



# The Compassionate Friends

## Santa Clarita Valley Chapter

### Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Jan-Feb 2026

Volume 27, No. 1



**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 any 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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#### THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS OF SANTA CLARITA VALLEY

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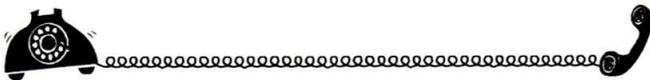
#### MEETINGS

We have one meeting a month. They are usually held on the 1st Thursday of each month. The next two meetings are:  
**January 8, 2026-Please note: SECOND THURSDAY**  
**February 5, 2025**

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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Linda Stout (Facebook Manager)  
Steve Crittenden (Webmaster & Treasurer)  
Jeanne Crittenden (Button & Angel Board Manager)  
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### Each Life Is Like A Song

A life is like a song we write  
In our own tone and key,  
Each life we touch reflects a note  
That forms the melody.

We choose the theme and chorus  
Of the song to bear our name,  
And each will have a special sound,  
No two can be the same.

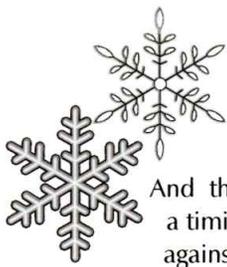
So when someone we love departs,  
In memory we find  
Their song plays on within the hearts  
Of those they leave behind.

Isn't this beautiful?  
Our family and our children's "SONG"  
plays on within our hearts.  
Each day, we are all writing our own "Song".  
Let us all make it beautiful.

~Elma Burns Semko  
Atlanta, GA  
Mother to Bobby Burns

*Watch the Sunrise,  
Remember the laughter,  
Celebrate what was.*

~Sascha Wagner



## Winter Sun

And then it happens, from a bitter sky,  
a timid sun strides to his silent battle  
against the gray and hostile universe.

It changes ice to roses, sky to song.  
And then it happens that your heart recalls  
some distant joy, gladness from the past.  
A slender light, then larger, braver, until  
your mind returns to hope and peace.  
Let memories be beauty in your life,  
like song and roses in the winter sun.



~Sasha Wagner  
Wintersun



## New Year Thoughts

I hear the bells peal and the firecrackers pop as another year is ushered in and I pause for a few moments of reflection, knowing that each year has a way of bringing the unexpected and, sometimes, even the unthinkable. In February I will pass the five year mark since my daughter's death and I look back over those five years with amazement; first, for the sheer fact that I am still journeying forward when five years ago I was stopped in my tracks and wondered if I would survive the emotional cement mixer I found myself suddenly thrust into. The lows were so very low at first, and the highs nothing more than little hiccups of hope giving me the impetus to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

There have been cliffs to scale, valleys to walk through, storms to weather, huge patches of mud that sucked at my feet and almost mired me completely a few times, and dry, desert-like areas that just about baked the life out of my soul. There have also been warm, sunny areas, cool lakes, majestic views and enriching encounters with other pilgrims - fairly fleeting at first, but increasing as time has progressed. Now here I am, contemplating a brand new year, knowing that it will include the bad as well as the good, the tough as well as the touching, and opportunities as well as roadblocks.

I will always miss my daughter. I will always have an empty place in my heart that only her presence can fill. I will never have an answer to "why" and, in fact, I no longer ask it. I simply ask for enough strength for each day; enough wisdom to be gentle with myself when the winds of grief blow with extra force; enough insight to see when someone needs a comforting word; and enough courage to let the seeds of hope take root and grow in my soul in ever-increasing numbers.

~Sally Cowell  
TCF Salem, OR  
Jan/Feb 2012 Newsletter



## New Year's Resolutions For The Bereaved

This year I resolve to:

1. Not put a time limit on my grief. Loving someone means loving them for my lifetime whether they are physically present or not.
2. Tell their stories, the happy and the sad they will live on through me.
3. Teach others that they cannot "make" me cry, tears are only an external expression of how I am feeling all the time.
4. Understanding that crying or otherwise expressing my pain is healthy and normal. "Doing well" means expressing my feelings.
5. Understand that others will not understand my pain and it isn't fair to expect them to do anything but listen.
6. Recognize that asking for help from those that love us is really a gift that we give to them.
7. Help others, reaching out to others in pain will help me to heal.
8. Do something nice for myself every day.
9. Know that if today I can not do everything that needs to be done, tomorrow is another chance to get it done.
10. Cry when I need to, laugh when I can and to not feel guilty about either one.
11. Let go, bit by bit, of the guilt, regret and anger that can be so damaging.
12. Take a risk and let others into my life and heart.
13. Take care of my physical, emotional and spiritual health.
14. Reinvest in life a little bit each day...

Wishing you a peaceful New Year's!

~Tanya Lord



Grief: is sometimes silent, like snowflakes falling on a dark winter's night., but never peaceful or serene or pretty like the pure white snow. When grief is silent, the tears seem to turn to ice, like the snowflakes, before they reach our eyes.

Grief: is sometimes raging, like a monstrous thunderstorm with all its fury and lots of lightning striking our hearts at every angle. When grief is raging, the tears come in torrents, like the rain, and flood our soul.

Grief: whether it be silent or raging...Hurts.

~Verne Smith  
TCF Ft. Worth, Texas

# Chapter News

## Meeting Topics & Info

**Jan 8 - SECOND THURSDAY- Meeting, "Facing the New Year"** What can we do in 2026 to help ourselves?

**Feb 5 - Meeting, "How Our Loved One Lived Their Best Life"** - We have so many beloved memories and much to share about how our loved one lived their best life. Join us to share stories of your loved ones amazing abilities, adventures, escapades, and experiences that continue to touch so many.

## 24th Annual Candle Light Remembrance Program

On Sunday, December 14th our chapter held its annual candle lighting program indoors in the Worship area of Bethlehem SCV, the church where we hold our meetings.



We had 29 beautifully embellished luminaries lining the walkway into our program. The bags glowed with our beloved children, siblings, and grandchildren's faces and their names as they greeted us to our special night of remembrance.

We gathered together in this beautifully decorated area, many their first time at attending along with many long time familiar faces. We came together in friendship and love to celebrate and remember our children, grandchildren, and siblings, when most are celebrating the holidays. We listened to poems and songs performed by two talented ladies. As our loved names were called out loud we lit our candles and stood proudly holding that flickering light knowing this small little jester is our way of keeping their memories alive. The beautiful slide show with the song "Precious Child" then began. We watched our loved ones faces float across the screen, you could hear weeping and see glistening tears shimmering down our cheeks. But those tears signify the forever love we hold deep within our hearts. Whether they lived three score and ten or never tasted earth's air they are ours, now and forever. No longer being with us the way we want does not lessen our love for them in our hearts.



It is our hope that this program for just a short time helped you feel the warmth of your loved one's memories and presence in your heart and that you were given some small measure of peace for the holidays.

Thank you to Jeff & Tracey Mogg, Kathy Hilton, Jeanne Crittenden, Tom Reynolds, Bert Briones, the family of Aiden Lopez,  
Please continue reading in next column →

(continued from first column)

Alison Lewis, Deena Russo, Andy Goldsmith and anyone else who lent a hand to help put this evening on. Also, thank you to all those who donated non-perishable food items to the church, they were very thankful for the large amount of items donated! If you weren't able to attend, we hope you were able to light a candle from home, so that..."their light may always shine."



~Alice Reynolds, Editor

## 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:

Lizzy Vides, Mother of Nelson  
Debbie Shymansky, Grandmother of Jeremy  
Mychal & Christine Haworth, parents of Maxwell  
Richard & Andrea Sopinanukul, parents of Caden

## Important Newsletter Renewal Time



We usually update our mailing list/data base every two years and it has been 3 years! So we are in the possessing of doing that now. You should be receiving your renewal letter in the mail soon. So please make sure that we have your most **up-to-date mailing address!** When you receive your form, please make sure to fill it out and return it by the date noted on the form if you would like to remain on our mailing list and continue receiving our newsletters and note cards.

Thank you,  
Alice Reynolds, Editor



## The Valentines of Yesterday

In my lifetime I have received many Valentines. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, school friends, boyfriends, good friends, acquaintances and my husband have showered me over the years with lovely Valentines which I have so appreciated. The tradition of declaring friendship and love on Valentine's Day is a very fond memory.

However, the sweetest Valentines I have ever received are from my son. From the first days in nurse school when my son made a hand plaque and a drawing on construction paper to the final Valentine in 2002. I have cherished these gifts of love from my only child. I have kept every Valentine my son ever made for me or bought for me. I have every Valentine gift he ever gave me. These are the treasures that remind me how special a parent's love truly is. There is no love to compare with the unconditional love we give our children. I think my son knew that nobody in the world would love him as much as his mother did. Yet, he also knew that he would love his children in just this same way. This unconditional parent's love that we give our children is the most precious love in life. It is always our hope that they, too will find the joy of this love with their children.

When our child dies, we cling to our unconditional love as we feel the anguish of a final separation on this earthly plane and a tsunami of betrayal as the devastation of this incomprehensible loss sweeps over us. The pain is real. It is physical, emotional, psychological and forever embedded on our psyche. Yet, without that unconditional love, there would be no pain. Who among us would trade the most infinitely rewarding love and the subsequent pain of loss for a life of lukewarm relationships?

And so, as Valentine's Day once again comes into my life, I will look back at this love, at the good times, the wonderful handmade childhood Valentine cards and gifts and the carefully selected cards of adulthood that my son gave to me. His words, his love, his appreciation for all that we had shared as mother and child will be reflected in these treasures. There will be tears, certainly, but these are tempered with the many sweet memories of my son and his life. It is these sweet memories which sustain me, give me hope, and bring me gratitude for all that was given to me. My son is forever in my heart. He is with me every day and every night, and especially, he is with me on Valentine's Day.

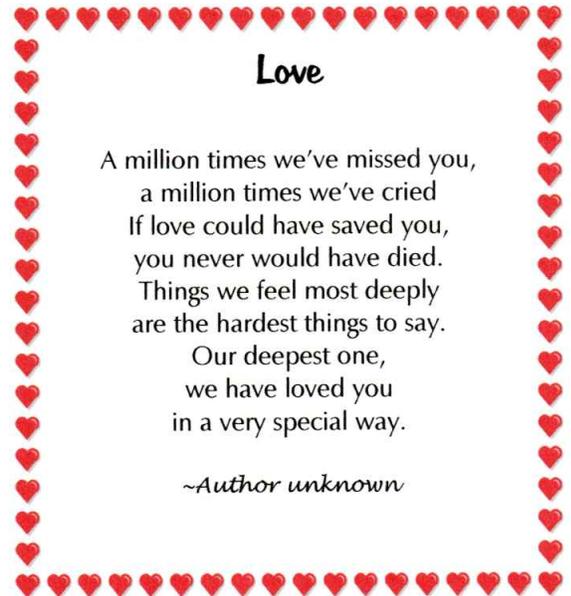
*Annette Mennen Baldwin  
TCF Katy, TX*

*In Memory of my son, Todd Mennen*



*Time does not really  
heal a broken heart,  
It only teaches a person  
how to live with it.*

*~Author unknown*



## Love

A million times we've missed you,  
a million times we've cried  
If love could have saved you,  
you never would have died.  
Things we feel most deeply  
are the hardest things to say.  
Our deepest one,  
we have loved you  
in a very special way.

*~Author unknown*



## This Month of February, I Wish You Love

This is the month that a whole day is dedicated to love. In our sorrow, let us not forget that one emotion which, above all else, can comfort and console us.

Let us think of the things we love:

1. Our child/grandchild-whom we love-still love and always will love-here in our hearts as long as we live.
2. Our families-hurting like us-lonely-needing each other-needing us.
3. Our true friends-listening-trying to help-wanting to lighten our load, but not knowing how-not always understanding, but there.
4. Our memories-of wonderful times gone by-some that make us laugh-some that make us cry-but all part of the fabric of our lives and of our love for each other.
5. Our quiet times-to get away by ourselves and think-to read-to note again the world around us-to let peace enter.
6. Our Compassionate Friends-who are there-who know-who understand when others do not.

"Love makes the world go "round" and when our world comes to a sudden, grinding, heart-shattering stop, love is the glue that keeps us from falling off.

*~Fran MacArthur,  
TCF Southern, MD*



# Love Gifts



Were Received From:

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

**Peter  
Spencer**  
2/5 - 9/4



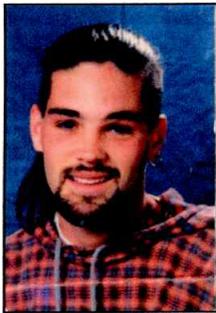
*Elaine McAlpine*  
In Loving Memory of her son:

**Daniel  
McAlpine**  
6/27 - 8/29



*Jim & Susan Kirk*  
In Loving Memory of their Children:

**Jamie Knopf**  
10/21 - 11/21



**Justin Knopf**  
11/28 - 11/21

*Tom & Alice Renolds*  
In Loving Memory of their Children:

**Tim Renolds**  
3/17 - 2/17



**Danny Renolds**  
6/22 - 2/17

*Barbara Rawson*  
In Loving Memory of her son:

**Christopher  
Rodriguez**  
9/22 - 6/13



The gates of memory never close,  
How we miss you no one knows,  
No longer in our lives to share,  
But in our hearts you're always there.

~unknown

We love and miss you every minute of every day.  
Love Mom & Dad

# "Forever In Our Hearts"

Our Children/Grandchildren/Siblings

*Loved and Missed on Their Birthdays*



## January

## February

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Nigel Peddie	1/19	Bruce Peddie	Sammy Thomas	2/1	Dave & Kay Thomas
Noah Carmona	1/02	David & Itzel	Edward Evans	2/28	Barbara Evans
Kevin Perlstein	1/9	Kathleen Lencki	Peter Spencer	2/5	Bobbie Mathers
Randy Pereira	1/22	Valerie Pereira	Brian DeCaro	2/27	Mary Yancey
Aaron Golianis	1/5	Lisa Shields	Izaiah Baxter	2/14	Clyde Baxter
Caden Sopinanukul	1/13	Richard & Andrea	Zayne Malan	2/24	Lex & Emily Malan
			Ezequiel Sanchez	2/20	Stephanie Sanchez
			Dustin Roberto	2/6	Deborah & Joe
			Christopher Morse	2/16	Lisa Moscheth
			Harrison Goodwill	2/17	Lisa Goodwill
			David Flores	2/14	Raymond Flores
			Justin Golchin	2/5	Maria Golchin



*Lovingly Remembered on Their Angel Dates*

## January

## February

Name	Date	Member	Name	Date	Member
Edward Evans	1/2	Barbara Evans	Daniel Renolds	2/17	Tom & Alice Renolds
Travis Marton	1/1	Andrew & Ricki Marton	Timothy Renolds	2/17	Tom & Alice Renolds
Eric Rodriguez	1/20	Carlos & Ana Rodriguez	Jeanene Sykes	2/5	Ted Sykes
Mindy Siefert	1/25	Debbie Gardner	Nigel Peddie	2/1	Bruce Peddie
Emily Mogg	1/30	Jeff & Tracey Mogg	Reese Stout	2/10	Linda Stout
Emily Mogg Grandchild	1/30	Gary & Sandy Johnson	Troy Covert	2/24	Melanie Miller
Jason Fields	1/26	Renne Fields	Danny Sullivan	2/8	Terasa Papa
Amanda Miranda	1/11	Patrice Madrigal	Jordan Vargas	2/28	Carlos & Fabiola
Justin Golchin	1/30	Maria Golchin	Nelson Vides	2/10	Lizzy Vides



## Gentle Memories



We can be left with nothing greater than gentle memories of those who have touched many lives in numerous ways.

When we gather happy memories and hold them close to our hearts, the gentle spirit of peace will touch us.

And as we go on celebrating the time, we had together, we'll find the treasure of remembering and the comfort of believing that each life is indeed a gift...to be held in our hearts forever!

~Unknown