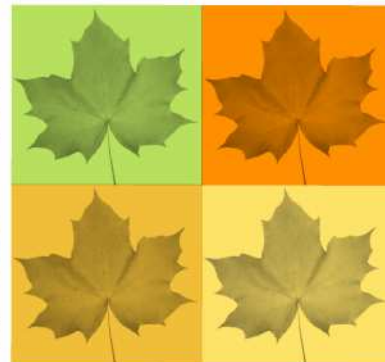


# SEASONS

*"Embracing the Seasons of Life."*



*November/December 2009*

Dear Friend,

Yes, the Holidays are upon us! For those who grieve, what was once a time of joy and celebration can turn into a time of actual dread. Anticipating the times of celebration without your loved one there can be very painful.

No matter how hard we try to avoid it, the world will continue to celebrate. Our very presence in the world makes us a part of what goes on around us.

It is very important to plan how you will spend your time during the Holidays. Chances are you will get many invitations and loving friends and family will be "sure" that they know what is best for you. Begin now to think about where you want to be, when you want to be there, and who you want to be with. Planning ahead will keep you from making last minute plans for something you really don't want to do.

Most often the anticipation is worse than the actual event. Expect to have both good and bad moments, time filled with both laughter and tears. And remember, it is okay to do both. Often people who are grieving experience what is called "joy-guilt" when they feel guilty for having a good time without their loved one. We need to remind ourselves that we are allowed to enjoy life. This does not mean that we miss or love our dear one any less, but that we are beginning to reconcile our loss and are continuing to go on with our lives.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you go through this time:

Do what is best for you. Only you know what works best to help you in your grieving. Decide what you can and cannot handle and let this be known to your family and friends.

Do not place too many expectations on yourself or others. Plan for periods of rest, since grieving is both physically and emotionally exhausting. This may intensify during the Holidays. Do not expect others to know how you feel. Again, express your needs and feelings to those around you.

Ask yourself "Do I really need to do all I have done for other Holidays"? If you do not feel like shopping, give the people on your list money or offer to donate to a charity in their honor. Also, catalog shopping will keep you away from, the busyness of department stores. If you do need to shop, do it early to prevent last-minute anxiety; likewise with greeting cards, baking, and shopping. Do what you feel you can handle and what gives you pleasure. It's also a good idea to invite others to do these tasks with you, so you are not alone.

(over please)

Making some changes in the way you have always done celebrations is helpful. If Christmas Eve dinner was always at your house, ask another family member to have it this year. Perhaps changing the time for dinner or changing a sit-down dinner to a buffet might be helpful. Some families go away if they can for the Holidays or volunteer at a soup kitchen to spend time with others. Of course, for some, doing things exactly the same is best. Again, the rule is: do what is best for you. You may find that next year you can return to your former traditions.

Allow some time for yourself. You may need to do your grieving in private, so plan a period of time to be alone.

Enjoy the memories you have of the good times with your loved one. They can strengthen your heart.

Attending church or synagogue services can be both uplifting and difficult. Perhaps attending a different church or synagogue or a service at a different time would be helpful. You may feel that you want to go alone, which your family may find difficult to understand. If going alone is hard, ask a family member or a friend to accompany you.

Working alone or using the support of family members or friends can be healthy choices for you. However, if you have become frustrated or feel alone and isolated with no real change in your pain, Diakon Hospice Saint John offers another choice.

Just as we joined together with you in providing care to your loved one, we would like to continue sharing with you during your time of bereavement. During the year we offer grief workshops and seminars at no cost. We also have support groups which are not advice or therapy groups—they are people helping people in mutual times of need.

To an outsider, the idea of a group of people meeting to discuss death and the pain in loss may seem grim and morbid. The idea of "dwelling on the loss" is most often expressed with negative connotations. But "dwelling" is part of "healing". It is working through the process facing the pain, asking the questions, sorting the emotions, choosing the behavior and responses, and coming to terms with what has occurred in order to regain control of one's life.

You are invited to attend any of our upcoming meetings. Please see the attached meeting schedule for December.

If you need to talk with one of our staff, privately, please call the nearest Diakon Hospice Saint John office. A Diakon Hospice Saint John chaplain is available 24 hours a day.

The staff of Diakon Hospice Saint John wishes you a blessed and peaceful Holiday Season.

Sincerely,

***Diakon Hospice Saint John Pastoral Care and Bereavement Team***

*Rev. Linda Williams Allentown Area (610) 391-2300 (888) 754-4608	*Rev. Linda Haring 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.

***IN THE CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE TO CONFIRM***

**ALLENTOWN AREA**  
**Grief Support Group Meetings**

Bereavement support is provided by the Allentown chaplain and Diakon Family Life Services. Please contact Chaplain Linda Williams at (610) 391-2308 for information about grief support groups being held in your area.

**WYOMISSING AREA**

**Grief Support Group Meeting**

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

**MEMORIAL SERVICE**

A Memorial Service to honor loved ones served by the Wyomissing office of Diakon Hospice Saint John will be held on Sunday, November 15, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. at Atonement Lutheran Church, 5 Wyomissing Blvd., Wyomissing. Please RSVP by calling 610-320-7980.

**HAZLETON AREA**

**Grief Support Group Meetings**

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.

Hazleton: Monday, November 2, 2009, and Monday December 7, 2009, 1:30-3:00 p.m.  
at the rectory of St. Gabriel's Catholic Church, 122 S. Wyoming Street, Hazleton.

**MEMORIAL SERVICE**

A Memorial Service to honor loved ones served by the Hazleton office of Diakon Hospice Saint John will be held on Sunday, November 8, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 46 S. Laurel St., Hazleton. Please RSVP by November 2, 2009 by calling 1-877-438-3511.

**Bereavement Workshop**

***Handling the Holidays When You've Had a Loss***

This Three hour workshop consists of two parts: education on the grief process and tips on coping with the holidays. The workshop will be offered at varying times and locations, please call the office at 570-459-6778 or 1-877-438-3511 for the schedule and to register.

**IN THE CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE TO CONFIRM**

**HONESDALE**

**Grief Support Group Meeting**

For more information on Grief Support Groups in this area, please contact Rev. Jane Mason at (57) 251-8712 or (800) 622-3315.

**Hawley:** Thursday, March 19, 2009 and April 17, 2009, 10:30-12:00 noon, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 405 Church Street, Hawley. This support group is open to the public.

**MEMORIAL SERVICE**

A Memorial Service to honor loved ones served by the Honesdale office of Diakon Hospice Saint John will be held on Sunday, November 15, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 405 Church St., Hawley. Please RSVP by calling 1-800-622-3315

*From Carol Olzinski, MSW Intern with Hospice St. John*

In preparation for my internship with Hospice St. John, I read several books this past summer including Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler's *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief through the Five Stages of Loss* (2005). I highly recommend it for anyone who is grieving or accompanying someone who is in the midst of facing his/her own grief.

Co-authored by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, a well-known authority on death and the dying process, this book provides the reader with insight into the course that the grieving process often takes - namely, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance - as well as addresses particular concerns that are often shared by those who grieve. A chapter that addresses the pain experienced internally as one grieves includes such topics as: regrets, tears, dreams, secrets, and resentment. Issues addressed in later chapters include anniversaries, sex, clothes and possessions, and closure.

While this book does normalize the grieving process to a large degree, it cautions the reader against assuming that there is only one appropriate way to feel and to act in response to loss. Grief is highly personal, shaped by many factors that are particular to the personal grieving. It is a healing process that enables each of us, in our own creative and adaptive ways, to find life in the midst of death.

**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.



[www.diakon.org/hospice](http://www.diakon.org/hospice)