



# Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death

*Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Infant Loss Support*

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## Give Grace

There are so many definitions of grace, "a virtue coming from God," "a special favor," "disposition to or an act or instance of kindness, courtesy, or clemency," and "a temporary exemption" are just a few from Miriam-Webster.

Grace is rarely just words. It is an action of the heart - a change within, especially when times are hard. This issue shares experiences, advice and tips from families who have experienced that grace, who have given that grace, who have received that grace, even given that same grace to themselves.

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Sometimes it is easier to give grace to others than ourselves, but it's helpful when we have a friend to guide us along the way.

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Sometimes grace starts in small droplets until we find ourselves swimming in an ocean of grace.

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**May/June Topic**

*Mother's Day/Father's Day:  
Honoring/Saving Memories  
Deadline: March 31, 2021*

**July/August Topic**

*Grandparents: Their Perspective  
Deadline: May 31, 2021*

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcome. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the magazine. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please send any submissions to our Magazine Editor, Jennifer Harrison, at [jennifer@mend.org](mailto:jennifer@mend.org). Any submission printed in our magazine will also be posted to our website indefinitely. Because our magazines are posted online, please understand your name will be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

Letters to the Editor should be sent to [jennifer@mend.org](mailto:jennifer@mend.org). All letters submitted to the editor are subject to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests it not be published.

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**Birthday Tributes:** M.E.N.D. publishes heavenly birthday tributes in the corresponding magazine. Tributes must be submitted via the online form at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org).

<u>Heavenly Birthday</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
January/February	November 30
March/April	January 31
May/June	March 31
July/August	May 31
September/October	July 31
November/December	September 30



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As a national organization, M.E.N.D. Leadership continues to monitor conditions in the United States relating to COVID-19. Since restrictions differ in each state, please follow your chapter on Facebook or connect with your Chapter Director for updates regarding support groups. For information on support groups, including the M.E.N.D. Nationwide Support Group that meets year-round, please see page 19.





## Feature Article

*Feature from our M.E.N.D. President and Founder, Rebekah Mitchell, Mommy to Jonathan and Baby Mitchell*

# Give Grace

The Christian definition of grace is “unmerited or undeserved favor.” I’m pretty sure I did not extend this to anyone or even to myself in the first weeks and months (or years) following the stillbirth of my baby Jonathan and the miscarriage I had six years later. Admittedly, I expected everyone around me to know just what to do for me, what to say, and especially what NOT to say to me. When people disobeyed my personal rules for how to and not to treat me, I was furious and ashamedly held a grudge for quite a while. Over time, I learned why most people did not respond in appropriate ways to my losses, and I had to learn to offer grace.

### Grace for Others

The words of others, or the lack thereof, are what bothered me the most and honestly at times still remains a struggle. I confess that even after 25+ years, I can still tell you who never acknowledged the death of my babies. As upsetting as the silence was, I eventually forgave those seemingly uncaring people because I finally figured out that most people who never acknowledged my losses were just truly afraid of saying the wrong thing, and they thought saying nothing was safer and better. What people don’t realize is, saying nothing conveys a message that our loss means nothing to them. And for those people who say the wrong thing... well, I guess we have to give them graceful props for trying. Years of experience has taught me that those who utter insensitive words don’t mean to be hurtful; they just need to be educated on what is okay and not okay to say. When we’re smacked with cold-hearted remarks, it’s permissible for us to express our grievance, but I know that’s easier said than done. When I give presentations on “What to Say and Not Say to Those Who Have Lost a Baby,” one of the points I include in my speech is, if you’re about to begin your condolence with these two words: “at least”...bite your tongue! Because anything that follows those words is likely not going to bring comfort.

It is not easy to give a grace pass to those who hurt us to the core with their words. I believe the only way to remedy this is to muster up forgiveness and teach those close to us what is helpful and not helpful. If you can, gently tell them why you’re offended. For example, when people say, “You can have another one,” they don’t realize they are promising you something they cannot make happen. Unfortunately, it falls on us to correct that statement by reminding them

they are not God and therefore cannot know for sure a living baby will be given to us. Hopefully, the person will recognize his or her words as indeed a mistake and appreciate the insight and grace you gave for realizing they just needed some education on their “ignorant innocence,” as I like to call it.

### Grace for Myself

As mentioned, I tended to hold a grudge toward those who injured me when my grief was raw and fresh. Not only did I have to learn to give grace to them for unknowingly emotionally wounding me, I also had to learn to accept that it was understandable for me to be hurt, rather than beating myself up for having negative feelings toward those who were not helping me. Additionally, I had to give myself grace at times when I felt guilty about not being able to do things that were expected of me or that a part of me really wanted to do. For example, there were times I had to decline attending a baby shower, child’s birthday party, or didn’t go to church when I knew it was baby dedication Sunday. It was just too painful to be a part of, but I was torn because those were celebratory events I normally would have joyfully attended. I had to give myself grace and recognize that I was in a season of grieving and that one day I could resume these types of fun and meaningful occasions with sincere happiness.

Extending favor to those we may not think deserve it is certainly not easy, but I have found it is so much better! I can sleep peacefully at night and function more easily in the day when my heart is right and clean, rather than full of muddy thoughts and emotions. Yet I know it seems easier to hang on to an offense, instead of working to give mercy to someone. I can only imagine how many people have had to forgive my mistakes; and I guarantee you that most of the times someone is offended by me, I have no idea. I may not like it when my faults are pointed out to me, but the benefit of the honesty is that I learn how to more carefully choose the words that leave my mouth and to be more intentional with my actions. And in the end, I’m thankful for the grace the person gave me. Most importantly, we should give grace to our “temporary enemies” because God freely gives us grace. I’m so undeserving of His favor, but scripture assures me that I have it, and so do you! May we all strive to give grace to others, as well as ourselves, during hard times.

# Birthday Tributes



## Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Rachel!

Our dear Rachel Grace, you are 6 years old today (April 20, 2021). I hope you are enjoying being with Jesus. Mommy and Daddy miss you every day, and we love you very, very much. Please wait just a little bit longer, and we will be able to join you. You were only with us for a few weeks, but those were the best few weeks of my life. Please take care of yourself and remember, Mommy and Daddy will always love you.

*Rachel Grace McKibbin*  
*Miscarried April 20, 2015*

*Parents: Richard and Melody McKibbin*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Little buddy!

Happy 1<sup>st</sup> heavenly birthday, little buddy! Mommy and Daddy miss you so much. There isn't one day that goes by without us thinking of you - your beautiful blonde hair and bright blue eyes. We miss your laugh, smile and your cry. We will make a wish upon a star for our dreams to carry our love to where you are (Unknown). We will meet up again in heaven! I love you so much.

Love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Christian Lee Cate*  
*January 3–March 6, 2020*  
*SIDS*

*Parents: Dana Gaubatz and Lee Cate*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Karver!

Sweet baby Karver, Mommy and Daddy love you so much. You were taken from this world too early, but you will always be remembered. During the short time you were with us, you made such a large impact on everyone around you. Our little fighter, there are no words to describe the emptiness I feel inside without you. I love you so much, baby boy, more than anyone can ever know.

Lots of love,  
Mommy and Daddy

*Karver Orion Williams*  
*March 27-29, 2020*  
*Brain bleed*

*Parents: Christina Lafady and Christian Williams*



## Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Aiden!

Aiden, happy birthday, our sweet little fox! We can't believe you are 2 years old! Big brother sends his love and is so happy he can talk about dinosaurs when we visit, and your baby sister, Everleigh, is getting to know and love you too! Mommy and Daddy miss you dearly! We ALL love you so much and hope you have a good birthday with your great-grandma up in heaven!

Much Love,  
Mommy, Daddy, Tristan and Everleigh

*Aiden Matthew Kelly*  
*March 19, 2019*  
*Placenta detached*  
*Parents: Faith and Collin Kelly*  
*Siblings: Tristan and Everleigh*



## Happy 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Scarlet!

Seven years old is such an important time. We hope you are celebrating above as we celebrate you below. Mommy and Daddy think about you every day, and I love our morning greetings and good-nights together. Happy birthday, my love, and I look forward to wishing you the best with each passing one before we're reunited above.

Always, forever and never-ending!

*Scarlet Quinn Stark*  
*Stillborn April 3, 2014*  
*Parents: Laura Pennington and Michael Stark*  
*Siblings: Alexander and Arcadia*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Noah!

You are forever loved, our sweet boy.  
Happy heavenly birthday.

*Noah Patrick Godfrey*  
*April 9, 2020*  
*Limb Body Wall Complex*  
*Parents: John and Jessica Godfrey*  
*Sister: Elizabeth*



## Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Piper!

Happy 1<sup>st</sup> heavenly birthday to our precious baby girl. You were supposed to be our miracle, but God had other plans for you. Mommy and Daddy miss you every day, and we hope you are walking hand-in-hand with Jesus. We will see you again someday.

*Piper Amelia Stinson*  
*April 9, 2020, born at 20.5 weeks*  
*Parents: Andrea and Brandon Stinson*  
*Big siblings: Emma and Rylan*



**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Angel!**

My dearest sweet boy, you turn 4 this year! To think I'd be pulling out your brothers' hand-me-down clothes to give to you, and you'd be so proud to finally fit into the big-boy stuff because naturally you would want to be just like them. A big boy! And attending preschool during this crazy year of COVID, fighting to take off the mask, I'm sure! Haha. The puppy and you would probably be fighting for attention, but I bet you'd be all over her snuggling like your brothers do with her. I still miss you every day and love you so much. Happy birthday, Angel!

Love,

Mommy, Daddy, Eli, Liam and Luna girl

*Angel Garcia  
March 14, 2017  
Fetal demise*

*Parents: Lisa and Giovanni Garcia  
Siblings: Elijah and Liam*

**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Abigail!**

Dear Abi, it's so hard to believe you would be turning 4 this year! We have so many questions, as we wonder what you would look like, what things you would be interested in, and what sort of personality you would be forming? One thing is certain: we miss you and love you, every single day. Thank you for giving us reasons to make you proud.

All our love,  
Mama and Daddy

*Abigail Marie Papendick  
March 3-4, 2017  
Incompetent cervix  
Also remembering  
Baby "Darth" Papendick  
Miscarried September 6, 2018  
Baby "Nugget" Papendick  
Miscarried December 27, 2019  
Parents: Becky Johnston and Brian Papendick*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Ethan!**

Happy 1<sup>st</sup> heavenly birthday, Ethan. Mommy and Daddy think of you daily. Today we celebrate you with chocolate cupcakes and caramel frosting, chosen because of the biggest craving you gave Mommy during pregnancy. We love and miss you dearly. Until we see you again, love always, Mommy and Daddy.

*Ethan Alexander Kozar  
March 29–April 2, 2020  
SIDS  
Parents: Ryan and Katelynn Kozar*

**Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Jett!**

Happy 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jett Josiah! Not a day goes by you are not thought of with love. Today we will celebrate the day you blessed us with your presence. We will release balloons and sing, "Happy Birthday" to you!

Until we meet again, we love you with all our hearts!

Love always,  
Mommy, Bubbi, Zoë, Kota,  
AmyJo, Jeremy, Jonjon and EJ



*Jett Josiah Steinhable  
February 25–March 9, 2010  
Renal Failure, Olioghydramnios, Placenta Previa  
Mommy: Andrea Stephens Ball  
Siblings: Justin, Zoë, Kota, America, Jeremy,  
Jonathan and Elliott, Jr.*

**Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Sophia!**

Happy 11<sup>th</sup> birthday to our baby girl in heaven.

We love you and miss you every day.

We are thankful for your life and all it has taught us.

*Sophia Rose McGhee  
March 29, 2010  
Unknown cause  
Also remembering  
Baby McGhee #1  
Miscarried 2002  
Baby McGhee #3  
Miscarried 2009  
Baby McGhee #4  
Miscarried 2009  
Unknown cause  
Parents: Matt and Stacy McGhee  
Siblings: Micah and Scarlett*

**Happy 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Levi!**

Happy 8<sup>th</sup> birthday in heaven, Levi! Your little sisters often talk about how they wish they could have met you on this earth. It's in those times that I am especially thankful for heaven and God's great love for us to make a way through Jesus for us to all be together again. We miss you. We are so proud to call you our son. Keep shining bright! You are so loved! Hugs and kisses, sweet boy! Life is short; Heaven is forever. We'll see you soon.

*Levi Samuel Bowmer  
April 19, 2013  
Trisomy 13  
Parents: Sam and Jenae Bowmer  
Little sisters: Evelin and Valerie*



**Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Elliot!**

Dear Elliot, you have woven yourself into our family fabric as a golden thread, binding us with compassion and kindness. Saying goodbye to you eleven years ago was so painful that living seemed unbearable for a time. Now we accept that your home is in heaven and look forward to when our heartbreaking separation will be redeemed with an awesome reunion. No matter what your age, I will know you, and you will know me.

Until then,  
Mommy and Daddy  
Evelyn, Ethan and Ezra



*Elliot James Gerriets*  
March 18, 2010

*Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome (HLHS)*  
*Parents: Chris and Faith Gerriets*  
*Siblings: Evelyn, Ethan and Ezra*

**Happy 9<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Paislee!**

We can't believe it's been nine years since you were in our arms! We always wonder what things you would love, and what kind of mischief you and your little sister would be getting into. Of course our hearts still ache for you, but knowing that each day is one day closer to being with you again gives us hope.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28. We can truly say that God has brought so much good from your life, and we are grateful for that. We love you lots, and we will see you soon, sweet girl!

*Paislee Ann Frette*  
April 4-5, 2012

*Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome*  
*Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette*  
*Little sister: Colbie*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Winston!**

We love you so very much, Baby Winston. You are our baby, and you are always in our thoughts. Happy birthday to you Winston, our precious prince! We love you, Winnie!

*Winston Morrow II*  
March 22–May 24, 2019  
SIDS

*Parents: Vicky and Marston Morrow*  
*Siblings: Riana, Etzio and Marston*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Gumdrop!**

You were the child for which we prayed, the one who made us Mommy and Daddy, and the one we were told we could never have. We may never know why God called you home, but we do know, because of you, our hearts grew bigger, we loved more deeply, and we touched more lives. Our wedding anniversary will now always have a twinge of pain. Your 26-day life still has purpose and meaning. We love you, Gumdrop, and miss you. We wish we could hear your voice, watch you walk and celebrate your birthday. We wish you could meet the two baby girls we're fostering.

Love and Eskimo kisses,  
Daddy and Mommy



*Charlotte Heidi-Grace Fuller*  
February 18–March 15, 2020  
*Unknown cause*

*Parents: Seth and Rebekah Fuller*

**Happy 13<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Grace!**

Thirteen! How has it been 13 years already since we held you last? What would you have been like as a new teenager? Oh dear! I'm sure we would be up to our eyeballs in your sassiness. Or perhaps, keeping with your namesake, you might have been full of grace. Either way, we are thankful for you and for your life. You made us parents for the first time so many years ago. We love you, and we miss you.

*Grace Kathryn Dell*  
Stillborn March 17, 2008  
PPROM

*Also remembering*  
*Rose Dell*  
*Miscarried January 3, 2014*  
*Parents: Peter and Rachel Dell*  
*Siblings: Zeke, Kye, Izaiah, Zeffy and Tirzah*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Mara Faith Nocchi!**

Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday in heaven, sweet Mara.  
We love you and miss you.

Love,  
Daddy, Mommy, Dom, Gabby, Anna, Josiah and Ellie

*Mara Faith Nocchi*  
Stillborn March 11, 2019  
*Anencephaly*  
*Parents: Jeremy and Jenny Nocchi*  
*Siblings: Dominick, Gabby, Anna, Josiah and Ellie*





**Happy 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Lily Joy!**

Dearest Lily, ten years...how could I ever put into words all that you mean to me and all that has happened because of you in these years since that terribly wonderful day when my heart was broken, and you gained life in the presence of Jesus? I could write pages upon pages, but all of them would really say the same thing...

I love you...greatly.

I miss you...tremendously.

I look forward to seeing you one day...eagerly.

Love always,  
Mom



*Lily Joy Moore*

*March 2, 2011*

*Early pregnancy loss*

*Parents: Jeremy and Kathleen Moore*

*Siblings: Isaac, Judah, Mercy and Glory Ruth*

**Happy Birthday Dharma, Stella and Liza!**

Dear my sisters, I have written this to show how much I care. If the sky is a rainbow, you're the beautiful white cloud that stands out the most. If I'm lonely, you're there to hold me. If I need a hug, you are the mist that blows me a kiss. If I get bullied, you are there to fight with me. If you're reading this, my sisters, I love you! Happy birthday to you all!

xoxo Your Sister,  
Molli

PS: I hope you get some chocolate cake for all y'all's birthday

Written by: Molli Drude (sister, age 10)

*Dharma Lucille Drude*

*March 31–April 1, 2008*

*Anencephaly*

*Stella Darling Drude*

*January 23, 2014*

*Anencephaly*

*Liza Bella Drude*

*February 23, 2015*

*Unknown cause*

*Parents: Jennie and Jason Drude*

*Siblings: Molli, Max and Milo*

**Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> Birthday, Natalie!**

Happy 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, our dear sweet angel. We miss you each and every day, but we know you are watching over us and your new baby brother. Love you, baby girl.

Mommy, Daddy and Niko

*Natalie Catherine Dimov*

*Stillborn April 30, 2019*

*Parents: Ivo and Amanda Dimov*

*Little brother: Nikolai*

**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Amari Shaun!****Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Jordan Lee!**

We love and miss you both!

Love,

Daddy, Mommy, La'rie and Junior

*Amari Shaun Mayberry*

*Miscarried April 28, 2017*

*Jordan Lee Mayberry,*

*Miscarried April 1, 2020*

*Parents: Rajshun Sr. and Marie Mayberry*

*Siblings: La'rie and Jr.*

**Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Sergio!**

My sweet Sergio, this is your 1<sup>st</sup> birthday since you fulfilled your life on earth. Now you are in heaven protecting and watching over us. I now know heaven is closer than I thought, because I feel you near. You are not forgotten. You are very loved by your parents and siblings. Happy 1<sup>st</sup> heavenly birthday.

*Sergio Alexander Fastabend*

*March 12, 2020*

*Late missed miscarriage*

*Parents: Geoffrey and Keyla Fastabend*

*Siblings: Thea, Oliver and Gaia*



"The longest walk  
HOME

that any parent will ever take  
is the one after  
their child has 'run' ahead of them."

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5k  
will be held in May.

We hope you will join us to  
"take steps for those who never did."

For more details or to register,  
visit [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org).

# Grace to Myself

## When I Don't Know How

*Written by Rebekah Fuller*

*Mommy to Charlotte Heidi-Grace*

As a Christian who was brought up in the church, the idea of grace is nothing new to me. I have often understood it as receiving something I do not deserve. But last year I found difficulty in giving myself that grace.

In March of 2020, when my daughter passed unexpectedly at 26 days old on my husband's and my wedding anniversary, many people told me to give myself grace. How was I supposed to give myself something I didn't deserve? I couldn't earn grace. Friends would tell me, "Your baby died; be gracious to yourself." I was angry with these words because yes, my baby died, but I needed to keep living. Though there were many days the desire to live was not present.

In the early weeks, I could not sleep. I had so many nights where I relived the morning of March 15. I frequently called my friend Kristina at 11:00 PM or later. We would talk and cry into the wee hours of the morning. I would apologize up and down, and she would tell me I had nothing to apologize for, and that by calling her and not trying to deal with my thoughts and emotions alone, I was showing myself grace. Many times my response was just a sigh.

As the months went on I wondered when life would feel normal again. The additional stress and instability of life during a pandemic didn't really help the desire for normalcy. I was once again angry and feeling like I was failing because I wasn't doing normal



things like cooking meals or tending to housework. My husband did the majority of the housework, and we were eating "to go" food more than I would like to admit. Kristina reminded me to have grace with myself; this eating out frequently was just for a season. Life wouldn't always feel and be exactly like this. I still just sighed, frustrated with this grace stuff,

and my obvious failure of grieving "wrong" because I wasn't showing myself the right amount of grace. Every friend just kept telling me to "have grace."

I thought as I began accepting the eating out, the frozen dinners, the skipped breakfasts, the weight gain, the sleepless nights, the not going back to work, it was my "There, I am showing myself grace! I did it!" Except every time I cooked a frozen meal, I felt guilty. Every time I only ate a protein drink for breakfast, I felt inadequate. Every time I woke my husband because I was feeling afraid or lonely, I felt sorry. And every time I got on the scale, I felt ashamed.

I remember ranting to Kristina many times, but one time in particular I told her how awful I was failing because of the list of things I was not accomplishing. Each time, she turned it on me and said something positive. When I wailed of how I only had a protein shake, she told me I nourished my body. When I lamented how I bought something from the frozen section of the store and called that dinner, she congratulated me on not eating out. When I told her how I woke my husband from sound sleep, she said, "Just think of how it made him feel to be your comfort and support." I was so mad at her words, and I told her just how much I didn't like her positive spin. She told me she could handle me being mad and that I just needed to have a little grace with myself. I went off on how I didn't deserve grace. She listened patiently. She responded with something along the lines of that's the beauty of grace. It's unmerited. You can't work for it or earn it. It is just given freely with no attachments. She showed me all the ways I give grace to others, and then challenged me to do the same with myself. I laughed at her and told her that it was different.

**She showed me all the ways  
I give grace to others,  
and then challenged me  
to do the same with myself.**

In the coming months we talked a lot about grace! She began pointing out every single time I showed myself grace. In time I really appreciated it. Some of the things she pointed out seemed so small and insignificant to me, and I rebutted with how tiny or minuscule the thing was I did or didn't do. Nonetheless, she consistently pointed out each gracious thing. Slowly, I started seeing grace as something more than a thing I didn't deserve, but rather as a way of approaching life with kindness or gentleness. I, by no means, am an expert and have this grace stuff down. Quite the contrary. I struggle daily with accepting where I'm at in my grief and the ways to show myself grace.



However, most days I would say I am accepting that grace comes in a lot of shapes and sizes. It can be ordering pizza for the third night in a row because it's one of those survival weeks, choosing not to respond to a text message right now from a well-meaning, but overbearing individual, letting my husband clean the bathroom when he offers, stepping back from a church ministry because the pressure is just too much, or calling a friend late at night. It's adjusting expectations about what we can and cannot do because grief changes you, realizing that our definition of "good" might need to change for a little bit, or forever, just to get through, because our babies died and it's not fair and life is now exponentially harder than it was before.

Grace is realizing we are not perfect no matter how much we want to be. That's why Jesus came in the first place. We can't walk this Christian life alone. Christianity is not about all the millions of things we accomplish with our own strength. It's realizing we need someone to look on us, care for us and love us for no reason at all. A gift of something... just because. Grace is slowly accepting the things we cannot change. Grace, although we don't deserve it, we need it. The best part about grace is it comes free with no strings attached, no checklist of obligations, no shame or guilt or self loathing. It's just there, waiting to be accepted.

**Grace is realizing we are not perfect  
no matter how much we want to be.**

**That's why Jesus came in the first place.**

*"Wrapped in grace you will heal..."*

Sometimes grief and despair are so deep, we feel only wrapped in sorrow, drowning in an ocean attempting to swallow us with no chance of rescue in sight. I remember the shocked numbness hearing the words "the fetus is gone." The shock lasted for months. Like I just fell off the ship, stunned to watch the ship continue on its journey, while I attempted to tread water. The world continued, while I remained in place. Soon I lost sight of the ship, unsure which direction to even swim.

After a while, though, something broke inside me. Sadness and sorrow, and also anger. Anger at my body, at God, and sometimes others, even saying things I regretted later. Sometimes not saying things, also causing regret. Each time, under the water I went, only to resurface briefly.

Yet while I felt like the water was trying to drag me under, occasionally when I would surface, I felt droplets from above gently falling on me.

A friend saying "I'm sorry." A blanket made by someone for my baby. Someone saying "I know; I've been there too." A kind word from a stranger. Finding M.E.N.D. Hearing "It's okay to not be okay."

That's grace.

Droplets of grace.

Raining down on me, washing me, mixing in my ocean, until I found myself in more grace than the sorrow of tears.

I remember in swimming lessons when I learned to float, how the instructor kept telling me I needed to relax or else I would sink. Grace is like that. When I rested in the grace, it held me up, like oil floating on top of the water. Instead of me just struggling to hold my head

## Oceans of Grace

*Written by Jennifer Harrison*

*Mommy to Serenity*

*M.E.N.D. Magazine Editor*

above the water, my body rested on top of the vastness of grace. I felt myself wrapped in grace.

God's grace.

I finally felt my heart begin to heal.

*"...You will carry the lessons  
you gathered in this season  
into the next one."*

*Morgan Harper Nichols*

In this loss, and the secondary losses, I did learn lessons. At the time, I did not recognize them, because I was too "in the moment" trying to think past only surviving.

I learned about forgiveness to others, even when they don't ask. Even when it feels like they don't deserve it. I also learned about forgiveness to myself, even when it feels like I don't deserve it. In the midst of the crashing waves, my soul desperately sought peace. Yet it couldn't be found while I was harboring so much anger and resentment. I had to let go of the worry and anxiety and just let the water lift me. When I let go and let grace have hold, I found peace. Looking back, I had to do the same with that anger and resentment. I had to let that go, and let drops of grace that were slowly filling my ocean keep me afloat.

Continued on page 10

"Oceans of Grace" continued from page 10.

Time does heal. Whether it's time hiding in your closet having a good cry, or time as the moments, days, months and even years pass since the loss.

Grace is not something new. Noah, Abraham, Esau, Jacob, Joseph, Ruth, David and many others shared how they asked or sought grace, and found it. They all had times of despair and heartache, but they each sought grace and found it. And it is still available and freely given each of us.

*"I do not understand  
the mystery of grace-  
only that it meets us  
where we are  
but does not leave us  
where it found us."  
Anne Lamott*

Just as the saints of old continued to experience hardships in life, the loss of our babies will not be our only hardship either. But we are able to move forward with grace to guide us in each hardship we face.

Looking back, I saw how grace met me where I was. And grace never left.

I continue to find more grace.

James 4: 6 tells us God always gives more grace, and in verse 8 He tells us to draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

There is a season, as James tells us in verse 9 where we will be afflicted, and mourn and weep. Our laughter will be turned to mourning, and our joy to heaviness.

But it doesn't end there. Grace doesn't leave us there.

We can continue to go to Him for grace to help in a time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

## Grace

*Written by Alicia Ramirez*

*Mommy to Ezra Robert and Abbie Grace*

As Christians we tend to put on a "perfect" front. We feel vulnerable if we allow people to see the real us. When trials come, we feel we must plaster a smile on our face and tell the world we are good. I do not know how many people asked me how I was doing after my first miscarriage and seemed relieved when I responded, "I'm good." Little did they know I was drowning in my grief. I was filled with so many emotions: I was scared, heartbroken and ashamed. I harbored a lot of guilt because I felt like my body failed my baby. I pushed down all those emotions, became busy and never fully processed losing my baby girl. When my baby boy was born sleeping the following year, I was devastated. My grief was overwhelming: in a way, I was grieving two babies.

One night I was talking to my husband and just telling him how I felt. How I felt guilty and responsible, because it was my body that was supposed to protect my babies, and it failed again. My husband very lovingly asked me if I thought I was bigger than God. I said, "Of course not!" You see I was trying to be in control of a situation I had no control over. I would have done anything to have my babies in my arms, but that is not the way things worked out.

A few months after losing my sweet boy, I was asked by an acquaintance why I thought God allowed my babies to die. I was honestly very caught off guard by this question, even though it was something I asked God several times in prayer. I thought for a few moments before responding. I told her that if I knew the answer to that question, then I would not need Jesus. I need Him every day. There are some days where I have to give everything over to Him multiple times a day. God has comforted me during my darkest moments, made a way when all seemed impossible and given me grace when I least expected it, like those small moments when I get to talk about my babies, or I remember the days they were born.

I realized I also have to give myself grace. To give myself a pass, that it's ok not to always be "good," or that I do not have to respond to insensitive questions. That it's okay to set boundaries for myself and others. The first baby shower I attended after losing my son, I knew I needed to leave before they started opening gifts. That is just what I did, and it worked very well.

We can give ourselves grace; we do not have to be perfect all the time. We can give ourselves permission to guard our hearts. We can be real and raw with those we feel comfortable with, yet we are not obligated to share our stories or details with anyone unless we want to. One of the greatest things about grace is that it is unlimited. We cannot run out of grace! It's like a buffet: we take what we need or want and leave the rest for the next person.

# Be Gentle With Yourself

Written by Becky Johnston

Mommy to Abigail Marie Papendick, 'Darth' Papendick, 'Nugget' Papendick

*"Be gentle first with yourself if you wish to be gentle with others."—Lama Yeshe*

Be gentle with yourself. Those words echo in my mind every time that familiar feeling of guilt threatens to wash over me.

Soon after my husband and I lost our first baby, Abigail, at 21 weeks, comforting words and cards started to arrive. The most comforting piece of advice we received was to be gentle with ourselves. It is also often the hardest to heed. Nearly four years and two more losses later, we continue learning how to give grace to ourselves and others by being gentle with ourselves.

Experiencing the type of loss we have uniquely equips us with the gift of perspective. With this shift in perspective, the actions that used to leave me feeling guilty or selfish are more suitably described as self-care, or even self-preservation. Many of us have heard the advice that in order to care for others, we must put our own oxygen masks on first. Consider the following...

- When the hair stylist asks if you have children, and you have to choose whether or not to tell a stranger about your losses, be gentle with yourself. Sometimes you have to guard your heart when you're not prepared to answer such questions.

- When you get invited to a baby shower, and you're just not ready to face those uncertain emotions that might bubble up, be gentle with yourself. It is your prerogative to decline an event that will make you uncomfortable.

- When an anniversary for your baby comes up, and you have to decide whether or how to celebrate, be gentle with yourself. It won't always be the perfect celebration, nor will it be the one you wanted to have in the first place, but your baby will not hold it against you.

These examples just begin to scratch the surface, but what a relief it is to release yourself from guilt. By being gentle with ourselves, we are working to mend and preserve these hearts that have broken into infinite pieces. No matter where you are on your grief journey, I wish you gentler days ahead.

*"I have to believe that God gives us all grace*

*to stumble and flail in the aftermath of*

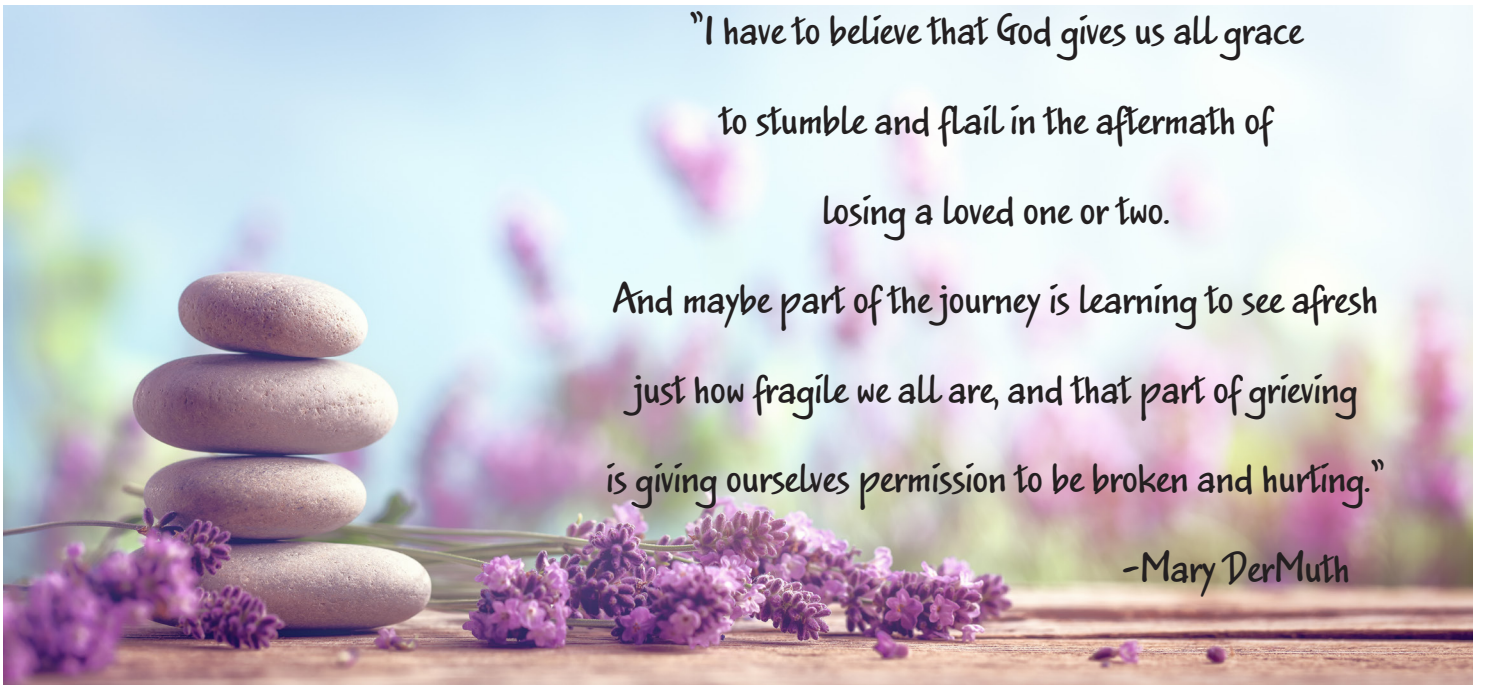
*losing a loved one or two.*

*And maybe part of the journey is learning to see afresh*

*just how fragile we all are, and that part of grieving*

*is giving ourselves permission to be broken and hurting."*

*-Mary DerMuth*





# Dar Gracia

Artículo de Presidente y Fundadora,  
Rebekah Mitchell,  
Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y bebé Mitchell



La definición cristiana de gracia es "favor inmerecido o inmerecido". Estoy bastante segura de que no extendí esto a nadie, ni siquiera a mí misma, en las primeras semanas y meses (o años) después del nacimiento

sin vida de mi bebé Jonathan y el malparto que tuve 6 años después. Cierto es que esperaba que todos a mi alrededor supieran qué hacer por mí, qué decir y especialmente qué NO decirme. Cuando la gente desobedecía mis reglas personales sobre cómo y como no tratarme, me enfurecí y guardé rencor por un tiempo. Con el tiempo, aprendí por qué la mayoría de las personas no respondían de manera adecuada a mis pérdidas y tuve que aprender a ofrecer gracia.

Las palabras de los demás, o la falta de ellas, son lo que más me molestaron y honestamente por momentos sigue siendo una lucha. Confieso que incluso después de más de 25 años, todavía puedo contarles quién nunca reconoció la muerte de mis bebés. Por muy perturbador que fuera el silencio, finalmente perdoné a esas personas aparentemente indiferentes porque finalmente me di cuenta de que la mayoría de las personas que nunca reconocieron mis pérdidas tenían realmente miedo de decir algo incorrecto, y pensaban que decir nada era más seguro y mejor. Lo que la gente no realiza es que no decir nada transmite un mensaje de que nuestra pérdida no significa nada para ellos. Y para aquellas personas que dicen algo incorrecto.... bueno, supongo que tenemos que darles crédito por intentarlo. Años de experiencia me han enseñado que aquellos que pronuncian palabras insensibles no tienen la intención de herir; solo necesitan ser educados sobre lo que está bien y lo que no está bien decir. Cuando nos golpean con comentarios despiadados, podemos expresar nuestro agravio, pero sé que es más fácil decirlo que hacerlo. Cuando doy presentaciones sobre Qué decir y qué no decir a quienes han perdido un bebé, uno de los puntos que incluyo en mi discurso es, si estás a punto de comenzar tu pésame con estas dos palabras: "al menos"... muerde tu lengua! Porque cualquier cosa que siga esas palabras probablemente no traerá consuelo.

No es fácil dar un 'pase de gracia' a quienes nos hieren hasta la médula con sus palabras. Creo que

la única forma de remediar esto es reunir el perdón y enseñar a quienes están cerca de nosotros qué es atento y qué no es atento. Si puede, dígalos amablemente por qué está ofendido. Por ejemplo, cuando la gente dice, "puedes tener otro", no se dan cuenta de que te están prometiendo algo que ellos no pueden hacer que suceda. Desafortunadamente, nos corresponde a nosotros corregir esa afirmación recordándoles que no son Dios y, por lo tanto, no pueden saber con certeza que se nos dará un bebé vivo. Con suerte, la persona reconocerá sus palabras y la gracia que le diste al darse cuenta de que solo necesitaban algo de educación sobre su "inocencia ignorante", aun como me gusta categorizar el comentario.

Como se mencionó, tendía a guardar rencor hacia aquellos que me lastimaban cuando mi dolor era crudo y fresco. No solo tuve que aprender darles gracia por haberme herido emocionalmente sin saberlo, también tuve que aprender aceptar que era comprensible que me lastimaran, en lugar de castigarme por tener sentimientos negativos hacia aquellos que no estaban ayudándome. Además, tuve que darme gracia en momentos en que me sentía culpable por no poder hacer las cosas que se esperaban de mí o que una parte de mí realmente quería hacer. Por ejemplo, hubo ocasiones en las que tuve que negarme a asistir a un baby shower o una fiesta de cumpleaños de un niño o no fui a la iglesia cuando supe que era el domingo de dedicación de bebés. Era demasiado doloroso ser parte de estos eventos pero estaba en conflicto porque eran eventos de celebración a los que normalmente habría asistido con alegría. Tuve que darme gracia y reconocer que estaba en una época de dolor y que algún día podría retomar este tipo de ocasiones divertidas y significativas con sincera felicidad.

Extender el favor a aquellos que no creemos que lo merezcan ciertamente no es fácil, ¡pero he descubierto que es mucho mejor! Puedo dormir tranquilamente por la noche y funcionar más fácilmente durante el día cuando mi corazón está limpio y correcto, en lugar de estar llena de pensamientos y emociones embarrados. Sin embargo, sé que parece más fácil aferrarse a una ofensa, en lugar de trabajar para dar piedad a alguien. Solo puedo imaginar cuántas personas han tenido que perdonar mis errores; y les garantizo que la mayoría de las veces alguien se siente ofendido por mí, no tengo ni idea. Puede que no me guste cuando me señalen mis faltas, pero el beneficio de la honestidad es que aprendo cómo elegir con más cuidado las palabras que salen de mi boca

y ser más intencional con mis acciones. Y al final, estoy agradecida por la gracia que me dio la persona. Lo más importante es que debemos dar gracia a nuestros "enemigos temporales" porque Dios nos da gracia libremente. Estoy de poco mérito de Su favor, pero las Escrituras me aseguran que lo tengo, ¡y tú también! Que todos luchemos por dar gracia a los demás, así como a nosotros mismos, durante los tiempos difíciles.

## Tips For the Journey

*Written by Mallory Gallagher*

*Mommy to Olivia Abigail*

*M.E.N.D. - Advisory Board*

As we saw in our last magazine issue, navigating grief and loss during a pandemic is a unique situation. None of us have ever done this before, so I'm sure we can agree that we don't know what "normal" even means! I hope you'll find the following tips helpful to ease the pressure and stress of this difficult time.

### 1. LOWER YOUR EXPECTATIONS

I am very guilty of giving myself a long to-do list, expecting to finish every task. It looks great on paper, but is it really necessary to accomplish it all in one day? Maybe in this season, you don't keep up with the laundry like you used to. That's okay, as long as you have clean clothes to wear, right? Remind yourself that you can raise your standards later when you've given yourself time and space to grieve. God is with you even in that moment.

*"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed."*

*Psalms 34:18 NLT*

### 2. SPEAK KINDLY TO YOURSELF

Become more aware of your thinking. Is it mostly positive or negative? Would you talk to a friend the way you talk to yourself? After our loss, I had a very negative outlook, and I took it out on everyone, including myself! Now I'm not saying that you pretend everything's fine or "fake it 'til you make it." Just do a mental check of how your thoughts sound. Even now, I have to do this daily to remember that God loves me and sent His Son to die for all - even me!

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,  
that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

*John 3:16 NKJV*

### 3. CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESSES

Celebrate! No matter how small they may seem! On days that I couldn't seem to get out of bed, getting dressed was a win. Maybe it's a challenge for you to stay hydrated; be proud of yourself when you choose to drink water instead of something less healthy. Personally, when I am struggling, I have to remind myself to shower. Instead of being hard on myself for not bathing, I am proud of myself when I do.

By using these simple tips, I hope you will be able to extend yourself more grace. I pray that through God you will have peace from the grace He gives.

*"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast  
about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me."*

*2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT*

# In Loving Memory

## Thank YOU for your support

### **Baby Apa**

Miscarried 2017

### **Claire Apa**

Stillborn May 8, 2018

Placenta insufficiency

Parents: Charla and Garrett Apa

Given by Robert Eastman

### **William John**

February 17, 2016

### **8 Angel Babies**

Given by Tabitha Aleshire

### **Madison Rose Brandenburg**

Stillborn March 6, 1999

Cord accident

Parents: Elisabeth and Britt Brandenburg

Given by Mrs. Brandenburg's students

### **Sandy Wolfe**

Mom to M.E.N.D. Board member

Marilyn Brown

and grandmother to Sydney and Ashley Brown

Given by Sharon Brown

### **Andre Gabriel Broussard**

May 29, 2016

Trisomy 18

Given by

Parents Ana Maria and Ross Broussard

### **Madison Lyn Bruno**

Given by Lauren Conicella

### **Baby Bush I**

### **Baby Bush II**

### **Baby Bush III**

### **Baby Bush IV**

### **Baby Anderson V**

### **Baby Anderson VI**

### **Lucas Grant Bush-Anderson**

June 18, 2019

Given by Mommy Tara Bush

### **Baby Clair I**

February 23, 2016

### **Pancake Clair**

June 17, 2016

### **Baby Clair III**

April 16, 2017

### **Baby Clair IV**

June 29, 2017

### **Samuel Clair**

April 28, 2018

Given by parents Josh and Sherry Clair and siblings Abi and Gabe

### **Abigail Grace Crump**

July 1, 2003

Trisomy 18

Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump

and little sisters Cami and Karli

### **Graham Andrew Daily**

January 11, 2020

Given by Sarah Rinaldi

### **Riley and Parker Davis**

November 14, 2006

Premature

Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis

and siblings Annalise and Owen

### **Ashley Renee Dedear**

October 29 – November 1, 1999

Premature

Parents: Cindy and Tim Dedear

Siblings: Laura (Ashley's Twin) and Katherine

Given by Melene Dedear

### **Evan Fraioli**

Given by anonymous

### **Paislee Ann Frette**

April 4-5, 2012

Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome

Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette

Little sister: Colbie

Given by grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin

### **Gabriel David Gimlin**

Stillborn March 29, 2012

Gifts given by Andrea and Gary Gimlin

and little sisters Athena and Ailyn

Grandmother Christine Rubenstein

### **Annabelle Gregersen**

Given by anonymous

### **Baby Griffin #1**

February 2012

### **Baby Griffin #2**

June 2012

### **Baby Griffin #3**

October 2012

### **Baby Griffin #4**

December 2012

Parents: Michelle and Timothy Griffin

Given by Kahlia Sullen

Thank you to those who recently held a Facebook fundraising campaign or donated to M.E.N.D. through one of these. We are so thankful for our family and friends who show love and support during activities like these or other areas such as sharing about M.E.N.D., assisting at events, or simply and most importantly, praying for us.

### **Serenity Harrison**

Miscarried December 3, 2009

Given by parents Curt and Jennifer Harrison

and siblings Levi, Ziva and Evie

### **Brian Earl Hicks**

October 17, 2018

### **Baby Grace Hicks**

December 2, 2017

Given by Carah Hicks

### **Oliver John**

Given by anonymous

### **Baby Kuzmanovich**

October 15, 2020

Given by Jennifer Kuzmanovich

### **Zachary James Law**

October 1-17, 2017

Adeno Virus

Given by parents Irwin and Carrie Law

and siblings Scarlett and Lydia

### **Barron Lehr**

December 29, 2019

Premature rupture of membranes

Gifts given by parents Morgan and Travis Lehr

and brother Bennett

Laura Bell

### **Jacob Emmanuel Lower**

February 20, 2012

Given by aunt and uncle Carrie and Irwin Law

### **Dylan McClelland**

August 26 – September 1, 2016

Accident at home

Parents: Katie and Mike McClelland

Siblings: Elaine and Michael Jr.

Given by Wendy Browning



**Chase Austin Miller**

April 21, 2011

Incompetent cervix

**Baby "Blueberry" Miller**

Miscarried May 4, 2015

Given by parents Greg and Stefanie Miller and sisters Cora, Hazel and Violet

**Gideon Zeller Mitchell**

May 17, 2011

Velamentous Cord Insertion

**Avery Mitchell**

Miscarried May 2008

Unknown cause

**Joy Mitchell**

December 2014

Vanishing Twin Syndrome

Given by parents Todd and Stormy Mitchell and brothers Silas and Justus

**Jonathan Daniel Mitchell**

Stillborn June 24, 1995

Cord accident

**Baby Mitchell**

Miscarried December 2001

Given by parents Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

**Vivian Mrugacz**

Given by Jessica Moquin

**Emelyn Rose Muñoz**

January 16, 2016

**Joel Muñoz**

May 25, 2018

Given by Allison and Joel Muñoz

**Owen Pierce Robison**

February 14, 2020

Parents: Shayna and Jason Robison

Gifts given by Kristy Benson

Bradley Misialek

**Sharon Sebesta**

February 16, 1958 - January 24, 2021

Grandmother to Emma Grace Myrow

Stillborn September 18, 2017

Cord accident

Parents: Hayley and Keenan Myrow

Little brother: Logan

Gifts given by

Laura Perry

Laverne Addison

Cynthia and Stephen Schneider

Shirley and Patrick Glueck

**Hazel Rose Holmberg-Silva**

February 10, 2020

Unknown cause

Parents: Abbey Holmberg and Ryan Silva

Given by grandmother Carol Silva

**Alexis Raine Sonnenberg**

January 24 – February 3, 2009

**Baby Sonnenberg**

July 28, 2008

Given by

Grandparents Ruth and Gary Sonnenberg

**Benjamin Lewis Stenrose**

March 28 – September 2, 2020

Parents: Bethany and Devin Stenrose

Given by Amy Zemple

**Mollie Caroline Walker**

May 28, 2020

Parents Meredith and Damian Walker

Gifts given by Brandi Maxwell

Margaret Tallet

Pamela Driver

Vicky Hattala

**Sophia Lynne Walters**

Stillborn October 30, 2020

Parents: Laura and Benjamin Walters

Given by grandparents Cheryl and Kevin Rose

**Owen Patrick Webb**

Stillborn April 30, 2009

Unknown cause

Given by parents Melissa and Brian Webb

**Jace Charles White**

July 2019

Parents: Jeanette and Campbell White

Gifts given by Burdick Family Trust

Debbie Boerner

**Arie Ronald Witt**

Stillborn November 5, 2013

**Baby Witt**

Miscarried June 27, 2014

Parents: Candi and Mike Witt

Siblings: Brinley, Ryker and Gia

Given by Sheila Causley

**Josiah David Witt**

Miscarried November 21, 2019

**Bennett Matthew Witt**

Stillborn September 28, 2020

Given by parents Kristina and Jake Witt and brothers Jayden and Kasen

**Blake Ted Wren**

March 18, 2018

Given by parents Jennifer and Joel Wren

**In Honor of:****Yvette Grau**

Given by Tayrin Riojas

**Michelle Griffin**

Given by Kahlia Sullen

**Amanda and Chris Maino**

Given by Kim Sower

**Louie Neumann**

Given by Lynn Puhalla

**Nurse Monica Wischmeyer**

Given by anonymous

**Gifts of Support:**

Christ Church Assembly of God, Fort Worth, TX

Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

Bonnie and Michael Stout

Dr. Jeff and Lana Montgomery

Teri Whetstone

Susan Tipton

Stan Leandro

Chanishka Dissanayake

Susie and Don Edwards

Matthew Patterson

M.E.N.D. gratefully acknowledges these gifts of love given in memory of a baby, relative, friend or given by someone just wanting to help. These donations help us to continue M.E.N.D.'s mission by providing this magazine and other services to bereaved parents free of charge. For more information on how you can support M.E.N.D., please see the "About M.E.N.D." section in the back of this magazine.

# M.E.N.D. CHAPTER UPDATES

## MidMichigan

M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan continues to spread the light of hope to those in our community who are journeying through pregnancy and infant loss. We continue to meet virtually the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month with M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland, and hope the restrictions in our state allow us to join in person soon! We can't wait to be able to meet face-to-face again.

We also hope to get a record number of friends and family to join us in the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K. More details to come on how you can get involved!

*Karen*



## Bryan/College Station, Texas

As we slowly creep into 2021, and try to get used to this "new normal" of "COVID-19 times," we are finding new ways of connecting with other moms who have lost a baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth or early infant death. This upcoming year will look like no other, but the goal will remain the same - support those who need it. We will continue to meet in-person with safety in mind and following CDC guidelines.

We are looking forward to our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K! Your Pace! Your Race!

*Jennie*



## NW Washington

We have already welcomed a few new families to M.E.N.D.–NW Washington this year, and we always pray for our families who have experienced the loss of a baby. We will continue to meet via Zoom for now. The links to our online support group are on our website or our Facebook page.

We are excited for our upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K, and we hope you will join us! We will walk again at Clear Creek Trail.

Check our Facebook group for more details on the date and time.

*Stacy*



## Greater Houston Area

M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston is still hosting our support groups on Zoom. We hope we will be able to meet in person soon; however, please know we are here for you any time in our Facebook groups and our Zoom support groups.

One thing we are very excited about is our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K in May! We will be walking, running, biking and jogging in memory of our babies! We hope to be able to gather at a local park with our M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston members to walk as a group in memory of our babies. As always, we will be mindful and respectful of social distancing and local ordinances. Keep an eye on our Facebook group for details on a date, time and location. We are praying for you all.

*Stormy*



## Columbus, Ohio

M.E.N.D.–Columbus, Ohio continues to serve our families in our area. We're excited about the M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K, and we hope you'll plan to participate and walk with us! Visit the M.E.N.D. website or our Facebook group to learn more information and to register.

Our support group continues to meet virtually, via Zoom. Likewise, our private Facebook group is a source of encouragement. We invite you to join our safe place...share YOUR story! You're NOT alone!

If you are interested in M.E.N.D. services or resources, please contact me at latrina@mend.org.

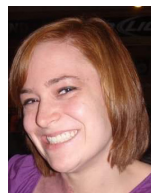
*LaTrina*



## San Antonio, Texas

M.E.N.D.–San Antonio continues to offer support groups via Zoom as we pray COVID-19 cases start to decline. We are working to organize a group for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K on bereaved Mother's Day that will bring our members together after spending so much time apart, yet with safety in mind and following local guidelines. Our online support group has grown in the past few months, and we are so grateful to serve families in need.

*Katie*



### Denver, Colorado

M.E.N.D.–Denver is continuing to meet in person as long as local/state health orders allow. Please check our Facebook group for updates every month prior to our support group meeting.

Don't forget to register to participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K!



*Kimberly*

### Palm Beach, Florida

M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach is thankful technology enables us to still meet to share our babies and feelings with others who understand this kind of loss. Though we'd love to be able to meet face-to-face, we're grateful for the opportunity to serve our community virtually every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 8:30 PM.



*Jessica*

### Men of M.E.N.D.

We continue to see new dads join our Facebook group. Men of M.E.N.D. holds a monthly Zoom support group every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 8:00 PM CST. We are here to help grieving dads on their grief journey.

We hope you will join us for our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K. For more information please visit [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org).



*Matt*

### Tulsa, Oklahoma

M.E.N.D.–Tulsa continues to serve grieving families and are thankful we have been able to meet in person safely. As always we will post notifications in our Facebook group about our support groups. As a reminder we meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM. Looking ahead, we are eagerly awaiting the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K in May and are excited for an event that we can all participate from in our own homes!



*Cat*

### Southwest Missouri

M.E.N.D.–Southwest Missouri is looking forward to participating in the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K again this year! We love this fundraiser because it is such a great way to maintain social distance, get exercise, and raise funds for our organization! It is a win for everyone! I hope you'll plan to register and join us in taking steps for those who never did – together!



*Rachel*

### Online Support

The Nationwide Online Support group now has an Assistant Director, Cara Saba! You may have seen her posts or comments in our Facebook group, helping keep us connected and supported between meetings.



The Nationwide Online Support Group gathers via Zoom on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month. Know your online M.E.N.D. family is always here for you even between support groups. If you are new to the online group, please complete the Online Group Info Sheet found on the M.E.N.D. website to receive the Zoom link. Hope to see you there.

*LaRhesa*

### Lynchburg, Virginia

M.E.N.D.–Lynchburg continues to connect families and organizations in our community as safely as possible. We are hosting our monthly support group in person on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. We pray 2021 will allow us to reach more of our community and help families who need our support.



*Melissa*

### East Valley, Arizona

I am thankful to be opening M.E.N.D.–East Valley Arizona and serve as the Chapter Director. My husband and I have two living children. Our middle child, Liam James, was delivered prematurely at 19 weeks, surviving just a few hours. I looked for a way to support women like me, and discovered M.E.N.D. online. I instantly felt a connection with other members.



We look forward to holding our first support group in April, so please watch our Facebook group for details.

*Danielle*

### Chicagoland

M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland looks forward to hopefully meeting in person soon. We have been blessed joining with the M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan chapter for support groups via Zoom. We are thankful that in these times we can still find ways to safely remember our babies and support one another.



*Sara*



## About M.E.N.D.

M.E.N.D. is a Christian nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to reach out to those who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death and offer a way to share experiences and information through monthly support groups, this magazine, and our website at [www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org). For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the magazine, contact us at:

M.E.N.D.  
P.O. Box 631566  
Irving, TX 75063  
Phone and Fax: (972) 506-9000  
(Please call before faxing)  
E-Mail: [rebekah@mend.org](mailto:rebekah@mend.org)  
[jennifer@mend.org](mailto:jennifer@mend.org)  
[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)

Donations make the printing and distribution of this magazine possible. Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated and should be sent to the address listed above. If your gift is made in memory of a baby, please include that baby's name (if named), date of birth and/or date of death, the parents' names, and the name of the benefactor. You may also include the cause of death (if known).

M.E.N.D. is a member of  
First Candle/SIDS Alliance  
International Stillbirth Alliance  
Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance



international  
stillbirth alliance



## M.E.N.D. Leadership

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### Magazine

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Co-Editors: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

### Magazine Volunteers

Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott  
and Becky Johnston

## M.E.N.D. Support Groups in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex

Mommies AND Daddies are both welcome at all M.E.N.D. support groups. Unless otherwise noted, all support groups are held at: 800 W. Airport Freeway Irving, TX 75062 (building with black windows, located off 183, between MacArthur and O'Connor). Support groups are held in the building's board room on the first floor. For more information, call (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. chapter support groups are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of every month from 7:30 - 9:00 PM

Daddies group meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec., from 7:30 - 9:00 PM  
Moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups for discussion.

### **New Satellite chapter!**

Dallas/Fort Worth has opened a satellite location to serve families in the eastern area of the metroplex. Support groups are held in Rowlett and are currently meeting in person, rather than via Zoom.

Visit our Facebook group or email [terri@mend.org](mailto:terri@mend.org) for more details.

Subsequent pregnancy group meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday from 7:30 - 9:00 PM  
Led by Marisa Perry: [marisa@mend.org](mailto:marisa@mend.org)  
For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.

# M.E.N.D.

## Chapter Information

### M.E.N.D.–NW Washington

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 6:30 PM  
The Oak Table Cafe'  
3290 NW Mt. Vintage Way  
Silverdale, Washington 98383  
Director: Stacy McGhee  
stacym@mend.org, (360) 662-6161

### M.E.N.D.–SW Missouri

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday at 7:00 PM  
Project H.O.P.E.  
1419 S. Enterprise Ave  
Springfield, Missouri 65804  
Director: Rachel Dell  
rachel@mend.org, (417) 770-0600

### M.E.N.D.–Bryan/College Station

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:30 PM  
Hawthorne Suites  
1010 University Drive East  
College Station, Texas 77840  
Director: Jennie Drude  
jennie@mend.org, (402) 704-6363

### M.E.N.D.–Tulsa, Oklahoma

Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 PM  
Canyon Crossing  
1651 E Old North Rd.  
Sand Springs, Oklahoma 74063  
Director: Cat Markham  
cat@mend.org, (918) 694-4325 (HEAL)

### M.E.N.D.–Columbus, Ohio

Meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, at 6:30 PM  
Paul Mitchell-The School of Columbus  
3000 Morse Road  
(Upstairs Conference Room)  
Columbus, Ohio 43231  
Director: LaTrina Bray  
latrina@mend.org (614) 530-5128

### M.E.N.D.–Chicagoland, Illinois

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 PM  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
202 E Schaumburg Road  
Schaumburg, Illinois 60194  
Director: Sara Hintz  
saraann@mend.org, (630) 267-9134

### M.E.N.D.–Palm Beach, Florida

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 7:00 PM  
Embark Lake Worth  
3927 Hadjes Dr  
Lake Worth, FL 33467  
(close to Turnpike and Lake Worth Rd)  
Director: Jessica Gaddie  
Jessica@mend.org, (561) 843-3509

### M.E.N.D.–MidMichigan

Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday, at 7:00 PM  
Ashman Plaza  
713 Ashman Street  
Midland, Michigan 48640  
Director: Karen Kilbourn  
karen@mend.org, (989) 577-5755

### M.E.N.D.–Denver

Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 PM  
Journey Church  
9009 Clydesdale Rd.  
Castle Rock, Colorado 80108  
Director: Kimberly Adams  
kimberly@mend.org, (720) 593-0166

### M.E.N.D.–San Antonio, Texas

Meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, at 7:00 PM  
8620 N New Braunfels Ave  
San Antonio, Texas 78217  
Director: Katie McClelland  
katie@mend.org

### M.E.N.D.–Lynchburg, Virginia

Meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday, at 7:00 PM  
Motherhood Collective  
at DeWitt Cottage #8, 150 Linden Ave  
Lynchburg, VA 24503  
Director: Melissa Scifres  
melissa@mend.org (434) 221-2357

### M.E.N.D.–Greater Houston Area

Greater Houston Area Main Chapter:  
Meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 7:30 PM  
Lone Star College,  
3200 College Park Dr, Room A228,  
The Woodlands, Texas 77384  
Greater Houston Area Director:  
Stormy Mitchell  
stormym@mend.org, (405) 529-6363

### Satellites in Greater Houston Chapter:

Katy, Texas:  
Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 7:00 PM  
Katy Community Fellowship  
24102 Kingsland Blvd  
Katy, Texas 77494  
Katy Director:  
Kessi Wilhite, kessi@mend.org  
Kingwood Area, Texas:  
Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at 6:30 PM  
6450 Kings Parkway  
Kingwood, Texas 77346  
At Rosemont Assisted Living,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Community Room  
Kingwood Director:  
Nikisha Perry, nikisha@mend.org

### M.E.N.D.–East Valley, Arizona

**OPENING IN APRIL!**  
Meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, at 6:30 PM  
Queen Creek Library  
Edward Abbey room  
21802 S Ellsworth Rd  
Queen Creek, Arizona 85142  
Director: Danielle Radler  
danielle@mend.org, (602) 699-6228

## Online Support

### M.E.N.D.–Online Support Group

Held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 9:00 PM (CST)  
to join, contact  
Director: LaRhesa Johnson  
LaRhesa@mend.org

### Men of M.E.N.D.

Held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 8:00 PM (CST)  
to join, contact,  
Director: Matt McGee  
Matt@mend.org  
Facebook Group:  
[www.facebook.com/groups/MENofMEND](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MENofMEND)

Due to COVID gathering guidelines,  
please follow your chapter on  
Facebook or connect with your local  
Director for updates if your chapter  
will meet in person or virtually.



The Garden of Hope is a place of peace and solace where families can come for a quiet time of reflection, prayer, or even to celebrate the life of their loved one.

The Garden of Hope was established by M.E.N.D. in 2016, and is located on property of Calvary Church in Irving, Texas.

You can remember your loved one by purchasing a brick in the Garden of Hope. Brick purchases can be made at <https://www.mend.org/garden-of-hope>. Bricks purchased by August 15, 2021, will be installed prior to the Walk to Remember in October 2021.



M.E.N.D. Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death  
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USA  
(972) 506-9000  
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# JOIN OUR VIRTUAL 5K



## HERE'S HOW!

### 01

Register online  
[WWW.MEND.ORG](http://WWW.MEND.ORG)

### 02

Receive your race packet. Then-walk, run, bike or jog your 5K between May 2-9



### 03

Upload a photo with your medal and/or t-shirt and share it using #MENDINGMiles5K

### 04

Feel the LOVE!  
All proceeds directly benefit M.E.N.D. and bless grieving families in your community.