

# Sew Precious In His Sight

Volume Nine, Issue 4



July 2007

**I**n the last newsletter I shared how my baby brother made a difference in my life and how the Lord used this tragedy to prepare my heart to being open to the call of making burial gowns for other families that lost their precious baby at birth. I would like to also share another story about another little baby that only put his wings down for a short time here on earth, but also changed the life of his big sister and touched a lot of other families many years later.

I first met Debbie, who has grown to be a dear friend to me and to Threads of Love, about twelve years ago. Debbie is an OB nurse at our local hospital and has a heart for these families who never take their babies home to be able to make memories. The memories that Debbie so tenderly and lovingly helps make will remain in their hearts forever. Without Debbie they would only have the memory of losing their baby, but with Debbie's help and because of her little brother, she has learned to reach out to these families in giving them beautiful memories to look back on.

Remember when you are sewing for Threads of Love, you are also helping those families make beautiful memories. I have had ladies tell me that they cannot sew for a dead baby. Please don't look at making a burial gown as sewing for a dead baby, but look at it as gift wrapping that baby to send back home to our Lord, where that baby will rest safely in the arms of God. As you make one of these gowns pray for that family. In this way you are wrapping that baby and it's family in

God's love and sending a little part of you to embrace that family when they are so desperately in need of love and prayers.

-Sissy Davis

## **THREADS OF LOVE TAKES PART IN MARTHA PULLEN SEWING MARKET**

This was our eighth year for Threads of Love to take part in the Martha Pullen Sewing Market in Arlington, TX. A BIG thanks to Martha Pullen and staff for allowing us to again be a part of the sewing market. This year, once again, we made blankets to donate to one of the local hospitals. We chose John Peter Smith County Hospital this year and at the end of the show we had 216 blankets to give to the NIC unit there for their preemie babies. A special thanks to Gloria Speakman of the Arlington chapter who arranged to have sergers on loan from the Arlington Sewing Center, and the loan of her two embroidery machines for embroidering the special design dizited by Laurie Anderson of the TN chapter. Thanks to Cherry Breland from the Baton Rouge chapter and Sandra Smith from the Jonesboro chapter for their help at the show. Also, special thanks to Kelly Butler and Gloria Speakman for the eight to ten hours that they put in the booth each day. A big thanks, also, to Linda Whigham and Judith Ligiers who came to the rescue when we didn't have enough help. I would also like to thank my chapter for cutting ten bolts of flannel into blankets for the show.

-Sissy

# Lessons Learned

by  
Debbie Fowler

For as long as I can remember, I have loved babies and anything that had to do with babies. When I was eight years old, my Mama told us we were going to have a baby. I was so excited. Our church gave us a baby shower. I don't remember the shower and may not have even gone, but I remember all the baby things that we were given. I loved to just look at all the things they had given us. I had never seen so many baby things in one place in my life. Sometimes I would go to my parent's room and just look at all the nice things we had for our baby.

At that time we lived in a tiny house on the Dupuy's property. Mr. and Miss Dupuy was an elderly brother and sister that made ends meet by renting out the tiny house on their farm. They raised goats, chickens, and I think a few cows and pigs. Miss Dupuy gave me my first peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I sat at her kitchen table while she fixed it for me. I thought it was the best thing in the world. She also gave me goat's milk from their old, wooden icebox with the block ice. I remember drinking it and I don't remember not liking it. I think I was just so happy about the sandwich, I didn't care that I was drinking goat's milk. Mr. and Miss Dupuy also raised hairless Chihuahua's. The only thing I remember about their dogs was I wasn't sure which smelled worse the Chihuahua's or the goats.

I would go out very early in the mornings. The sand was cool under my bare feet and smelled so good. I loved to run and even more, I loved to chase things. I learned pretty quickly not to chase the goats. Those are some mean animals, but the chickens were easy to chase. They are amazingly fast. Then one day I tried to chase a mother hen. I've been afraid of chickens ever since and I'm afraid of them to this day. Lessons learned.

I was the oldest child. I was the little mama and at eight years old, I always tried to be the one that made everything better. That summer when the west Texas sun was blazing, I found an old horse trough. I rolled it to our house, filled it with water and my brother and sister and I had a wonderful, if leaky swimming pool. Since we didn't have swimming suits, we just jumped in with our clothes on. When all the water leaked out, we played in the mud.

One night, Daddy got my brother and sister and I up in the middle of the night. He said Mama might be having the baby. I don't remember seeing my Mama before being rushed over to the Dupuy's. I don't know if we stayed at the Dupuy's for the days Mama was in the hospital or if we stayed somewhere else. The next thing I remember is my Daddy bringing us home. There were other relatives there, but Daddy took all three of us straight to our tiny bathroom

and shut the door. He kneeled down and told us that the baby had died. We started to cry and he said to dry up our tears. We could not cry and we could not talk about the baby to anyone. He said we especially could not say a word about the baby to Mama and we were not to let her see us cry. I now know that was the prevailing attitude at the time. I'm sure he was just repeating the doctor's instructions, "Go home, forget about it, and don't talk about it." But as a little girl only eight years old, I remember the feeling of a solid mass rising up from my gut and no matter how hard I tried, the tears came. Daddy left the bathroom and told us when we dried up our tears we could come out. I don't remember coming out of that bathroom, but I'm sure I did as I was told, dried up my tears and walked out. Lessons learned.

A couple of days later, Mama came home. I was so glad to see her. She hugged me. She was the first person that had hugged me during this whole thing. I felt the tears coming and ran to the closet and hid while I cried. I remember trying to compose myself because I really wanted to see my Mama. I remember spending a lot of time alone in that closet, just a lost little girl all alone with this mass of grief I couldn't swallow and there was nothing I could do to make it better.

Timothy Landon James was buried the day after he was born. My daddy and a few family members went to the funeral. Mama wasn't allowed to go and neither were my brother, sister, and I. Someone came and took away all of the nice baby things our church had given us. I really wanted to keep it, because maybe one day we would have another baby, but I didn't get a vote. It was all gone. It was forty-five years later that my Mama, sister, and I first went to his unmarked grave. To this day I want to move his body to my dad's gravesite. To this day, I want to tend to him. I want to be his big sister and I never will.

Timothy was my Mama's first loss that I remember. I'm not sure how many miscarriages my mom had, I would guess a few before Timmy. The next year, my Mom had my little sister, and even my parents said I raised her. I remember pulling a chair up to the sink to stand on while I bathed her when she was only a few weeks old.

Several years later, my Mama was pregnant again. I was really happy, but Mama said not to get my hopes up until she was at least 4 months along, just in case something happened. I thought the fourth month would never come, but it did. A few weeks later, Mama and I sat down to make a list of what we needed for the baby. We bought diapers (cloth), plastic pants, and diaper pins and I practiced folding diapers.

We lived in town at this time. My daddy worked as a truck driver, so we were alone a lot. One night, we were having a terrible thunderstorm. My Mama came into my

room and woke me up. The power was off. I was and still am afraid of the dark and it was very dark. Mama said she was bleeding a lot. As we still didn't have a telephone she needed my brother and I to walk to my aunt and uncle's house so they could take her to the hospital. It was thundering, lightening and pouring rain. The wind was blowing, but it was summer so it wasn't cold. Mama put a quilt over our heads and sent us out the back door. I could see the fear in her eyes. Mama is afraid of storms, so I know she must have been really bleeding to send us out in that storm. I tried to be brave. It was only about 3 blocks to my uncle's house. Except for the lightening it was black dark and very scary. As far as I know that was the last baby Mama lost. By then I had gotten pretty good at hiding my grief, but I never got good at not being able to make it better.

Years went by and I got my first job as a nurse's aide in a small hospital. One of the nurses there saw my interest and went out of her way to help me learn and do as much as possible. One day, my mentor pulled me to the side. She knew I was interested in babies. She told me someone had a miscarriage and I could see it if I wanted. The catch was, the products of conception were in the delivery room, an area strictly off limits to nurse-aides. She said if I got caught I was on my own.

I had never been in a delivery room. As I passed through the double doors, the room was dark except for a light in the sink area. It was cold, sterile, and quiet. I saw no products of conception but didn't really have an idea of what products of conception looked like. As I looked around, I saw a small package wrapped in white paper lying on the counter near the sink. I don't know if my fingers felt frozen from the cold or from my fear, but I, clumsily picked up the tiny package and moved it to a stainless steel table. I unwrapped the package and there was a tiny human being, certainly not what I expected. Looking back with what I know now, the fetus was probably about 20-22 weeks gestation. She had a little black fuzzy hair and ridges for eyebrows. She had perfect fingers and toes. She had knees and elbows. She was perfect. I touched her tiny hand and she moved her fingers. Even at just fifteen years old, my first thought was, "Where was her mother. This baby should be dying in her mother's arms, not alone on a cold, porcelain sink." But I knew her mother was in a room alone and had probably been given a medication to make her sleep and forget. I touched her again and she didn't move. I looked for a tiny heartbeat and saw none. I quickly wrapped her and placed her back on the sink. There was nothing I could do to make it better. Another lesson learned.

In the mid-eighties, I was an LPN in a small hospital. We sent all our preemies to a large hospital in Birmingham. They sent them back to us when they were stable enough to nurse a bottle. I got very attached to a baby who was with us for months. His mom was a teenager and she did not have transportation to visit him. Every day that I worked I took care of him. One night, a nurse from the nursery came running to labor and delivery with him...he wasn't breathing. We worked

for an hour, trying to get him back. Eventually, people began dropping out of the room. They all knew how attached I was to him. Finally it was just the doctor and I left. I was doing chest compressions and she was ventilating him. She stopped giving him ventilations, listened for a heart rate, and quietly said, "It's time to stop." I physically could not stop. I started doing both chest compressions and ventilations. I didn't even realize I was crying until I saw a tear drop onto his tiny hand. Finally the doctor gently took my hand and again softly said, "It is time to stop, he is gone." It was so hard for me to stop.

When the doctor left she closed the door, leaving me alone with him. I cleaned him and took his IV out. I wrapped him up, sat down on a stool and cried while I held him. He had spent four of his six months on earth with us. Only a few hours earlier, I was rocking and feeding him. Now, I was holding his lifeless body and crying. It was one of the most devastatingly emotional times in my professional life. Another lesson learned.

Over the years, I had a lot of experiences with death. Some people were old, some not so old, and some tiny babies. As I look back I can see God's plan for me. Of course at the time, in the middle of it all I didn't recognize it as that. There were times when I rejected God, because in my infant spiritual thinking, if there were a God, He would not let these things happen. I'm sure, to God I was like a two-year old stamping her foot and crying. There must have been times that God carried me, even though I didn't know it. And all along he was preparing me to be able to make it better. He was preparing me to accept that I couldn't always fix whatever was wrong, but He was giving me the skills to help people that were experiencing the grief that my family experienced.

Now as I look back, I can see that whatever skills I have, whatever drive I have to help a grieving family, whatever I teach another caregiver about perinatal loss comes from God. And I wonder why. Why me? I am so unworthy and I am humbled that God would take a ragged, poverty stricken little girl from Texas and give her the skills that I have been given.

I could not care for my Mama when her babies died. I could do nothing for that sad little girl that I was, hiding in the closet and crying. If I can help just one grieving mother, if I can keep just one little girl from having to cry alone in the closet, then hopefully, through God's grace, one day, I will sit at the feet of God and he will say, "Lessons learned my good and faithful child."





## MAIL BOX...

Thank you all for what you do! I work in the NICU @ Camp Lester, Okinawa Japan.

The Threads of Love organization is unique not only to the parents who receive these items, but to the staff members who see the smiles on the parents faces. It just goes to show, there are good people in this world.

Thank you all so much for your hard work. I just wanted to let you know it doesn't go unnoticed.

Hendra K. Hill, SRA, USAF  
Health Service Management Journeyman  
Critical Care Flight  
Lester Naval Hospital, Okinawa Japan

---

I am the cousin of our beloved Mariah who passed away on last Sunday. She was laid to rest on Saturday. After she died, she was presented to her mother in the most beautiful garment. On the tag, I noticed it said Threads of Love. From the family of Mariah, I just wanted to say thank you. She was 3 months and 7 days old and will truly be missed. She was a blessing to our family for the short time she was here on earth with us. 3 (Father, Son, Holy Ghost) and 7 is for completion! Mariah was cared for by the Brookwood Medical Center Staff in Birmingham, AL.

Again, we thank you...  
Candice

---

This past week my sister Margaret gave birth to a stillborn baby in her seventh month of pregnancy. She received the most beautiful pink gown, bonnet and blanket. She worried about what to bury Meghan in. We looked at premie clothing but everything looked huge and not appropriate. Your outfit was so perfect. It made her so happy that she could bury her child in something lovely made with love. You may never know how much it meant to our family. You have been a wonderful blessing. The prayer will be used at the funeral service. Thank you!

Loretta (River Ridge, LA)

---

I would like to thank you for the cute items you gave our twins in the NICU at St. Lukes hospital in December 2006. We still use them.  
Gina De La Cruz

My name is Linda Sullivan and my daughter and son in law just had a new baby 10 weeks early. I cannot tell you what it meant to us to open the incubator and find a new white hat with a red ribbon and her first hand sewn toy. From the bottom of our hearts the Sullivan/Steele family would like to thank you for all that you do.

We had never seen a baby as small as Isabella but apparently they are born every day. We were told by the doctors that Isabella is progressing in ways that most 29 weekers do not. This is a direct result of prayer. Again, we thank you.

Linda Sullivan—04Q  
Case Manager  
Cabinet for Health and Family Services  
Louisville, KY

---

Hi! I came across your website while doing some looking and I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your ministry. I have had 5 children that all have spent anywhere from 5 days to 7 weeks in the NICU ( a totally of 20 weeks). Each of them coming home with a blanket that says threads of love on it. I just wanted to encourage you to continue on in your efforts. What an encouragement it was to me during this time of my life to know that someone had thought of my little one. Each of the blankets have been well used and are still being used as doll blankets. I enjoy being able to tell my children that that blanket was used by them when they were a tiny little one. Often premature children come unexpectedly in your life and you have nothing to give your child when they are born. It was so nice to know that threads of love always came through and had a blanket or out fit to help keep my child warm at this time in their life when they are struggling so much to just stay alive. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Your labor of love has not gone unnoticed.

Indeed blessed, Melinda

P.S. These children were born in 3 different hospitals: Barns Jewish Christian Hospital in St. Louis, MO; Wilford Hall Medical Center and Methodist Children's Hospital in San Antonio, TX

**BOOKS OF THE BIBLE QUIZ.....BE PATIENT...THEY ARE THERE!**

**There are thirty books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them?** This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising even, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new sales record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "the books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight". Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus, there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found!



**HANDY LITTLE CHART**

**God has a positive answer:**

**YOU SAY**

**BIBLE VERSES**

"It's impossible"	<b>God says:</b>	All things are possible (Luke 18:27)
"I'm too tired"	<b>God says:</b>	I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28-30)
"Nobody really loves me"	<b>God says:</b>	I love you (John 3:1 6 & John 3:34 )
"I can't go on"	<b>God says:</b>	My grace is sufficient (II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)
"I can't figure things out"	<b>God says:</b>	I will direct your steps (Proverbs 3:5- 6)
"I can't do it"	<b>God says:</b>	You can do all things (Philippians 4:13)
"I'm not able"	<b>God says:</b>	I am able (II Corinthians 9:8)
"It's not worth it"	<b>God says:</b>	It will be worth it (Roman 8:28 )
"I can't forgive myself"	<b>God says:</b>	I Forgive you (I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)
"I can't manage"	<b>God says:</b>	I will supply all your needs (Philippians 4:19)
"I'm afraid"	<b>God says:</b>	I have not given you a spirit of fear (II Timothy 1:7)
"I'm always worried and frustrated"	<b>God says:</b>	Cast all your cares on Me (I Peter 5:7)
"I'm not smart enough"	<b>God says:</b>	I give you wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30)
"I feel all alone"	<b>God says:</b>	I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)

Threads of Love  
A Ministry of First Presbyterian Church  
of Baton Rouge  
763 North Boulevard  
PO Box 2006  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Place address label here

### **Mission Statement**

Threads of Love is a sewing ministry meeting the needs of tiny premature infants. The ministry is about healing and binding hearts together - the hearts of parents at a time of uncertainty about their baby's health or when they lose an infant. Our mission is to show parents the love of Christ at a time when their personal pain is hard to endure and let them know that God is faithful. Through acts of obedience and donation, His work can and will continue. Pray that this ministry will have an impact far beyond our expectations.

*Threads of Love  
First Presbyterian Church  
PO Box 2006  
Baton Rouge, LA 70821  
Website: [www.threadsoflove.org](http://www.threadsoflove.org)  
Sissy Davis, Director  
[sissy@threadsoflove.org](mailto:sissy@threadsoflove.org)*



*Jesus Knows Me,  
This I Love*