

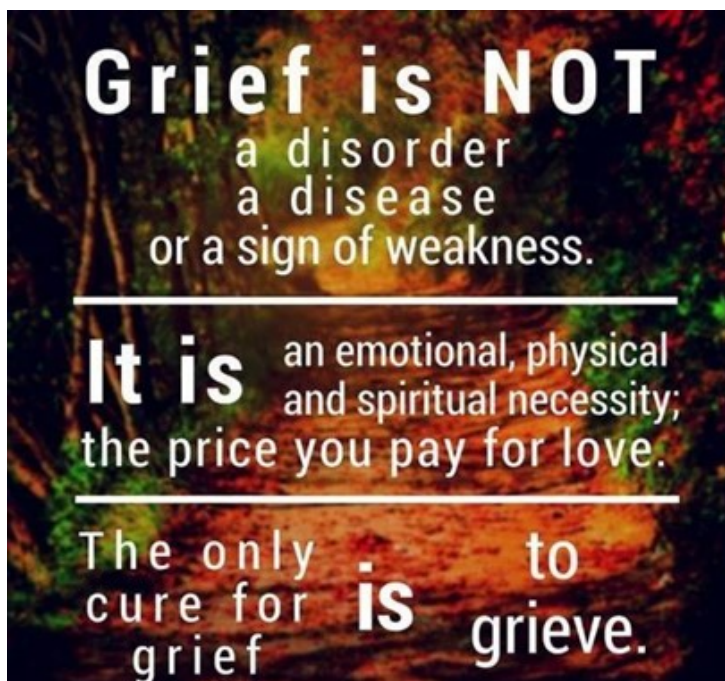
# Phoenix Rising

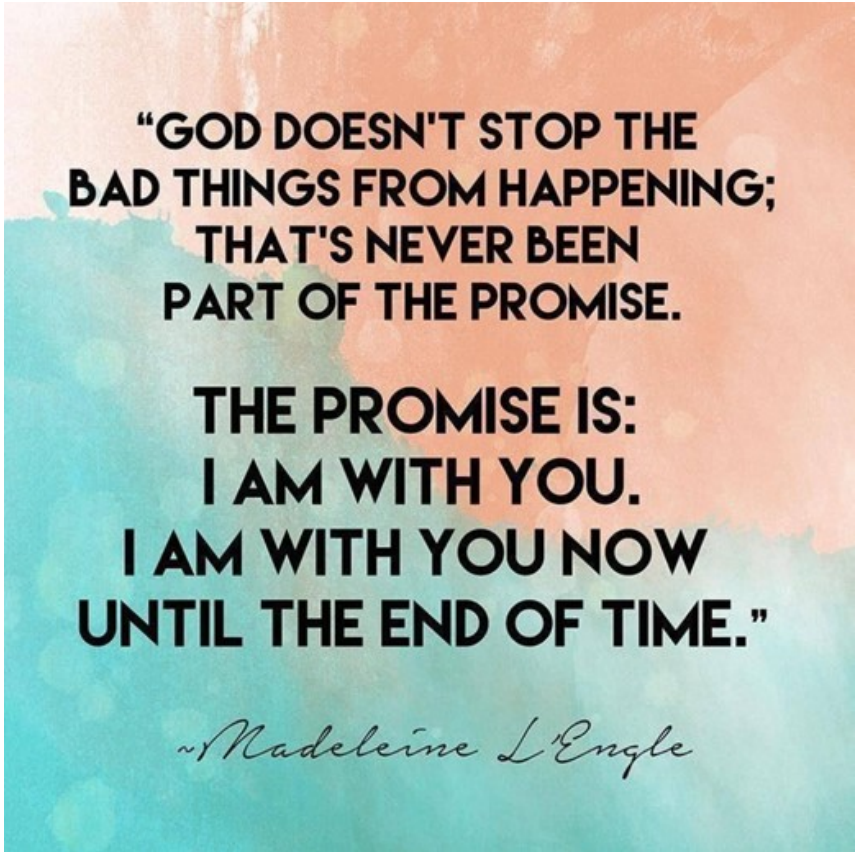
This grief newsletter is sent to members and friends of Paradise Valley United Methodist Church following the loss of a loved one. PVUMC pastors are available to you if you need one-on-one support. Contact the church office for more information at 602-840-8360. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, contact the church office or e-mail [ddoran@pvumc.org](mailto:ddoran@pvumc.org).

Debbie Doran, Editor

## 2026

Welcome January, the beginning of a new year. Change is part of this new beginning. A new song for you to sing. You are not the same as you were last year at this time. Your song has changed. In the midst of your losses and hurts, there are gains and happiness to be discovered. May these messages show you a new song...a song of caring, love, hope, renewal, friendship, learning, and adventure.<sup>1</sup>





**"GOD DOESN'T STOP THE  
BAD THINGS FROM HAPPENING;  
THAT'S NEVER BEEN  
PART OF THE PROMISE.**

**THE PROMISE IS:  
I AM WITH YOU.  
I AM WITH YOU NOW  
UNTIL THE END OF TIME."**

*~Madeleine L'Engle*

### **The Hand of God**

I said to the man at the gate of the year,

"Give me a light that I may go forth into the unknown."

And the man replied, "Put your hand into the hand of God.

That shall be to you better than a light, safer than a known way."<sup>2</sup>

## Holding on to God

“I am the Lord your God, who grasps your strong hand, who says to you, Don’t fear; I will help you.”

Isaiah 41:13 (CEB)

My granddaughter is just over one year old. She is standing and taking tentative steps but has not yet tried to walk on her own. When she wants to move from one spot to another, instead of crawling she will look around for someone she trusts and hold out her hand. If one of us responds to her, offering her our hand, she will use it to steady herself as she stands and then will walk with us to where she wants to go. She doesn’t walk anywhere without holding on to the hand of someone stronger and steadier than herself.

It is a wonderful thing to know that we don’t have to walk through life alone. Whether we feel confident or unsure, brave or fearful, joyful or sorrowful, God is always with us, strong and steady for us to hold on to.

We can always reach out for God whose guidance, understanding, and protection are always there for us. God wants to walk with us at all times. Just like my granddaughter will take my hand in trust, knowing that I love her, we too can hold on to God, trusting God’s steadfast love to keep us from falling.

## Let Us Pray

Dear God, thank you for loving us and for your steadying presence that holds us up and helps us along whatever path life takes. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

## Open Your Heart

You can shed tears because they are gone, or you can smile because they lived. You can close your eyes and pray they will come back, or you can open your eyes and see all that they left for you.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see them, or you can be full of the love you shared. You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember only that they are gone, or you can cherish their memory and let it live on. You can cry and close your mind and feel empty, or you can do what they would want. Smile. Open your heart. Love...and go on.<sup>4</sup>

## Grief Journaling



When we write about our grief in a journal, we're expressing our thoughts and feelings outside of ourselves. That means journaling is a form of mourning, and it can help us heal.

There are no rules for grief journaling, but you might consider jotting down your thoughts and feelings first thing when you wake up or each night before you go to sleep. You can use a paper journal or a computer. Entries can be as long or as short as you want. Don't worry about what you're writing or how well you're writing it. Just write whatever's on your mind and heart.

Overtime, journaling also helps us see our progress. When we go back and reread things we wrote months ago, we notice the ways in which our grief has changed and softened. Sometimes seeing how far we've already come helps us keep going.<sup>5</sup>



Footnote:

1. Paula Rugen
2. A New Year's message from Britain's King George to his embattled people at the beginning of WWII.
3. Joy Margaetts; Wales United Kingdom; Upper Room, December 7, 2025
4. Elizabeth Ammons
5. "GRIEF ONE DAY AT A TIME" by Dr. Alan Wolfel, January 6, page 17