

# Comfort for the Grieving Heart

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Provided by St. Luke's Hospice Bereavement Program

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**St. Luke's Hospice**

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If you would like to be added to or removed from our mailing list, or if you would prefer to receive an electronic copy, please contact Dawn at (610) 997-7125.

## Anger as an Anchor

*Anger's best-kept secret is that it is designed to be a positive force that can lead you to inner exploration and healing. It has the power to help you understand, trust, and appreciate yourself more fully, while at the same time increasing your inner strength. What gives your anger this power is its unerring ability to guide you to the tender and painful feelings that we all carry deep inside, and to the unmet needs and mistaken beliefs that fuel that pain and keep it in place. Then, you can use the power of your anger to help you heal and strengthen those vulnerable places as you learn how to meet your core needs.*

— *The Gift of Anger, Marcia Cannon, PhD.*

Anger is oftentimes described as an explosive emotion, and one that implies negativity and correlation with words such as frustration and rage. Anger takes a toll on us physically and emotionally, and we are cautious and scared when it surfaces quickly and unexpected. And rightfully so, anger that is not addressed or allowed to come to the surface can be detrimental to our health and wellbeing.

But, anger is also a natural part of our grief journey and can serve as a starting point to help us delve deeper into our emotions and inner experiences. Anger is a common element of the healing process; if we can identify and start to feel anger, the more it will dissipate and the more we will heal. There are many other emotions under the anger and we get to them in time, but anger is the emotion we are most used to managing. If we are able to reframe anger as a strength, it permits us to experience a much-needed sense of control. Instead of feeling helpless, we feel as if we can exert some influence over our own lives. This is temporarily very satisfying because the death of a loved one robs us of personal power and we crave to regain control of something, anything. Grief can plunge us, without mercy, into the darkest of places, so if we can use anger as a ladder to climb out of that pit, we do it. So, start with your anger. If your grief feels like you are alone in a vast ocean of waves and emotions, let it be your anchor and your settling spot into your healing process. Give your anger the attention it needs right now, but allow it to move you to the deeper, sometimes hidden, sometimes scary, emotions that mourning will take you.

## We Heard You!

Thank you to all who completed and sent in our Bereavement Services Survey. We are here for *you*, and want to make sure our programming is meeting *your* needs. Stay tuned as we process your responses, and work to better meet your needs!

# Upcoming Events

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## Open /Drop-in Support Group



Perhaps you've thought about attending a group but weren't sure if it was for you. Maybe you've already participated in a group and are looking to reconnect to people who understand.

Please join us for an open, ongoing support group. We will meet on the **first Friday of each month** from **10-11am** at St. Luke's Hospice House (2455 Black River Road, Bethlehem.) Our next meeting will be on **November 6, 2015.**

No registration is required, but you can contact Mindy with any questions.

## Grief & the Holidays Workshop



Whether it is a birthday, anniversary or holiday, special days on our calendar keep memories alive that are near and dear to us. Yet, not everyone anticipates holidays and special occasions with joy and, particularly for those of us who have lost a loved one, the holidays can be a time of sadness, pain or anger. The waves of grief can overwhelm us and the stress of the holiday season can seem daunting. There is no right or wrong way to handle the holidays, but planning ahead and understanding your needs and limits on these special days can help.

Please join us for a 2 hour workshop on Thursday, November 19, 2015 from 6-8 pm to look at some strategies to help you cope during the holidays, and beyond. We will meet at the Priscilla Payne Hurd Education Center on the St. Luke's Bethlehem Campus (801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem) in room 105.

For more information and to register, contact Mindy at (610) 997-7139 or email [Mindy.Watson@sluhn.org](mailto:Mindy.Watson@sluhn.org).

## Luminaria Ceremony



St. Luke's Hospice invites you to join our 3rd annual Luminaria Ceremony on Saturday, **November 7th at 5pm.** Participants can create luminarias in honor and memory of loved ones; the luminaria will be placed along walkways near our offices at 1510 Valley Center Parkway in Bethlehem.

- 5:00pm Creation and Placement of Luminaria Bags
- Gathering for Refreshments
- 5:45pm Opening Remarks
- 6:00pm Luminaria Lighting

To register, call St. Luke's Info-link at (866) 785-8537. (See flier on page 5 for more information.)

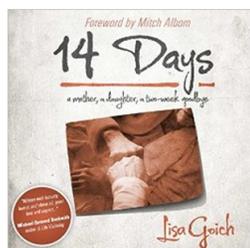
## Service of Remembrance



We gather periodically as family members of our patients and as a Hospice staff to remember those who have died. Our Services of Remembrance are inter-faith and are offered as a way in which we may take time to reflect, remember, and celebrate the lives and legacies of those who have passed from ours. The names of the deceased will be read at these services unless we are notified that you prefer otherwise. Please bring your family and friends and join us for this time of remembrance.

For patients served by our **Bethlehem office and Hospice House**, who died between **July 1, 2015 and October 31, 2015** the Service of Remembrance will be held on **Sunday, December 6 at 3 pm** at Wesley Church, 2540 Center Street, Bethlehem, PA 18017, 610-865-5715.

## Resources and Reflections



14 Days: a mother, a daughter, a two week goodbye

Lisa Goich

When Lisa traveled home to visit her parents in December 2011, she never expected an ordinary three-day weekend to turn into an extraordinary 14 day observance of her mother's life – and ultimately – death. *14 Days* is a story of parental loss, and how to lovingly, bravely and gracefully let go of a hand you've been holding your entire life. From a child's first breath to a mother's last, this memoir shows how closing that circle can be a celebration of this unbreakable bond. (amazon.com)

### For the young ones....



Balloon releases are a beautiful way to remember a loved one, and are a great activity to help young children who are grieving. Here are a few tips to get you started:

1. Purchase your balloons - latex balloons are biodegradable
2. Take notice of wind direction to avoid trees and power lines
3. Attach a handwritten note to the string that expresses the child's thoughts or feelings. Keep the note short and on a small piece of paper so the balloon is not too heavy that it will not reach the proper height to pop
4. Let your child release the balloon, while at the same time saying a prayer or verbal message out loud to their loved one. You can also talk about how releasing the balloon is a metaphor for releasing the child's grief
5. Take a photo for a memory book.

*Adapted from [www.balloonrelease.com](http://www.balloonrelease.com)*

### Online Resources:



### Final Gifts

Carol Mithers

Ebook published by Shebooks, visit <http://shebooks.net>.

Caring for aging parents may be today's defining midlife experience—and Carol Mithers went through it in multiples. Four aging relatives needed her at once, while she was working and raising her own family, sweeping her into a place she calls elderworld. The experience changed her forever. This memoir, funny, sad, brutally honest, and ultimately life-affirming, is a must for every member of the “sandwich generation.” Carol Mithers is coauthor, with the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee, of *Mighty Be Our Powers*. Her articles have appeared in a wide variety of newspapers and magazines. Mithers is also the author of *Therapy Gone Mad*.

### Featured Website: [www.whatsyourgrief.com](http://www.whatsyourgrief.com)

“To put it simply, this website is about grief. That probably sounds *oversimplified*, but grief is a complex, heavy, frustrating, scary, enormous...ahem, big topic. It starts with a death and envelopes everyone from family to friends, to friends of family and friends. Not only is grief an emotional, logistical, and existential nightmare, but it is taxing. It requires us to navigate a world without someone important, deal with complex feelings and emotions, and figure out ways to move forward when everything seems kind of bleak.” The co-authors of the site are mental health professionals with 10+ years of bereavement experience, but more importantly, they have both dealt with the loss of a loved one and have had to learn to live life after that loss. They are currently facilitating an online book club through a Facebook group and their website is full of information for anyone who has experienced a loss.

# Honoring the Journey

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## Additional Places to Find Support and Share Your Story

This is a listing of free bereavement resources in the area. If you have a need for something and don't see it on this list, please call Mindy at (610) 997-7139 for referrals to other services.

**Cancer Support Community of Lehigh Valley with St. Luke's** offers the Hope and Healing Series, a series of creative classes at St. Luke's Cancer Center-Anderson Campus. Programs are free, but registration is required. Call 610-861-7555 or email [info@cancersupportglv.org](mailto:info@cancersupportglv.org) to register or for more information about classes, dates and times.

**The Compassionate Friends** offers ongoing support groups for parents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the loss of a child, grandchild, or sibling.

**TCF of Lehigh Valley** meets at Sacred Heart Hospital, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 421 Chew Street in Allentown. The group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday each month at 7pm. For more information, call 484-597-0240.

**TCF of Quakertown** meets at St. Luke's Hospital, ground floor, 1021 Park Ave in Quakertown in Taylor Conference Rooms A&B. This group is held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday each month from 7:30 – 9pm. For more information, call 215-536-0173.

**TCF of Easton** meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday each month from 7-9pm at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2115 Washington Blvd. in Easton. For more information call 610-866-5468.

**TCF of Carbon County** meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm in the Palmerton Community Ambulance Association, 501 Delaware Ave in Palmerton. Please call 610-826-2938 for more information.

**Family Answers** holds a Survivors of Suicide support group at 402 North Fulton Street in Allentown, PA. This group is held the first and third Monday each month from 7-8pm. Call 610-435-9651 for more info.

**Free Spirits** is a group of more than 2 dozen older widows who go out to lunch once a month to keep active and offer support to each other--and to newer widows. Most are members of Church of the Manger UCC, Bethlehem. Call 610-866-8223 for more information.

**Gentle Yoga for Grief, Stress, and Life Transitions** offered by Wendy Littner Thomson, M.Ed., LPC, RYT. First session offered for free to caregivers whose loved one recently received hospice services from St Luke's Hospice. For location, times, or more information, please call 610-730-1992.

**Grand View Hospital Hospice** offers many groups and services that change seasonally. Please call 215-453-4210 for more information.

**GriefShare Groups** are a faith-based, evangelical approach to grief and loss. GriefShare groups are provided at several locations in the Lehigh Valley. To find a location near you, please visit [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org).

**Lehigh Valley Health Network** offers grief support services in the form of counseling, support groups, and workshops for adults and children, as well as a lunch club for women. For more information, please call 610-969-0330.

**Soaring Spirits Regional Group Lehigh Valley** is planning to hold monthly social gatherings for widowed individuals to provide opportunities to connect with others in a positive, caring, and supportive environment. For more information, please call Sonja Handwerk at 610-297-0057, email [soaringspiritslvpa@yahoo.com](mailto:soaringspiritslvpa@yahoo.com), or follow on Facebook at Soaring Spirits International Group Lehigh Valley.

**VNA/Hospice of Monroe County** offers a support group the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month at noon. Call 570-421-5390 for more information.

**Doylestown Hospital Hospice** offers a variety of support groups, including a widow/widower group, a young survivors group, and an adult loss group. Visit [www.dhospice.com](http://www.dhospice.com) or call 215-345-2838.