

This issue of the newsletter is lovingly dedicated in precious memory of D'Artanion Starkey.



# Empty Arms Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 1

Fall 2007

Happy Fall!



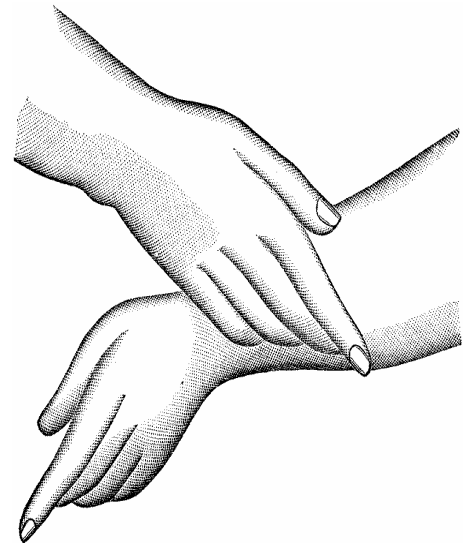
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## Ministry Update

Happy Birthday Empty Arms Ministry! We are officially three years old and growing strong. Looking back three short years ago, I never could've imagined that this ministry would grow as quickly as it has. The need was definitely there—before the first care basket was even assembled, we already had a waiting list of three. Due to generous donations, giving hearts and countless prayers, no one has to wait to receive a basket these days. God not only ordained the purpose of this ministry but also the time that the baskets are received by the families they were made for. Countless times I've been told that the basket arrived at just the right time after the family was experiencing a particularly difficult day. God truly is present in the details of our lives.

Since the last newsletter, nine care baskets were delivered. Six were early infant deaths and three were as a result of miscarriages. Out of the five early infant deaths, three were the



result of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). October is SIDS, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month and this issue will focus on SIDS and the unique heartbreak it brings. During such times of helplessness, God equips us with the awesome power of prayer. Please use this gift to lift others up during trying times. It is the most loving thing that you can do.

## Click On Us

Empty Arms is FINALLY on the church website! Go to: [dabconline.org](http://dabconline.org), click on Ministries," then click on "Empty Arms Ministry." There is a description of our history, mission and purpose as well as a downloadable

brochure and past and current issues of the newsletter.

A huge thanks to Keith Nash who helped design the site to be user friendly and updates the information regularly. You rock, Keith!

## Prayer Needs

*Please remember these families in prayer:*

- The Courtney family whose son, Evan, was born and died on August 2nd.
- Henry and Tessa Brunson-Heiss lost their baby as a result of SIDS. They had previously lost another baby as well. They are family friends of Bro. Charles.
- The Hartsfield family who lost their 4 week old daughter.
- Collin and Kristina Stephens, son of Carolyn Stephens, suffered a miscarriage at 3 months.
- The Roberts family lost their one year old son.
- A Texarkana family lost their baby, no further information was given.

- Gaylon and Misty Starkey lost their 3 month old son, D'Artanion, as a result of SIDS.
- Brent and Shelly Slaten who suffered their third miscarriage and had complications during the D & C which may effect future fertility.
- Ryan and Courtney Azios lost their newborn son to Trisomy 1, a rare disorder.



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

**J A M E S 5 : 1 6**

## First Candle

First Candle, previously known as SIDS Alliance, is a secular organization which provides support, education, public awareness, advocacy and research regarding SIDS. They also offer a 24 hour bilingual hotline by calling 1-800-221-7437 which is equipped with crisis counselors.

Their official website, [www.firstcandle.org](http://www.firstcandle.org), offers a wide array of grief resources, memorial opportunities, current research and studies pertaining to stillbirth and SIDS, as well as coping strategies for

family and friends who are affected by this tragic loss.

They are the driving force behind the Infant Safe Sleep Campaign which works to bring public awareness of the dangers of infant death resulting from sleeping in adult beds or other unsafe places.

First Candle is an excellent resource for expectant families wanting to reduce the risks of SIDS, as well as those directly affected by this syndrome.

## MISSing Angels Bill

### What is it?

The MISSing Angels Bill is a piece of legislation that allows for the issuance of a "Certificate of Birth resulting in Stillbirth (CBRS)" by a state's vital records office for any stillborn infant.

### Why is it necessary?

Every state in the U.S. already issues a death certificate

for all stillbirths. Additionally, each state has a final disposition mandate for stillbirths. Many parents want to have their child's birth certificate in addition to their death certificate. Unfortunately, without legislative change, most states are unable to accommodate the parents' wishes.

To sign a petition online to support this bill, go to [www.missfoundation.org/news/legislation.html](http://www.missfoundation.org/news/legislation.html).

## Reducing the Risk of SIDS

*The following are tips for parents in helping to reduce the occurrence of SIDS. The information was taken from First Candle/SIDS Alliance. Education is key to fighting this tragedy.*

- Always place babies to sleep on their BACK. Side and tummy sleep positions are not safe and should not be used.
- Babies should not sleep in adult beds or on sofas. Bring baby into bed with you for feeding and bonding—but place the baby in a crib or other separate safe sleep area alongside the bed before going to sleep.
- Don't smoke while you are pregnant and babies should not be exposed to secondhand smoke after they're born. Babies exposed to tobacco during pregnancy are two to three times more likely to die of SIDS.
- Use a safety-approved crib with a firm, tight fitting mattress covered by only a sheet. There should be nothing else in the crib.
- Soft materials or objects such as quilts, comforters or sheepskins should not be placed under a sleeping baby.
- Do not use loose blankets in a baby's crib. Instead, layer clothing to keep babies warm and safe.
- Soft or pillow-like bumper pads should not be used. If bumpers are used, they should be thin, firm and securely tied.
- Encourage babies to use a pacifier at nap and nighttime for the first year. Evidence shows that pacifier use can reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Do not overheat babies with too much clothing or too warm of room temperature. Keep room temperature at a level that would be comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- Educate other caregivers about these important tips!

## Cry Out To Jesus

To everyone who's lost someone they love, long before it was their time.

You feel like the days you had were not enough when you said goodbye.

And to all of the people with burdens and pains, keeping you back from your life.

You believe that there's nothing and there is no one who can make it right.

**There is hope for the helpless, rest for the weary, love for the broken heart. There is grace and forgiveness, mercy and healing. He'll meet you wherever you are. Cry out to Jesus, Cry out to Jesus.**

## Words by Mac Powell/Music by Third Day

For the marriage that's struggling just to hang on. They lost all of their faith in love. They've done all they can to make it right again, still it's not enough.

For the ones who can't break the addictions and chains. You try to give up but you come back again. Just remember that you're not alone in your shame and your suffering.

**When you're lonely, and it feels like the whole world is falling on you. You just reach out, you just cry out to Jesus. Cry to Jesus.**

For the widow who struggles with being alone, wiping the tears from her eyes. For the children around the world without a home, say a prayer tonight.

## Grief Reactions Associated with SIDS

Source: [grieflink.asn.au](http://grieflink.asn.au)

The death of a baby through SIDS happens without warning. The shock and grief can be intense for parents, remaining siblings and other members of the family. Guilt associated with this type of death may affect the grief process. Parents and siblings often blame themselves and may believe they contributed to the death in some way. Mothers often believe they may have failed to nurture their baby and fathers may feel they have not protected the family. Siblings who loved their brother or sister but may have been jealous or irritated

by the baby sometimes take on a burden of guilt by inventing ways of how they caused the death. Grandparents may feel the pain of the death of their grandchild as well as the distress of their own child and relatives.

SIDS is diagnosed when other causes are not found. Not knowing the cause of death may leave the parents wondering and searching for an answer for the rest of their lives. Media reports about the cause of SIDS can cause ongoing distress for parents. Police involvement and having an autopsy performed add to the trauma of this already broken family.

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D'ARTANION STARKEY.**

Empty Arms Ministry  
Denman Avenue Baptist Church  
1807 E. Denman Avenue  
Lufkin, TX 75901

Charles M. Roberts, Pastor  
Phone: (936) 634-6691  
Jill Gerland, Coordinator  
Phone: (936) 634-3175

*Issues of this newsletter will be distributed quarterly. If you would like to submit an article or any information to be included in the newsletter, please contact Jill Gerland at (936) 634-3175. Each issue will be dedicated in memory of one of our precious babies.*

*Editor: Jill Gerland*

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)



## SPOT- LIGHT ON...

This issue of the newsletter finds our spotlight on Billie Jean (B.J.) Capps. All who have the pleasure of knowing her will agree that she is a treasure and an asset to any cause that she supports.

Mrs. Capps and Donald, her husband of over 46 years, have been members of DABC for one year. They have four daughters, Susie, Shannon, Sharla and Sherri. She also boasts two Godly sons-in-law, Joe Jones and Tim Flynt, as well as five grands: Katie Jo, 13, Caleb, 11, Hannah, 8, Hayden, 6, and Halle, 4.

In her spare time, she loves being with her family, keeping her grandchildren and making jelly.

\* Editor's note: Her jelly is THE BEST. My personal favorite (and my son's) is Mayhaw. Donald's orchard keeps her supplied with beautiful fruit so she can make jelly to share with others.

She became involved with the E.A. Ministry when daughter Sherri told her about our journey with Grace Beth before and after her birth. She then invited

## Volunteer Spotlight: Billie Jean Capps

me to come speak to her Women's Ministry group at her former church to talk about the Empty Arms Ministry and they have been gracious enough to donate needed items. "I truly believe that our Christian ministry or service is wherever God is working and we have a responsibility to join Him as He uses others to do His work.

Empty Arms gave us this opportunity to become involved in the lives of hurting women through these efforts." said Mrs. Capps. "I pray Empty Arms will become stronger and will reach those God intends to touch for His glory and that lives will be changed by our Lord." It is truly a pleasure working alongside Mrs. Capps and we are so glad she is a part of this ministry.

