



"THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS HAS NOT OVERCOME IT." JN 1:5

# With Hope

## The Newsletter of Share the Hope Minstries

# Fall 2017

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## Hope for the Holidays

by Rev. Robyn Plocher, Director

The holiday season can be especially difficult when a loved one has died. As others are hitting the stores and shopping for presents for their loved ones, shopping may remind the bereaved that their loved one is no longer here to receive their gifts of love. As others make plans to travel or host family get-togethers, the bereaved is reminded that her family is forever changed and the holidays will never be the same. Memories of holidays past, good memories and even bad memories, rumble through our brains and leave our emotions raw.

Those who have walked this path before you have shared with me some suggestions of how to cope and find new meaning at the holidays after loss. Here are some of their ideas:

- Know that anticipation is sometimes worse than the reality we dread, but be realistic. There will be pain. Let the tears come. Don't block them. Keep the tissue close. Feel the hurt. Then let it go.
- Plan ahead. Bereavement is a time when we don't think as clearly as

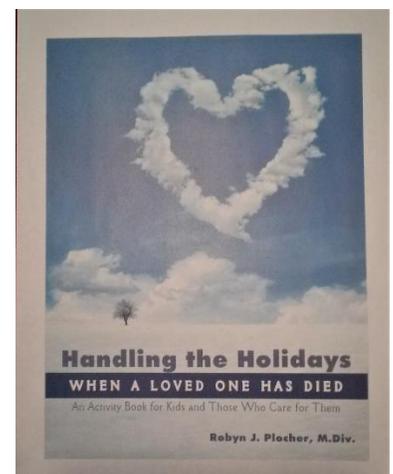
we want to. Our memory and concentration may be impacted. It helps to plan ahead. Prioritize your activities. Make lists.

- Modify your expectations. You won't have the energy to do everything you have done in the past. Be honest about what you can and cannot do.
- Don't expect others to read your mind. Communicate, discuss and make decisions together whenever possible. It is okay to say "No."
- Don't be afraid to change traditional routines. Some find comfort in their traditions. Others are overwhelmed by the demands of holiday activities. Ask: Will it be "the holidays" without this activity? Could it be done differently?
- Make "Thanksgiving" a lifestyle, not a day. Research supports a connection between gratitude and one's cardiovascular and immune system health. Watch for things that touch, inspire or surprise you. Keep a gratitude journal where you record these things daily.

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Early look at events for 2018! P2



*Handling the Holidays When a  
Loved One Has Died* P3

# Look What's Coming in 2018!

Share the Hope Ministries is offering a number of retreats/events in 2018. Here is a partial list:



February 24, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
**I Have This Hope: Sharing our Stories - Naming our Hope.** A Women's Retreat. Riverview Conference Center, Cedar Falls, IA

March 15, 9:30 a.m.  
**Preventing Compassion Fatigue for Ministry Professionals,** Immanuel United Methodist Church, Des Moines, IA

May 5, 9 a.m. - **Keeping Hope Real: You and Your Special Needs Child.** Pictured Rocks Camp and Retreat Center, Monticello, IA

June 1-2 **Grief and Faith in the Family.** Camp Comeca and Retreat Center, Cozad, NE

CHECK THE WEBSITE [www.sharethehope.net](http://www.sharethehope.net) FOR FREQUENT UPDATES!!



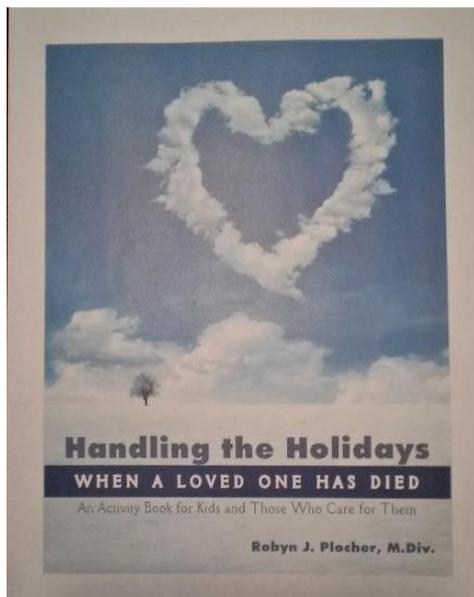
## Hope for the Holidays (continued from p.1)



- Hold on to your billfold and credit cards. You can't spend grief away, though it might be tempting to try. If shopping is stressing you, consider the less stressful options of online purchases, now available for groceries as well as gifts.
- Help others. Reaching out to others in need is a good way to gain a little perspective on our own situation and distract ourselves from the feelings that overwhelm us.
- Honor your loved one's memory. You may want to make a charitable donation to a meaningful cause to honor your loved one. You may also participate in a special service organized by your funeral home or hospice organization designed to honor your loved one and others.
- Remember the spiritual meaning of Christmas. As the birthday of Christ, Christians celebrate His coming as the greatest hope to a world in darkness. Emmanuel is His name, meaning "God With Us." At Christmas, may you be reminded as never before that you are not alone. God is with you, as are my prayers.

## ACTIVITY BOOK FOR GRIEVING KIDS!

Order yours today! Just \$5 +S/H



When someone we love has died, the holidays can be overwhelming for adults. Adults may choose to seek comfort in rituals and traditions of the past. Or they may choose to simplify their holiday in some way. ***This book was created to help the children in your family connect with positive memories of past holiday celebrations, including memories of the loved one who has died.***

Children will be encouraged to express any ambiguous feelings they may have, or may be picking up from adults around them, about this particular holiday season. This activity book provides the opportunity for them to express their needs and desires about this year's holiday observance.

The book is also designed to act as a tool to encourage communication between parents/caregivers and the children they care for. Adults are encouraged to share the experience of completing the activity book with their child, or have the child share their activity book when they have completed it. The book is general enough to be used for Easter, Passover, Kwanza...just about any holiday.

As you set your intentions for self-care this holiday season, please do take a few moments to also be sensitive to the needs of the children in your family.

Order **Handling the Holidays When a Loved One Has Died** at <https://sharethehope.net/order-form/>

### ***For Loneliness in Bereavement***

*Father, I am only human. I need the touch of human companionship.*

*Sorely I miss those I love who are with Thee.*

*I pray, O Jesus, that Thou wilt reveal to me unseen presences. Help me to know how close my loved ones are.*

*For if they are with you, and you are with me, I know that they cannot be far away.*

*Make real for me that contact of spirit with spirit that will re-establish the lost fellowship for which my heart yearns.*

*Give to me faith shining through my tears.*

*Plant peace and hope within my heart.*

*Point me with joy to the great reunion.*

*But until then, enable me to live happily and worthily of those who are with Thee.*

*In the name of Him who is the Lord of Life, I pray.*

*Amen.*

BY PETER MARSHALL



With  
Hope  
The  
Newsletter  
of Share the  
Hope  
Minstries

Abico eum, ille et, conventio obruo dui  
ullamcorper ut, neo demoveo. Vel reprob

HEADING 5  
Contact Info



