

Hope and Remembering

A Time of Reflection

Sunday 28th June 2020

Welcome—Stephen Gurr

Although not able to come together physically in the way we normally do at this time of year for our remembrance at Chestnut Tree House we wanted to provide this more 'virtual' way of connecting with one another and sharing in a time of reflection and remembrance together.

We've put together some words of remembrance, a couple of poems, a story and an activity, and we invite you to make use of any of these things in whatever way feels right for you. We always say at our remembrance events that not every part of what we offer will necessarily make a personal connection with you, and it's the same with what's offered here. Take from the thoughts we've put together whatever is helpful, and don't worry about anything that's not so helpful for you.

I'm going to start as we always do at our events with lighting a candle and keeping a few moments of quiet just as we gather our thoughts together. If you have a candle at home and would like to join me as I do this, please feel free to.

We are who we are today
because of those whose lives have touched ours.
We do not and cannot forget
those we have known and loved.

We join together to acknowledge grief
and the anguish and pain felt because a child has died.

We spend this time
seeking courage
and finding comfort
knowing others are also
remembering their loved ones with us.
We are here to honour
lives that shaped us
love that enriched us
and love which still enriches us.
This now is a special time to think of those
who have been gifts to us.
We remember how they are still part of us
And that beyond our horizons,
Beyond our understanding
Each is still with us.

Poems

Not alone — Read by Davina Townley

We bereaved are not alone.
We belong to the largest company
in all the world,
the company of those who have known suffering.
When it seems that our sorrow
is too great to be borne,
let us think of the great family
of the heavy hearted
into which our grief has given us entrance,
and inevitably, we will feel about us
their arms, their sympathy, their understanding.
Believe, when you are most unhappy,
that there is something for you to do in the world.
So long as you can sweeten another's pain,
life is not in vain.

Helen Keller

Poem Read by Clare Slater

A butterfly lights beside us
like a sunbeam.

And for a brief moment
its glory and beauty
belong to our world.

But then it flies on again,
and though we wish
it could have stayed,
we feel so lucky
to have seen it.

(Anon)

Story — Read by Fiona Rogers

The Invisible String—Patrice Karst

Time of Reflection

If you'd like you might wish now to hold whatever special item you've chosen to help you reflect during this time of remembrance.

We find ourselves holding today so many different thoughts and emotions as we spend this time remembering with others those we love who have died.

We hold within us our struggles during this time of Covid 19 and we feel the loss of not being able physically to be with family, friends and with other families at Chestnut Tree to keep this precious time together. Whatever item you may be holding to think about your child or children who have died, maybe spend a quiet moment now thinking of others holding their special keepsake, and remember that you are not alone as you do this.

In our thoughts and prayers today and deep within our hearts we hold each child we love and remember, and all those whose names are written in our Books of Remembrance at Chestnut Tree House. As we think about the story of the Invisible String we think of all the things that help us feel connected in that special way to those we love. We sense the connection we have with other families who feel the loss of a child today. We think of the things that have helped us through difficult times in the past and we think about the things that today have helped us face this day.

May we be given that deepest peace and courage within us today and for each day. We ask a blessing on us, and on all who are connected to us who we hold in our hearts just now.

Some final words of blessing

We used these words of blessing a couple of years ago when we gathered in the Woodland Walk at Chestnut Tree House at the end of the summer remembrance. As you read them, or listen to me reading them, you might like to picture the Woodland walk if you know it, or any other part of the lovely grounds at Chestnut that might mean something to you.

Warm and strong
Green and growing,
The blessing of the earth be ours.

Wide and free,
With the wind whistling,
The blessing of the heavens be ours.

Today and tomorrow,
The seasons turning,
The blessing of the days be ours.

Memories and stories
And a million questions,
The blessing of eternity be ours.

We are so small
But we are loved and cherished,
The blessing of heaven's love and peace be ours.

Ours today and in the days to come. Amen.