

# Brokaw-Mennonite Association Delegate Church Health Tips

November 2009

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## Holidays Without the Ones You Love: Hope for the Journey

“Jesus wept.” This is the shortest verse in the Bible and yet it tells us so much. Jesus mourns for his friend Lazarus who has died, even though he knows he will raise Lazarus from the dead. Jesus recognizes the pain Lazarus’ family is feeling and, by his own tears, he blesses our sorrow.

Approaching holidays can cause problems many weeks before the actual day for those who are grieving the death of a loved one. One way we can comfort those who mourn is to hold a service of remembrance several weeks before the holidays. Providing a memorial service before the holidays can help those who are grieving in a number of ways.

The service provides a place to feel the emotions that are dredged up by memories of the holidays in the company of others who may be facing the same heartaches, or have faced them in the past. People who are grieving during the holidays often feel pressure to suppress the sadness they are feeling. Attending a memorial service provides an outlet for emotions.

A memorial service is a wonderful way for a church community to be a support to those who are grieving. Sharing memories and laughter and tears with one’s church family blesses the bereaved person as he or she honors their loved one. The memorial service honors and blesses the emotions of the grieving person and provides an outlet for expression.

The message of hope is a critical part of a memorial service. Those facing the holidays with grief and sorrow can feel hopeless. A memorial service can restore a sense of hope as our friends support those who are in need. Just as Jesus wept with Lazarus’ family, we can weep with those in our midst who are mourning.

*By: Rev. Kathy Otto  
Second Year Chaplain Resident  
BroMenn Healthcare System*

*“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted”*

*Matthew 5:4*

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The service provides a place to feel the emotions that are dredged up by memories of other holidays in the company of others who may be facing the same heartaches, or have faced them in the past. People who are grieving during the holidays often feel

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