"Endless days of rain" captures the description of living with infertility. Add in the "storm" of a pregnancy or infant loss, and our umbrella with which we try to protect ourselves feels broken and useless. After the storms ease and the rain finally stops, there are "rainbows" from life, yet are sometimes hard to see and even keep in focus as we are still wiping the rain from our eyes. In this issue, moms share journeys of trying to grow their families, yet struggling with infertility and loss.

In this issue...

Feature Article
Rebekah’s journey began with a successful pregnancy, yet then faced secondary infertility until medical issues closed the door for more children.

This Kind of Grief
For many of us, it’s hard to explain the grief we face after loss. Christen captures many of the thoughts running through our heads as she shares her dreams of Hope and Rose.

Mourning Dreams
The Varners’ journey to grow their family has not been easy as they faced many ups and downs, yet as Amy shares her story, she also shares how God continued to be there for her.
September/October Topic
No Answers For Loss
Deadline: July 31, 2024

November/December Topic
Holidays
Deadline: September 30, 2024

Stories, poems, thoughts, and/or feelings regarding these topics are welcome. Submissions must be received by the deadline to be considered for publication in the magazine. Unfortunately, there is not enough room to include all submissions. Choices will be left to the discretion of the editors. Please send any submissions to our Magazine Editor, Jennifer Harrison, at jennifer@mend.org. Any submission printed in our magazine will also be posted to our website indefinitely. Because our magazines are posted online, please understand your name will be attached to your submission when searched on the Internet.

Letters to the Editor should be sent to jennifer@mend.org. All letters submitted to the editor are subject to be published in future issues, both in the print version and online, unless a letter's author expressly requests it not be published.

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Birthday Tributes: M.E.N.D. publishes heavenly birthday tributes in the corresponding magazine. Tributes must be submitted via the online form at www.mend.org.

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Primary infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after one year of trying to get pregnant without the use of birth control. Secondary infertility can be described as the inability to get pregnant or carry a baby to term after you’ve been pregnant before and had a baby without any trouble. That’s my label – Secondary Infertility.

All three of Byron’s and my babies were conceived the first month we tried. Our first son was born full-term but with the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck three times. Today he is a healthy married daddy of our two precious grandsons, Elias and Samuel. Our second baby, Jonathan was stillborn at 29 ½ weeks due to a cord accident. His umbilical cord was snaked around his head, his body, and his left leg.

I was diagnosed with a kidney disease shortly after our wedding, and after having two babies, I was strongly advised NOT to get pregnant again because of the kidney disease. My doctors told me we could discuss another pregnancy if and after I got a kidney transplant. This circumstance – not being able to get pregnant because of a health issue – is not listed in any of the infertility definitions I have read, but it sure should be! To know I COULD get pregnant but CAN’T was devastating! Especially after a heart-wrenching stillbirth.

Almost five years after Jonathan’s death, I did have a very successful kidney transplant. At that time, all I could think about was, “I got the new kidney, so when can I get pregnant again?!”. Eighteen long months after the transplant, we were finally given the “yellow light”, as I say, to have another baby. Just like the first two times, we conceived right off the bat. This baby was going to be the happily ever after to our sad story. But it wasn’t to be. Ten weeks into the pregnancy, little Baby Mitchell died. I had many complications with the miscarriage which included two D&Cs, two hospital stays and had to have triple IV antibiotics for several days. My hcg levels took weeks to get to zero, and I almost had to take a round of chemo to get all the “products of conception” to stop multiplying (side note: I am pretty sure I had a partial molar pregnancy, though no one ever officially told me that).

As a transplant recipient, I must keep my immune system suppressed so my body doesn’t attack the kidney, thinking it is an enemy. Thus, I take a handful of different medications every day to ensure my immune system doesn’t wake up. All these necessary meds could have resulted in my loss, but there wasn’t much research on the medicine to review because, at that time, very few female transplant patients risked a pregnancy. Therefore, I was given the red light by my doctors. No more pregnancies. No more babies. Be grateful for the son we did manage to create and keep.

I was devastated. Not only did I want a baby to hold in my arms, but I deeply wanted to give my husband another child and our son a sibling. I’m from a family of six kids. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would only produce one living kid who would essentially be an only child. And for reasons I can’t explain, we never felt called to adopt.

I grieved all over again. Then I committed my desire, well, my obsession, to have another baby to the Lord. I begged Him to take away this longing and help me to be happy with what I did have. It wasn’t a quick resolve, but over time I thankfully got there. I will always be sad we couldn’t and didn’t have more children, but finally the ache in my heart eased. Yes, there have certainly been triggers along the way that have put me right back in a sad state for a bit. But for the most part, after many years, just as the apostle Paul wrote, I have learned the secret to being content. And that’s my prayer for you as you walk this journey of infertility after loss:

"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.
I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.
I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."

Philippians 4:11-13
Happy 7th Birthday, Zoey!

How we wish you could be here with us. We will always wonder what you would want at your party. We hope you celebrate with all our loved ones in heaven. I bet you will have a great day. You will never be forgotten and always loved. Watch over us and continue to send us signs you are with us. Love you always, sweetness!

If there ever comes a day when we can’t be together, keep me in your heart.

I’ll stay there forever. —Winnie the Pooh

Zoey Von Martinez
August 16 — December 16, 2017
Multiple abnormalities
Parents: Vanessa Hernandez and Eli Martinez
Siblings: Cecilia, Deja and Peyton

Happy 1st Birthday, Mia!

Happy heavenly birthday, Mia. We love you so much and miss you every minute of every day. We wish more than anything you were here with us, but thank you for sending butterflies and beautiful sunsets to remind us you are with us. Until we see each other again, baby girl.

Love,
Mama, Dada,
Big brother Nico and Furry big brother Bali

Mia Sofia Villarnovo
July 9, 2023
Premature birth due to HELLP syndrome
Parents: Andrea and Michael Villarnovo
Big brother: Nico

Happy 1st Birthday, Waylon!

Happy 1st birthday, sweet boy! We know you are having a good time with Vinny and Pawpaw Mac. You will be in our hearts forever! We love you so much and can’t wait to hold you in heaven!

Waylon David McAnally
Stillborn August 11, 2023
Parents: Kruz and Audrey McAnally

Happy 16th Birthday, Daniel!

Happy 16th heavenly birthday to our sweet baby boy! We love and miss you so, so much. I often sit on the patio, gazing up to heaven and wonder who you would be today. Who would you look like? What personality would you have? Would you be outgoing and funny like Daddy or shy like Mommy? I can just picture you and your nephew, Emmitt, playing hide-and-seek in heaven with Grandpa Joe - just like your sister used to do. You are loved, missed and thought of every single day! Until that sweet day when I hold you in my arms again, I am sending tons of love, hugs and kisses to you in heaven.

Daniel Nicholas Woodard
August 31, 2008
Premature birth with complications
Also remembering
Grandson Emmitt Alan Thornbury
September 18, 2015
Trisomy 18
Parents: Joe and Danette Woodard
Siblings: Kristina, David, Douglas and Nicole

Happy 19th Birthday, Ryland!

It’s hard to believe so many years have gone by.
You are loved and missed.
Until we see you again...

Ryland Michael Dixon
Stillborn August 12, 2005
Parents: Bryan and Kelly Dixon
Siblings: Leighanne and Conor

Happy 18th Birthday, Alivia!

Alivia, we can’t believe it has been 18 years since you were born. We see all the pictures of kids graduating from high school, prom, senior photos, trips to visit schools and getting all the dorm room items, and think how that should be us.

This year has been harder because of that, but we do know you are well and being taken care of until we see you again. All of the dreams we had for you cannot compare to the experience you have every day in heaven.

Happy 18th birthday, young lady!
We love and miss you so much,
Mom, Dad and Jaxson.

Alivia Elizabeth-Grace Walker
July 24, 2006
Incompetent cervix
Parents: Liz and Robert Walker
Brother: Jaxson and Lauren
Happy 2nd Birthday, James!
We love you and miss you every day. We are so thankful for your life and everything you have taught us. Our hearts are sewn closer together because of you, little one. Rest in peace.

James Douglas Watkins
June 21, 2022
Unknown cause
Parents: Ainsley and Karl Watkins
Siblings: Peter, Amelia and Nathan

Happy 20th Birthday, Jordyn!
Happy heavenly birthday, Jordyn!
~The BIG 20~
I miss you every day, twin! I always think about the "could-have-beens," but I know you are guiding and watching over us. We love you so much!
Love always,
Jada, Mom, Dad and JR

Jordyn Lynae Johnson
July 13-16, 2004
Cord problem
Parents: Bruce and Debra Johnson
Siblings: Jada (twin) and Bruce Johnson Jr.

Happy 1st Birthday, Baby Smith!
I will forever miss my favorite "could-have-been," I think about you every day. Not a day goes by I don’t wish you were still in my stomach. I miss the feeling of you growing. I will forever love you.

Baby Smith
Miscarried August 2, 2023
Mommy: Darleen Hardesty

Happy 10th Birthday, Trinity!
Oh Trinity Ann, our beautiful blue-eyed angel, 10! Double digits! Daddy and I have no idea how that is possible. Happy 10th heavenly birthday, sweetheart. We would give anything to celebrate with you, but we will be ready when the time comes. We love and miss you more than words will ever explain. Your brother and sister love you. We love you mostest. We will hold you in our hearts until you are in our arms again. Happy 10th birthday, baby girl.
Love,
Mommy, Daddy, Bubba and Sissy

Trinity Ann Faram
August 1, 2014
Placenta abruption
Parents: Elizabeth and Bradley Faram
Siblings: Emma and Brentley

M.E.N.D. is humbly grateful for the generous donations which enabled us to donate a new Caring Cradle to Methodist Dallas Hospital. This cradle will give loss parents more time with their precious baby before having to say goodbye.

M.E.N.D. leadership traveled to Chicago to represent and share information at the PLIDA International Perinatal Bereavement Conference. Leaders shared the services M.E.N.D. offers to hundreds of healthcare providers from all over the country and also learned valuable information to take back to our chapters.
Book Review

“As I Lay Weeping: Where Sorrow and Suffering Meet Faith and Hope”
Written by Lindsay Higdon

Lindsay Higdon’s book, “As I Lay Weeping: Where Sorrow and Suffering Meet Faith and Hope” is a book for anyone experiencing pregnancy or infant loss. The author shares how hope and constant faith helped her in the loss of her twins and a subsequent pregnancy loss. Early in her grief, she made the choice of trusting God when it did not make sense, instead of being angry with God and turning away. Throughout the book, scripture verses and Biblical stories are interspersed along with her personal stories and reflections to stay faithful to God even when grief-stricken and missing her babies. Each chapter ends with her own personal prayer journal entries. While reading, I often prayed them for myself. Lindsay gives hope when it is needed, to hold fiercely onto God in the deepest of heartache. This book can be used as a devotional as there were so many takeaways to reflect on one small thing at a time, such as the little word ‘and.’ She wrote that “pain and sadness can live simultaneously with joy and peace in Christ” (pg. 115). This book brings hope and comfort in every page to hold onto when hearts are broken after experiencing the loss of a precious baby. I encourage anyone seeking comfort to read this book. It is my prayer that you hold onto God and trust in Him, even when days are difficult.

Verses from the book to give you hope today:
Lamentation 3:19-25
Psalm 40:1-3
Psalm 62:1-2, 5-8
1 Peter 1:6-7

Reviewed by Becky Luedtke,
M.E.N.D. – Chicagoland Chapter Director
Two articles on grief showed up as I scrolled news headlines. Very good reads, but they fall short because they don’t address the kind of grief that comes with the loss of your unborn child who you never got to see alive on the outside of you. It’s not a loss that leaves a void filled with memories. With miscarriage and stillborn death, you have no memories of your child. You can’t remember what they looked like because you never got to meet them.

With our first baby, we never even heard his heartbeat although I saw him moving on two separate ultrasounds. On the second one, I could see his little heart beating rapidly yet he measured just one week earlier than when he died. It was during week 17 that I thought maybe I was starting to feel flutters, but I now know he had already been gone for three or four weeks at that point. For the rest of my life, I will know my womb was his tomb for a month, and I had no idea.

This type of death even took away our right to know when it happened or why it happened. Death came silently - but in the night or in the day? We will never know. Where was I when it came? Was I watching our girls opening their Christmas presents? Was I laughing or complaining about something trivial? Was I worrying about what we would name him? Was I mad at Adrian or yelling at the girls? Was I talking about him? Was I praying?

This type of death steals all your hopes for their future. It is a robbery of what might have been. A forced sort of reverse amnesia of a lifetime of memories that never had a chance. It’s like a bird swooping down to steal your only French fry right from your hand or the wind snatching away your balloon, but then it’s nothing at all like either of those because your baby wasn’t a slice of fried potato or a crinkly balloon on a string. But you’re left staring at your empty hand or at the sky where the balloon you just held is getting smaller and smaller and smaller, and you have to accept your helplessness. There’s no getting it back. The wind came and took it away.

It’s a constant wondering what they would have looked like or become. How would they have laughed? What color would their eyes have been? Your mind has nothing but a blank canvas and your imagination constantly feels inadequate for the task. Your only experience with them was knowing they existed inside of you and following their development on an app that compared their size to fruit. The app last told me my baby was the size of an orange. But, he was not a round, orange ball when I held his lifeless, precious body on that blanket. And all that is left on that blanket now is a stain shaped like a hash-brown from McDonald’s.

I see him in our daughters now and in my husband, too. I see him in the stroller that just passed me in the grocery store and in the cute baby video that popped up uninvited on my screen. I see him running naked through the house after his bath and then getting scooped up giggling as Daddy growls on his round little tummy. I see him mad at his sister for taking his cookie, and I feel him asleep on my chest. I see him snuggled under blankets between his sisters on the couch and working in the garage with Daddy. I see him walking to his kindergarten classroom all by himself and then walking across the stage at his college graduation. I hear him saying, “Mom, relax….” and then hugging me so hard he picks me up off my feet because he’s taller than me now. And then, I close the book and remember these aren’t memories. They were dreams.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

Pictured is a green and yellow butterfly that big sister Sofina made for me on the day I miscarried our little Rose. She didn’t even know I was pregnant, and we have opted, for now, to not tell her about the second miscarriage. She took it very hard with her baby brother and asked lots of detailed questions. We don’t feel she is ready to know about this one yet. But, I was completely blown away when she ran up to me so happy to show me what she had made.
My husband, Robert, and I were blessed with the birth of our daughter, Sarah, in 2015. My labor and delivery with her was a very long and scary experience. Just minutes after my 9 pounds and 2 ounces baby was born, I began to hemorrhage, ultimately losing half of my blood and requiring bags of blood to be transfused. When I was supposed to be ooo-ing and aww-ing over my little bundle of joy, I was struggling to put one foot in front of the other, unable to bathe myself or go to the restroom on my own.

Because of my own recovery after our daughter was born, I was petrified of getting pregnant and potentially having a repeat of my labor and delivery experience. My husband and I had always wanted to adopt, so we took this experience as God's clear sign that the way our family would grow next would be through adoption.

We knew that private adoption would cost at least $20,000; money we didn’t have. So, we decided to go through Children's Division. We had the blessing of fostering a sweet baby boy from the time he came home from the hospital until shortly after his first birthday. Saying goodbye to him was excruciating, and I’d be remiss if I didn’t take this opportunity to ask you to pray for his emotional and physical safety and ultimately salvation.

When he left our home, we decided we’d find a way to pay for a private domestic adoption. We spent hours applying for grants and ultimately received a few and were able to cover the cost. Waiting was difficult, and continually being rejected by expectant mothers was defeating. We didn’t understand why we weren't being chosen. After two years of waiting, we decided to end that journey in 2022. Doesn’t God love adoption and children? Why wouldn’t He honor our desire to adopt and grow our family with the hope of adding to the Kingdom of God?

Prior to all this, in 2018, I had been experiencing intense, unexplained pelvic pain. After a few exams and specialized ultrasounds, I received a diagnosis of uterine fibroid and PCOS. I realized that this was a big reason why I hadn’t gotten pregnant in the three years since Sarah’s birth. At this time, I began to wrestle with the thought of a hysterectomy, but my husband and I didn’t feel reassured that it was the right plan for us yet.

In the spring of 2022, I started having pelvic pain again. I was annoyed when I called my OB/GYN, because she said to take an at-home pregnancy test. I knew I wasn’t pregnant. I hadn’t been pregnant in six and a half years. But I went to WalMart to buy the test so I could get a negative result and prompt her to think an appointment was justified. On the morning of April 6, 2022, I was shocked when I took a pregnancy test, and it was positive. I don’t even know if shocked was the right word. Dumbfounded? In absolute disbelief? Unable to think clearly?

I immediately went to the doctor. Neither my OB/GYN nor my primary care physician could see me, but I was able to get in with a nurse practitioner at the clinic. She took a urine sample and confirmed pregnancy, but I was in so much pain that it prompted me to know that something just wasn’t right. They took blood work and showed elevated HCG levels – yay! But I still didn’t feel well. The next day I threw up, and it wasn’t a morning sickness type thing. It was throwing up out of excruciating pain. The day after that, I did more blood work, and it showed the HCG level was going down. It confirmed what I already knew in my heart: Our time with Noel was brief, but this baby’s life would impact my life forever.

I had never experienced a miscarriage before, and everything I knew about it came from movies and TV shows. I could have never imagined how long of a journey it would be physically, mentally, and emotionally. I ended up having an injection of Methotrexate a month after we confirmed the loss of baby Noel because my body was not

Baby Cole joined their family for such a short period and was returned to his biological family, creating a different kind of loss for not only Robert and Amy, but Sarah, too.
recovering. This failed to work, and I went on to bleed uncontrollably for months. I spent most of the day in bed. Finally, in July, three months after this all started, I took daily Progesterone pills twice a day for 30 days. Four months after the positive pregnancy test, I had finally recovered physically, but the mental anguish was still excruciating.

I had a dear friend who had gone through multiple pregnancy losses, and I turned to her often during this time. She validated my thoughts and feelings: Noel’s existence did matter, medical staff needed to be more sensitive, I would find other women who could relate to me (Hello, M.E.N.D.!), and God was still good. Her constant nearness from hundreds of miles away was a lifeline. She mailed me spa items, a board game to play with my husband, a book to go through about mourning the child I never got to meet, and words of encouragement.

I want to be what she was to me for you. If we could sit together on my couch, sipping coffee, and looking eye-to-eye I would say these words: God hasn’t forgotten you. He loves you even when it doesn’t feel like it. God will turn your mourning to dancing. Your infertility experience isn’t easier or harder whether or not it has included pregnancy loss and death.

Sometimes I feel like I should “just be thankful I have one child.” And I am. I am incredibly grateful for Sarah’s life. But teenager me had envisioned a life with six kids. I thought I’d be the mom with the van. I’d enjoy pregnancy and look cute doing it. That isn’t the life God had planned for me, and it’s okay to mourn the death of a dream. But I also see God’s goodness in His plan for my life. This is the life He planned for me, and He calls it good.

The loss of Noel and subsequent medical complications confirmed what I had mulled over for four years: I was ready for a hysterectomy. I had a few more appointments with my OB/GYN to answer my questions and really confirm that my husband and I felt good about this decision. We booked the surgery, but then my doctor ended up needing to personally have surgery and recovery, so the date got pushed back. I finally had my surgery on December 13, 2023, five and a half years after initially considering it, and have never looked back. It was the right decision for me. I ended up having more noncancerous tumors in my uterus than they had realized, and I also had growths on my fallopian tubes.

My recovery went well, and the addition of pelvic floor physical therapy has left me feeling like a new woman. I do still have times where I wish this wasn’t my lot in life, but I spend most of my time looking forward to a bright future, knowing that God has brought me through dark times I never could have imagined, and that when the storms of life return, and I know they will, God will hold me in His loving arms just like He holds Noel.

The Weaver
by Grant Colfax Tullar

My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me.
I cannot choose the colors
He weaveth steadily.

Oft’ times He weaveth sorrow;
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside.

Not ‘til the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas
And reveal the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver’s skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

He knows, He loves, He cares;
Nothing this truth can dim.
He gives the very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.
We had 396 registered participants in our M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K this year! Your support raised $2400 in donations and more than $6000 in profit to our chapters. We loved seeing all your photos across the country as you gathered to “Take Steps For Those Who Never Did.” Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MENDingMiles5K for next year’s event.
Dismantled Self

Written by Erin Ward
Mommy to Autumn Rae

A few months after my daughter, Autumn Rae Ward, was unexpectedly stillborn at 39.2 weeks on October 20, 2020, I wrote this poem about those painful early days of nightmares, dissociation, and loss of identity. I had arrived at the hospital for delivery with the car seat, newborn clothes, and all the works, only to discover she had passed away due to a knot in the cord earlier that day. We had to inform our older boys, then ages 9, 6, and 3, that they would not get to meet their baby sister they had been excitedly preparing for. It’s been 3.5 years of processing, healing and welcoming another wonderful healthy baby, but the pain remains a close companion. I hope this poem will help let others know they are not alone.

Not enough
Too much
Apathetic
Disconnected
Shattered pieces
Dismantled self

I set some parts on a shelf
Pick this up and try it on
Misshaped shards now don’t belong
Puzzle pieces with wrong edges
Interactions feel like ledges
Nothing comforts
Rarely sleep
Her sweet face I will keep
All tucked in, what will I see
An empty car seat
Will haunt me
Dark waters and big waves crashing
Although asleep I’m still rehashing
Remembering her baby feet
Disbelieving
No heartbeat
Never being there in time
To rescue her and make her mine

Sun is up, still unrested
Patience ready to be tested
Torn down I am a city
Empty streets full of self pity
Rebuilding somewhat day by day
Being judged and that’s okay
Making comments with few questions
Some will offer their suggestions
Try to relate share how they feel
Forcing me to watch their reel
Notice I dissociate
Won’t be whole at this rate
Putting on my many faces
Survival mode in unsafe spaces
Inching forward, someone new
She’s not perfect, she’ll have to do
Loves her children and her life
Thankful and a happy wife
Could this be a note of hope
The other end of a rope?
Who will she be as her full self...
Will her faith come off the shelf?
Faith in INFertility

Written by Dr. Latazia Stuart (DoctorTazz)

Isaiah 61:3 (NIV): "...and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor."

I was just over 21 weeks pregnant on a business trip. I was just sitting in a boardroom meeting. Yet, there I was, alone, just me and my babies in the back of the ambulance in snowy Ohio. But the word of God on repeat in my head kept whispering, “I am with you always.” Where are they taking me? What is happening? Are my babies okay? I was cool as a cucumber on the outside, but my brain was going a mile a minute, gravely concerned for my babies. I wasn’t in any pain, but I was truly confused by what just happened. I could still feel my babies moving inside of me, and the paramedics said all my vitals were okay. So, what just happened? As I was lifted out of the ambulance and carried into the emergency room, I remember a doctor stating they were using a strip to test the fluid on me to determine whether I had peed myself or whether it was amniotic fluid from my babies. Unfortunately, it was amniotic fluid, and they moved me right away to an ultrasound room. There were my babies! They were there on the screen once more, happy and rolling around, living their best life inside me, and they looked great. My precious Azaria and DJ, both looked fine.

Little did I realize, this would be the final time I would see my babies on an ultrasound, as the next time I would see them was when an L&D nurse would roll them into my room two days later in a little hospital bassinet with cute little knitted caps swaddled tightly in hospital blankets, so I could hold them at least once before they were taken away to be cremated.

The innermost parts of my soul were shattered as I held and whispered to my babies how much I loved them.

It was my hope to never experience such heartbreak again, especially after the long infertility journey my husband and I endured with repeated failed fertility treatments. Yet, there we were, finally pregnant again, but only to hear the doctor say, “I’m sorry, there is no heartbeat.” Time literally stood still. My heart began to race; it felt like 1,000 beats per minute. I firmly replied, although I know my voice was quivering, “Please check again.” He turned the screen toward us and moved the probe around and around. This time, not only did we not hear a heartbeat, we did not see any movement. My baby was not moving.

The heartbreak of pregnancy losses left me with so many questions:

- Why did that happen?
- Why me?
- What did I do?
- What caused this to happen again?
- Will I ever be a mom someday?
- God, did you forget me?

And the list goes on and on.

It had been many years of trying to get pregnant and previous failed IVF attempts that I embarrassingly kept a secret from family and friends. My faith was tested to the brink and many times left me wondering if God had truly forgotten me. However, in His divine wisdom, God had a Plan with a Purpose for my Pain.

While I fast-forward through most of my journey I detail in my book The Secrets of Faith INfertility, it would be several more years of repeated failed fertility treatments and taking a "real break" from it all before I would once more experience the joyful joy of being pregnant. Just as I had finally crossed the timeline threshold of losing my twins in my first pregnancy, I began to experience excruciating abdominal pain. This pain would bring me to have two separate hospital admissions, with the second admission resulting in my living in the high-risk maternal-fetal unit for the next 70+ days.

While the initial humanistic fears surfaced, it was during this time my faith in God was recharged and strengthened to extraordinary levels where God put His super on my natural, as detailed in my book The Secrets of Faith INfertility.

The reality is that despite the challenges of infertility and loss, God reminded me I was not forgotten, and the beauty is You are Not forgotten too!

A year prior to this hospitalization and becoming pregnant, I wrote in my journal Isaiah 43:19, which clearly spoke to me, saying, “God is about to make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” It was as if God was speaking to me directly.
regarding my pregnancy losses. Despite everything that even looked as grim as a desert, He was going to make a way to see me through it.

I also penned in my journal that day Hebrews 10:35–36 (NIV), which said, “So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.” “But the righteous person will live by his faithfulness,” Habakkuk 2:4 (NIV).

With a whole lot of prayer, crazy faith, and endless hope alongside exceptional care, I gave birth to my beautiful rainbow baby girl. I have since also delivered my twin sons at 31 weeks, who, despite spending several weeks in the NICU, are rambunctious healthy boys.

It had taken several years to heal from losing my precious babies, who I will never forget, and many years to move past the shame of my inability to have children. However, I have finally dismissed the blame and shame of my infertility and pregnancy losses. Now, I am on a journey to bring hope to other mothers who are living these experiences through my book and my nonprofit Fertility Empowerment International, Inc. (FEI), with a mission of building hope, breaking silence, and bringing empowerment to navigating fertility issues.

I want to leave you with a message of hope from the scriptures: “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1, NIV). No matter how difficult the journey may seem, remember that faith and hope can carry you through the darkest times. Trust in God’s plan and know you are never forgotten. Keep believing, keep hoping and keep trusting.

Dr. Latazia Stuart (Doctor Tazz) is a global fertility advocate, speaker, coach and best selling author of *The Secrets of Faith INfertility: An Untold Journey of Faith, Fertility, and Favor*. According to the World Health Organization 1 in 6 persons are globally impacted by infertility, and 1 in 4 persons experience a pregnancy loss as reported by the Center for Disease Control. Doctor Tazz advocates the need to break the shame and silence to normalize fertility issues especially in Christian and minority communities. Her framework helps leaders and individuals navigate fertility challenges in the workplace, religious communities and social settings through customized sensitivity and wellness programs. To connect with Doctor Tazz for speaking engagements, or conducting organizational sensitivity workshops, email tazz@doctortazz.com. For more information or to support the nonprofit initiatives of Fertility Empowerment International Inc. (FEI) email info@fertilityempowerment.org.

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**Book Review**

The Secrets of Faith INfertility – an Untold Journey of Faith, Fertility and Favor

by Dr. Latazia Stuart

A few months ago, I purchased this book on Amazon in order to learn more about the woman we invited to speak at our annual Walk to Remember. Once I finally got a chance to pick up the book to read it, I couldn’t put it down, and read the whole book in one sitting. Dr. Latazia (Tazz) Stuart, shares her personal faith journey of years of infertility, the loss of three babies, her fears, and even her battle of embarrassment over her and her husband not having living children after more than a decade of marriage. The book is full of faith, scripture, and prayer. Although her story is primarily her road of fertility challenges, it certainly covers her grief and sorrow over her losses, as well as her strength and courage to keep pressing on. As you read Dr. Tazz’s book, as a loss mom, you’ll undoubtedly relate to her experiences even if infertility is not part of your story.

Hear Dr. Tazz in person at our annual Walk to Remember on October 5, 2024, in Irving, TX. Registration will go live on our website at the end of August.

Reviewed by Rebekah Mitchell

M.E.N.D. – President/Founder
Infertilidad y Pérdida

Artículo de Presidente y Fundadora, Rebekah Mitchell,
Mamá de Jonathan Daniel y bebé Mitchell

La infertilidad primaria se define como la incapacidad de concebir después de un año de intentar quedar embarazada sin el uso de métodos anticonceptivos. La infertilidad secundaria se puede describir como la incapacidad de quedar embarazada o tener un bebé hasta el término después de haber estado embarazada antes y haber tenido un bebé sin ningún problema. Esa es mi etiqueta - Infertilidad secundaria.

Los tres bebés de Byron y míos fueron concebidos el primer mes que lo intentamos. Nuestro primer hijo nació a término pero con el cordón umbilical enrollado alrededor de su cuello tres veces. Hoy es un padre casado y saludable de nuestros dos preciosos nietos, Elías y Samuel. Nuestro segundo bebé, Jonathan, nació sin vida a las 29 semanas y media debido a un accidente del cordón umbilical. Su cordón umbilical rodeaba su cabeza, su cuerpo y su pierna izquierda.

Me diagnosticaron una enfermedad renal poco después de nuestra boda y, después de tener dos bebés, me recomendaron encarecidamente que NO volviera a quedar embarazada debido a la enfermedad renal. Mis médicos me dijeron que sólo podríamos hablar de otro embarazo después de que me hicieran un trasplante de riñón. Esta circunstancia (no poder quedar embarazada debido a un problema de salud) no figura en ninguna de las definiciones de infertilidad que he leído, ¡pero seguro que debería estarlo! Saber que PODRÍA quedar embarazada pero NO PUEDO fue devastador! Especialmente después de un nacimiento sin vida desgarradora.

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Casi cinco años después de la muerte de Jonathan, tuve un trasplante de riñón muy exitoso. En ese momento, lo único que podía pensar era: “Tengo el nuevo riñón, ¿cuándo podré volver a quedar embarazada?”. Dieciocho largos meses después del trasplante, finalmente nos dieron “luz amarilla”, como digo, para tener otro bebé. Al igual que las dos primeras veces, concebimos desde el principio. Este bebé iba a ser el feliz para siempre de nuestra triste historia. Pero no fue así. Diez semanas después del embarazo, el pequeño Baby Mitchell murió. Tuve muchas complicaciones con el aborto espontáneo: dos dilataciones y legrado, dos hospitalizaciones, antibióticos triples por vía intravenosa. Mis niveles de hcg tardaron semanas en llegar a cero, y casi tuve que tomar una ronda de quimioterapia para que todos los “productos de la concepción” dejaran de multiplicarse (nota al margen: estoy bastante segura de que tuve un embarazo molar parcial, aunque nadie me dijo eso oficialmente).

Como receptor de un trasplante, debo mantener mi sistema inmunológico suprimido para que mi cuerpo no ataque al riñón, pensando que es un enemigo. Por lo tanto, tomo varios medicamentos diferentes todos los días para asegurarme que mi sistema inmunológico no se despierte. Todos estos medicamentos necesarios podrían haber resultado en mi pérdida, pero no había mucha investigación sobre el medicamento para revisar porque, en ese momento, muy pocas pacientes femeninas trasplantadas corrían riesgo de quedar embarazada. Por lo tanto, mis médicos me dieron luz roja. No más embarazos. No más bebés. Agradece al hijo que logramos crear y conservar.

Estaba devastada. No sólo quería tener un bebé en mis brazos, sino que también deseaba profundamente darle a mi esposo otro hijo y a nuestro hijo un hermano/a. Soy de una familia de seis hijos. Nunca en mis sueños más locos pensé que solo produciría un niño vivo que esencialmente sería hijo único. Y por razones que no puedo explicar, nunca nos sentimos llamados a adoptar.

Lamenté de nuevo. Entonces le entregué al Señor mi deseo, bueno, mi obsesión, de tener otro bebé. Le rogué que me quitara este anhelo y me ayudara a ser feliz con lo que tenía. No fue una resolución rápida, pero con el tiempo, afortunadamente, lo logré. Siempre estaré triste porque no pudimos y no tuvimos más hijos, pero finalmente el dolor en mi corazón se alivió. Sí, ciertamente ha habido factores desencadenantes en el camino que me han vuelto a poner en un estado de tristeza por un tiempo. Pero en general, después de muchos años, tal como escribió el apóstol Pablo, he aprendido el secreto para estar contento. Y esa es mi oración para usted mientras recorre este viaje de infertilidad después de una pérdida:

“No digo esto porque esté necesitado, porque he aprendido a estar contento cualesquiera que sean las circunstancias. Sé lo que es tener necesidad y sé lo que es tener abundancia. He aprendido el secreto de estar contento en cualquier situación, ya sea que esté bien alimentado o hambriento, ya que vivo en abundancia o en necesidad. Todo esto lo puedo hacer en Aquel que me fortalece”.

Filipenses 4:11-13
Lonnie Jr Poem

By Rachel Barber
Mommy to Lonnie James Wolfe Jr
M.E.N.D. – St Louis Chapter Director

Some days I’ll want to talk
Some days I’ll want to cry
Just because I accept what happened

Doesn’t mean I understand why

The pain is unexplainable
But the love is so real
The shock is unbelievable
I’m not sure how I feel
Life sometimes happens
And it’s out of our hands,
But I’m glad I know
It’s all in God’s plan

M.E.N.D.

In Loving Memory

Levi Samuel Bowmer
April 19, 2013
Trisomy 13 & Tetralogy of fallot with absent pulmonary valve
Parents: Jenae and Sam Bowmer
Sisters: Evie and Val
Given by grandmother Jaimi Wilkins

Abigail Grace Crump
July 1, 2003
Trisomy 18
Given by parents Gerald and Jaimie Crump and little sisters Cami and Karli

Riley and Parker Davis
November 14, 2006
Premature birth
Given by parents Rob and Cheryl Davis and siblings Annalise and Owen

Olivia Sophia Donnelly
Miscarried February 24, 1997

Jessie Marie Donnelly
Stillborn February 12, 1998

Levi Ernest Donnelly
Miscarried May 16, 2000
Given by parents Joe and Genevieve Donnelly and siblings Moirah, Isaac, Aiden and Aunyah

Paislee Ann Frette
April 4-5, 2012
Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome
Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette
Little sister: Colbie
Gifts given by Grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin
Anonymous

Ethan Alexander Kozar
March 29 – April 2, 2020
SIDS
Parents: Katelynn and Ryan Kozar
Little sister: Elizabeth Grace
Given by Heather Kozar

Raekwon Kozar
Stillborn December 2, 2000
Given by mommy Nikisha Perry and sisters Victoria and Vivienne

Benjamin Lynn
Miscarried August 21, 2021
Given by Parents Christopher and Stacy Lynn and little sister Lily

Tyler James Merrill
Stillborn March 28, 2014
Tetralogy of fallot
Given by parents Jennifer and David Merrill

Matthew Joel Mifflin
June 6, 2003
True knot in cord
Given by parents Dennis and Janet Mifflin and siblings Thomas and Michelle

Lily Joy Moore
Born to heaven March 2, 2011
Given by parents Jeremy and Kathleen Moore and siblings Isaac, Judah, Mercy and Glory

Abigail Marie Papendick
March 3-4, 2017
Baby “Darth” Papendick
September 6, 2018
Baby "Nugget" Papendick
December 27, 2019
Parents: Becky Johnston and Brian Papendick
Given by grandparents Micky and John Johnston

Margot Lily Perry
Stillborn June 10, 2013
Cord accident
Parents: Marisa and Brandon Perry
Siblings: Adeline, Bennett, and Noelle
Gifts given by grandmother Marie Perry
Mary and Norman Lorentz

Addi Brooke Smith
Stillborn November 5, 2021
Parents: Alesha and Jeremy Smith
Given by Great-aunt Dwanna Kight

Chapin and Bradbury Taylor
Given by anonymous

Russell Woodrow Wisdom
April 1, 2021
Unknown cause
Given by parents Casey and Roman Wisdom I and little brother Roman Joshua II

Daniel Nicholas Woodard
August 31, 2008
Premature birth with complications
Also remembering

Grandson Emmitt Alan Thornbury
September 18, 2015
Trisomy 18
Given by parents Joe and Danette Woodard and siblings: Kristina, David, Douglas and Nicole

Gifts of Support:
Second Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
William Turner
Tori Wilson
First Assembly Church, St. Peters, MO
Micheal and Sarah Stevens

Paislee Ann Frette
April 4-5, 2012
Wolf-Hirschhorn Syndrome
Parents: Brent and Courtney Frette
Little sister: Colbie
Gifts given by Grandparents James and LuAnn Junkin
Anonymous

Lonnie Jr Poem

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Life sometimes happens
And it’s out of our hands,
But I’m glad I know
It’s all in God’s plan
Chicagoland

**M.E.N.D.** – Chicagoland had a beautiful morning walking together in May for the **M.E.N.D.**ing Miles Virtual 5K. Being together to talk and remember our babies was so special. We are grateful for the connections and friendships that **M.E.N.D.** allows us to experience. I am always amazed at how God uses **M.E.N.D.** to bring us together, to provide comfort and understanding for each other. We are grateful for everyone who walked with us whether in person, with your own groups, or on your own.

We hope your summer schedule will allow you to join one of our support groups which meets at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Villa Park.

**Becky**

NW Washington

Thank you to all who participated in the **M.E.N.D.**ing Miles Virtual 5K! It was a beautiful day, walking with old friends and new! Our chapter meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at GracePoint Church in an adult meeting room on the ground floor.

**Katherine**

Greater Houston Area

**M.E.N.D.** – Greater Houston Area's Walk to Remember will be October 12 at Lone Star College Kingwood. If you would like to volunteer, please contact me at nikisha@mend.org.

Thank you to those who participated in the **M.E.N.D.**ing Miles Virtual 5K.

If you’re interested in becoming more involved with **M.E.N.D.**, please contact me at nikisha@mend.org.

**Nikisha**

Southwest Missouri

**M.E.N.D.** – SW Missouri is planning our October and December events. Save the date for our Remembrance Event on October 12 at the Pavilion at Graceway Baptist Church. Our Christmas Candlelight Ceremony will be held on December 2 at Second Baptist Church. More details will be coming soon, so make sure to join our Facebook group.

Thank you to all who participated in the **M.E.N.D.**ing Miles Virtual 5K and the Teddy Bear Project. Through these generous donations, we can provide comfort to families during difficult times.

**Jennifer**

National Online Support

**M.E.N.D.** – National Online Support meets the 3rd Thursday of each month. We hope to see you via Zoom at 8:00 PM CST. Please email me at mallory@mend.org for the Zoom link and to answer any questions.

In the meantime, please connect with us through Facebook. We are here for you as you grieve the loss of your baby and navigate this “new normal.” We are here to help and provide comfort and hope.

**Mallory**

Pregnancy and Parenting After Loss Support

**M.E.N.D.** – Pregnancy and Parenting After Loss Support Group is for parents who are pregnant after a loss or who are considering trying to conceive again after a loss. Our support groups meet via Zoom at 7:30-8:30 PM CST on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

**Marisa**

East Valley, Arizona

**M.E.N.D.** – East Valley Arizona is grateful for all who walked the **M.E.N.D.**ing Miles Virtual 5K with us, near and far, in memory of our little angels! We also are so excited for our great turnout at Barro’s pizza fundraiser. Also, thank you for coming out to Kneader’s and for their continued support in June!

We hope to see you at the Queen Creek Library on the 2nd Thursday of the month!

**Danielle**

Columbus, Ohio

“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:16 NIV

Summer is here, bringing with it some days of intense heat. Living with grief can be overwhelming. During these times, God’s grace and the support of others can make a beautiful difference in your journey. We are always here to walk with you. Let your presence be felt and your voice heard on our private Facebook group, in our support groups, and at local events with partnering organizations. Join us. Remember, you are NOT alone!

If you need **M.E.N.D.** – Columbus’ services or have a desire to serve, please contact me at latrina@mend.org.

**LaTrina**
St. Louis, Missouri

My name is Rachel Barber, I am the Chapter Director for M.E.N.D. – St. Louis, Missouri. I found M.E.N.D. as I was searching for a way to provide support to other families who have experienced infant loss, as I have. In 2012, I went into labor at 23 weeks; and without knowing I had an infection, I was told my baby or I would not survive. He was born two days later and only lived a few short hours. After some tests, it was confirmed I had been infected with chorioamnionitis; which at that time was very rare and only affected about 1-5% of pregnant women. I was scared, hurt, confused and could not find anyone who had gone through anything similar. It’s hard to share my grief because my experience was so “unique.” I have also had a miscarriage at 9 weeks gestation earlier in life, so loss is not foreign to me. Over the past few years, I have shared my story as often as I could in hopes I would be able to encourage others who have experienced any form of loss, whether in pregnancy or infancy. I am so hopeful that as I share my story and provide a safe space for others to share theirs, our journey will be easier to navigate, as we each offer a listening ear.

Rachel

MidMichigan

Thank you to all the friends and family who supported our M.E.N.D. – MidMichigan chapter for the M.E.N.D.ing Miles Virtual 5K! We were able to raise almost $1,000 to help spread the word about M.E.N.D. to our local community! Please keep an eye on our Facebook group for our summer schedule. We appreciate all your support!

Karen

Men of M.E.N.D.

Let us come together and talk about our babies. Men of M.E.N.D. holds a Zoom support group every 3rd Monday of the month at 8:00 PM CST. I pray you have some comfort and peace.

Matt

Tulsa, Oklahoma

M.E.N.D. – Tulsa now meets the 4th Tuesday of the month 7:00-8:30 PM at The Office Tulsa. Upcoming events include our Wave of Light Ceremony in conjunction with Tristesse Grief Center on October 15th at Floral Haven Family Event Center as well as our Christmas Candlelight ceremony in December. More info will be available on our Facebook group and email soon.

Cat

M.E.N.D. en Español

M.E.N.D. – en español fue creado para brindarles a las familias de habla hispana un espacio para compartir su duelo y triunfas a través de Facebook y con apoyo individualizado, cuando es necesario. Nuestra esperanza para el futuro es ampliar nuestro apoyo para incluir servicios de traducción en nuestros grupos de apoyo en línea y en persona, pero eso sólo es posible gracias a voluntarios bilingües que desean compartir su tiempo y talentos para ayudar a aquellos que están en duelo. Si usted o alguien que conoce está interesado en ayudar a nuestras familias de habla hispana, nos encantaría hablar contigo. Comuníquese con jessica@mend.org para obtener más información.

Jessica

M.E.N.D. Chicagoland

M.E.N.D. Chicagoland is looking for a loss mom interested in leading our chapter.

Please contact beckyl@mend.org for more information.

Chapter Director Needed

M.E.N.D. Chicagoland

M.E.N.D. Chicagoland is in need of 2 or 3 loss moms in the area to serve as assistants for this chapter.

If interested, please contact beckyl@mend.org

Assistant Directors Needed
About M.E.N.D.

M.E.N.D. is a Christian nonprofit organization whose purpose is to reach out to those who have lost a child to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death and offer a way to share experiences and information through monthly support groups, this magazine, and our website at www.mend.org. For inquiries, subscription requests, deletions, and submissions to the magazine, contact us at:

M.E.N.D.
P.O. Box 631566
Irving, TX 75063
Phone: (972) 506-9000
E-Mail: rebekah@mend.org
                                             jennifer@mend.org
                                             www.mend.org

Donations make the printing and distribution of this magazine possible. Your tax-deductible contributions are greatly appreciated and should be sent to the address listed above.

If your gift is in memory of a baby, please include the following:

- Baby’s name (if named)
- Date of birth and/or date of death
- Cause of death (if known)
- Parents’ names (and living siblings if applicable)
- Name of the benefactor

M.E.N.D. is a member of
First Candle/SIDS Alliance
Pregnancy Loss and Infant Death Alliance

M.E.N.D. Support Groups in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex

Mommies AND Daddies are welcome at all M.E.N.D. support groups.
Irving Archives Museum, 801 W Irving Blvd, Irving, TX 75060.
For more information, call (972) 506-9000.

M.E.N.D. chapter support groups meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM
Daddies group meets the 2nd Thursday of March, June, Sept. and Dec., at 7:30 PM
Moms and dads meet together for introductions before dividing into two groups.

Rowlett Satellite Chapter
A satellite chapter in Rowlett holds support groups to serve families in the eastern area of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.
Support groups are held the 1st Wednesday at 7:00 PM at the Veterans Resource and Outreach Center,
4210 Industrial St, Rowlett, TX 75088.
Visit our Facebook group or email terri@mend.org.

M.E.N.D. Leadership

Board of Directors
Rebekah Mitchell
Byron Mitchell, D.D.S.
DaLana Barsanti
Brittney Fish
Cindy Dedear
Courtney Frette

Advisory Board
Paula Schear
D’Anna Sims
Jenae Bowmer
Stacy McGhee
Terri Nymeyer

Magazine
Editor: Jennifer Harrison
Co-Editors: Byron and Rebekah Mitchell

Magazine Volunteers
Rachel Dell, Sara Elliott
and Becky Johnston
Subsequent pregnancy group meets the 4th Tuesday from 7:30 - 8:30 PM via Zoom. Please visit www.mend.org to join. Led by Marisa Perry: marisa@mend.org For families who are considering becoming pregnant or are currently pregnant after a loss.

Online Support

**M.E.N.D.**

**Nationwide Online Support Group**

Held the 3rd Thursday at 8:00 PM (CST)

Please visit https://www.mend.org/virtual-support-group-links

Chapter Director: Mallory Gallagher
mallory@mend.org

**Men of M.E.N.D.**

Held the 3rd Monday at 8:00 PM (CST)

to join, contact, Chapter Director: Matt McGhee
Matt@mend.org

Facebook Group: www.facebook.com/groups/MENofMEND

The Garden of Hope is a place of peace and solace where families can come for a quiet time of reflection, prayer, or even to celebrate the life of their loved one.

The Garden of Hope was established by **M.E.N.D.** in 2016, and is located on property of Calvary Church in Irving, Texas.

You can remember your loved one by purchasing a brick in the Garden of Hope. Brick purchases can be made at https://www.mend.org/garden-of-hope.

The order deadline for 2024 installation is July 15, 2024. To ensure the bricks are ready for the 2024 Walk to Remember, brick orders will be closed from July 16 – October 4, 2024.
2024 UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

DALLAS/FORT WORTH
Walk to Remember
Saturday, October 5, 2024 at 1:00 PM
At Calvary Church in Irving, Texas
Registration will go live at the end of August

GREATER HOUSTON AREA
Walk to Remember
Saturday, October 12, 2024
At Lonestar College Kingwood
More details to come!

SOUTHWEST MISSOURI
Remembrance Event
Saturday, October 12, 2024 at 5:30 PM
At Graceway Baptist Church
Watch for more details!

DALLAS/FORT WORTH
Wave of Light
Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 7:00 PM
At the Garden of Hope at Calvary Church
No registration – just bring a candle

TULSA
Wave of Light
Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 7:00 PM
At Floral Haven Family Event Center
More details to come!

DECEMBER

DALLAS/FORT WORTH
Christmas Candlelight Ceremony
Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 7:30 PM
At Calvary Church in Irving, Texas
Registration will go live in November

SOUTHWEST MISSOURI
Christmas Candlelight Ceremony
Monday, December 2, 2024 at 6:00 PM
At Second Baptist Church
Watch for more details!

EAST VALLEY ARIZONA
Christmas Candlelight Ceremony
Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 7:00 PM
At Modern Moments
Watch for more details!

More events to come!

For more information, please visit www.mend.org to learn more and connect with a chapter near you as well as our online chapter.