

County-Wide Chaplaincy

Thanks you!

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GRIEF

As our chaplains know, grief is prevalent in our world. Every day, people in our community encounter grief of various kinds. As each of us walk through life, we will have our own stories of grief. And we will also come face to face with other people's stories of grief.

Recently, I found myself thinking about one of my stories of grief, and people during that painful time that stood in that place of grief with me. Some of these people stayed in that grief with me for months while others encountered it for a brief moment but took the opportunity to show me love and kindness. There is one such brief moment that had a huge impact on me that I don't often share, but still think about years later.

In 2018, I experienced the loss of miscarriage and it shook me to the core of my being. I was eleven weeks along, and had become deeply attached to my unborn baby. After realizing something might be wrong, I had an ultrasound to check for any signs of life and see if there were any complications that needed medical attention. Walking into that room, I held onto a small glimmer of hope that the tech would find something and that my baby would be ok. As the tech examined me, she did something I have rarely experienced. She was a total stranger, but somehow, in that moment, she saw me. She saw what I was going through and she did something about it. As she went through the standard procedures of scanning and taking pictures, she took a moment to look me in the eyes and tell me that if she saw anything good that she would immediately put it on the screen for me to see.

As she continued doing her job and the screen stayed dark; she was silent, but I could feel her compassion as my hope faded and my grief took hold. At the end, she did something that I will never forget. She waited until I was dressed and walked me to the door. Before she opened the door for me, she looked at me and she hugged me. She didn't say a word— she just hugged me. She saw my grief and she chose to act. Her act was simple, but it was so powerful to me in that moment. I didn't know her name; I have never seen her again, and if I did, I don't know that I would even recognize her. But her compassion and kindness towards me in one of the darkest times of my life will stay with me forever. She chose to enter into my grief with me. She didn't have to— she easily could have just done her job and let me walk out the door. But for some reason that I will never know, she chose to. And that choice impacted me deeply.

To this day, her choice speaks to me of how we all have opportunities to stand in the places of grief we encounter. Even if it just for a moment, we can greatly impact the life of another by simply seeing and acting. Our actions don't need to be huge gestures or eloquent words— just our loving presence is enough. Simply seeing and showing up. Grief is a hard place to enter into, but treasured are those who choose to show love and kindness when it is needed most.

Our chaplains have chosen to enter into grief every day. They have chosen to be the stranger who stands in the places of grief in our community. And their impact is felt deeply by those experiencing that grief. Our chaplains become a part of the stories of grief in our community. I know this because I have encountered people who have had our chaplains by their side, offering that compassion and comforting presence in their darkest moments; and I can tell you, their presence is felt and appreciated. I have had people I have just met find out who my dad is and tell me their story of grief and how my dad impacted them in that story.

Hearing these stories and remembering my own encourages me to make the choice each day to see, to act, and to love. I hope it does for you as well.

Brigida Diggs

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