



The Compassionate Friends

Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Nov-Dec 2025

Volume 26, No. 6



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS is a self-help, nonprofit organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to families grieving the death of a child of any age, from any cause. When a child dies, at age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides personal comfort, hope, support to every family experiencing the death of a son, daughter, brother, sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family. The butterfly signifies a new life for our lost children and a different life for ourselves. It is a symbol of hope, rebirth, regeneration and beauty.

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MEETINGS

We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month. The next two meetings are:

November 6, 2025

December 4, 2025

Candle Lighting Program— Dec 14, 2025 @6:30pm

TIME: **7:00 PM**

MEETING **Bethlehem SCV**

PLACE: **27265 Luther Dr. Room 5 (Second Driveway & through the gate)
Canyon Country, CA 91351**



FOR INFORMATION OR FOR A LOVING LISENER, PLEASE CALL:

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Requiem

The memories always linger
In the shadows of the mind.
The pain is always present
As life and death unwind.
The past is not forgotten
When it's a part of you
And a torch burns for others
Whose dreams did not come true
It hurts to lose a loved one
Whose flower never bloomed,
But dreams can be reborn
If by you they are assumed.
The flame of life may flicker
Or become mere residue,
But it cannot be extinguished
If it brightly burns in you.

~Clay Harrison

*Tears are the jewels
of remembrance,
sad but glistening with the
beauty of the past.*

~James A. Peterson



Thanksgiving

The time draws near
And the calendar says
Thanksgiving is really here.

Time to reflect and time to gather
Thoughts of what to be thankful of.

Thankful? I think not.
My life is not full these days
And to be thankful is beyond my grasp.

But to give thanks? This, I believe, can be done.
Searching my soul deep within
Reasons to give thanks surface to the edge.

Yes, I give thanks
For the memories of yesterdays,
The love, the laughter, the joy of each day when James was
with us
The trials & tribulations of being an active parent,
The rewards & the challenges of raising a child,
The days of blissful ignorance when I thought tragedy
would never visit our home,
The days when life was normal, even though I took it all
for granted.
For the treasures of todays,
The sunrise, sunset, the changing of the seasons,
The new found friends along the journey I reluctantly travel
The tried & true friends who stand by me still,
The strong and everlasting love of my husband
The warmth of wet kisses from my canine companion
& feline friend,
The encouragement & support, compassion & caring I give
& receive as
I survive and help others survive.
For the hopes and possibilities of a peaceful tomorrow,
With faith, love, & preservation as I struggle to move on
With James in my heart forevermore, spiritually guiding me
with his new presence,
With sorrow and reluctance, each new day,
To yet, somehow, be open and loving,
Not to forsake what I've learned
Because of what I've lost.

You see, it's not about keeping up with the Jones' having
an SUV or two in the garage, having the largest beanie baby
collection, having so many CD's, video games, or the newest,
most improved, latest and greatest new gadgets, not even being
up to date with state-of-the-art technology -

It's about love - it's about the gifts of yesterday, blended
with the blessings of today to make meaning for tomorrow.

~Meg Avery
(James Mom)
TCF Lawrenceville, GA



Just Flow With The Season And Take Care of Yourself

We're well into November and it's almost time
to take the "January pill". After Tricia died I decided I'd
invent a pill you could take the week before Thanksgiving
and when you came to, it would be January! I'm still
working on the invention. In the meantime, I know
many of you are already dreading the approaching
holidays.

The true spirit and meaning of Thanksgiving and
Christmas are not necessarily exemplified by some of our
"traditions." You are re-evaluating many aspects of your
life so let this also apply to the coming holidays. You will
not always feel as you do now. You will find joy in
holiday activities, but maybe not in all the things you
once thought so very important.

Flow with the season and with your sadness,
knowing strength will come as you work with what you
can do without overtaxing yourself. Resolve to be as
generous with your energy as you can and as selfish as
you have to be to protect the emerging person you will
become as a result of your loss. This person can be truly
beautiful and loving because of what you have learned
through grief.

You will miss your child; no magic potion can
wipe the pain away. Enjoy what you can - you deserve
some pleasure. And may some measure of peace
overtake you before this year ends.

~Elizabeth B. Estes
TCF Augusta, GA
In Memory of Tricia



I Never Believed...

I never believed I would see another season
change with gladness. I never believed I would see the
world again without the haze of tears. I never expected
to actually laugh again. I never felt my smile would
return and feel natural on my face. I never hoped for
another day when I would not want to die. I never
envisioned a world that could again be bright and full of
promise. I believed that all that had passed from me
the day he died and went away, never to return.

But I was wrong, and I know that in the fullness
of your grieving, you too, will come to understand that
life goes on...that it can still have meaning...that even
joy can touch your life once more.

~Don Hackett
TCF Hingham, MA

Chapter News

Meeting Topics & Info

Nov 6 - Meeting, Make Luminaries (See Below)

Please join us as we decorate a luminary for our Candle Lighting Program, the room next door will be open for those who wish to just have open sharing

Nov 24- Deadline to send in picture for video/ Candle Lighting Program

Dec 4 - Meeting - "Handling the Holidays"

Dec 14 - Candle Lighting Program—See below



During our November meeting we will be **selling and decorating** luminaries in memory of our children, siblings or grandchildren for **\$10.00 each as a SMALL FUNDRAISER**. All the necessary supplies will be available for you. This is the **only fundraiser** our chapter has. As this is a fundraiser, we would appreciate that you not bring luminaries from home or from past years to our ceremony. These beautiful, lighted luminaries will line the walkway to our Candle Lighting Remembrance Program and then they are yours to take home along with the sand and candle.

Also, please don't forget if your child's picture is not already on our video presentation and you want it to be included, you will need to add it. Please email a digital photo to Alice at AL5renolds@twc.com by **November 24**.



Food Drive

The Bethlehem SCV Church where we have our meetings and where our Candle Lighting program will be held again this year is collecting food items for the Santa Clarita Grocery.

We are asking our Compassionate Friends families to join with them and donate a non-perishable food item. You may bring it to our November or December meetings and to our Candle Lighting Program to help them in their efforts.

*"When someone you love becomes a memory,
the memory becomes a treasure."*

~unknown

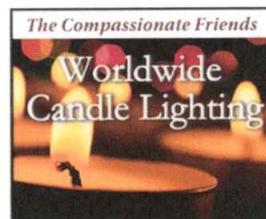
Welcome New Members



Attending your first meeting takes courage and it is always hard to say "welcome" because we are so very sorry for the reason which made you eligible for our membership in TCF. However, we are glad you found us! We cannot take away your pain but we can offer our friendship and support. Do try and to attend at least 3 meetings so you have a chance to meet others who are bereaved and discover that special acceptance that occurs with new friends who truly understand.

New to our chapter is:

Ron & Melissa Ungerman, Parents of Zachary
Valerie Geene, Mother of Ashley
Denise Johnson, Mother of Daniel



24th Annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Program

December 14 @ 6:30 PM

We are happy to inform you that we will once again be holding our annual Candle Lighting program. **It will be held indoors in the main Worship Center** at the church where we hold our meetings. This Worldwide Candle Lighting Remembrance Program will be on Sunday, December 14 beginning at **6:30PM @ Bethlehem SCV, 27265 Luther Dr. Canyon Country, 91351.**

This very touching evening includes music, featured performers, a video presentation, the reading of poems, and the lighting of candles (battery operated) which will be provided to all who attend.

We know that the holiday season is an extremely difficult time of year for families grieving the death of a child, grandchild, or sibling. This candle lighting ceremony is a symbolic way of showing the love we continue to carry for our children, even though they are no longer with us physically.

Please mark your calendar and invite your friends, neighbors and relatives to come and share with you this very moving celebration of all children who have gone too soon. **If you haven't been to a meeting lately, please rest assured, you are always welcome to attend our Candle Lighting Program!!**

If you can't be with us, be sure to light a candle at home so that...

"their light may always shine"



Handling The Holidays



Christmas and Chanukah, two holidays rich in tradition and intimately connected with children, are often especially difficult for bereaved families. What you do, or don't do, may depend on whether or not you have young children or grandchildren who should not be deprived of the joy the holidays can bring.

Try to finish shopping well in advance so that you are not inundated by holiday displays and music which the stores seem to initiate earlier and earlier each year. You might want to shop by catalog or the internet. Take advantage of the people who said to let them know how they can help and ask them to shop or do holiday chores for you.

In consultation with your immediate family, decide which traditions you wish to keep and which you want to change. As you progress in your journey through grief, you may find you are able to reinstate some traditions you could not handle in the beginning.

Do things at different times or in different places if that works for your family. You may want to observe the holidays by yourselves, rather than take part in large gatherings. If you do take part in family or other gatherings, feel free to mention your child if you want to. If others are uncomfortable, it's their problem. Do not let them make you feel guilty for talking about your child or crying. You might want to explain in advance that this is a difficult time for you and that talking about your child and even shedding some tears are necessary for healing.

Memorialize your child in some way. Light special candles; have a special Chanukah menorah; fill his or her stocking with messages of love; have a special tree or decorate the tree with special ornaments; buy presents for a needy child of the same age; make charitable donations; volunteer in a hospital or homeless shelter.

Try attending a TCV or other memorial service. While difficult, this may allow you to express your feelings in a caring and comfortable atmosphere.

Savor any moments of happiness as a special holiday gift. Your children would not want you to be miserable. Honor them by remembering them with love.

*~Stephanie Hesse
TCF Rockland County, NY
& Palm Beach County, FL*

*When the time comes for
lighting festive candles,
let them remind you not of what you lost,
but also of what you had.*

~Sascha Wagner

Only December



Feelings heavy,
tears and tears,
Will the darkness last?
Or is it -
Only December?

Hadn't past months
brought peace and hope?
Where is the strength
of October -
and November?

Lights, carols, ornaments on trees,
cards from friends,
happy times in seasons past.
We remember.
We remember.

Will January bring
light at last?
Will we be stronger then,
for making it through
this December?

When people ask
how I'm doing I say,
Well...you know...
It's December.

*~Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
From Stars in the Deepest Night-
After the Death of a Child*



Blessings and Burdens

As our feelings of loss and pain mingle with celebration, our memories are at once the burden and the blessing of this season, a cause for loving tears and a cause for aching smiles. When memories of winter's past come to mind, many of us can find a light behind the tears. Images and sounds that are stored inside emerge in our mind with familiar clarity and evergreen tenderness.

But there are those among us who have no holiday memories because their infants did not live long enough to see their first season of lights. These grievers have few memories to give them solace today, and we can only tell them that we are deeply aware of this special part of their grief.

*~ Sascha Warner
Wintersun*

A Love Gift

Was Received From:

Bobbie Mathers & Dan Spencer
In Loving Memory of their son:

**Eric
Spencer**
12/29 - 11/2



Love Gifts



A Love Gift is a wonderful way to remember your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthday or angel dates or just to say I love you. What better way than to have their photo included in our newsletter along with a special memory, thought or message, article or poem from you.

If anyone would like to make a donation in memory of their child, grandchild, or sibling you may give it to Alice or Diane at our meeting or mail it to Alice at 27949 Park Meadow Dr., Canyon Country, 91387. You can also email the info to AL5renolds@twc.com Love gifts should be received by the 10th of the month to be placed in the up-coming newsletter. **But remember our newsletter is bi-monthly.** What a special way to share and remember your loved one!

Our chapter exists solely on voluntary, tax deductible donations. We thank you in advance for any donations you may be able to give or send. Your donations help to pay the expenses of our newsletter, purchase books & brochures, coffee & refreshments, new member's packets, our rental space and other miscellaneous supplies. They also fund our annual Balloon Release and Candle Lighting programs. We sincerely appreciate your support!

*"It isn't for the moment you are struck
you need courage,
but for the long uphill climb back to
sanity and faith and security"*

~Anne Morrow Linbergh



A Mother's Thoughts

YESTERDAY...

We dreamed of how our future would be,
Of times we'd share, my child and me.
Whether joy or pain, laughter or tears,
We'd stand together throughout the years.
A promise of what life should always be,
Of a child so dear, ever loving me.

TODAY...

My heart sobs with uncontrollable grief.
I search for answers, but find no relief.
The skies have darkened, no longer bright,
For my child is gone, forever from sight.
The dreams we shared can never be,
They're left to linger in my memory.

TOMORROW...

My heart will push aside this cloud
That darkens my life like a heavy shroud.
Once again I'll see the dawning light
And know my child's love still burns bright.
I'll remember the moments we both shared;
I'll remember our love and how we cared.
I'll remember my child now lives in me,
And his YESTERDAYS shall always be.

*~Carol Cichella
TCF Rockford, IL*

Time turns
and at your doorstep waits
another Christmas
and another year...

Time sings
a gentle song for you to hear:
"Let there be Christmas now,
invite the coming year,
what you have loved
is always near."

*~Sascha Wagner
"The Poems of Sascha Wagner"*

"Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings



Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays

November

December

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Justin Knopf	11/28	Jim & Susan Kirk	Eric Spencer	12/29	Bobbie Mathers
Michael Kelly	11/17	Kathy Kelly	Michael Leone	12/6	Mariacristina Leone
Justin Hakola	11/9	Cheryl Landreth	Andro Barsoum	12/10	Odette Awad
Amanda Miranda	11/16	Patrice Madrigal	Logan Ortega	12/22	Ellie & Amanda
Keith Drynan	11/1	Lisa Grose	Danny Sullivan	12/10	Terasa Papa
Jason Fields	11/21	Renee Fields			
Christian Malan	11/23	Lex & Emily Malan			



Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates

November

December

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Darren Bullock	11/19	Carol Lock	Whitney Moore	12/12	Beth Moore
Eric Spencer	11/2	Bobbie Mathers	Jacob Kaplan	12/24	Michael & Robyn
Justin Knopf	11/21	Jim & Susan Kirk	Kevin Rickhoff	12/09	Nancy Rickhoff
Jamie Knopf	11/21	Jim & Susan Kirk	Joshua Mathews	12/2	Priscilla DiBlasio
Melissa Mueller Matters	11/3	Kirk & Dianne	Sean Tessier	12/5	Patricia Vassallo
Colleen Brown	11/3	Keith & Lin Brown	Amber Wyatt	12/20	Lora Wyatt
Kevin Petersen	11/18	Cheryl Petersen	Eddie Meadows	12/21	Veronica Meadows
Jax Markley	11/06	Matt & Daisy	Kaitlyn Todd	12/19	Jennifer Todd
Christian Malan	11/23	Lex & Emily			
Jason Fields	11/21	Renee Fields			

Memories Are Golden

They say memories are golden
well maybe that is true.
I never wanted memories,
I only wanted you.

A million times I needed you,
a million times I cried.
If love alone could have saved you
you never would have died.

In life I loved you dearly,
In death I love you still.
In my heart you hold a place
no one could ever fill.

If tears could build a stairway
and heartache make a lane,
I'd walk the path to heaven
and bring you back again.

Our family chain is broken,
and nothing seems the same.
But as God calls us one by one,
the chain will link again.

~Author unknown



Love transcends time and space, and our loved ones who have passed beyond our sight continue to wrap us in their love, blessing us with that love every minute. Knowing this does not soften the ache of longing, but I am grateful for this truth. May you too feel weave after weave of blessing from your loved ones who are beyond your sight, but never beyond your love.

~Kim Minske Bodeau
TCF Chippewa Valley, WI