

# The Compassionate Friends

*The Modesto Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends*

## Supporting Family After a Child Dies

*A self-help organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved families that have experienced the death of a child.*

[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

April 2022

[tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com)

### MONTHLY MEETING

7:00 PM

*Bridge Covenant Church  
2201 Morrill Road  
Riverbank, CA 95367*

*(Corner of Oakdale Rd and Morrill Rd)*

*Please join us at our  
next meeting on*

*Monday, April 11<sup>th</sup>*

*\*Please arrive by 6:50 p.m.  
so we may begin promptly  
at 7:00 p.m.\**

### Upcoming Meetings

May 9<sup>th</sup>

June 13<sup>th</sup>

July 11<sup>th</sup>

Be the things  
you loved most about  
the people who  
are gone.

[tinybuddha.com](http://tinybuddha.com)

Are you taking a vacation? Visiting family? Moving? Helping someone new to TCF to find a chapter?

*Use the link below to find TCF chapters in other cities and states*

Chapter Meeting Locator -  
Compassionate Friends



## Our Mission

*The mission of  
The Compassionate Friends:*

When a child dies, at any age, the family suffers intense pain and may feel hopeless and isolated. The Compassionate Friends provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family.



### MESSAGE LINE

(209)622-6786

*Please leave a message and  
a steering committee  
member will return your  
call.*



### 2022 Steering Committee

**Tracey Parker**  
*Chapter Leader*

**Devon Homme**  
*Secretary*

**Elsie Freeman**  
*Treasurer*

**Janet Neal**  
*Outreach Coordinator*

**Vacant Position**  
*Hospitality & Library*

**Chad Homme**  
*Public Relations*

**Kris Leitner**  
*Newsletter Editor*

**Mike & Suzanne Casity**  
*Website*



We are so pleased to announce that local author, and member of our chapter, Shannon Harris will be giving a short presentation about her new book, Biblical Inspiration for the Bereaved Mother. The book addresses topics of loss of faith, anger with God, loss of identity, lack of purpose, and finding joy for both Christian and non-Christian women. You can find an excerpt from that book in this month's newsletter. Shannon has generously donated a copy to our chapter library and will have additional copies available for those interested. After the presentation, there will be a short Q & A session before we resume our normal meeting format. We ask that you arrive by 6:50 pm on Monday, April 11th so that we may begin the meeting promptly at 7:00 pm. We hope to see you there!!!

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2<sup>nd</sup> Monthly Meeting

Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

Please join us for an online meeting

**Modesto Area TCF Chapter April Meeting**



*Offering Help After A Suicide Death*

Friends for Survival Inc. - Suicide Bereavement, Bereavement Support

*The group meets, by Zoom, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.*

Pre-registration is required @ [Meetings \(friendsforsurvival.org\)](https://www.meetings.friendsforsurvival.org)



TCF 45th National Conference  
Houston, TX • August 5-7, 2022

We are very pleased to welcome back TCF's annual national conference. This year it will be in person! This eagerly anticipated event is for bereaved parents, grandparents, and siblings. Those who attend will find renewed hope, ways of coping with their grief, and friendships made with those who truly understand the painful loss of a child, sibling, or grandchild.

The Compassionate Friends 45th National Conference is a much-needed gift that we give to ourselves! There will be inspirational keynote speakers, numerous workshops with a wide variety of topics, the always memorable candle lighting program on Saturday evening, and will culminate with the transformative Walk to Remember on Sunday morning.

This year's conference will be held at the Marriott Marquis Houston. Reservations can now be made online at TCF's dedicated reservation link. TCF's discounted room rate with Marriott is \$149 per night plus tax. Please note that each attendee will only be able to reserve two rooms. Since the conference begins early on Friday and pre-conference activities are offered on Thursday evening, attendees usually find it beneficial to arrive on Thursday.

Make your hotel reservations now.

### **HOTEL RESERVATIONS**

For those not able to make your reservations online, call the Marriott Reservation line at 877.688.4323. When calling be sure to mention *The Compassionate Friends National Conference* to receive your room rate.



*The Promise*  
Written by: Genesse Bourdeau Gentry

*Your birth brought me star shine, the moon and the sun;  
my wishes, dreams, gathered round my little one.  
My life became sacred, full of promise and light  
wrapped up in the child who brought love at first sight.  
The years of your living filled with laughter and tears,  
excitement, adventure, some boredom, some fears,  
but ended too quickly, ahead of its time  
the loss so horrendous, such heartbreak was mine.  
But from the beginning, one thought rose so clear:  
never would your death erase the years that you were here.  
I would not be defeated or diminished by your death;  
I would hang on, learn to conquer, if it took my every breath.  
For if your death destroyed my life, made both our lives a waste,  
It would deny your life's meaning and all the love you gave.  
I vowed that years of sadness would change, with work and grace,  
to years of happiness, even joy, in which you'd have a place.  
Memories of you, like shining stars in the patterns of my soul,  
are beacons flashing light and love, and with them I am whole.  
In your honor, I live my life, now living it for two;  
Through all my life, you too will live – you lived, you live, you do.*

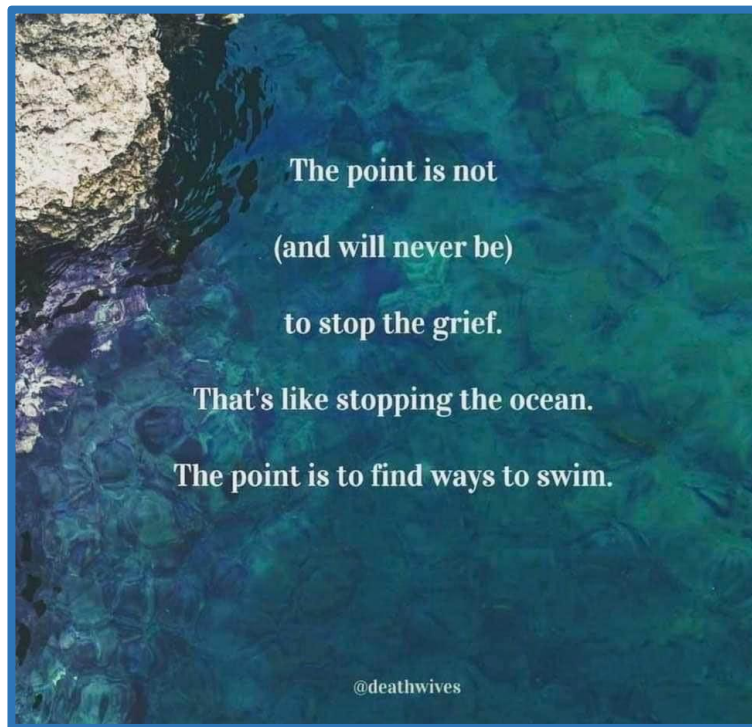
*Submission by: Susan Casity ~ Kristen's Mom*

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*Submission by: Tracey Parker ~ James' Mom*





*Submission by: Elsie Freeman ~ Steven's Mom*

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*Excerpts from ~ Biblical Inspiration for the Bereaved Mother  
Written by: Shannon Harris-Garcia*

*"In the beginning of my grief, my anger toward God was about Him taking my son away. As it evolved over the years it turned into hopelessness. The energy it took each morning to put on the "pretend to be okay" face waned. I lost faith when I tried over and over to find purpose in my "new normal" but kept coming up short. Letdown after letdown revealed that hardly any true friend remained. What would become of my life? Why am I here? What was the point of all this?*

*These questions weren't just little journal entries over coffee in the morning, they were the ghosts of my soul, haunting me from the minute I woke up until the minute I went to sleep. I felt half dead inside. More than half really. I was a shell of a human, wandering aimlessly through each day. I drank until I was sick so that my body matched my mental state. I completely stopped taking care of myself in any real way and no one noticed. As long as my hair was done and my clothes looked nice, I was fine. As long as I never missed work and the business kept thriving, there was no problem. As long as my kids were healthy, I must have been doing a good job. But deep down I was dying, wishing for a sign of life, wishing for a change. Wishing for someone to take away my hurt."*

*"Why me?" Isn't this the question we ask most often? Or, "Why my son?" or "Why my daughter? Perhaps we are all asking the wrong questions.*

*A more realistic question might be, "Why not me?" My ego tells me that my son and I were so incredibly unique and special that him dying is unfair and unjust. My broken heart lies to me and tells me I'm alone and no one understands, but the Bible shows me otherwise. You and I aren't in this alone."*

*Submission by: Shannon Harris-Garcia ~ Anthony's Mom*

*First Encounter*  
*Written by: Sascha Wagner*

*When grief first enters our life,  
it tends to invade us -  
completely and relentlessly.  
We are without comfort, we do not feel pleasure,  
we find no joy.  
We ache in mind and body.  
We feel weak and numb.  
In the deepest core of our being,  
we are ready to accept  
that we will never know happiness again.  
What's more, we feel that this state  
is entirely appropriate, natural and irreversible.  
Nothing can convince us that,  
given time,  
we can learn to live again.*

*But we will.*

*Submission by: Janet Neal ~ Josh's Mom*

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*The Sea of Grief*  
*Written by: Kristina Leitner*

*Crashing into the ominous reef ... shattering & shivering.  
Now directionless.  
My life changed in that moment - in a flicker, an instant ... the entire course of my journey shifted  
in an entirely new & unknown direction.  
I was swept up & carried out into the "Sea of Grief"!  
I had no idea how to navigate the waves. I was pulled out farther & farther ... into its tumultuous  
grasp ... many times feeling alone & with no view of any shore.  
Adrift & smashing into the anguish, regret, pain, sadness, chaos & confusion.  
The "Sea of Grief" is deep & wide.  
Learning to maneuver the ebb & flow of its waves was exhausting ... it still is some days.  
I felt consumed by the power it possesses.  
In those early days, weeks, months & even years ... I wasn't sure if I would or could survive.  
Thankfully the crushing sweeps & swells lessen.  
The expanse becomes less daunting & more manageable ... the crests & currents likewise  
predictable. Periods of calm come to quiet the treacherous waters, the horizon is visible & I am  
carried to shore ... a bit of respite ... time to catch my breath.  
For I know the "Sea of Grief" will pull me out again ... with gratitude I say, "Thankfully I have  
learned to swim!"*

*Submission by: Kris Leitner ~ Grant's Mom*

We quickly find there are no words to describe  
*the experience of losing a child.*

For those who have not lost a child,  
*no explanation will do.*

For those who have,  
*no explanation is necessary.*



**The  
Compassionate  
Friends**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

~ Mary Lingle

## ♥ LOVE GIFTS ♥

Love gifts can be made in memory of your child, sibling or grandchild in any amount. Donations received are used for our annual Candle Lighting Program each December, for sending our monthly newsletter via US mail and for community outreach. We are here to reach out to other bereaved families who may not be aware we are here to lend our support after the death of a child. Please send your tax-deductible donation to the PO Box below.

*In loving memory of all our beloved children, grandchildren & siblings*

### If you wish to make a Love Gift Donation

Please fill out the information below and send with a check to:

**The Compassionate Friends  
Modesto Area Chapter  
PO Box 578713  
Modesto, CA 95357**

☐ Child, ☐ Sibling or ☐ Grandchild \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Passing \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Donation amount \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Your email address \_\_\_\_\_

Your address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like your gift listed in our monthly newsletter in memory of your child, grandchild or sibling?

The amount will remain anonymous Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

The Compassionate Friends is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Check out our closed Facebook page, *The Modesto Area of TCF*. Make a request to join the page and an Administrator will approve your request.

Join us on our Instagram account page. You can find us at – *modestoriverbankarea\_tcf*.

Our Steering Committee wants to provide the best possible support to each of our TCF Chapter members and friends. Please contact a member of the Steering Committee with any concerns you have or any ideas about how our Chapter can be of support to you and others. We're also available if you'd like to talk about your child or some aspect of the challenges of your bereavement journey. You can reach us by email at: [tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com) or by phone at 209-622-6786 or on Facebook.

#### OUR CHAPTER PHONE TREE

If you are struggling and need to talk, we are here for you. We have set up a phone tree and someone is available day or night. You can call or text us at (209)622-6786 and one of the Steering Committee will get back to you as soon as possible. You may also reach someone through the email address, [tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com](mailto:tcfmodestoriverbank@gmail.com), or on our private Facebook page, which you can find by searching for *The Modesto-Riverbank Area Chapter of TCF*.

If you would like to be a part of our phone tree and be available for other members, please contact us through one of the above mentioned methods and we will add your name and number to our list.



Please remember to send in your child's photo so that it can be added to the new TCF Modesto-Riverbank website. Send photos to: [scasity@comcast.net](mailto:scasity@comcast.net)

Visit our website for information and to stay up to date on chapter events.

[www.modestoriverbanktcf.org](http://www.modestoriverbanktcf.org)

Support our chapter by using  
*Amazon Smile*

[smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)

(click on the link above for further information).

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

#### How to turn on AmazonSmile in the mobile app

1

##### Join AmazonSmile

If you are not already an AmazonSmile member, sign up on your web browser. Simply select your favorite charity to start generating donations, at no cost to you.

2

##### Get the app

Download or update to the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app on your phone. You can find it in the [App Store](#) for iOS or [Google Play](#) for Android.

3

##### Turn on AmazonSmile

Open the app and find 'Settings' in the main menu (≡). Tap on 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile on your phone.