

St. John's Grief Support Ministries

"Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal." Thomas Moore

St. John's supports people experiencing grief in a variety of ways including regular contact, grief support literature, special informational events, pastoral counseling, and a reference library.

Support Programs

Pastoral Counseling

Clergy of St John's are available to support you in your grief through discussion and prayer as well as directing you to other appropriate resources. Please contact the Church office at 813-259-1570 to schedule an appointment.

Walking the Mourner's Path

This is a proven eight-session program for those who have experienced a loss of at least six months. It has been described as "A place to come in our pain instead of withdrawing, to be comforted; a place to come together and to join hearts and hands so that we can do together what we cannot do alone."

Faithful Friends

This is a small group ministry of St. John's Episcopal Church that reaches out to those experiencing grief from the loss of a loved one. Bereaved persons are appropriately contacted at key intervals with cards, letters, calls, and remembrances.

Events

Service of Remembrance

This is a special service held most years in the springtime to remember loved ones who have died during the preceding year.

Gatherings

From time to time, we offer programs that may be relevant to your time of grieving, such as book studies and public conversations.

Additional Resources

A Widows Connection

Finding little or no resources for her new position in life, Miriam Neff founded the Widow Connection. The web site addresses the various situations a widow may encounter and offers current and relevant assistance. www.widowconnection.com.

LifePath Hospice Bereavement and Support Groups

Individual grief counseling and support groups for all ages; provides a safe place to express

feelings, share experiences, learn about grief and move ahead. For more information visit the calendar at www.chaptershealth.org or call 813-877-2200.

Reference Library

These books address various grief experiences and have been found to be helpful by those who have gone before us. Some of these books may be available for loan from the Church.

For those who have lost a Spouse:

A Severe Mercy by Sheldon Vanauken. A beautiful meditation on the power of love, the existence of God, and how to have hope in the midst of tragedy. Sheldon and Dean Vanauken became friends with C. S. Lewis while studying at Oxford. The illness and untimely death of Davy and the terminal illness of Lewis's wife brought the two men closer as they struggled to reconcile their faith with the loss of the loves of their lives.

Suddenly Alone, A Woman's Guide to Widowhood by Philomene Gates. For both the newly bereaved and the veteran widow, Suddenly Alone offers shared experiences and down-to-earth advice on how to cope with a new life-style and handle practical problems that accompany widowhood.

Not Alone by Miriam Neff . Eleven inspiring stories of courageous widows can close in all around. Not alone, helps the reader successfully navigate this difficult and complicated new world.

A Grief Observed by C. S. Lewis. Lewis, a confirmed bachelor, married late in life. After four brief, intensely happy years, Lewis found himself alone again and inconsolable. He wrote this journal, an eloquent statement of rediscovered faith. In it he freely confesses his doubts, his rage, and his awareness of human frailty. In it he finds the way back to life.

For those who have lost a Parent:

The Death of a Parent : Reflections for Adults Mourning the Loss of a Father or Mother by Delle Chatman and Rev. William Kenneally. Eighteen stories touch on a wide range of emotions and situations related to grief, loss, and moving on with one's life in a healthy manner.

And When did You Last See Your Father? by Black Morrison. A Son's Memoir of Love and Loss, explores the deepest emotions of being a father and a son.

100 Days: Dying to Tell His Story by Nancy Herzog Walker. It took the death of her father, the Rev. Robert Herzog, and his dying days for author Nancy Walker to comprehend that this universal experience was more fertile than she could have imagined. That what was most painful would also produce a banquet that would feed her family during this sacred time and transform their lives forever.

When Your Father Dies by Dave Veerman and Bruce Barton. The death of a father can affect a man to his very core. “When Your Father Dies”, helps a man see God at work in this very difficult period of his life and how to grow in understanding; help deepen relationships with children. For women, you can gain a deeper appreciation for what the man in your life is experiencing and how to respond to his feelings.

For those who have lost a Child:

Surviving Sorrow by Kim Erickson. There is no loss like that of losing a child. Your heart may break over and over. And there is no roadmap to healing but there are steps that can be taken to ensure sorrow does not overwhelm, but is survived. How to remain united with your spouse and what it means to transition into a life without your child.

Braving Sorrow Together by Ashleigh Slater. “There is a groaning and an aching that comes not from labor pains but from losing a child, who I have not yet met”. Grief can turn into growth when we lean on Christ and others.

A Grief Unveiled – One Father’s Journey Through the Death of a Child by Gregory Floyd. Gregory reveals with candor, his journey through the sorrow of losing a young child – dealing not only with his own broken heart, but also with the struggle to reconstruct his role as husband, father and protector.

The Worst Loss – How Families Heal from the Death of A Child by Barbara D. Rosof and Henry Holt. For families embarked on the tortuous journey of healing after the death of a child, down-to-earth presentations and practical advice will serve as a powerful guide.

Holding on to Love After You’ve Lost A Baby by Gary Chapman and Candy McVicar. A “working publication” that provides for the family members to interact with the information and make a personal family journal of healing.

The Shack by Wm Paul Young. Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain? Mack is invited back to the place of the brutal murder of his youngest daughter where his encounter with the Holy Trinity leads to profound love and forgiveness.

For those who have lost a Family:

A Grace Disguised, How the Soul Grows Through Loss by Gerald L. Sittser. In an instant, a tragic accident claimed three generations of his family: his mother, his wife and his young daughter. While most of us will not experience such a catastrophic loss, all of us will taste it. We can, if we choose, know as well the grace that transforms it. The circumstances are not important; what we do with the circumstances is.

For those who have lost a Sibling:

Recovering From the Loss of a Sibling by Katherine Fair Donnelly. These intimate, true stories provide valuable insight, demonstrating that the reader is not alone and that others have gone through this devastating experience and have survived. Sisters and brothers share their innermost feelings, wanting others to gain comfort from their experiences.

Helping Children Grieve:

Water Bugs and Dragonflies –Explaining Death to Young Children by Doris Stickney. The author uses the transformation of a water bug to a dragonfly to share the concept of death. The small booklet has pictures to show as you read the story and other tools such as prayers that can be personalized, suggested responses to the questions the little ones ask.

Healing a Child's Grieving Heart by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. 100 practical ideas for families, friends and caregivers to help a grieving child. They will help you to know what to do when you don't know what to do.

The loss of a Pet:

Good-by My Friend , Grieving the Loss of a Pet by Mary and Herb Montgomery . Enhanced with beautiful sketches, this booklet addresses many questions such as: Stages of Grief, The Pain of Loss, Helping Children Deal with the Loss, Should I get Another Pet, etc.

Loss of a Pet Memory Book – Memory Book and 90 Day Journal to Help with the Loss of a Pet by Frances P. Robinson. Well constructed Journal with lots of guidance to create memories with pictures and drawings from the day the pet first came home and all the events since.