

Lights of Love

#ShareTheLight
#LightsofLove2020
#Sands

4th December 2020



Welcome –

Maria Huant, Sands Bereavement Support Services Manager

We welcome you to the Sands Lights of Love 2020 service of remembrance. In previous years, we have held events across the UK for bereaved families to come together and light candles in memory of their babies. This year, with the ongoing restrictions affecting meeting in person across the UK, we have created a virtual service to offer a space for reflection and remembrance.

The theme this year is Finding Light in the Darkness and we hope the readings, music and time for reflection will offer a sense of peace, comfort and hope to those joining. It will be a multi-faith service with contributions from across faith and non-faith communities. The service will remain on the Sands Youtube channel and you are welcome to share across social media. You can find more information about the order of service and support available on the Sands website. Thank you.

Opening Address –

Jen Coates, Sands Director of Bereavement Support and Volunteering

This year, 2020, has been one of unprecedented challenges for our society and for us as individuals. Changes to the ways we live and work, huge pressures on the NHS and the announcement of lives lost each day on the news has taken a toll. Being physically distanced from those we love at times of celebration, and particularly at times of sadness, has only added to the challenges for us all. For all those who have been through the heart-break of bereavement and baby loss in this most difficult of years, we hear you and we welcome you.

But we have learnt many things through this difficult time. We have learnt the power and importance of community, the depths of our resilience and the ways to keep the flame of hope burning in the dark. Through this service we have brought together words and music to share a message of hope and to remind each of you that coming together, supporting each other and sharing our strengths will help us move towards a brighter future. Sands will continue to offer support to all those affected by the death of a baby, work with NHS staff to provide excellent bereavement care and shine a light on the inequalities that contribute to the number of babies dying. We are committed to inclusion and ensuring that each of you find solace and comfort in the Sands community.

Music: 'In Case You Don't Live Forever' –

performed by Matt Beveridge. Written by Jennifer Decilevo, Nate Cyphert, Michael Pollack and Ben Platt.

KSAVI, Sands Ambassador and Trustee

Hello everyone. Today as I film this video, it's a time of year when we all celebrate Diwali. Diwali is all about coming together as families and celebrating the new Hindu calendar year. Of course this year is slightly different in that we are all doing it virtually. But the sentiments around Diwali are what I wanted to share with you as I think it also goes with what remembrance day is all about, light after darkness, knowledge and good over evil. I feel it goes really well with today's ceremony remembering all the little ones that we have lost, including our own son Shivai. Every time I think of him, a light within me shines out. I want to talk about him, I want to remember him and I know the people around me feel the same too. I feel really blessed and full of gratitude in being chose as his earth guardian. I know the little time that we had was cherished and for that I am really grateful and I keep those memories alive by talking about him continuously, by sharing moments about him and about being his mother. That allows me to continue being his

mother even though he is not here. The opportunity today to talk about this also reminds me of the support that's available through Sands for any bereaved parent or family member going through the loss of a child pre-birth, during birth or after. I know certainly that contacting Sands as a bereaved parent initially and now becoming an ambassador with them, it's those friendships that I formed through our combined grief, those friendships that hold me and carry me through these days without Shivai. I am grateful for that support I have received from Sands. So I want to take this moment to remind you that today and every day, you are not alone. There are so many people out there that have had the same experiences that you may have had and I want to remind you that we are all here to support and hold you. As we do this remembrance day and celebrate our little ones, I hope it brings you today and for the forthcoming days peace, love and harmony in remembering your little ones.

Yunus Dudhwala, Head of Chaplaincy at Barts Health NHS Trust

This poem is dedicated to all those who have lost a child through stillbirth or neonatally. From an Islamic perspective, there are certain beliefs that we hold around this child and the mother and hopefully

these have been captured in the poem. The poem talks about the pain of the mother and the child being in paradise and eventually the mother and child being reunited in heaven. I want to thank Fountains of Paradise in South Africa, who provided us with this poem especially for this service.

Drowning in the abyss of pain and despair

A grief permeated with a loss so difficult to bear

Reserved exclusively for the special parents,

For indeed the best of mankind, also experienced.

Tears of anguish and sorrow punctuate the silent darkness of the night

The Jannah (Paradise) child's laughter in preparation for your welcome, warms the soul with light

Bidding farewell to a precious bundle of joy is no easy fate,

Hoping the promise of your Lord eases the wait.

While there is no expiry date on the time it takes to heal,

the slave of Allah conquers with Sabrun Jameel.(Beautiful Patience).

For in the darkness of the storm radiates a light so bright

Of eternal bliss and a blissful reunion in the Gardens of Delight

O wounded soul, do not for a second doubt that your creator does not know your pain

Take faith, dear heart, in He by who's will lies all loss and gain.

He hears every silent sorrow, sigh and lament

He will heal your broken heart and the cracks in your soul he will cement.

As surely as the sweet rain causes the withered rose to blossom to life again

So too will your tears and suffering not be in vain

Fortunate are those who have the promise of a gift so rare

Holding fast to the rope of hope eases the despair

For in the blink of an eye, the pain of this temporary world will be sealed

Soon all will be forgotten when the pangs of separation are healed.

Trust in His timing and wisdom when you feel like you are in a shipwreck

Soon you will feel the warm embrace of those precious arms around your neck

Know without a shadow of doubt you are the chosen ones raised

For whom Baitul Hamd (House of Praise) has been prepared by the one who is praised.

May the sorrow in your eyes be replaced with comfort and ease

May your heart be graced by the source of peace.

Candle Lighting

Music: Hallelujah arr. Sheku Kanneh-Mason used courtesy of Decca Classics, performed by Sheku Kanneh-Mason

Lorna Delayahu, Sands Volunteer Co-ordinator

Hannukah is the 8-day Jewish festival of lights, which falls in December, the darkest time of year. For 8 days we gather together and light candles on a menorah. The candles light up the darkness, much as gathering together and sharing in our grief may help light up the darkness inside us.

Traditionally, we sing songs together, and I'd like to share the first verse and chorus of a song called *We Came to Drive Away the Darkness (Banu Choshech Le-Garesh)*.

Though the night is cold and dark.

In our soul, there lies a spark.

Each of us, is one small light.

All together, we shine bright.

Do a good deed – light your spark.

Let your glow shine through the dark.

Do a good deed – light your spark.

Let your soul shine through the dark.

'The Hanukkah menorah with its eight branches and kindling light remind us of the diversity on Earth, bound together with a branch of oneness.

It is a reminder that we are interconnected as a global community.

We are diverse yet equal.

At times of deep darkness, instead of walking in fear, let us kindle Godly lights, lights within and lights beyond, and let us increase these lights each day to light the way for all.'

Words by Rabbi Warren Stone

Nana-Adwoa Mbeutcha, Dope Black Mums

I wanted to talk to you today about quite a famous reading in the Bible, about coming out of the darkness into the light. When you suffer

bereavement, it's very easy to get stuck in the darkness because you think, 'Why should I come out? I'm hurting, I'm in pain.' I understand that. I went there as well. But sometimes if you just have a little flicker of hope, you realise that actually, coming out is better than staying in. You can reach so many more people, hear from so many people. And maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow because it takes time but one day, you could be light for someone else. I want to read this from the book of Matthew, chapter 5 verse 14-16.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a mountain cannot be hidden. No-one lights a lamp and covers it. Instead, it is put on a lampstand where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, your light must shine before others so they may see the good you do and praise your Father in Heaven.

Marc Harder, National Bereavement Care Pathway Lead

We find ourselves in difficult times, often feeling that bad news, isolation; loneliness and grief are all around us. The same was true for those in the land of Judah around the year 700 BC. The people were walking in darkness, separated from their loved ones, anxious about their immediate and long-term futures. But the prophet Isiah brought

an important message of comfort to the people, foreseeing the coming of the promised Messiah and sharing words of light, peace and hope to those who would listen. It's in Isiah chapter 9 verses 1-3 and 6-7.

To us a child is born

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the gentiles, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan -

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of death a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

So may this same light, peace and hope shine in our hearts and be with us and our families this Christmas.

Music: I Can Love You From Here by Liberty's Mother

written and performed by Sophie Daniels (Liberty's Mother) with accompaniment from the ICMP Community Choir

Videography, recording and mixing by Richard Sanderson (filmed December 2019)

All EP Artwork by Nadine Furer

Download/stream the song: <https://orcd.co/libertysmother>

Watch the live video: <https://youtu.be/KKobvU4n5KU>

Watch the official video: <https://youtu.be/NvLo1Gk-UQw>

Helen Butlin, Bereavement Support Services Manager

This is a poem by the Irish poet Derek Mahon and I think it helps us to remember that even in the most difficult situations there are always moments of beauty to be found.

Everything is Going to Be Alright (Derek Mahon)

How should I not be glad to contemplate

the clouds clearing beyond the dormer window

and a high tide reflected on the ceiling?

There will be dying, there will be dying,

but there is no need to go into that.

The lines flow from the hand unbidden

and the hidden source is the watchful heart.

The sun rises in spite of everything

and the far cities are beautiful and bright.

I lie here in a riot of sunlight

watching the day break and the clouds flying.

Everything is going to be all right.

Sarah Finnigan, Regional Volunteering Lead

The deeper the dark, the closer the dawn. However profound the suffering that envelops you, never forget the inner spark of hope and courage. Never lose the capacity to wait with patient enduring. Even places that have been shrouded in darkness for billions of years can be illuminated. Even a stone from the bottom of a river can be used to produce fire. Our present sufferings, no matter how dark, have certainly

not continued for billions of years, nor will they linger forever. The sun will definitely rise. In fact, its ascent has already begun.

This quote is written by Daisaku Ikeda – Third President of Soka Gakkai International (A worldwide community-based Buddhist organisation promoting peace, culture and education centred on the respect for the dignity of life)

Music: I Leave With You

written John Fisher (BEM), performed by John Fisher (BEM) and IDMC Gospel Soul Choir. Producer: Jofish Media Ltd

[Download 'I Leave With You' MP3](#)

[Download 'I Leave With You' video](#)

[Lyric Link](#)

Closing Address, Clea Harmer, Sands Chief Executive

Thank you for joining us for this virtual Lights of Love 2020. We hope you found it helpful to pause, reflect and remember alongside the wider Sands community. I would like to close with the final lines of the poem 'When Great Trees Fall' by Maya Angelou, which reminds us of our continuing bonds with those who have gone before us:

And when great souls die,

after a period peace blooms,

slowly and always

irregularly. Spaces fill

with a kind of

soothing electric vibration.

Our senses, restored, never

to be the same, whisper to us.

They existed. They existed.

We can be. Be and be

better. For they existed.

Sands are here for anyone affected by the death of a baby and we will continue to offer support to those who need it, fund research into reducing the number of babies dying and raise awareness of the experiences of bereaved families. Thank you for supporting Sands and we look forward to continuing our work into 2021 and beyond.

To make a donation

sands.org.uk/donate

To get involved

sands.org.uk/get-involved

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Support for you

t: 0808 164 3332
e: helpline@sands.org.uk

Online community:
sands.community

**Sands bereavement
support app:**
sands.org.uk/app

All support options:
sands.org.uk/support

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