



# Rest. Breathe. Remember.

**Greetings to you** from the entire St. Luke's Hospice Team. With the traditional holiday season approaching, we would like to remind you that we are still here for you and your family. We hope this letter finds you warm and well.

## *A challenging season*

Under the best of circumstances winter can be stressful. With less daylight, holiday expectations, and the cold in general, many people feel the pressure of the season. The additional loss of a loved one may only add to the difficulty. As families gather and celebrations proceed, it is natural to feel the absence of a loved one even more so. We trust that some of the following ideas could help you navigate this time with hope and strength.

## *Rest*

- Get plenty of sleep at night and nap or rest as needed.
- Take a break from the usual holiday expectations and obligations. Minimal decorations, fewer cards and less shopping would all be okay this year. In fact, doing things completely differently may be easier, especially the first season following a loss.
- Plan any holiday gatherings ahead of time. Only do what you can handle. Don't allow yourself to be pressured into arrangements you are not comfortable with.

## *Breathe*

- Create a daily routine of deep breathing. Pause to take a few deep breaths when you feel anxious. Consider working them into your routine before bedtime.
- Acknowledge and accept your feelings. Sorrow and joy are both okay. Weep. Laugh. Breathe.
- Be honest with your family and friends. Know what you need, and respectfully explain what will and won't work for you this year.
- Having a "Plan B" in case you feel the need to "escape" from a gathering or event that becomes too difficult may be helpful. Communicating that you may need to leave or change plans with others can relieve some stress as well.
- Spend time outside if you are able. Breathe in the cool air and feel the sun on your face. Being in nature can be very healing.
- Ask for and accept the loving support of family and friends.

*"Darkness deserves gratitude. It is the alleluia point at which we learn to understand that all growth does not take place in the sunlight."*

— Joan Chittister

## Remember

- Embrace your treasure of memories. Talk about your loved one. Share your favorite stories and ask others to do so as well.
- Prepare your loved one's favorite foods to enjoy and share with others.
- Write a card or letter to your loved one.
- Light a candle in remembrance. You could also place battery-operated candles with timers around your home. Set them to come on automatically at dusk to help chase away the darkness.
- Volunteer or make a donation to a cause or charity that was meaningful to your loved one.
- If you have a faith community, ask that your loved one and family be remembered in thought and prayer.
- Pay attention to any children that may be present. Help them understand and honor the loss as best you can. Remembering their needs, and making occasions special for them, may help you as well.
- Gratefully consider the life your loved one lived. Be thankful for the things you shared and the memories you will always have. Don't forget to appreciate the family and friends you still have.



*"Expect to have hope rekindled.  
Expect your prayers to be answered  
in wondrous ways. The dry seasons  
in life do not last. The spring rains  
will come again."*

— Sarah Ban Breathnach

If you or a loved one would like additional information or support, or want to decline future mailings or phone calls, contact St. Luke's Hospice Duluth at **218.249.6100**.

St. Luke's Hillside Clinic  
220 North 6th Avenue East, Duluth  
**218.249.6100**

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