

This issue of the newsletter is lovingly dedicated in precious memory of Gracie Gerland.



Empty Arms Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 4

May/June 2006

Coming Soon:

- Happy Mother's and Father's Day!
- Mother's Day Memorials



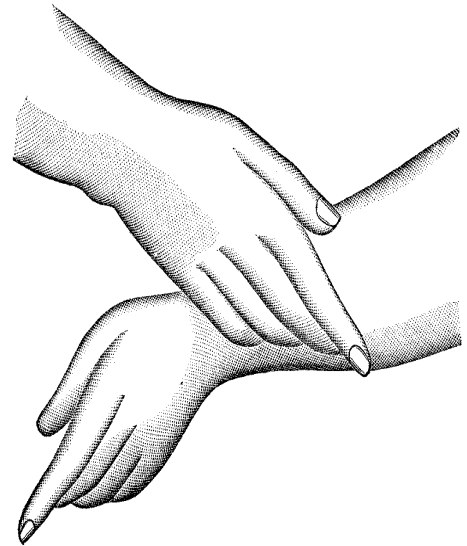
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Ministry Update

Well folks, it's hot and it's only April! It looks like it's going to be another scorcher of a summer if this is the prelude. That must be why God put the heat in East Texas, because He knows we're Texas tough!

Just around the corner is Mother's and Father's Day. For those who've lost a child, young or old, these can be intensely difficult days. I wish there was a magic pill to take to make these days and "anniversaries" easier, but the truth is, sometimes you have to let the hurt come so His healing can take place. We are in another stage of healing as we remembered Gracie's 2nd birthday last week. I say "another stage" because I think that's what grief is really. Some stages are one shot deals and others are repeated over and over, but there's really no end to it. Thankfully, God sustains us throughout and we learn so much about His love and mercy during these times. I pray that God will offer you an extra measure of comfort during the upcoming



ing celebrations.

Since the last newsletter, the ministry delivered 6 care baskets. Five were for stillbirths and one was for the death of a 2 month old baby boy. These families are included in the "Prayer Needs" section. Please remember to pray earnestly for them as they begin to heal.

Mother's Day Booths

Once again, we will be setting up tables in order to take donations in recognition of Mother's Day. Donations can be given in honor or memory of moms and Empty Arms will send them or the family an acknowledgment along with a brochure explaining the ministry.

These will be sent in time for Mother's Day. If you can help man a table on Sunday, April 30th or May 7th, please let me know.



Prayer Needs

Please remember these families in prayer:

- The Williams family of Lufkin, whose baby was stillborn.
- The Norrell family of Lufkin, who lost their baby boy at 20 weeks. This is their second consecutive loss.
- Jenny Capps, friend of Marci Caperton, is having complications with her pregnancy. She is due in June.
- The Montelongo family of Lufkin, whose baby was stillborn at 19 weeks.
- The Jackson family, of Lufkin, whose baby

boy, Christopher was stillborn at 18 weeks.

- The Avila family who lost their 2 month old baby boy.
- Brandi, a friend of Marci Caperton, whose baby is having complications and was taken to Shumpert Hospital in Louisiana.



**THE PRAYER
OF THE
RIGHTEOUS
IS POWERFUL
AND
EFFECTIVE.**

J A M E S 5 : 1 6

Summer Suspension

Due to a hectic schedule of vacationing (it's a hard life!), during the summertime, no newsletter will be distributed for the July/August edition and will resume in September.

Urgent prayer requests will be e-mailed or phoned in through the prayer chain during this time. Please don't hesitate to call me with any prayer concerns at 634-3175.

Since there will be times when I may not be in town when a care basket needs to be delivered, I would like to have an updated list of people who would be willing to make deliveries to the local hospitals and funeral homes. If you would be willing to do this, please let me know by phone or e-mail: jonthangerland@consolidated.net.

I appreciate you all so much!

Goodbye, Little One

Your eyes never blinked, but for a moment I saw you.
Your heart never had the strength to beat, but mine broke in two.
Your fingers never grew long for me to curl around my hand.
Your toes were never kissed by my lips nor tickled by the sand.
You never heard the sound of my voice singing my joy that you were here.
You never rested in my arms to be cradled by my love or swallowed by my fear.
You never tasted nectar my own body would alter to generate.
You never experienced a moment of the life I longed to create.

by Angela Wright

Little one, there are so many, so many things you never knew.
But, the most disturbing is how very much I loved you.
And while there is no tangible sign that you traveled through this space,
I honor your existence within me in my own special place.
And as life continues it's endless path and the waves move from sea to shore, know that for every moment of my life, in me, you exist forevermore.

In memory of Chloe' Charlize Wright 12-19-2005—12-25-2005

What's Happening?

There are so many things happening in the lives of the families that we have prayed for throughout this year, that I felt it was a good time to update everyone on how these families are doing so that we can continue to pray for their specific needs. It's amazing to see how God is working in their lives.

- **Owen Quarles**, son of Christi and Wiley will turn one in June. He was born with a rare chromosome disorder and is a trooper! Currently he has a tumor on one of his kidneys, but doctors do not feel that it's life threatening. He is deaf, but has been approved for cochlear implants with that date still pending. Owen signed his first word, "EAT", just recently and everyone was so excited.
- **Dana Akers** will be pursuing in-vitro fertiliza-

tion next month. She and husband, Dan, lost Dawson to Trisomy 18 last February and have had several miscarriages. Pray that this procedure is successful.

- **Crystal and David Wheeler**, who lost their baby, Emalee last year are currently in the process of adoption. Our own, Kelli Slaga, has been assisting this special family.
- **Jacob Runnels**, son of Davelyn and Richard just turned one a few weeks ago with much fanfare! He is a miracle and God continues to work in this family's lives using them for a higher purpose. He has been fitted with hearing aids and has shown signs of hearing. He also has vision problems which they hope will improve as he continues to develop.

Please continue to pray for these special families.

All Things Work Together For Good?

Romans 8:28 has been quoted countless times, most often during times of suffering. Even though it's been used to bring comfort to the hurting, sometimes the context of this verse is misunderstood. **"We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose."**

Obviously, those who love God are Christians because they are called according to God's purpose, but what about the "good" part? If we keep reading through verse 29, some of this becomes clearer:

"because those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son..." So, this "good" cannot be defined as our wealth, health, or any earthly comforts. Instead, all things work together to bring each Christian into conformity to Christ! We may not see the good come of misery or pain in this world, but there is more beyond this world—Praise God! God uses the present, warts and all, to conform us to the image of His Son. If we limit our definition of "good" as what we see in this life, we've missed the boat!

"Love Them Like Jesus"

The love of her life is drifting away* They're losing the fight for another day* The life that she's known is falling apart* A fatherless home, a child's broken heart* You're holding her hand, you're straining for words* You're trying to make sense of it all* She's desperate for hope, darkness clouding her view* She's looking to you.

Just love her like Jesus, carry her to Him* His yoke is easy, His burden is light* You don't need the answers to all of life's questions* Just know that He loves her and stay by her side* Love her like Jesus* Love her like Jesus*

Lyrics by Mark Hall

The gifts lie in wake, in a room painted blue* Little blessing from Heaven would be there soon* Hope fades in the night, blue skies turn to gray* As the little one slips away* You're holding her hand, you're straining for words* You're trying to make sense of it all* They're desperate for hope, darkness clouding their view* They're looking to you.

Lord of all creation holds our lives in His hands* The God of all the nations holds our lives in His hands* The Rock of our salvation holds our lives in His hands* He cares for them just as He cares for you.

THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED IN PRECIOUS MEMORY OF GRACIE GERLAND.

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Issues of this newsletter will be distributed bi-monthly. If you would like to submit an article or any information to be included in the newsletter, please contact Jill Gerland or Kelli Slaga. Each issue will be dedicated in memory of one of our precious babies.

*Editor: Jill Gerland
Co-editor: Kelli Slaga*

The Empty Arms Ministry of Denman Avenue Baptist Church was created in October 2004 to reach out to those who have suffered the loss of a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death.

Ministry opportunities include delivering care baskets, grief partnering by sharing experiences and information with someone who is beginning their grief journey, praying and offering support through a variety of ways to the ministry. It is our prayer that we will be a valuable, Christian resource for those who are hurting as a result of losing their child.

“God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!”

Matthew 5:4 (CEV)



SPOTLIGHT ON...

For this issue of the newsletter, I wanted to spotlight my Mom just in time for Mother's Day. Most of you know what a special lady she is and I am so blessed to be her daughter. Here's a bit about Mom in her own words. Happy Mother's Day Mom!

Larry and I have been members of DABC for more than 28 years. Throughout most of those years, we have been involved in S.S. teaching positions. Larry is the teacher, but I do excellent records! We currently serve in the sweetest class, the Adult 4 Co-Eds.

On June 7th, we will celebrate our 38th anniversary. (Someone might need to remind Larry.) We have two grown children who gave us four wonderful grandchildren. Our son, Dave and wife Becki live in Ft. Worth with 10 year old Holly and 7 year old Hope. Daughter Jill and husband Jonny live in Lufkin with Joseph, age 8.

It is such a joy to share in the lives of these 3 grands and we anticipate the day when we will be reunited with our youngest granddaughter, Gracie Beth. Before her birth, she had been diagnosed with the fatal disorder, Trisomy 18. Even though the doctors had given Jonny and Jill very little hope of her survival, God had a different plan. He gave us

Volunteer Spotlight: Mary Beth Kendrick

6 1/2 weeks with a precious baby that we didn't even know would be possible. We are so grateful for that time and continue to treasure it in our hearts.

It is a shame that there is such a great need for this ministry, but isn't it just like God to take ordinary people who have suffered great losses and allow them to minister to others who have broken hearts. I'm thankful that God has provided our family with this opportunity to serve Him as we continue to heal.

For many years my favorite passage of scripture has been Psalms 139, but it has become even more precious with the births of our grandchildren. I also love Lamentations 3:22-23, "Because of the Lord's great love (mercy) we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness."

