



Vol. 18, No. 6

November/December 2021

caring & sharing news  
Helping rebuild lives following the death of a child

# *That Their Light May Always Shine . . .*

*The Bereaved Parents of the USA  
Northern Virginia Chapter  
Invites you to the  
2021 Annual Service of Remembrance  
Sunday, December 12, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.*

*First United Presbyterian Church  
14391 Minnieville Rd  
Woodbridge, VA 22193*



*Program will consist of readings,  
music, slideshow of our children  
and lighting candles in their  
memory*



*For more information or to RSVP please contact Jodi at 703-656-6999  
or email: [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com)*

*The Annual Service of Remembrance provides an opportunity for parents, grandparents, siblings, relatives and friends to remember our precious children.*



*Please join us in celebration of our children's lives as we enter this Holiday Season with Love, Compassion and Hope for all.*



**Slide Presentation** ~ During the program, we will be presenting a slide presentation of our children. To have your child(ren) included, please provide a photo of your child, sibling or grandchild to Jodi Norman, 539 Harrison Circle, Locust Grove, VA 22508. Photos can be mailed or e-mailed to [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com). If you are sending an original photo to be scanned, it will be returned to you. Also, provide the child's name, date of birth and date of death. **Deadline to submit a photo is Wednesday, December 1, 2021.** Any questions, contact Jodi at 703-656-6999.

**Fellowship and Pot Luck Dinner to follow the service.** Please bring a main dish, salad, side dish or dessert to share. Beverages will be provided.

**Please bring a framed photo of your child** (no larger than 8x10) identified with your child's name and age. A table will be set up for you to display your child's picture.

**Poinsettias** will be used to decorate for our Service. If you would like to sponsor a poinsettia in memory of your child, we are asking for a \$15 donation. You may take the poinsettia home with you at the end of the evening. Please let Jodi know by Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> if you would like to sponsor a poinsettia.

**We encourage people to participate in the program.** If you would like to participate in the program by doing a reading, provide music, read the names or anything else you would like to do, please let Jodi know at [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com) by Wednesday, December 1, 2021.

**Doors will open at 5:00 p.m. with the service starting promptly at 6:00 p.m.**

Any questions, please contact Jodi Norman at 703-656-6999 or e-mail: [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com)

**RSVP by Wednesday, December 1st**

**There is a meeting for everyone! Join us at one of these meetings!**

## **Caring & Sharing Meetings In-Person Meetings are Back**

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month  
3:00 p.m.**

**First United Presbyterian Church  
14391 Minnieville Road  
Dale City, VA**

## **New Date for Zoom Meetings**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.**

I will send out an email with password and log in information prior to the meeting date.

## **Life After Loss Support Group for Suicide Survivors**

**"Shining A Light for Those in Darkness"  
Last Wednesday of Each Month  
7:00-8:00 p.m.**

## **Parents of Suicide Loss Support Group**

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Month  
1:00-2:30 p.m.**

**Meetings held at ACTS  
9317 Grant Ave, Manassas, VA**

For more information contact:  
Kimberly Fleming  
Office: 571-377-8134 or Cell: 703-349-9184  
email: [kimberly.fleming@djcfoundation.org](mailto:kimberly.fleming@djcfoundation.org)  
website: [www.djcfoundation.org](http://www.djcfoundation.org)



## **AMORe**

**(All Murdered Offspring Remembered)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday @ 6 p.m.  
3182 Golansky Blvd, Suite 101  
Woodbridge, VA**

**A support group meeting for parents  
whose children have been murdered.**

**For more info contact:  
Beverly Ruane  
540-628-4758 (h) or 703-395-9546 (c)  
[ruane.beverly@yahoo.com](mailto:ruane.beverly@yahoo.com)**

## **Sibling Support Group**

Our National BPUSA Sibling Coordinator,  
Katie Alger, will be facilitating a  
Zoom Support Meeting for  
any bereaved sibling over the age of 18.

**Zoom Meetings will be held on the  
last Thursday of each month**

If you or your surviving children are interested in  
participating in the Sibling Support Group, please  
email Katie at [bpyvirtualsiblingchapter@gmail.com](mailto:bpyvirtualsiblingchapter@gmail.com)  
for the zoom link.

## **Support Group for Parents with No Surviving Children**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month at 2:00 p.m.  
North County Government Bldg.  
Reston Police Station  
12000 Bowman Towne Drive  
Reston, VA**

**For more info contact: Nancy Vollmer  
703-217-8560 (c) or 703-390-0589 (h)**

# Surviving The Holidays After The Death Of A Child

By Alice Wisler

That holiday-pang hit my stomach the first October after Daniel died. Greeting me at an arts and craft shop were gold and silver stockings, a Christmas tree draped with turquoise balls and a wreath of pinecones and red berries. What was this? And was "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" playing as well? It was only October.

I had anticipated that Christmas and the holidays would be tough. In fact, I'd wake on those cold mornings after Daniel died in February and be grateful that it was still months until his August birthday and even more months until Christmas. I dreaded living both without him. I would have preferred to have been steeped in cow manure. At least then I could take a hot bath with sweet smelling bubbles and be rid of the stench. But bereavement isn't that way. As those who had gone on before let me know, you have to live through it.

Christmas came. I did live through it. It continues to happen as do the other significant days of the calendar year. Daniel never arrives at any of them although his memory lives on. By incorporating him into these days of festivity, I can cope.

Some of you have your child's birthday and/or anniversary day within the November through January season. These days, in addition to the holidays everyone else is celebrating, make the season even more complicated and painful, I'm sure.

I offer eleven tips I've used to survive the holidays. Some are my own suggestions and some are borrowed from the many who walk the path of grief.

1. Know you will survive. Others have done it and you will, too. Keep in mind that your first Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day will not be easy.

2. Find at least one person you can talk to or meet with during the holiday season. Perhaps this person has gone through a few Thanksgivings and Christmases before and can give you some helpful ideas that have worked for her.

3. Things will be different this holiday season and perhaps for all the rest to come. Don't think you have to do the "traditional" activities of years past when your child was alive. Your energy level is low. If no one in your household minds, skip putting up the tree. Forget spending hours making your holiday cookies.

4. Spend the holidays with those who will let you talk about your child. You will need to have the freedom to say your child's name and recall memories, if you choose to do so. Your stories about your child are wonderful legacies. Tell them boldly again and again.

5. If going into the mall or stores brings too much pain, shop for gifts online or through mail-order catalogs. Thinking everyone is happily shopping at the malls with intact lives while your heart is crushed is terribly tough. Go easy on yourself.

6. Getting away from the house is an idea that worked for my family. The first Christmas without Daniel we went to a nearby town and lived in the Embassy Suites. The kids enjoyed the indoor pool and breakfast buffets. Christmases that followed were spent at a rented cottage on the shore and the Christmas we rented the beach house, we were able to invite extended family to join us. We all shared in the cooking.



7. Create something to give to those who have helped you throughout the year. I made some very simple tree ornaments with "In Memory of Daniel" stamped on them and gave them to friends that first Christmas.

8. Decorate the grave. Put up a plastic Christmas tree with lights. Sometimes being busy with decorating the grave gives a feeling of doing something for a child we can no longer hold.

9. Do something in memory of your child. Donate to a charity or fund in his memory. Volunteer. My oldest daughter Rachel and I volunteer at the Hospice Tree of Remembrance each December and share memories of Daniel as we spend this time together.

10. If your bereavement support group has a special candle-lighting service to remember the children in your area who have died, attend it. Doing something in memory of your child with others who understand the pain these holidays hold can be therapeutic.

11. Spend time reflecting on what the season is about. Everyone around you may be frantic with attending parties, services, shopping and visiting relatives. Perhaps you used to be the same way. Now you may want to avoid some of the festivities. Give yourself permission to excuse yourself from them. Light a candle in your favorite scent. Record some thoughts in a journal. This is great therapy, too.

One day you will wake up and it will be January 2. The holidays will have ended. You will have made it. If you are like me, you will find that surviving the tinsel has made you stronger and although you may cry, somewhere within you, you will feel that core of new steel.

# Getting Through the Holidays After Losing a Child

By Bianca Dottin

Let me start by saying that this post, by no means, is a tutorial of any sort. There's no how-to guide on getting through the holidays after losing a child. Every single person will find their own way to navigate through these tough times. It's not easy, and if you're reading this because you've lost a child, I'm sorry. No parent should ever have to experience what the holidays feel like without their child by their side.

It sucks.

There's simply no other way to put it. I'm definitely not an expert on this topic, but I wanted to share how my family and I got through our first holiday season without my son, Tristan, and how we continue to go on. The holidays can be the most joyous time of the year, the time of the year where your family makes new memories for years to come. But I won't lie to you, holidays after losing a child will never be the same, but here's how we try to get through them.

## Incorporate them into family traditions

During our Christmas photoshoot, he made an appearance. It was only for a second, but you can see a beautiful rainbow in the background of our pictures. That's Tristan. As soon as we arrived for our pictures, I felt a few drops on my shoulder. No one else felt them which I thought was weird. When it was time to get a family shot, this bright rainbow appeared in the background. Now, a rainbow probably won't appear in your pictures, but you can find ways to incorporate your child into your family traditions.

We'll still put Tristan's stocking up this year and every year after that. He'll still have a new ornament waiting for him in his stocking that will go on our tree. His elf will still appear around the house right next to his sister's. It's the little things that help make this easier for us.



## Allow yourself to continue to grieve

Grief is a lifelong process. It's OK to be sad during the holidays. There will be triggers everywhere. Remember to take time out for yourself during the madness to just breathe. If all you do is remember to breathe during the holidays, no one will judge you. Some days we allow ourselves to lay in bed and do nothing but look at pictures of Tristan and tell stories to each other about our favorite memories with him. Allow yourself to grieve and be sad when that wave of sadness hits but remember the happy times too.

## Honor their memory

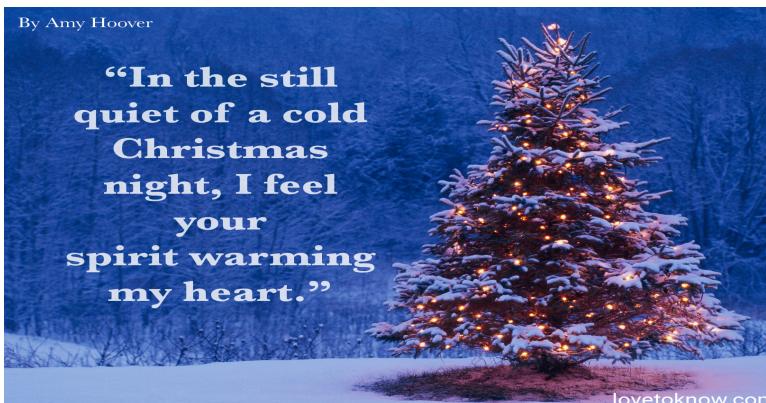
When Tristan died, we decided that we would honor his memory every chance that we got. One of the new traditions that we'll be starting this year in honor of Tristan is creating a gift basket for a NICU family. We know all too well what it's like to spend the holidays, especially Christmas, in the NICU, so we want to create a basket for a family that's going to be going home just in time for Christmas. We'll fill it with special things to help make their transition to home easier so that they can focus on making memories at home with their baby instead.

This will be something special for us and will be a great way to continue to honor Tristan's memory every year.

## Don't allow others to dictate how you feel

This one is a biggie for us. Our family is a weird mix. Some of them like to tell us that we shouldn't cry or be sad. Others like to overly compensate for Tristan's loss and make their grief seem greater than ours.

The most important thing that I've learned about losing a child is that you should never allow others to dictate how you feel. Ignore the ignorance and stupidity of others who have never been in your shoes, and allow yourself to feel everything you need to. Your feelings are yours and yours alone, and they're valid.



### The Many Faces of Grief

Robert still cannot sleep too well, he's awake from 2am.  
Janet is the opposite, and doesn't rise till ten.  
Sarah made a special card, for each and everyone.  
She did this sitting on the beach, while soaking up the sun.

Samuel went out to the shed, in the middle of the night.  
He grabbed the axe and chopped the wood, until it was first light.  
George took out his little boat, and sailed across the bay.  
We may be family, we may be friends, but we each grieve in our own way.

Peter flew off the handle, anything set him off.  
Pat put a message in a balloon and gently set it aloft.  
Tui simply went to bed and hid under the sheets.  
She couldn't bear to leave the house, it's now been several weeks.

Jane cleaned the entire house, from room to room she went.  
Till the house was cleaner than it had ever been and all her tears were spent.

Leo couldn't wash at all, he didn't shower for days.  
We may be friends or family but we grieve in different ways.

Mark just HAD to go to work to "take his mind off things",  
Melissa walked to the park at dusk and sat quietly on the swings.

Bethany went down to the gym, she didn't do this for fun,  
And if that didn't help ease her pain, she'd head out for a run.

Patricia looks like nothing's wrong, that not a tear was shed,  
Plenty have been but no one knows, she only cries in bed.  
So please be kind and gentle when loved ones pass away,  
For each of us will be grieving in our own and special way.

A van der Velden

There is no time limit on grief

@\_friendsoserenity

Wishing I had one more chance to say  
"I Love You"

## Save The Dates

Alan Pedersen and  
Angels Across the USA  
Tour  
Presents:

Heartaches, Highways &  
Hope Concert

Sunday, March 27, 2022



Laura Diehl  
Sunday, April 10, 2022



# We Remember Our Children

## *Who have Birthdays and Death Dates in November and December*

Charles (CJ) Angelos, Jr.	5/28/85 ~ <b>11/18/06</b>	Glen Irvin Leonard II	4/13/71 ~ <b>12/07/09</b>
Mielen Garlit Arquines	<b>12/01/68</b> ~ 6/04/08	David Lesser	<b>11/20/56</b> ~ 11/07/18
Scott R. Barley	<b>12/07/81</b> ~ 9/29/11	Jacob Glenn Lewis	8/06/92 ~ 11/12/13
Stephanie Sue Webber Bartley	9/29/87 ~ <b>12/20/16</b>	Marc Lopretto	<b>11/11/76</b> ~ <b>11/26/20</b>
Jennifer Lynn Becker	<b>12/30/67</b> ~ 7/26/70	Sara Kelsey Lott	<b>11/01/95</b> ~ 7/23/08
Ashley Nicole Blue	<b>11/23/05</b> ~10/11/19	Brian Alan Mature	<b>11/23/83</b> ~ <b>11/23/12</b>
Clayton Kendall Breeding	10/23/77 ~ <b>12/12/01</b>	Darren McKeever	<b>12/07/80</b> ~ <b>11/19/98</b>
Brian Brumbaugh	<b>11/09/83</b> ~ 5/02/07	Michael Sean O'Berry	9/13/94 ~ <b>12/15/97</b>
Erika Danyelle (Brummett) Lott	4/06/77 ~ <b>11/05/13</b>	Brian Scott Ogden	7/04/87 ~ <b>12/24/17</b>
Amy R. Buckley	3/13/86 ~ <b>11/17/16</b>	Angela Oliver	<b>11/07/67</b> ~ 1/06/11
Claire Rebecca Buckley	7/27/11 ~ <b>11/17/16</b>	Christina Lianne Panzo-Bowers	1/08/94 ~ <b>11/01/14</b>
Abigail Jane Buckley	4/25/15 ~ <b>11/17/16</b>	Michael Joseph Pennefather	<b>12/09/95</b> ~ 2/04/08
David John Butts	10/18/80 ~ <b>12/16/05</b>	Catzby James Pitzvada	8/07/88 ~ <b>12/17/19</b>
Autumn Marie Coffie	4/16/88 ~ <b>12/29/14</b>	Carie Ann Polizzi	<b>11/23/78</b> ~ <b>11/11/18</b>
David Justin Combs	<b>11/22/79</b> ~ <b>11/23/01</b>	Kylene Marie Privett	<b>12/14/83</b> ~ 8/13/07
Ryan Michael Conde	<b>12/02/04</b> ~02/02/17	Ronald Douglas Ralph, Jr.	7/27/66 ~ <b>11/04/02</b>
Michael Costanzo	7/07/98 ~ <b>12/22/20</b>	Stephen P. Ramos	4/24/87 ~ <b>11/11/19</b>
Christina Lynn Curtis	3/01/74 ~ <b>12/25/07</b>	Marcus Daniel Robinson	<b>12/29/07</b> ~ 10/04/17
Barbara Dawn (Dotson) Cleary	<b>12/3/66</b> ~ 1/21/18	Courtney Sharee Shelby	<b>11/23/93</b> ~ 5/14/01
K.J. Edwards	<b>12/03/85</b> ~10/31/03	Jacqueline Simoes	<b>11/05/66</b> ~ 3/15/06
Brian Patrick Elero	<b>12/30/80</b> ~10/29/01	Ben Smith	<b>12/22/70</b> ~ 1/26/03
Rhonda Lynn Flannery	7/31/63 ~ <b>11/10/01</b>	Karl Dewan Smith	<b>11/20/83</b> ~ 4/25/04
Dillon Adam Foley	<b>11/16/98</b> ~04/02/20	Ananth Vignesh Sridhar	<b>11/12/94</b> ~ 3/20/18
Ahmad Givon Glenn	3/06/83 ~ <b>12/04/06</b>	Jerry Damon Taybron	<b>11/21/75</b> ~ 8/18/07
Christian Green	<b>11/12/91</b> ~ <b>11/01/08</b>	Shawn Terrill	2/23/82 ~ <b>12/03/06</b>
Adon Gerald Grey	<b>11/05/81</b> ~ 1/20/18	Brian Trotter	<b>11/24/94</b> ~ 10/17/20
Clay Matthew Haga	<b>12/09/88</b> ~ 8/26/19	Christopher Andre' Waters Jr	5/31/97 ~ <b>12/23/07</b>
Kimberley Hellandbrand	<b>11/03/69</b> ~ 4/27/19	Melinda "Mindy" Lee Weakley	<b>12/20/83</b> ~ 9/02/09
William Clayton Holt	9/10/84 ~ <b>12/23/17</b>	Keith Alan West	9/22/66 ~ <b>11/25/10</b>
Philip Reid Hottle	2/16/85 ~ <b>12/03/08</b>	Jessica Dove Williams	9/18/89 ~ <b>12/05/19</b>
Olivia Jean Howard	<b>12/31/91</b> ~ 9/03/09	Brenden Michael Wilson	1/10/98 ~ <b>11/10/14</b>
Adrienne Leigh Ingram	6/25/79 ~ <b>12/02/07</b>	Kevin Woods	<b>12/08/93</b> ~ 8/06/14
Leslie Ann Kramer	4/20/71 ~ <b>12/17/06</b>	Stephen Wesley Wright	6/06/89 ~ <b>11/21/13</b>

We apologize if there are any mistakes in the "We Remember Our Children" section. If we spelled any names incorrectly, have any dates wrong, or your child's name is not listed but have a birthdate or death date during the months of November and December, please provide us with your child's information so they can be included correctly in future newsletters. Email [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com) with any corrections or additions.

## Bereaved Parents of the USA Welcome

We are the parents whose children have died. We are the siblings whose brothers and sisters no longer walk with us through life. We are the grandparents who have buried grandchildren.

We come together as Bereaved Parents of the USA to provide a safe space where grieving families can connect, share our stories, and learn to rebuild our lives. We attend meetings whenever we can and for as long as we find helpful. We share our fears, confusion, anger, guilt, frustrations, emptiness, and feelings of hopelessness, knowing these emotions will be met with compassion and understanding. As we support, comfort and encourage one another, we offer hope and healing. As we confront the deaths of our loved ones, our shared grief brings us to a common ground that transcends differences, building mutual understanding across the boundaries of culture, race, faith, values, abilities, and lifestyle.

Together we celebrate the lives of our children, siblings, and grandchildren, sharing the joys and the heartbreaks as well as the love that will never fade. Together, strengthened by the bonds we create, we offer what we have learned from one another to every bereaved family, no matter how recent or long ago the death.

We are the Bereaved Parents of the USA. We welcome you.

## Chapter Contact Information

Jodi Norman, Leader  
P.O. Box 7675  
Woodbridge, VA 22195  
Phone: 703-656-6999  
[bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com)



Bereaved Parents of the USA  
[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)

### Someone Cares About You

If you are receiving this newsletter and have never attended one of our meetings, it is because someone who cares about you feels that our newsletter may help you on your journey through grief. We're sorry for the reason you are receiving this newsletter but invite you to attend our monthly meetings. We cannot take away your pain but we can offer friendship and support.



Attention: If you do not wish to continue to receive this newsletter or be on our mailing list, please let us know by mailing back the address label from this newsletter, by emailing [bpusanova@gmail.com](mailto:bpusanova@gmail.com) or calling Jodi at 703-656-6999.

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