



The Compassionate Friends

Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

We Need Not Walk Alone, We Are The Compassionate Friends

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National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

Chapter Website: www.tcf-cle.net



Chapter Closed Facebook Group

November, 2020

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WHAT IS COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS?

Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization offering friendship and understanding to bereaved parents.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS CREDO

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our

MISSION STATEMENT: When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.

faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends.



November Monthly Meeting

November 11th at 7:00pm: We will meet “virtually” using the Zoom video conferencing app. Please see page 9 for more information and some help preparing for this new way to meet. The discussion topic will be “Preparing for the Holidays”. As always you can raise any concerns or issues you feel the group might be able to help with. Meeting facilitators will be Doreen and Brian Sismour. *Join the meeting from your home via Zoom!*

NOTE: THE MEETING WILL NOT BE HELD AT BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Remembering Our Children

Please take a moment to remember these children and those who love them on their birth dates and anniversaries. Although they were only here for a short time, the impact they made on their loved ones remains forever.



November Birth Dates

3 - James Christopher Hartman	19 - Tiffany Lyn Clawson
5 - Dina Marie Parisi	19 - Bruce Albert Schmidt
8 - Thomas Patrick Harsany	19 - Amy (Cudney) Sobolewski
11 - Michael James Wohl	20 - Dorothy Thomas
12 - Anthony James Dawson	20 - Jason Tompkins
12 - Scott Winfield Hawke	22 - Dustin M. Zarobell
14 - Todd David Buchko	26 - Christopher E. Andes
15 - Brian David Moll	29 - Michaelann Elizabeth Arnold
18 - Antonio Deshon Briones	30 - Kadeem Von Hogan

November Angelversary Dates

Christopher E. Andes (Age 25)	Sean R. Kaminski (Age 26)
Arik Bocian (Age 5)	Andrew C. King (Age 21)
Todd David Buchko (Age 1 day)	Lauren Venzel Kutchenriter (Age 27)
Benjamin David (Age 31 days)	Donald A. Litvin, Jr. (Age 13)
David Thomas Erich (Age 29)	Kerriane Loas (Age 20)
Tom Friebel (Age 17)	Steven Michael Luff (Age 19)
Christopher James Giermann (Age 31)	Tracy Ann Schuenemann (Age 27)
James Christopher Hartman (Age 31)	Justin Robert Swanger (Age 22)
Brian Tyler Jenkins (Age 12)	Ashley Nicole Szewczyk (Age 39)

Remembering Our Children

Love Gifts

Love gifts are donations that are made to our chapter to support the continuation of the chapter as well as the newsletter. We would like to thank these people who donated to our Chapter in memory of their loved one(s).

~ Don and Joanne Litvin ~ In loving memory of
Donald A. Litvin, Jr. (Age 13)

Thoughts About Progress

One thing that is frequently discussed at our meetings is the despair of thinking you are on the road to “recovery,” when all of a sudden you seem to be back at square one. But are you really?

Let’s keep in mind most of us have had no previous experienced “recovering” from the loss of a child. Therefore, we have no point of reference – it’s all new to us. Actually the “roller coaster” of emotions is perfectly normal. In the very beginning most of us seem to vacillate between dead numbness and excruciating pain. Constant crying, to not a tear left – just dried up and limp. We actually are living minute-to-minute.

After a couple of months we might actually have a few hours that we have not cried or felt that deep overwhelming despair. Then, WHAM – back to where we started. We tend to panic and think something is wrong with us. Let’s be realistic! There is something wrong – terribly wrong: we have each lost a child.

Let’s be fair to ourselves. We started to play a role to the outside world. Like the old song says, “laughing on the outside – crying on the inside.” We want to be acceptable to society. “You are doing so well,” we hear. If only they knew! We may feel we have to fool others, but let us really be honest about our feelings. To deny our feelings, particularly to ourselves, is to block the road to recovery. Remember that recovery in this case does not mean, “getting over it,” it means to gain control of our lives again.

So, let’s not worry about what other people think, say, or expect. Our friends (well meaning as they are), sometimes members of our family, even someone who has lost a child, should not sit in judgment. Each person grieves differently, due to a person’s general make-up and the relationship with the dead child. Unless someone has totally withdrawn from everything and everybody over a lengthy period of time, the chances are all is in the realm of normalcy. Only after we have walked down the long road of grief and can look back, remembering those early days and weeks, can we see we really are not on square one again. We have just slipped backwards for a time. That is all. Allow yourself that, and then strive forward again. It takes time, a lot of time! We tend to expect too much from others, others expect too much from us, and therefore, we tend to expect too much from ourselves.

*Mary Ehmann
TCF Valley Forge, PA*

Newsletter Dedications



Donald A. Litvin, Jr. (Age 13)

The emptiness never goes away.

Love, Mom and Dad

First Thanksgiving

The thought of being thankful
fills my heart with dread.
They'll all be feigning gladness,
not a word about her said.

These heavy shrouds of blackness
enveloping my soul,
pervasive, throat-catching,
writhe in me, and coil.

I must, I must acknowledge,
just express her name,
so all sitting at the table,
know I'm thankful that she came.

Though she's gone from us forever
and we mourn to see her face,
not one minute of her living,
would her death ever replace.

So I stop the cheerful gathering,
though my voice quivers, quakes,
make a toast to all her living.
That small tribute's all it takes.

*Genesse Bourdeau Gentry
from Stars in the Deepest – After the Death of a Child*



First Meeting

Our October meeting was the first for these bereaved mothers. It is very difficult to attend a first meeting and we applaud them for having the courage to come. We hope we were of help, and that they will return and work through their grief journeys with us.

Melinda Dalton, remembering her beloved daughter Elizabeth Dalton (Age 41)

Rosemary Pratt, remembering her beloved son Richard Pratt, Jr. (Age 28)

A Forgiving Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving was always an easy holiday. Unlike Christmas, there was no pressure of giving just the right gift! Thanksgiving Day brought family gatherings and good food. Late on those afternoons, we would return home full from over-eating and satisfied that our family relationships were intact. It was also a day that reminded us of everything for which we were thankful. We are supposed to be thankful for our health, our families, our comfortable life, etc.

The death of a child changes our perceptions, however. When the family now gathers around the Thanksgiving table, I now see a missing plate that no one else sees. When our nieces and nephews are laughing or crying. I hear a voice that no one else hears. When a family member recounts a story about something his or her child did last week. I wish for a story to tell. (Of course, when I say no one else, I exclude my wife and daughter. I'm sure they see, hear and wish what I do, although probably at different times.) We still have much to be thankful for, we bereaved parents; and we should remember that. But now Thanksgiving Day has an additional observance for us, too, doesn't it? It is a day of forgiveness, also. We must forgive others who cannot acknowledge the missing child, for whatever reasons. If family and friends cannot understand us, then we must try to understand them, especially on holidays. If we can exhibit tolerance, forgiveness, and understanding on a day on which we offer thanks, we can climb another step on our ladder to recovery.

I hope you have a forgiving Thanksgiving.

By: Jim Hobbs, Bereaved Father

TCF National News



WORLDWIDE CANDLE LIGHTING MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting on the 2nd Sunday in December unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit on December 13th, 2020 at 7:00 pm local time, hundreds of thousands of people commemorate and honor the memory of all children gone too soon.

Now believed to be the largest mass candle lighting on the globe, the annual Worldwide Candle Lighting (WCL), a gift to the bereavement community from The Compassionate Friends, creates a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. TCF's WCL started in the United States in 1997 as a small internet observance and has since swelled in numbers as word has spread throughout the world of the remembrance. Hundreds of formal candle lighting events are held, and thousands of informal candle lightings are conducted in homes, as families gather in quiet remembrance of children who have died and will never be forgotten.



A MESSAGE FROM SHARI O'LOUGHLIN, TCF'S NEW CEO

I wanted to share two videos with you. The first is a personal introduction since I have not yet had the chance to meet many of you. The second is a video interview with Dr. Gloria Horsley & Dr. Heidi Horsley on Open to Hope to discuss TCF's wonderful support services and finding hope in this time of great anxiety.

[A message from Shari O'Loughlin, TCF's new CEO](#)

[Video interview from the Open to Hope show](#)

Our Chapter News



Worldwide Candle Lighting Celebration December 13, 2020 (*save the date*)

The Compassionate Friends Worldwide Candle Lighting unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon.

Our chapter is reviewing options for observing this annual event virtually, via Zoom. More information will appear in the December newsletter.

Library Notes – by Clayton Samels

I hope this finds you all well. The nights are now colder and longer, which makes for good evening reading time.

I recently dipped into some fiction, a mystery novel called Let Me Lie, by Clare Mackintosh. The novel begins with the main character grieving the suicides of her parents, but the book has enough twists and turns to keep any mystery fan on their toes. One of my favorite quotes, approximately, is that you can't change the past; you can only change the way you respond to it. The book was another of my purchases for my Kindle app at a very reasonable price from Amazon.

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against regular ink and paper books. It's just that during these times, I find it easier to go digital. Sooner or later, though, we may return to face to face chapter meetings, and I will have to drag out the big tub of books. Which reminds me, you are more than welcome to not only take books out from our library, but also to donate books. So if you have a book you found helpful in your own grief journey and would care to donate it, you can always bring it to a meeting, and we will add it to the collection. You can write on the inside cover that you donated it in memory of your child, etc. And you can always pass along a review of it, too, and I will add it to a future Library Notes column.



I recently moved, and while unpacking books for my book cases, I came across a little book I found helpful in the early years of my own grief journey. It's called Birds of Ohio: Field Guide, by Stan Tekiela. My copy says copyright 1999, though I didn't buy it until after Robert died in 2006. My then wife Paula and I lived in an apartment with a large front yard, and we put up several bird feeders. I enjoyed watching the birds that came to visit (along with a large, annoying squirrel that I named Squirrelzilla, but that's another story). I could recognize a few birds, like the goldfinch and cardinal, but there were some I wondered about, so I got the book at a local bookstore on my way home one day from teaching at the university. I really liked the fact that the guide is color coded, so if you see a red bird, you look in the red section. I now live in a large highrise apartment building, and they don't want anyone feeding the birds. So I have to just recall the good old days, or walk over to the pond on the other side of the mall to feed bread to the ducks, which isn't quite the same as just looking out my window. Anyway, feeding the birds and trying to identify some of them provided some hours of peace during my early years of grief, so I thought I would pass that along. Maybe you can set up a bird feeder, and now that we are headed towards winter, they might appreciate a food station, and you might get some peaceful moments out of it all.

We are also heading into the holiday season, which can be extra stressful with all the gatherings and expectations, or maybe this year with fewer gatherings and sadness over that. In any case, stay well, stay safe, and read something.

Dear Friends:

I get migraine headaches.

Every migraine-sufferer knows these are not the “take two” kind of headaches. They are more like the “lie-down-in-a-dark-room-and-hope-you-die” kind.

People who have never experienced migraines often cannot understand this excruciating ordeal. If their own headaches are just the nuisance variety, they may even be impatient and unforgiving. As in most things, understanding is generally defined by personal experience. These people don't mean to be cruel, they just can't empathize with anything they haven't gone through themselves.

Grief is like that too. Just as there are different kinds of physical pain, there are different degrees of grieving. People who have experienced only mild grief may be intolerant of grief that is disabling. (I won't try to give examples of “mild grief” here or I'll get in big trouble with somebody!) Believing that they handled their own problem, they tend to think that others should do the same, just as easily.

In my years of connection to the world of the grieving, I've seen a lot of people (myself included) who have spent an inordinate amount of time trying to “win over” the uninitiated.

We beg their pardons, we excuse ourselves for being a bother to them, we strain our minds and hearts trying to find ways to help them understand us, we try to follow their advice; and when it all fails, we build on our foundations of guilt, because we believe it must have been all our fault for being bereaved in the first place!

This might make sense to somebody, but when I thought it through, it seemed to me that the shoe was on the wrong foot. I'm not mad at “them” anymore. I realize now that it's awfully difficult to describe a sunset to someone who was born blind.

On the other hand, I need to keep in mind that I have no right to expect those who do not share my suffering to automatically know my needs.

Now, when I encounter people who “brush off” grief and who are critical of those who can't, I ask them to share with me their deepest sorrow. If the only death they've suffered through is that of their car battery, I simply tell them I don't expect them to understand. If they haven't experienced grief on a deeper level, there's no way they can imagine it, so they needn't even try.

I do, however, expect-even demand-that they believe me when I tell them what it's like. I not only require that they take my word for how it is, I've liberated myself from being apologetic if I can't take their advice. Never again will I permit myself to become a pitiable victim who is counseled, guided and instructed by the uninformed.

We who grieve intensely don't need pity, we need understanding. If we can't get that, we can at least refuse to bend our backs to the whips of pragmatism. We can grieve with dignity and self respect.

In the end, “they” will like us better, and we will like us better too.

*Andrea Gambill
Reprinted from Bereavement Magazine, Mar/Apr 1990
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Zoom! Join us online for a video chapter meeting using Zoom!

Should you use a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone? They each have their benefits and their drawbacks, so pick which one you are comfortable with. In any case, you need to download the Zoom app for your device or use Zoom from within your web browser. It's probably a good idea to do a test at first with a friend or two before you actually join a meeting. Or, you can be like me, jump right into a meeting and learn the hard way.

You will receive a link to click on to join the meeting. Just click on the link and you will be put in a "waiting room" until the meeting host admits you to the actual meeting. This is a security measure to keep unwanted people from crashing the meeting. Also, the host can remove a participant from a meeting if that ever becomes necessary. You have the ability to name yourself or rename so that the other members will see that displayed. The meeting host can rename any of the participants.

You should know how to mute/unmute yourself, just in case. You should also switch off or on your video. You can leave the meeting at any time if you wish. If the meeting exceeds the allotted time limit (40 minutes) it may end automatically. To prevent that, we will probably take a break after 35 minutes and then in 5 minutes or so, the host may start up the meeting again. In that case, you can return by clicking that meeting link again.

Let's get specific: How to Zoom

1 Download Zoom for your device and install if you don't already have it and then run it. Here are some links for videos showing how to install Zoom on different devices.

Android - <https://youtu.be/1tdT35ZNGKk>

iPhone or iPad - https://youtu.be/j__a-PKrMqI

Windows - <https://youtu.be/Xp6tJOo9mmc>

Need more instructions? Search on YouTube for "zoom dottech" for some good ones.

2 Sign up for a Zoom account. Not needed to join a meeting, but you might want to sign up anyway. Their basic account is free. You can then host your own meeting with your family or friends., a good way to test it all out and keep in touch with people. Check to make sure your audio and video work, and learn how to mute/unmute your audio and turn off/on your video.

3 Click on our meeting link at meeting time to open the app and be placed in the waiting room. The meeting host will admit you to the meeting. It's that simple! (Maybe!) Try it out. If you need help, post on our chapter TCF group page and I, or someone, will try to get you going.

*Clayton Samels
TCF Southwest Suburbs/Cleveland Chapter*

Heartprints

Whatever our hands touch---
We leave fingerprints!
On walls, on furniture,
On doorknobs, dishes, books,
As we touch we leave our identity.
Oh please where ever I go today,
Help me leave heartprints!
Heartprints of compassion
Of understanding and love.
Heartprints of kindness
and genuine concern.
May my heart touch a lonely neighbor
Or a runaway daughter,
Or an anxious mother,
Or, perhaps, a dear friend!
I shall go out today
To leave heartprints,
And if someone should say
"I felt your touch,"
May that one sense be...
YOUR LOVE Touching through ME.

~author unknown

Memory

There is a place called memory,
Where we sometimes like to roam.
Through hills of love and laughter
A place we know as home.

A place that's free from all this pain
Where our hearts are light once more.
A place that lives forever,
Where life is, as it was before.

Our children live in memory.
They laugh and dance and sing.
Their lives are filled with a magic
That only Heaven can bring.

They feel no hurt or anger.
Their spirits are free as air.
And God's love will always protect them
In times when we aren't there.

Cherish this place called memory.
Feel the love that lives there.
Remember the joys, the warmth of the sun,
And the bond you will always share.

Smile at happy moments,
Laugh at times gone by.
Let the tears you cry be happy ones,
Know love will never die.

Have no fear of visiting,
the joy will outweigh the pain.
Learn to treasure memory
for there is much that you will gain.

And though life is not as it was before,
And never will be again.
Our memories are much richer,
Than if love had never been.

*Lovingly lifted from
Brazosport, TX Chapter Web Site*

What Is A Love Gift ?

A love gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends. It is usually in honor of a child who has died, but it can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, 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. All local TCF chapters are totally dependent on funds from our families. We DO NOT receive funds from our National Office. Everything we need to operate our local chapter is paid directly from our local resources and our local family contributions. All monetary love gifts are tax deductible.

Thank you to all who contribute and support our chapter. Some people contribute in memory of other's children ... this is a wonderful way for others to say, "I am remembering your child." Other "Gifts of Love" are evident by all the compassionate and giving volunteers we have within our organization.

Love gifts should be made payable to The Compassionate Friends and mailed to:

Cheryl Ondrejch, 14365 Old Pleasant Valley Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130

Newsletter Dedications

A newsletter dedication is a wonderful way to remember your child, and to help defray the costs to produce the newsletter. The cost is \$30 (tax deductible). If you would like to include a dedication, please fill out the form below and either bring it to a monthly meeting or mail it with your check (made payable to The Compassionate Friends) to Bill Luff, 133 Fourth Avenue, Berea, OH 44017. If you have a picture to include or a small tribute, please e-mail it to Bill Luff at:

jbl3665@sbcglobal.net



Donor: _____
(Your Name)

Donor Address: _____
(Street) (City, State, Zip) (Phone #)

In Memory of: _____
(Child's Name)

I would like dedication to appear in newsletter for month of: _____
(1st Choice) (2nd Choice)

What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other? ~ George Eliot

Holidays - Past, Present, and Future

Once again, it's that time of year. Halloween is over, Thanksgiving is fast approaching, and Christmas is only a few steps behind. Will this year be different than the last seven? Will I find the magic again? Wait. Let me revise that question: Did I ever feel the magic?

As a bereaved parent, I have experienced only two holiday seasons. While I have physically lived through 49 hell-a-days, emotionally, there have been only two: The ones before and the ones after Jason's death. The two categories are distinctly different.

If memory serves me correctly, which God knows it doesn't always do, I spent the first 42 years focused on material issues. What would I get? What did I want? What would make me the happiest child in the whole world? As I grew older and had my own little family, I spent the next 22 years asking myself what I would get them. What did they want? What would make them love me more? How would I manage to pay for all of it? I always felt there was something missing . . . but didn't really have the time or interest to find that missing something. Besides, why borrow trouble? Each year, by the time I realized that something was missing, the decorations were packed in their boxes and the kids had gone back to school. I could always find the magic next year.

In 1996, Jason died. Suddenly, my life ended its forward march and everything I had ever regarded as important became nonsense. My heart was not simply broken—it was ripped into shreds, emptied of what had fueled it over the span of my life. I had no hope of waiting for it to heal and had to face the reality that only a total reconstruction would suffice. I would have to create a new heart . . . from scratch.

That first fall was difficult. I was still numb, still cushioned from reality, but the pain of Jason's death was beginning to seep in. Then it was Halloween, and the horror of what had happened was upon me. Thanksgiving came with Christmas on its tail, bringing an empty chair, an unbroken wishbone, and silence where laughter had once prevailed.

I was sure it could not get any worse, but life always surprises us. The holidays of 1997 and 1998 were devastating. The numbness that had protected me that first season was gone. Reality had arrived, and I could not escape it. I would never again see Jason walk through our front door with that grin that always made me nervous, tracking snow across my "freshly waxed for the holidays" floor. I would never again buy two of everything for Jason and his twin brother. I would never again . . . enjoy the holidays . . . or life.

Years four through seven, we bought gifts for needy families, hung Jason's stocking right beside the rest of ours, illuminated special candles to include him in our celebrations, and smiled cheerfully at everyone who offered us their joy filled Merry Christmas. And as I spread my Christmas cheer and goodwill toward men, I had only one thought in my mind. It became my mantra: "If I can just make it through December, I will be okay." I was no longer focused on the material side of the season. I was no longer focused on the season at all. I wanted it over.

And now, here I am, at year eight. My eighth season of joy, my eighth year of decking the halls, my eighth year of Jason's physical absence. You probably think I am going to tell you that this year will be no different from the last seven. You might even anticipate that I am going to tell you that it never gets better, that there is no such thing as healing, and that grieving parents will always be bitter and angry, especially during the times when families everywhere celebrate the season of giving. Wrong. But don't feel bad; this revelation has totally shocked me also.

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A few days ago, on a cold morning in October, I woke up and was amazed to see that it was snowing. Overnight, the world had gone from brown to pure glistening white. It was beautiful. Later that day, I heard someone in my home actually humming Christmas carols. How dare they!? But . . . I was alone. It was me. That evening, I spent an hour printing up a beautiful green and red Christmas “wish list” with graphics! That was the straw that broke the camel’s back. Suddenly, it hit me. And no matter how guilty I feel in acknowledging it, I have to tell you. I am looking forward to the holidays. Oh . . . my . . . GOD. How can this be? Why is this happening?

Well, after much pondering, I think I know why. I think I spent 42 holidays looking through a lens that only focused on black and white, on the physical, on that which can be seen and physically felt. The lavishly wrapped gifts, excessive food, amount of money spent, and glittering (sometimes gaudy) lights on the tree. The next seven were spent looking through a lens that was distorted and scarred by grief. I focused on what was missing rather than on what was still here. I think I wanted it that way.

But now, I feel I’ve learned how to not only endure—but to enjoy—a memory that can only be defined as bittersweet. I’ve come to appreciate that feeling emotional is really about feeling impassioned. And I think this year, as the songs start to play on the radio and the cards begin filling our mailbox, I will choose a different lens, a lens that captures that which we cannot see or physically touch. A lens that goes beyond.

Not everything will change. I will still hang Jason’s stocking beside ours, buy gifts for the needy, light candles in his memory, and all of the other things that have made the last seven years bearable. But this year, I hope to do these things with joy rather than with bitterness and sorrow. This year, I want to grasp the hand of a homeless mother, kiss the cheek of a newborn baby, and hold a kitten while it plays in the place where kittens go to dream. I want to watch Santa as he holds wiggly toddlers on his lap. I want to sing “Silent Night” on a snowy night in mid-December when it feels as if all the world is sleeping. I want to feel the Christmas that we cannot see.

This year, I want to remember who I really am. I want to enjoy the months ahead. Not because I need to or because someone says it’s time to—but because—well, because I can. This year, I want to find the magic before it is time to put away the boxes. And I won’t stop searching until I find it.

Merry Christmas to you and yours . . . Believe in magic, And always . . . expect miracles.

~ author unknown ~

***When I grieve, when I stand by others as they grieve,
even in the midst of seemingly unbearable sorrow,
grief becomes a way to honor life —
a way to cling to every fleeting, precious moment of joy.***

~ Cortney Davis, Nurse Practitioner