death due to substance use. Group meets every 3rd Monday of the month at 1st Presbyterian Church in Allentown, Room 118. Please register with Nancy Howe (484) 788-9440

Stepping Stones for Adolescents is a group for teens ages 11-16 that meets at Lehigh Valley Hospice for teen peer support. Call (610)402-7481 for more information. They also offer Stepping Stones for Children, for ages 5-10

Grand View Hospital Hospice offers many groups and services that change seasonally. Please call 215-453-4210 for more information.

Doylestown Hospital Hospice offers a variety of support groups, including a widow/widower group, a young survivors group, and an adult loss group. Visit www.dhospice.com or call Celia Blum, 215-345-2079.

Lehigh Valley Health Network offers grief support services in the form of counseling, support groups, and workshops for adults and children, as well as a lunch club for women. For information, please call 610-969-0330.

New Jersey: Compassionate Care Hospice provides bereavement support groups at Warren Hospital on a rotating basis. Call 973-726-7510 for more information.