

**November/December, 2020**

Dear Friends,

Can you feel the changes in the air? Fall is here and Thanksgiving and Christmas will soon arrive. The calendar keeps moving, telling you how much time has passed since your loved one's death, yet you may find yourself wondering if you're making any progress in your grief. Have you thought "I should be \_\_\_\_\_ by now"?

Expectations we set for ourselves about our ability to cope with grief are often set pretty high. Add the demands of celebrating holidays or other special occasions, and our life starts to feel like a pressure cooker, especially during these covid times! Caution! We may explode under pressure.

Thankfully, there are things we can do to ease the anxiety about celebrating the holidays. The educational article in this newsletter provides good ideas for making a challenging time a little easier on everyone. Share your concerns and expectations with loved ones. If you try something new this year and you don't like it, you'll know what you want or don't want to do in the future.

Thanksgiving and Christmas will arrive whether you want them to or not. Planning for this time can help you cope with the changes and emotions that will come to you this holiday season.

No matter where you live, we can always talk with you over the phone if you have questions or concerns regarding your grief experience.



Thinking of you,

Joyce & Autumn  
Bereavement Coordinators

*Life is amazing. And then it's awful.  
And then it's amazing again. And in  
between the amazing and the awful  
it's ordinary and mundane and routine.  
Breathe in the amazing, hold on  
through the awful, and relax and  
exhale during the ordinary. That's just  
living heartbreaking, soul-healing,  
amazing, awful, ordinary life. And it's  
breathhtakingly beautiful.*

Author unknown



## *4 Strategies to Help You Cope with Grief During the Holiday Season*

1. Talk to your family about your anxieties and their expectations
  - accept there will be mixed emotions
  - honor differences
  - give them permission to help
  - ask for understanding and support
2. Redefine your definition of "holiday"
  - redefine what is most important (is it gifts, food, visiting, church services)
  - determine how to make it easier
3. Plan to use your "rights" as a bereaved person
  - don't allow other to persuade you to do something that makes you uncomfortable
  - you have the right to mention your loved one's name
  - pick a time to purposefully talk about your loved one
  - rehearse responses to inevitable questions (How are you?)
4. Create a ritual of peace
  - look through pictures of past holidays when your loved one was alive
  - remember change is a natural part of living
  - take steps to cope and believe next year will be better
  - spend a few moments in silence to reflect on your loved one and give the rest of the day to others
  - modify an old tradition or make a new one

## *Holiday Sentence Completion*

Something I enjoyed doing with my loved one during the holidays was .....

One of the happiest memories is .....

One of my fears about the upcoming holidays is .....

One way I could memorialize my loved one this holiday is to .....

Something I would like to do for myself this holiday is .....



# Light up a life

Remember and honor your loved ones with a dedication at the MercyOne North Iowa Hospice

## Tree of Life lighting program

*COVID-19 will make this year's event look and feel a little different than in year's past – but no worries, we'll still have the same beautiful memorial service, virtually!*

**Tuesday, December 22, 6 p.m.**

**Virtual location: wherever you are!**

The event link will be available on our Facebook page –

@MercyOneNorthIowaHospice,

Tree of Life Facebook event or at

[MercyOne.org/northiowa/tree-of-life](https://www.mercyone.org/northiowa/tree-of-life)

To participate virtually, click the event link on the event date and time and enjoy the program from the comfort of your home!

Note: event link will be available Wednesday, December 16.



Donate at: [MercyOne.org/northiowa/tree-of-life](https://www.mercyone.org/northiowa/tree-of-life)

### This gift is from:

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of:

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print the name as you'd like it to appear

Gift amount:

\$25  \$50

\$75  \$100

Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Optional: I would like North Iowa Hospice to notify the family of my gift. Please send notice to:

Their Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Specify the tree lighting program(s) where you'd like the name to appear:

Mason City  Charles City  Clear Lake

Forest City  Garner  Iowa Falls

Hampton  Lake Mills  Osage

Send contribution to: North Iowa Hospice | 232 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE

Mason City, IA 50401-3906 or [MercyOne.org/northiowa/tree-of-life](https://www.mercyone.org/northiowa/tree-of-life)

Source: OL