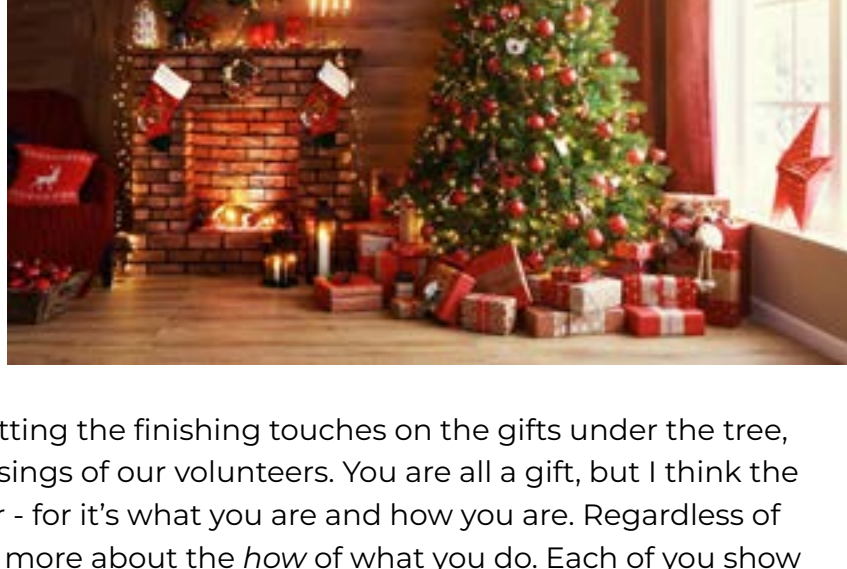


Volunteer Voice

Breaking News



Pres-ent noun - something that you are given, without asking for it, on a special occasion, especially to show friendship or to say thank you

Pres-ent – adjective – 1. In a particular place 2. Existing or occurring now

As the holidays draw near and we're putting the finishing touches on the gifts under the tree, I started to reflect on the incredible blessings of our volunteers. You are all a gift, but I think the term *present* explains each of you better - for it's what you are and how you are. Regardless of what you do here at Angela Hospice, it's more about the *how* of what you do. Each of you show up fully present, engaged, able to hold the space for whoever or whatever is needed. In a world with endless competing demands on our time, this ability to be present truly is a present to our patients, our families, our staff and everyone we serve. Thank you each for giving the gift of yourself to others.

Your presence is what has helped Angela Hospice achieve a 4 star rating! All hospice agencies must participate in what is known as the Hospice Quality Reporting Program. Through this we report on quality data that translates into an easy to understand star rating for the public. For the past two years, this data is presented through a platform called Care Compare and shows up as a 1-5 star rating system. At the beginning of the reporting system, Angela Hospice was 3 stars, which didn't seem in line with the compassionate, comprehensive and exceptional care we know we provide. Our Quality department, staff and team members knew that if we could make a few small tweaks, that this rating would better represent the type of care we provide. And we just received word that we hit 4 stars which is a tremendous accomplishment. Thank you to each and every one of you for helping augment and accent the care that Angela Hospice provides.

Bereavement News

By Debbie Vallandingham, LMSW-ACSW
Director, Grief Care Services

New Year's Resolutions

Even as you face loss, the world keeps turning and time keeps ticking. It's this time of year that it seems most noticeable: people plan holiday parties, they drive to spend time with their families, and they gather with friends to toast in the New Year. As we pass through the holidays it's important to note that a new year carries special symbolism as many raise a glass to toast the end of the old and the beginning of something new and exciting. At the same time, the year end is often a time of reflection and remembering those we have lost throughout the year.

As a part of these celebrations and reflections, many people take the time to make resolutions. History shows us that we have been celebrating the arrival of the new year for as long as 4,000 years beginning with the ancient Babylonians. The tradition of making New Year's resolutions is also an old one which began during the reign of Julius Caesar. Although we no longer decorate our homes with laurel branches or celebrate like the Romans, we have made resolutions a big part of our festivities. As we move along our grief journeys, making resolutions is a tradition we can embrace, even if we have fears on what the New Year may bring. Some resolutions worth considering are:

- Start a journal. A journal is a great place to reflect on your feelings. Keeping in mind the turning of the year, try to pay attention to hope and desire. Think about what makes you hopeful and what you would like to see for the coming year.
- Acknowledge your feelings. You are moving through your grief one step at a time. Seek to find the courage to understand and accept what you are feeling on your individual journey. Join a support group to talk about those feelings
- Learn about grief. Grief is a challenging subject and no two people grieve the same. Take the time in the next year to learn more about the process of grieving. Find a book at your local library. Attend workshops of grief and loss. Search for grief-related blogs on the internet.
- Brush off the hurtful comments of well-intentioned people. As you grieve, you will likely interact with people who truly care about you but are awkward in their comments or are new to dealing with loss. Resolve to forgive those who are themselves uncomfortable with grief and are unsure of how to respond.
- Give back by volunteering. There is a power in grievers helping others. Whether it's helping others who are experiencing grief or giving back to your local animal shelter, being in a position to offer the gift of your time and support can make a difference to many people, including you.
- Create a memory book, memory box, or memory board. Whether it's putting together photographs in an album, crafting and collecting items for a box, or uploading images to Pinterest, the act of posting things about your loved one (food, travel, music, etc.) is a healthy resolution for the New Year.

OUR FREE GRIEF CARE PROGRAMS: While feelings of grief are normal, handling them can be difficult and painful. Talking about what you are going through can help. Call 734.779.6690 to schedule an appointment. Or visit www.askforangela.com for our grief support calendar.

Care Center News

New Faces! - Our most recent volunteer training class concluded in December. Soon you will see new faces coming into the Care Center to start their mentorships. We're so grateful to our mentors for all of the time, energy and passion that they expend in helping welcome and train our graduates and helping them acclimate to the Care Center. Please take a few moments to introduce yourself and help our newest volunteers feel right at home.

Community Outreach & Philanthropy

Thank You! As another year comes to a close, we wanted to say thank you! Thank you for giving your time, for being an advocate and supporter of Angela Hospice, and mostly, for allowing us to get to know you. We always enjoy seeing volunteers, and we're so grateful to get to work with you!

Volunteers needed: You've been such a huge part of our Tree of Life this year and we have one more ask before it's done. The beginning of January, weather permitting, we're looking for volunteers to help us take down the angels that have meant so much to those who have honored a loved one this way. In doing so you'll be helping with another tradition, our annual blessing of the angels, which we do each year at the end of the Tree of Life. It's quite the beautiful ceremony too.

Please contact Helen Balmforth at hbalmforth@angelahospice.us or call 734.953.6045 if you're interested in being a part of this. We would really appreciate it!

Compassionate Corner

By Denise Welsh
Integrative Therapies Vol Coordinator

Christmas Tree Origin - The true Christmas tree tradition can be traced to 16th-century Germany, where Christians began to decorate trees—or, if times were tough, simple pyramid-shaped stacks of wood—inside their homes. The tradition of adding candles to the tree branches is most commonly attributed to Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation movement in the 1500s. (Legend suggests he was inspired by the stars in the night sky and wished to re-create the scene in his own home using candlelight.)

Other than the candle aesthetic already established in Europe, decorations like ornaments (often imported from Germany) became more popular in the late 1800s, and homemade decorations like cookies and garlands (think: popcorn, berries, nuts, and more) became decorating staples.

As technological and industrial developments progressed throughout the 20th century, the more homespun decorations gave way to glitzy electric lights and synthetic materials, like tinsel. The popular Shiny Brite ornaments, inspired by imported German glass ornaments, marked the beginning of the U.S. ornament industry in the early-to-mid 1900s.

I, personally, have made a vow to myself that as long as I'm physically able to I will always have a live Christmas tree. So for the past several years I have picked them out, put them in the tree stand myself, and carried them in the house to the designated corner. I just love the aroma of fresh pine in the air throughout the season.

We would love to see pictures of your Christmas tree(s) - and we know some of you have more than one!, so please email Denise Welsh at dwelsh@angelahospice.us so that we can include them in our next newsletter.

Mission Moment

Rev. Diane Smith, MDiv, BCC
Director, Ministry Engagement

Joy for Mission

It's a beautiful day. The sun is shining. The grass is lushly green. The sky is robin egg blue. Jesus goes off with his friends to pray. Crowds followed. Darn it! No peace and quiet this afternoon. The Christ recognizes their needs, the need to hear the good news of God's generous love, and the need for nourishment. And so he feeds them...all 5,000 of them.



His friends didn't quite get it. How could he feed such a crowd? Five loaves, two fish...that's like one man's lunch! But Jesus took what was there and acted on it in his compassionate, generous way. "He tumbled, he broke, he gave." Jesus shared the ordinary stuff of life in all its scarcity and transforms it into God's self-giving generosity. The outcome was that "all ate and were filled." But that's not all: there were twelve baskets left over (enough bread for all of the tribes of Israel).

His friends, and even us, are often a little slow, unwilling to learn what this new data of Jesus means, unwilling to recognize that the world is changed by Jesus, even unable to act differently in the new world of Jesus. (See, I make all things new.)

Here's the thing: the news that is proclaimed in Christ's coming is that he has turned the world into abundance. God is the gift who keeps on giving, and the people around Jesus are empowered to receive abundance and to act generously by paying it forward.

Every day, all day. It's still true. "He takes, he blesses, he breaks, he gives." And yet we are still astonished about the surplus. It is there for all of us with eyes to see, with ears to hear, and with hearts to remember. We are recipients of enough and enough and more than enough... enough and enough and more than enough to share. And to be glad in this giver who keeps on giving, endlessly.

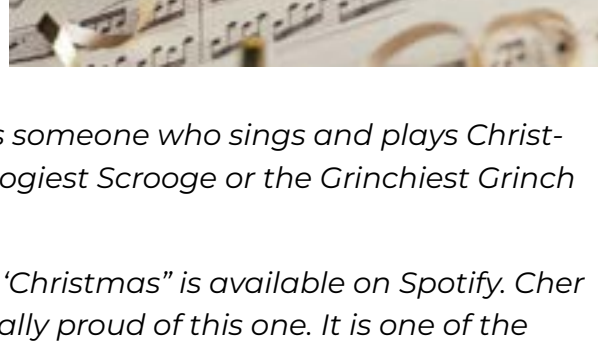
This is why we continue to say, "Come, Lord Jesus." Come and teach us how to take, bless, break and give. Teach us how to better cooperate with you in the spiritual renewal of the world. The world is waiting breathlessly for us to step up, for us to take the ordinary stuff of life in all its scarcity and transform it to renew the face of the earth. Yes, indeed, "Come, Lord Jesus." Breathe...

Music Matters

By Heather Dean, MT-BC

Count Down To Christmas

For those celebrating Christmas this year, there are many ways to celebrate the upcoming holiday. Some enjoying baking cookies, sending Christmas cards, decorating or lighting an advent candle. Probably the simplest way to anticipate Christmas though is listening to music.



Some do not enjoy Christmas music whatsoever, but as someone who sings and plays Christmas music on the daily, I have some songs even the Scroogiest Scrooge or the Grinchiest Grinch might enjoy, with a little bit of fun facts to boot:

- 1- For Cher says: *Cher's brand new Christmas album "Christmas" is available on Spotify. Cher gushes "I never say this about my own albums but I'm really proud of this one. It is one of the most amazing highlights of my career."*
- 2- *Wham's "Last Christmas": George Michael's biggest goal for this song is anticipating it becoming a number one hit. George felt conflicted that Last Christmas stayed at number two in 1984, while another song he was featured in "Do They Know It's Christmas?" stayed at number one. George Michael died on Christmas day in 2016. Last Christmas finally became a number one hit in 2021.*
- 3- *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer: This song was based on a book written by a Montgomery Ward catalog writer named Robert L. May. Rudolph represents how Robert felt as an outcast in school growing up. He wrote the book to help children who felt bullied understand their worth.*
- 4- *The 12 Days of Christmas: Did you know if you took out your calculator and added up all the strange holiday gifts highlighted in this song it would come out to 364 gifts? The last gift is the gift of love. Also there are many different versions of this song in different cultures including New Zealand's A Pukeko in a Ponga Tree.*
- 5- *Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas is You": People say they hate it but they secretly love it.*
- 6- *Children, Go Where I Send Thee- This song is a little bit like The Twelve Days of Christmas but really is about teaching the parts of the Bible. Listen to the Odetta version which in my opinion is the absolute best.*
- 7- *Good King Wenceslas: This French carol's original version was written in the 13th century. The 1853 version has English lyrics which illustrates the harshness of winter and Good King Wenceslas braved the worst of it.*

I hope this list helps your curiosity about the origins of your favorite Christmas hits and maybe inspires you to create your own new favorite playlist.

Spiritual Care News

Wishing you and yours a most memorable and peaceful holiday season. This season, let us focus on love, hope, joy and peace - a permeating peace. Blessings to all.

We Honor Veterans

This holiday season as we gather around with our family and friends, we thought we would provide some communication tips from We Honor Veterans on the best way to engage veterans.



Communicate in a Caring Way

Even though many of us are curious about the events that occurred during War, there are certain types of questions we **should not ask** a Veteran.

Here are some of the questions you should avoid:

1. What was the most horrible thing you saw over there?
2. What was it like over there?
3. Are you glad to be home?
4. Have you seen the news?
5. Do you feel guilty about the things you had to do during the war?
6. Do you want me to pray with/for you?

These questions may offend a Veteran or elicit negative feelings. We should engage with a Veteran in a more cautious and sensitive way, different than how we engage with any other person. Always be supportive and ask them how they have been since coming home, or ask about their families and friends. The most important gift you can give a veteran is active listening and your caring presence.

KEY VOLUNTEER CONTACTS

Bereavement	Volunteer
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Spiritual Care
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