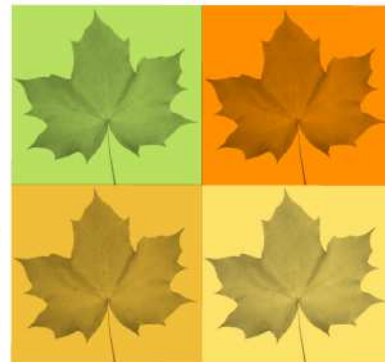


SEASONS

"Embracing the Seasons of Life."



March/April 2011

A well-known saying states: March roars in like a lion and leaves like a lamb! March is a month of changes – from winter to spring, from coldness to warmth, from inactivity to signs of new and renewed life. The process of grieving can be compared with the month of March, for grieving involves change.

It is hard to predict exactly what or when something will occur. Strong emotions such as sadness, fear, guilt, anger and rage are hard to predict. Like the storms of March, these strong emotions are a normal and natural part of grief.

Sadness typically occurs due to the loss of the loved one and the consequences of that loss. When we lose a loved one we also lose our security in that relationship, our dreams for the future with that person, and our identity related to that person. Sadness can intensify especially at holidays, Anniversaries, or other family events. Intense sadness can lead to situational depression. If, for a sustained period of time, the grieving person finds it difficult to do typical daily activities it may be appropriate to seek counseling.

Fear is also an emotion often experienced in grief. Our fear can be focused on different issues: fear of "What is going to happen to me now?"; fear of carrying on the responsibilities of home and family without the loved one; fear of financial loss. Facing and talking about our fears can help calm them.

Many people express feelings of guilt or regret following the death of a loved one. The term guilt is often misused, since the person may feel "guilty" in spite of having done nothing wrong. The more appropriate term may be "regret". The grieving often express regrets over not having done enough for, or said enough to their loved one. It is easy to take upon ourselves the "should've, could've, would've" feelings – "should I have done that, could I have done better, would my loved one still be alive if..." It is very difficult to talk someone out of these feelings. The griever needs to remember that they are a human being with limitations and they did the best they could to take care of their loved one. Often we remember the times we were not readily available to our loved one and forget the many times we did so much for them.

Anger can, and often is focused on specific individuals or groups of people. Family, friends, and medical personnel often become the focus of anger for the person mourning a loss. This anger arises from the hurt and pain of what was done or not done, said or not said, during the crisis time of illness and/or death.

If grief, anger is frequently expressed towards the deceased loved one. The death may be seen as a result of the deceased one's own action or inaction. The deceased is perceived as being "at peace" or "at rest," while the grieving person is left to struggle on alone in turmoil and pain.

Anger can also be turned inward on one's self. There is a heightened awareness of one's own vulnerability and inabilities. Anger leads to and feeds on feelings of guilt and fear.

Sometimes God or a Higher Power can be the focus of anger. If God is in control of things, then hurt, pain, isolation and loneliness are seen as God's action. It is perceived that God made (or at least allowed) this to happen; therefore, it is God's fault that the human hurts.

In grief we must expect these emotions to occur, anticipating that the degree of emotion will be better on some days than others. The death of our loved one has perhaps left us feeling isolated, restless, not sure what to do next. These are all normal and natural reactions to loss. Time does heal, but it is important to do the "work" of grieving. A vital part of this process is acknowledging the feelings as they come and finding someone trustworthy to talk with about these feelings.

Here are some suggestions for coping with the anger and rage of grief:

1. **Remember, Honesty is the Best Policy.** Be honest with yourself about your feelings.
2. Safe communication is the key to coping with the energy and tension of anger. If you try to control and contain anger, it often will show itself in innuendos, snide remarks and bitterness, which can cut off all communication. If you allow anger to express itself safely, it can often bring about constructive changes and better communication in the future. Anger often requires loud physical expression. Doug Manning talks of a woman who breaks cheap dishes as a way of releasing her anger. Stomping on aluminum cans will produce the same effect, as well as helping to recycle. Punching pillows can work, but many people have found slapping a washer or dryer or cleared counter top with a wet towel is more effective since a sound is heard. Screaming at people can cause further hurt feelings and isolation. Consider, instead, a good old-fashioned temper tantrum in the privacy of your own basement where you can scream, yell and cry your anger out in safety and privacy.

Once the energy and tension of the anger is expressed and released, the anger itself is no longer the focus of attention. Attention can now be paid to the source of the anger, and a healing process can begin.

For more reading material regarding anger in grief, we make these suggestions:
Kushner, Harold, *Who Needs God?* New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. 1989.

Kushner, Harold, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People.* New York: Schocken Books. 1981

Wolff, Pierre, *May I Hate God?* Paulist Press. 1983.

If you need to talk with one of our staff, privately, please call the nearest Diakon Hospice Saint John office. Please see attached calendar for upcoming Bereavement groups.

Diakon Hospice Saint John Pastoral Care and Bereavement Team

*Rev. Jane Mason Allentown Area (610) 391-2300 (888) 754-4608	*Rev. Coleen Kristula Wyomissing Area (610) 320-7980 (610) 882-4530	*Rev. Peggy Sue Pfeffer Hazleton Area (570) 459-6778 (877) 438-3511	*Rev. Jane Mason Honesdale Area (570) 251-8712 (800) 622-3315
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*Rev. Brian Kern
Bereavement Coordinator
Allentown/Wyomissing Area
(888) 754-4608*

*Rev. Tom Neuviller
Bereavement Coordinator
Hazleton/Honesdale Area
(800) 622-3315*

Please remember if you are feeling cut off and alone in your pain, we are here to listen; we do care.

ALLENTOWN AREA

(IN THE CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE TO CONFIRM)

Grief Support Group Meetings

March/April 2011 Wednesdays, 6:30 to 8:00p.m. March 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13, 20
Union United Church of Christ, 5550 Route 873, Neffs, PA 18065

Bereavement support is provided by the Allentown chaplain and Diakon Family Life Services. Please contact Chaplain Jane Mason at (610) 391-2300 for information about grief support groups being held in your area.

WYOMISSING

(IN THE CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE TO CONFIRM)

Grief Support Group Meetings

March/April 2011 Wednesdays, 6:30 to 8:00p.m. March 16, 23, 30, April 6, 13, 20
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 121 South Home Ave, **Topton**, PA 19562
April/May 2011 Mondays, 6:30 to 8:00p.m. April 11, 18, May 2, 9, 16, 23 (No group on April 25)
Kissinger Lutheran Church, 715 Berkshire Blvd. **Wyomissing**, PA 19610
April/May 2011 Tuesdays, 6:30 to 8:00p.m April 5, 12, 19, 26, May 3, 10
St. Luke Lutheran Church, 35 Wilson Ave., **Gilbertsville**, PA 19525

Bereavement support is provided by Diakon Family Life Services. Please contact Chaplain Coleen Kristula at (610) 320-7980 or Family Life Services at (888) 499-2699 for the latest information on the location of these groups.

HAZLETON AREA

(IN THE CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE TO CONFIRM)

Grief Support Group Meetings

Hazleton: Drop – in support group: The first Monday of the month from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall of Annunciation Roman Catholic Parish, 122 S. Wyoming Street, **Hazleton** PA.

Up-coming dates March 7, and April 4, 2011.

These information gatherings are open to all those who are grieving. There is no cost, however, registration is required. For more information or to register for a Grief Support Group please contact Rev. Peggy Sue Pfeffer at (570) 459-6778.

HONESDALE

(IN THE CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE TO CONFIRM)

Grief Support Group Meeting

For more information on Grief Support Groups please contact Rev. Jane Mason at (570) 251-8712 or (800) 622-3315.

MISSION In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries will demonstrate God's command to love the neighbor through acts of service.

 **DIAKON HOSPICE SAINT JOHN**
A LUTHERAN FAMILY & COMMUNITY MINISTRY
www.diakon.org/hospice

“Dealing with dying is hard work---physically and emotionally---and it’s very easy to slip into a frantic outlook that leaves you emotionally depleted, physically exhausted, and utterly overwhelmed”. Do not be afraid to let others help you with the responsibilities that come with caring for a loved one who is dying. Share the sadness as well as the tiny victories. If you need groceries, ask someone to sit with your loved one while you shop. Same goes for “me” time. It’s important to get out and decompress. You’re not being selfish, getting out of the house helps both of you. If you’re feeling overwhelmed, you can’t give the kind of care you would like.

Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley are the authors of **Final Gifts**, *Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communications of the Dying*-which is where the opening line was taken. Callanan and Kelley are both RN’s with extensive experience working with death and dying. This book is a valuable resource for those looking for guidance on what is happening and what you can do to help your loved one with their journey. It is a powerful read.

Life is eternal, and love is immortal, and death is only a horizon, and a horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight. Rossiter Worthington Raymond. 1840-1918

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