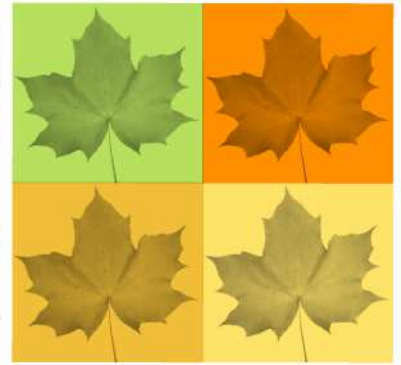


SEASONS

“Embracing the Seasons of Life.”



January/February 2010

When someone we love dies, we are often confronted with many confusing and difficult feelings. The “roller coaster” of emotions may include feelings of loss, disbelief, anger, fear, guilt, loneliness, and anxiety. There is often a sensation of shock or numbness as the combination of emotions is just too much to understand and assimilate. This numbness is a gift. A protective shell helping to keep the mind from becoming totally overwhelmed by painful and vulnerable emotions.

This early gift of numbness enables us to get through the initial days. With time, shock begins to subside and is generally followed by an intense need to cry. Whether you are male or female, young or old, crying is an important element in bringing healing. People who are grieving, as well as those around them, can find crying disturbing. Our culture has taught us to judge crying to be a sign of weakness. “Adults don’t cry in public!” “I wish I wasn’t so emotional!” “Big boys don’t cry!” and neither do men. “She’s holding up so well!” we proclaim. These are just a few of the ways our culture devalues the healing power of tears.

Tears, however, are the first form of language that we use in this world. The cries of an infant or child help parents and caregivers provide appropriate care. In our adult life, the amount of crying each person needs to do varies and is influenced by many factors. The circumstances of the death, the kind and intensity of the relationship that was shared, changing responsibilities and circumstances, as well as the individual’s coping skills and emotional make-up, are all factors which influence the need to cry. Tears help us express what we need to say when it is beyond the scope of ordinary language.

Holding back our tears takes a lot of energy. In grief, that energy is needed for so many other things. If you do not allow tears to flow when they need to, you will find that they will continue to gather and the pressure will increase until what would have been a small trickle or stream becomes a raging torrent. Damned up for too long tears can become impossible to control. If you feel like you can’t stop crying, quit trying to stop! Allow yourself to cry; don’t hold back! Accept the gift of tears as a part of the grief work that will bring healing.

You may feel most comfortable crying alone or with one other person. Plan a time to cry alone before going out to be with others. Again, if you release the built-up tension of suppressed tears before going out, you will be focused on conversations and activities and not on controlling and holding back your tears. If you cannot cry, but wish you could, set aside a specific time each day to be alone. During that time, review your memories, read old letters, look through pictures, handle special items, listen, to that “special” song or music, smell that familiar scent, or perhaps watch a sentimental movie which can help you tap into that deeply buried stream of life-giving tears.

In grief, remember: “Tears are not a luxury; they are a necessity!” (Anonymous)

Some myths and facts about grief:

Myth: it is important to “be strong” in the face of loss.

FACT: Feeling sad, frightened or lonely – or having other similar emotions- is a normal reaction to loss. Crying or breaking down doesn’t mean you are weak. You don’t need to “protect” your family or others by putting on a brave front. Showing your true feelings helps them and you.

Myth: the pain of loss will go away faster if you ignore it.

FACT: Trying to ignore your pain or keep it from surfacing will only make it worse in the long run. Facing your grief and dealing with it actively is necessary for true healing.

Myth: If you don’t cry, it means you aren’t sorry about the loss.

FACT: Crying is a normal response to sorrow, but it is not the only one. Those who don’t cry may feel the pain of loss just as deeply as others. They may simply have other ways of showing or coping with it. They need just as much support and comfort from others.

Myth: Grief should last about a year.

FACT: There is no “right” time frame for grieving. How long it takes to recover from loss can differ widely from person to person.

Myth: moving on with your life means you’re forgetting the one you lost.

FACT: Moving on means you’ve accepted your loved one’s death. That’s not the same as forgetting. You can adjust to a new life while always keeping your loved one’s memory a part of you.

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. 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

*Rev. Brian Kern
Bereavement Coordinator
Allentown/Wyomissing Area
(888) 754-4608*

*Rev. Tom Neuviller
Bereavement Coordinator
Hazleton/Honesdale Area
(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

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

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

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

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.

HAZLETON AREA

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

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: A "drop-in" group meets the first Monday of each month (unless otherwise arranged) at St. Gabriel's Roman Catholic Church, 122 S. Wyoming Street, Hazleton from 1:30 - 3 p.m. in the church basement. Enter by the side door.

Upcoming dates: January 4, February 1 and March 1, 2009

A Group for Men Only - Monday, January 25 from 6p.m. - 7:30 p.m. in the conference room of the Diakon Hospice Saint John office at 1201B North Church St., Suite 403, Hazleton.

Dallas: A six-week bereavement workshop will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Route 118 Dallas. Registration is required along with a commitment to be present for all six sessions. We will meet from 6:30 - 8 p.m. on Tuesdays January 12, 19, 26, February 2, 9, 16.

Wilkes-Barre: A six-week bereavement workshop will be held at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 1000 S. Main Street, Hanover Township. Registration is required along with a commitment to be present for all six sessions. We will meet from 6:30 - 8 p.m. on Thursdays January 28, February 4, 11, 18, 25, and March 4.

Carbon County Area: In conjunction with Blue Mountain Health Care, Lehighon, a conversation on grief and healing "A Road through Loss" will be held on Monday, February 8 from 10:30 a.m. - noon.

HONESDALE

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

Grief Support Group Meeting

For more information on Grief Support Groups in this area, please contact the office at (570) 251-8712 or (800) 622-3315.

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www.diakon.org/hospice

“Up,” now out on DVD, is a Disney/Pixar film that is laugh-out-loud funny and try-to-hide-your-sobs moving. This outlandish, wildly creative fantasy weaves together three story lines reflecting on loss and gain. The heart of the film is Carl Fredricksen (voiced by Ed Asner), a 78-year-old balloon salesman who keenly feels the absence of his beloved wife, Ellie. Grief, age, and unfulfilled dreams have made him more than a little grumpy, and the fact that urban developers are tearing down his neighborhood is not helping matters.

Russell (voiced by Jordan Nagai), is an 8-year-old “Junior Wilderness Explorer,” eager to earn his last Scouting-type badge by “assisting the elderly.” He knocks on Carl’s front door in hopes of helping him cross the street, but Carl is in no mood to be assisted and sends the boy away.

Charles Muntz (voiced by Christopher Plummer), Carl’s boyhood hero, completes the trio of story lines. Carl and Russell encounter Charles, a now disgraced explorer, when they land in Paradise Falls. Charles has been there following his mantra “Adventure is out there!” as he villainously sets about capturing a 13- foot- tall bird living in the jungles of the Paradise Falls region.

Director Pete Docter (*Monsters, Inc.*) and screenplay writer and co-director Bob Peterson (*Finding Nemo*) manage to mine great depths of emotion from the lives and needs of their heroes without falling into maudlin or saccharine territory. The pathos of the movie is rooted not only in the loss of a loved one, but also in the death of dreams. Carl and his wife deferred hopes. But his adventure with Russell and a gift Ellie left behind help him do much more than check items off his “bucket list.” Carl begins to realize that all the little interruptions that kept a husband and wife grounded at home were the stuff of dreams, because they added up to a life of love.

Most movies beat the “Go for your dream!” mantra to death, “Up” dares to suggest that the dreams we defer—and the reasons we defer them—might matter more in the end. Halfway through the movie, Russell speaks wistfully of the times he used to spend with his now-distant father. “The funny thing is, it’s the boring stuff I miss the most,” he confesses. This idea—that it’s the details we often overlook that actually count most of all—animates every frame of “Up.”

Remembering the mundane details of years spent in daily living can give restored meaning and renewed thankfulness on days when all just seems black and meaningless.

This story with it’s indelible characters, organic humor, original adventure and profound themes is a terrific opportunity to converse with family, remember the “boring stuff” and treasure daily living.