

The Messenger

December 12, 2018



MOMENT'S REFLECTION

"As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you." -Isaiah 66:13

I want to share some strategies with those of you who may be struggling with feelings of loss, sorrow and grief this time of year. For a variety of reasons, Christmas time tends to intensify those feelings. I want you to experience the comfort God promises you. To this end, please consider some of the following coping strategies. The feelings of grief won't go away completely. But the following ways may make them easier to bear.

1. Share memories with loved ones. Mayra Mendez, a grief counselor in California writes: *"A loved one's absence becomes more glaring when no one speaks about them. Instead of trying to avoid talking about your deceased loved one, make a point to share memories and stories about them during gatherings of friends and family."* My friend adds: *"Focusing on funny stories and remembering it's OK to laugh and enjoy those memories with one another. This is a totally normal and healthy way to deal with your sadness."*
2. Blend old traditions with new ones. Give yourself permission to do something new this year. Keep some of the old traditions but blend them with new ones. I remember the Christmas after Zach died. Jenny, Megan and I left town Christmas Day. Being at home with the memory of loss was too hard.
3. Cut back on seasonal stressors. Give yourself permission to cut back on your commitments in order to have space to heal. Don't try to ignore the holidays. You can't. But scale back.
4. Connect with others. You may feel like shutting out the world. Don't. Identify some people who bring you comfort and joy. Be intentional about seeking them out. Being with others forces you out of sad, unrelenting introspection.



5. Pay attention to possible unhealthy coping techniques. Grief makes us vulnerable to unhealthy habits such as eating a poor diet, short-changing sleep, or avoiding others. These habits can make us more vulnerable to destructive behaviors such as an over reliance of self-medication. Take care of yourself. Eat well. Sleep well. Maintain a connection with others.

-Dan, Christmas 2018

Memorial Service

There will be a memorial service for Joyce Witt-Boyd on December 15th at 1:00pm here at the church. A reception will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

Chancel Choir Cantata

“Carols of the Season”

Sun. December 16th

9:00am service



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Dec 24th 6:00pm – Family-friendly service

11:00pm – Candlelight service



PLEASE NOTE: From the Church Office . . .

The Church Office will be closed through Thursday, December 27th for the Christmas holiday. Please also note—Dr. Dan Jones will be on vacation Thursday, Dec 27 through Wednesday, Jan 3. Rev. Casey Tanguay will be available for any pastoral needs.

BOARD & CABINET EVENTS 2019

Leadership Commissioning

January 6, during worship

First Cabinet Meeting

January 6, 11:30am-12:30pm in Room 201

First Board Meeting

January 13 11:30am-12:30pm in Room 201

NTA Leader and Learner Event

January 26, 2019 at Northway Christian Church
from 8:30-3:00

Please Note!

No Youth on
23rd and 30th.
Youth Activities
will resume
January 6th,
2019.



Youth Caroling—Dec. 16th

We are going caroling on December 16th! We will depart from the church at 1:30pm for lunch at Cici's, go to Mayberry Gardens to carol, and end our day at Nestle Toll House at Firewheel at 3:30pm.

Please join us this day for Christmas cheer and celebration!



Thank-You to everyone that helped make our first Family ADVENTure a success! A fun time was had by all as we listened to a story about Advent and participated in several Advent activities (Advent Wreaths, Advent Activity Mason Jars, Prayer Ornaments, and Christmas Cards for our Home Group members). Thanks to all our helpers: Judy Ross, Laurie Owens, Teresita Turner, Mike Whalin, Kim Whalin, Travis Dacon, Kathleen Olalde, David Ware, Debbie Fetzer, Rebecca Fetzer, and special thanks to Stephanie Gordon who helped plan, organize, and share the story of Advent. Be sure to share how you used your Advent activities and décor at home! Happy ADVENTures!

Advent Grace, Rev. Casey

Congratulations

Kenneth James Roeger is a candidate for the degree of Doctorate of Nurse Anesthesia Practice

*at Commencement Exercises
Saturday, December fifteenth
Two Thousand Eighteen
Two o'clock in the afternoon
Ed and Rae Schollmaier Arena*



REV. CASEY'S MISSION TRIP

Reflections

Thanks to your donations, prayers, and support, I was able to visit the Lower Rio Grand Valley on a service-learning mission trip with *Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries*. I departed Sunday afternoon December 2nd and returned home Friday evening December 7th. It's amazing how big of an impact just one week can have! Those 5 ¼ days have changed me in ways that I'm not even able to fully process yet. While I have been involved in participating in mission trips to the Lower Rio Grand Valley and Mexico with *SWGSM* since I was about 13 years old, this was an entirely new experience.

A total of **\$6,528.09** was received in donations through the church, *SWGSM's* online giving, my Facebook Fundraiser, and the Amazon Wish List. These donations were received from 26 different individuals/families from First Christian Church Garland, First Christian Church McKinney, and Northway Christian Church. These funds enabled me to purchase many immediate-need gifts while I was there (food for hot meals, snacks, toiletries, hats, gloves, socks, shoelaces, kids toys, diapers, wipes, shoes, jackets, gas for volunteer vehicles, etc.). I was also able to provide numerous gift-cards to Wal-Mart for *Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries* and *Team Brownsville* as they continue their faithful work and service. The remaining money was gifted to *Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries* to be used for refugee care and ministry. This is all in addition to the truck-loads of donations received by Mike's Kids that are in the process of being transported down to the Lower Rio Grand Valley.

During my brief time I was able to learn from and work with many different volunteer organizations (*Team Brownsville, Good Neighbor Settlement House, ACLU, Catholic Charities, SWGSM*). It was beyond inspiring to see the ways that these volunteers selflessly give of themselves day in and day out. Many of the volunteers were working during all of their "free time," in the moments before and after their full-time paying jobs, while many others were working around the clock.

We responded to many of the immediate-needs of people that are "camping" on the bridge in Matamoros, waiting for their opportunity to petition for asylum. We provided hot home-cooked meals, healthy snacks, clothes for cold weather (hats, gloves, socks, jackets), kids toys,



Pictured: Taking dinner and snacks across the bridge

REV. CASEY'S MISSION TRIP

Reflections, continued.

and blankets. I was able to offer basic medical assessment and care for those that needed it. We also met people at the bus stations in Brownsville and McAllen, where they are dropped off from the local detention centers, preparing to travel via bus or plane to their next destination to family or sponsors. Once again, we were able to help with some of the basic needs: assisting with reading maps, offering cell phones to call family or legal aid, determining transportation needs, giving backpacks (they carry their belongings in produce sacks), providing snacks, paper and pen, toiletries, etc. Those that were not departing until the next day were transported to local organizations where they are able to take showers, eat hot meals, receive clothing or other basic needs, and sleep overnight.

These are people from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Cuba, Guinea, Cameroon...I can share all about the geography, logistics, legal processes; however, the most important and impactful aspects of my experience cannot adequately be described. It was the human-to-human contact, the ways that the struggle became real. It was not a news story, not hypothetical. The people were not just strangers from a far-away, unfamiliar country, but were real flesh and blood human beings with families and worries and needs and hopes. I was overwhelmed with how many young children were there. The stories that they shared were indescribable and shocking. Some were so outrageous and devastating they were unbelievable; yet, they are true. Their journeys have been wrought with violence, rape,

fear, illness, death, sex trafficking, drug cartels, gangs. These are not people that are bringing danger and threats to the U.S. (I never felt unsafe or threatened), these are people trying to escape the very issues we want to avoid. In desperation, they do everything within their power to find a better, more secure future for their families, clinging to hope that eventually their journey will have some light, some promise, some future.

I hope to share more about my experience in the coming weeks and months. After the New Year I will offer a presentation during Sunday School. From the bottom of my heart, thank-you for the many ways you support these missions and ministries!



Pictured: Mission Team waiting at the bus stop to assist people seeking asylum when released from local detention centers.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Circle of Fellowship

Erlinda Martinez

Wes Ferrell

Fishers of Families

David Brand

Quentin & Rachel

Scruggs

God's Messengers

Nina Wood

Hands of Faith

Michael Armstrong

The Grapevine

Jennifer Cass

Bettye Davenport

Lynda Simpson

PASTORAL CONCERNS LINE



469-573-1717

A dedicated phone number for your use in contacting a FCCG minister with your pastoral concerns.



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