

Memories to Hold Pregnancy and Newborn Loss Services invite you and your family to join us for an

Interfaith Christmas Memorial Service

in memory and celebration of our children lost to miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn death

Tuesday, Dec. 11, 7PM

Portiuncula Chapel
 Franciscan Health Indianapolis

Chapel is located on the first floor of the Heart Center (Entrance 1)

Refreshments and fellowship time to follow in the Heart Center Community Room

Please call (317) 528-5199 for information.

WINTER 2018

Moving Forward in Hope, Healing and Love

MEMORIES TO HOLD

A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER

By Marcia Jenkins

As the holidays approach for those of us who have lost our children, one of many feelings we experience is the dread of them not being remembered. As a bereaved mother and a longtime labor nurse, I have witnessed many losses. The one I have chosen to share with you took place more than 25 years ago.

It was Christmas Eve and the Labor and Delivery staff was eager to head home to their families, gifts and gatherings. The unit seemed strangely quiet, as the staff talked about family traditions and the true meaning of Christmas. Then, the elevator doors opened. A mother stepped out of the elevator and was crying from pain. The staff jumped to their feet and went into emergency mode. They went straight to the surgery suite, and baby "Tyler" was delivered in minutes. He was so beautiful and perfect at nine pounds, two ounces, 22 inches long...and silent. Nothing would change what had taken place before his parents' arrival at the hospital. They did all they could do. His mother would live, but she was too ill to see and hold him. His father sat in the rocker in a dimly lit room and spoke softly to his son.

The staff was doing what they did so well, even while in shock from the role they played in this family's story. As things began to calm, Dad came to the desk with a request. He asked if his other children could come see their baby brother. They were so excited about his birth.

At 1:30 a.m. on Christmas morning, the sound of the familiar elevator broke the silence on the unit. Out came Tyler's dad, then his brother and two sisters, all under the age of 10. Each was carrying two Christmas presents.

Before they went in to see Tyler, Dad set the stage for what they would see and how they would each spend time with their brother. Dad asked each child if they wanted to hold their baby brother. Each one agreed and I recorded it on film. This would be the only way Mom could see her family ALL together.

After holding Tyler, each child placed a present in the warmer, then sat on the floor and opened a gift that Santa left for them earlier. We brought blankets and pillows and the whole family lay down to rest.

I'm not sure when I left, sometime near dawn that Christmas morning. I am grateful for my family, grateful for my coworkers, grateful to have witnessed the love of a family.

I tell you this story because I want you to know we will never forget your precious babies or your special stories. Your stories will be a part of us forever.



Indianapolis Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support Groups

Reservations are not required. There is no fee for support groups.

Franciscan Health
 8111 S. Emerson Ave.
 Indianapolis, IN 46237
 Conference Room 1, Entrance #6
 Second Tuesday of every month
 7 to 9 p.m.
 Contact Joni Cutshaw or Julie Jackson at
 (317) 528-5199 for details.

Eskenazi Health
 720 Eskenazi Ave.
 Indianapolis, IN 46202
 8th Floor Conference Room
 7 to 9 p.m.
 Second Wednesday of every month
 Contact Angie Bess-Martin at
 (317) 880-8898.
 Call for transportation concerns.

SUBSEQUENT PREGNANCY SUPPORT GROUP
Franciscan Health
 Center for Women & Children (Entrance 2)
 Conference Room, 1st Floor
 7 to 9 p.m.
 Every other Thursday
 Contact Julie Jackson at (317) 528-5199 for schedule and details.

Community Hospital North
 7250 Clearvista Drive
 Indianapolis, IN 46256
 Professional Building Conference Room A
 7 to 9 p.m.
 Third Thursday of every month
 Contact Jennifer Waitt
 at (317) 621-5275.

St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital
 Physicians Medical Plaza
 8550 Naab Road, Suite 201
 (Corner of Naab and 86th Street)
 7 to 9 p.m.
 First Thursday of every month
 Contact Amber Lafayette or Jenny Cable at
 (317) 415-7494 for more information.

Caring Companions Corner



Franciscan Health is blessed to have Caring Companions, a group of 12 remarkable women who have experienced the loss of a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death. They feel they have been called to give back to families and bring the same comfort they received. They have attended special training from Resolve Through Sharing (RTS) Bereavement Services to learn principles of support for grieving families. Each issue of the newsletter will feature insight from our Companions.

WHY I BECAME A COMPANION

By Becky Cassinelli

In 2004, we lost our infant son, Jackson. Jack was born with a rare form of dwarfism. Because of the bone dysplasia, his lungs could not sustain life. We held our precious son in our arms until his last breath. Eight hours later, we had to say goodbye. The day started out with excitement, laughter and love. Then it ended in tragedy, disbelief and tears. I never felt so alone and lost. I never knew this could happen.

After two years of grief counseling and having a healthy subsequent child, I wanted to do more with my life and honor my son's life. I was educated on the frequency of miscarriages, still births and new born losses. It was surreal to me because no one

talked about it or how often it happens. I found out I was not alone. There were many families who have experienced infant losses. Who were the people to help these families? I wanted to be one of them! No one knows more about grief and loss than a mother who buried her child.

You always ask, "Why did this happen to me?" I believe that my son, Jack, answered that question for me. It is to help others, give back to my community, to take my sadness and turn it into something useful, honoring his life.



Hello, I am Julie Jackson and I facilitate the Memories to Hold Support Group. I am a licensed clinical social worker who began my career with counseling children more than 20 years ago. In 2004, we had a stillbirth with our second daughter. After this loss, I decided I wanted to help other families and parents who have suffered the loss of a child. Since then, I have been facilitating the bereavement support group and the subsequent pregnancy group at Franciscan Health. I have walked this path, and I hope that Memories to Hold will offer you support during your time of grief while walking the journey beside you. My hope is you will know you are not alone and we are here to help you in your time of need.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Empty Cradle, Broken Heart: Surviving the Death of Your Baby

By Deborah Davis

Miscarriage: Women Sharing From the Heart

By Marie Allen and Shelly Marks

Heaven is for Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back

By Todd Burpo and Lynn Vincent

FOR CHILDREN

We Were Gonna Have a Baby, But We Had an Angel Instead

By Pat Schwiebert

HOW WILL I MAKE IT THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS?

From Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, the upcoming holiday season is supposed to be a "happy" time. Happy may not be what you feel, however, when your heart is broken. If you are grieving this season, celebrate the holidays in ways that work for you and your family. Take care of yourself and consider the suggestions below. May the season bring you peace.

- Minimize family traditions unless they are a comfort to you, such as baking and sending cards.
- Share your feelings with family and friends.
- Be open with your children. They can bring great comfort, and you will teach them how to grieve.
- Give yourself time to cry if you feel like crying.
- Decide what is really important to you. Don't aim for perfection in your observances.
- Be aware there can be many triggers for crying, and they can hit at any time.
- Give your spouse or significant other a code word and have a planned excuse to leave an event if it is too hard to stay.
- Try to minimize your alcohol and sugar intake.
- Don't feel guilty if you enjoy yourself.
- Try yoga, meditation or aromatherapy to reduce stress.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DEC. 11, 2018

Interfaith Christmas Memorial Service
Franciscan Health Indianapolis, Portiuncula Chapel, 7PM

MAY 30, 2019

Miscarriage Memorial and Burial of Ashes Ascension Thursday
Calvary Cemetery, Infant Section, 2PM

JUNE 9, 2019

Parent's Remembrance Day/Blessing of the Angel Garden
Franciscan Health, Garden of Angels Center for Women, 2PM, place Memory Bricks

OCT. 12, 2019

Walk to Remember
Central Elementary School/Sarah T. Bolton Park Beech Grove, 11AM

NOV. 1, 2019

Miscarriage Memorial and Burial of Ashes
All Saints Day, Calvary Cemetery, Infant Section, 2PM

Remember your baby in a special way:

- Shower a needy child, that would be about the same age as your baby, with gifts.
- Make a donation to a charity in your baby's name.
- Place a special ornament on your Christmas tree.
- Buy a living tree, decorate it and then plant it in the yard as a remembrance.
- Decorate your baby's gravesite.
- Hang a stocking and place special notes to the baby in the stocking.
- Light a candle and spend some time remembering your baby.
- Place luminaries along the driveway.

