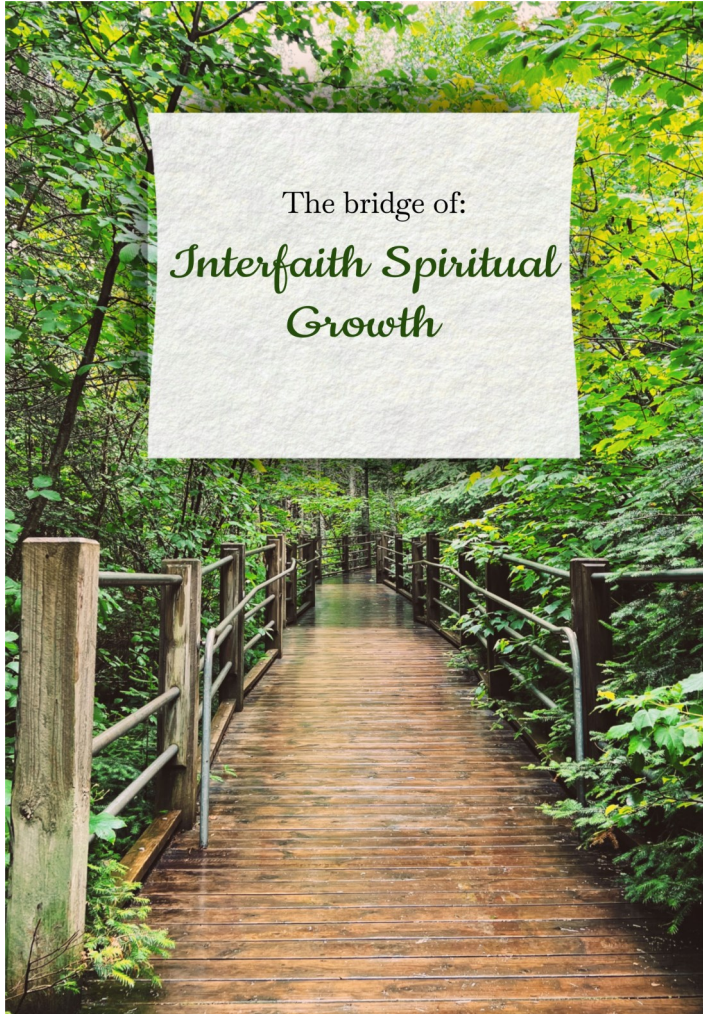




Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

VOL. XIX, NO. 10 October 2023



Why Interfaith?

By Linda Claire Groshans

I would love to hear your personal stories about what led you to be a part of the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth. In other words, I'm asking you

"Why Interfaith?"

I wonder if many of us would answer my question by sharing similar reasons and stories. Maybe yes...maybe no. Right? Perhaps we each have arrived here at the Center for a very personal reason. Didn't I hear one person tell us a story about how they started coming here because the potlucks were so delicious (*we sure have some fun members!*)

I know what I believe about my faith, but if I had to explain my personal beliefs to someone, I think it would feel very vulnerable, and maybe not even coherent. Is it important or necessary to be able to easily communicate why we Interfaith?

Every Sunday, a worship leader begins our service by explaining the visions and missions of the Interfaith Center. **Every Sunday, I need to hear this important part of the service.** Why? Because it is helping me to have the words to share with others when I tell them about why I Interfaith. Also, it is helping my philosophical mind have a way to clearly state a broad picture of my faith to others. **This portion of our Sunday Service is what I think of as a bridge.** It is where we can see a vision of how to walk with each other as we try to promote understanding and cooperation among peoples. Why does this metaphor of a bridge come to my mind? Well, bridges are where separate points become connected. **This brief explanation of Interfaith at the beginning of our Sunday service is where I begin to imagine that there is truly something that unites us all.** A bridge also gives me an image of something that facilitates a journey from one place to another. And, as we journey, we find sometimes that we become transformed and truly a part of a higher consciousness.

The opening of our service may seem routine because we repeat this every week. I hope that as the Service Leader begins this portion of the program next Sunday, you will join me on a figurative bridge. One good thing about bridges is how they often carry us over rough terrain or raging rivers...so how amazing is it that the bridge is laid out for us every Sunday morning.

I like naming things in my thoughts. I have thought of these names for a bridge...what do you think?

-The bridge of understanding -The bridge of peaceful coexistence- The bridge of unity- The bridge of Spiritual Growth- The bridge of Peace - The bridge of Love... OH WAIT...I can just call it the bridge of Interfaith for Spiritual Growth.

Ministerial Miscellany

By Annie Kopko

Last month, on September 10th, I was very gratified to be host to Marianne Williamson at our Interfaith center. It was an opportunity to welcome many people who otherwise may never have known about our community. To those of you who were not there, we had 178 attending in person and 54 on Zoom, our largest ever crowd for a Sunday morning service. It was indeed a wonder how we pulled it off, and I want to thank everyone who worked so hard to do the cleanup and painting, bring delicious treats, and help in every way possible. I am especially grateful to Delyth Balmer who coordinated us all for 2 weeks.

I was fairly nervous that day in the role of Service Leader, but I do believe in taking on challenges, because by pushing ourselves a little extra we gain strength and resilience. When it was all over, I felt that I had gained a boost in my self-confidence. I am also very grateful to Marianne Williamson, who, as an extraordinary Spiritual teacher, is calling us forth to put our spiritual beliefs into action and serve humanity in whatever way we may be inspired to do.

Have a great month, and join us at Interfaith for our classes, discussion groups, and these **special events**: (see our website at <https://interfaithspirit.org> for more details)

Saturday, Oct. 7th, 12-6 PM for a “Spectacular 25th Anniversary Picnic-Potluck “ at Montibeller Park Pavilion, on Ellsworth near Carpenter, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. (the Pavilion has heat if we need it) Sign up at the center for food and volunteer tasks.

Saturday, Oct. 14th, 7-9 PM Cafe 704 - Paul Vornhagen and Aron Kaufman, in person and on Zoom. tickets \$10.00

Sunday, Oct. 15th, 1-3 PM Quarterly Conversation in Community (QCC) Lunch at 12:30, by donation. At this meeting, we share our ideas, concerns, and desires for the future of our community.

Saturday, Oct. 28th, 7-9 PM Full Moon Kirtan with Chaitanya Trevor Eller by donation.

Blessings, Annie

Happy Birthday to Our October Celebrants



October-05 Patricia Ramsay
October-12 Jeffrey Kroon
October-13 Marius Nowakowski
October-15 Judy Bell
October-18 Eric Engel
October-21 Lorri Coburn
October-22 Jill Crane
October-23 Richard Durham
October-29 Craig Harvey



October's Party

by George Cooper

“October gave a party;
The leaves by hundreds came
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples,
And leaves of every name.
The Sunshine spread a carpet,
And everything was grand,
Miss Weather led the dancing,
Professor Wind the band.

Adding another
candle doesn't make
you older, it makes
your life brighter!



September Volunteer Corner

Submitted by Annemarie Howse

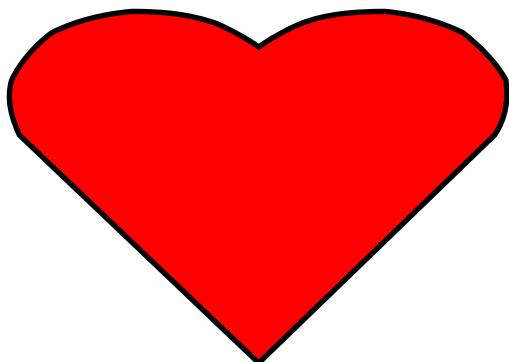
Some folks like to sit on the shore and watch others swim. Others like to dive right in. Still others like to get their toes wet from time to time. No matter what your style is you'll always find your niche at Interfaith.

The last few months have provided many opportunities for you to get involved at Interfaith. In April we had our 25th Anniversary Silver Ball, which required months of planning and many volunteers. This summer we decided it was time to sort through some of our "treasures" to decide what was still appropriate and what wasn't, donating, redistributing and in some cases trashing what was beyond repair. We scrubbed walls, painted and rearranged furniture. And this month is our 25th Anniversary picnic. Tasks, both big and small provided by a lot of volunteers has resulted in us getting to know each other better and having a lot of fun while doing it.

This fall we'll have our traditional Thanksgiving Dinner on Thanksgiving Day, and other holiday festivities. As usual, we'll work together to make 2023 a bright memory for all.

Whether you decide to sit by and enjoy the festivities, get your toes wet by volunteering to bring something for one of our potlucks or help set up, or dive right in, your participation will be greatly appreciated. And if you have been volunteering, thank you so much.

For more information please contact:
Annemarie Howse, Volunteer Coordinator
ahowse21@gmail.com
818-667-2815



Caring Committee August Report

respectfully submitted by Annemarie Howse

The mission of the Caring Committee is to assist individuals or families primarily within the community of the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, and selectively support outreach groups or people that aren't part of our Interfaith Community but we know about them through our members and affiliations.

Since the Caring Committee may not always be able to provide the services that are requested, we may reach out to the Interfaith Community for help. For example: if someone is moving or needs a ride, we might make an announcement or send an email with their request. We would then ask that you contact a member of the Caring Committee to let them know you are able to help.

During the month of September the Caring Committee provided the following services:

Transportation -2
Cards & Flowers sent on behalf of the Caring Committee-3
Cards sent by individuals within the Caring Committee-4
Texts/emails-4
Phone calls-3
Home or hospital visits-1
Outreach-1
Reiki-5

These supports and services were provided to 11 different individuals or families in our Interfaith Community and 3 organizations during the month of September.

Financial Report-Our balance at the end of September was \$2844.18. There were no expenses or donations made during the month.

**We thank you for your generosity and
are grateful for our ability to be of
service.**



Flowers Freezing

by Cayla Tchalo © 2022

The grief of flowers freezing

In the first killing frost of fall

Leaves on my heart and soul

A heavily hanging pall

That does not lift

Until the shift

From winter to the spring

When once again the Breath of Life

Returns to Everything



November World Religion Calendar

November 1* – Samhain: A Pagan and Wiccan festival marking the end of the harvest season

November 1 – All Saints Day: A day to honor all holy men and women who have been canonized in the Catholic Church

November 2 – Anniversary of the Crowning of Haile Selassie: The day when Haile Selassie ascended the Ethiopian throne. This is one of the holiest days in the Rastafarian year

November 27 – Guru Nanak Ji's Birthday: A day commemorating the birth of Guru Nanak Ji who founded Sikhism

November 12 – Diwali: A 5-day festival celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains. It honors gods, goddesses, harvests, New Years, etc.

November 27 – Jain New Year: A day celebrated on the first day after the month of Kartika.

November 30 – St. Andrew's Feast Day: St. Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Greece, Russia, Ukraine, Barbados, and Romania. This day honors him, his good works, and his canonization in the Catholic Church.

Mark your calendars!

CAFE 704 CONCERT SERIES

Saturdays, 7 p.m.—9 p.m.

In person and on Zoom

Oct. 14: Vornhagen and Kaufman

Nov. 11: Jean Wilson and Friends

Dec. 9: Emily Slomovits and Billy King

Interested in performing at Cafe 704?

Send an inquiry to Al Carter at

cafe704@gmail.com

PEACE GENERATOR

7—9 pm

With Craig Harvey

Every 3rd Friday

Leadership Team Meeting 2nd Sunday

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Bob Hopkins (734) 985-5572

Board of Trustees Meeting 3rd Sunday

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Marice Clark & Claire Groshans,

Co-Chairs

board@interfaithspirit.org

Caring Committee Meeting

1st Thursday

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. on **zoom** Marilyn Alf,

Chair

sdtoaa@gmail.com

Singing for Comfort

with Layla Ananda

7-8:30 pm

every 2nd Thursday

Celebration of Life

Joy Pendleton

November 4

2:30 pm

Interfaith Center

THE SUFI WAY

By Bob Hopkins

THE SUFI WAY AS A MEANS OF HEALING

It had been a very challenging weekend. The relationship with a woman who had been a quite significant part of my life was apparently ending at her behest. I was feeling desolate, disenchanted, dispirited and on the very edge of depression. A significant amount of dancing on the last two days of the weekend had raised my spirits for the duration, but I was late to arrive for the Sufi class and had little hope that anything that I would hear would be of much use to me. I had lost sight in this time of travail that all healing comes through the influence of God. When I tuned into the group on Zoom, the discussion was about healing and how one can expect the healing to come in time and affirming that the spiritual quality of healing from any type of malady or dysfunction can always be anticipated and that the most essential element in any such healing is faith. Suddenly I was buoyed by the awareness that no matter how bleak my view was at present, I could anticipate that the future held healing. The only issue was one of time and the only requirement was faith.

However, this perspective was not all I gained in the course of this early September Sufi class. Effortlessly, the focus of the discussion shifted to the nature of tools that would be helpful to healing. No fewer than four people spoke about their belief in the value of expressive writing. Kamau made the first statement about its value, but it was endorsed by at least three other speakers. I had been convinced that healing lay ahead. However, I did not feel that I was ready to put my feelings about my recent experience into a journal form. It felt too painful and I was convinced that writing about it would only add to the pain.

Surprisingly, I awakened in the night with the inspiration that I wanted to write a final love poem to my sweet friend. I got up early before work and began my writing of said poem. I could feel (almost immediately) more hopeful and a lift to my spirit. I must admit I hoped the poem might cause a reawakening of the relationship. Still, was well aware that my spirit was lifted and a significant movement toward healing had begun. I will long remember the powerful support I found in the Sufi group that night.



SCIENCE OF MIND

By Janet Somalinog

Spiritual counselor in the Religious Science tradition

This month I would like to reveal a Science of Mind Affirmative Prayer showing the steps in a clear linear fashion just to give you a sense of how to develop one's constrained consciousness to the Infinite Consciousness of the One Mind.

1. We start with a challenge or a condition of the body or of the outer world. Example: 'Jane' is feeling like she has lost faith, always questioning whether these prayers actually work. She understands all of this intellectually, but feels as though she is not really believing it on a deep 'soul' level.
2. Restate the desire that is to be revealed by this prayer: She wants to really feel **Peace of Mind and Trust**. *She wants to truly believe that a change or improvement will occur because of a simple shift in her thinking. She wants to be able to practice in real daily life that which she knows intellectually, but on a deep inner level.*
3. Note the use of the 3rd person pronoun when the prayer is for another entity. The 'practitioner' (1st person pronoun) is the person doing the prayer.

Here is what the 5 Step Treatment prayer could look like:

1. RECOGNITION: I know that there is but One Creative Source, One Love and that is God. God is peace, joy, understanding that surpasses everything. God is divine intelligence, an ever-giving mode of healing and supplying that is always available. It works in the Silent Knowing that all is right in the world.
2. UNIFICATION: And I know that I am one with that Source. I am one with the Universe...one with God. As I recognize this truth about myself, I recognize this to be true for 'Jane' as well. We are all connected...we are all one...we are all part of God. And that God is what makes up her consciousness, her body temple, her relationships and ALL aspects of her and her daily life.
3. REALIZATION: The truth I know about 'Jane' is that Faith is hers right now. There is no need to look for what is already there. **IT** is *surrounding her and flowing through her in Infinite Supply. There is a divine connection between her brain and her heart and it radiates Love, Peace and Trust. It guides her in her spiritual studies, her relationships, her personal life and all her daily affairs. The God Nature of 'Jane' has a deep and never ending supply of Wisdom that is embedded in the Still Knowing that is always present. God, in Her heart, is overflowing with joy that comes from a relaxed and confident KNOWING of who she is and what is the True Source of her Being. True Intelligence that comes from this KNOWING is ever available and closer than her very own breath.*
4. THANKSGIVING: It is with a joyous heart that I give great thanks for these Truths about 'Jane'. I also recognize that what is true for 'Jane' is also true for myself. This energy flows in and through all of the Cosmos and all of the beings in it. It is a deeply connected Life of Infinite reciprocity so when these Truths are known in one place, they are also known and experienced in all places. Infinite Love, Healing Energy, Abundant Source overflows and I am grateful!
5. RELEASE INTO THE LAW OF MIND (This is basically the Law of Cause and Effect): I now release my word into The Law of Mind, declaring it done and very good. There is no need for me to question the expression of these words and I need do nothing more than reside in the Still Knowing that 'Jane' and I are God in expression standing with our arms and minds open wide to experience these unconditional gifts of Spirit that flow through us into fruition. All mental barriers are released as I say, **"And so it is!! Amen!!"**



A CONVERSATION WITH THE SANDHILL CRANE QUEEN

By Peggy River Singer

Many years ago, I attended the funeral of a dearly loved neighbor at our little country church. When we walked out into the churchyard, I was surprised to see three Sandhill Cranes at the edge of the graveyard, just visible through the morning mist. They stayed until our friend was laid to rest, and we humans went back inside. The image of those cranes in the mist has stayed with me all these years, and it has encouraged me to invite a discussion with these amazing beings.

= = = = =

I hear a low, gentle chuckle.

Queen: *Bless you, child, we have waited for this day, in love and patience. It is no coincidence that our presence at your friend's ceremony touched you so deeply. We considered him a friend-of-the-heart, just as we have always considered you a friend-of-the-heart. This is why we have appeared to you at so many meaningful times in your life. It is our great honor and pleasure to bring you comfort and joy.*

Peggy: [I have tears in my eyes.] I'm so grateful for this relationship! Do you connect with other humans in this way?

Queen: *Oh yes, many many. Of course, few of them are able to hear our thoughts. We do not intrude on their consciousness, you see. But they feel a deep connection when they see us, or hear us singing.*

Peggy: I've always loved to hear your call; it is soothing and powerful at the same time.

Queen: *You have described our calls accurately. Creator asked us to use our unique voices to balance the energies of this world. Because of the complex design of our windpipe, our song is a combination of many levels, frequencies, tones, colors and shadings. It is designed to be heard at quite a distance, far beyond what humans are consciously aware of. Humans might feel their chakras activating when they hear it. [She shows me an image of my body's chakras lighting up rapidly one by one as the tone*

moves through them. I feel a slight but delicious response from every chakra, then I feel much lighter and "clearer".]

You might compare our singing to the toning of elephants, or the songs of whales, all in service of Creation.

When we migrate in fall and spring, the birds of a flock take turns harmonizing our calls in ways that strengthen and heal the balancing of the path we travel.

Like human children, our chicks learn to sing as they grow. The fully developed complexities can require a life's work, but that is not expected of every child. Individuals may choose the sort of healing and balancing they wish to embody.

Peggy: Do other crane species participate in the kind of balancing you practice?

Queen: *Yes, some, but not all. Every species has its own specialty.*

Peggy: What else would you like my people to know about your people?

Queen: *Our history with humans is long and complicated. Your indigenous peoples understand our energy very completely. This understanding is one small aspect of their ability to survive in spite of great sorrows and losses, as we cranes have done. Today we can feel the compassion of the humans who restore our ancestral nesting places and protect us from harm. It gives us hope for the future of our shared lives.*

Our blessings will go with you always.

AUTHOR BIO

Peggy River Singer is a Lightworker, all-beings channel and communicator, faerie ally, Reiki practitioner, and life-long writer who combines her gifts to help create harmonious relationships among all who share the Earth. Connect by phone at 734-548-0194, or by email at newbluecanoe@aol.com or peggytalkstoanimals.wordpress.com. More articles and columns are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com.

MOST BENEVOLENT OUTCOMES (MBOs)

by Lyriel Claire

I spoke about MBOs in my talk on October 15. The video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/user/interfaith704/videos>. The talk is called “Collaborating with the Flow.”

The process of calling forth a Most Benevolent Outcome (MBO) was channeled and developed by Tom Moore of TheGentleWayBook.com. A great deal of information can be found on his website.

MBOs are an easy way to direct your energy Flow and make life work out to your benefit as well as to others. They consist in saying a starting phrase that aligns the Forces of the Universe in your favor. They work because you are asking the Forces for help in a specific way. You can ask for yourself and for others. You should be involved emotionally in the outcome and are not just asking to “test the Universe” or for meaningless personal gain.

Your request should begin with the following phrase:

If the request is for yourself:

“I ask any and all beings to assist in creating the most benevolent outcome for...” State your request clearly. It can be short or long — there are no rules! Try to ask for the *essence of what you want rather than specifics*. *At the end you must add “Thank you.”*

If the request is for someone else:

“I ask any and all beings to aid and assist [Name] in the most benevolent outcome for [add what is wanted].” “Thank you.”

When requesting an MBO:

- It is not absolutely necessary for the wording to be exact. But do ask “any and all beings” and say “thank you” at the end. And, of course, it helps to envision the request being fulfilled.
-
- It helps immensely if you speak your request out loud. You don’t want to keep it silent in your head, because that is as far as it will go. Your voice has great power — use it! You may also write down the request if you prefer.
-
- Make the request from a calm state. Take a few very deep breaths and move into your center.
-
- And...don’t forget the all-important “thank you” at the end. This puts everything into play!
-

If you have any questions or need help crafting your MBO, please contact me: lyriel.claire@gmail.com



The Day of the Dead

By Heide AW Kaminski and
Annemarie Howse

Heide:

Wednesday, Nov. 1 through Thursday, Nov. 2 is the "Day of the Dead, (Día de Los Muertos)," a primarily Mexican holiday, but also widely celebrated by other Latino and Catholic cultures. It has nothing to do with Halloween or "The Walking Dead." It is a beautiful celebration to honor deceased loved ones. Colorful altars are created with flowers, candles, photos, memorabilia, and even food to let friends and family who have crossed over know that they are not forgotten. These altars are constructed over a period of months.

North Americans have a baseball saying, "Three strikes and you're out." In Mexico, people die three legendary deaths, the third being the most poignantly final. The first death is the failure of the body. The second is the burial of the body. The most definitive death is the third death. This occurs when no one is left to remember us.

~ <https://www.albany.edu/~dkeenan/isp523/halloween.html>

The most beautiful movie about this that I can think of is the movie "Coco." It is an animated Disney movie that is enjoyable for the entire family and has a lot to say "between the lines."

My family is partially Latino. One of my son-in-laws is from El Salvador, and he and my daughter have two absolutely wonderful children who are immersed in the Spanish language and Latino culture, as well as learning English and German.

As per culture, the dead live on after death as spirits. If their spirit is forgotten, they die permanently. Families and friends celebrating the dead keeps the souls alive and happy. Therefore, it is important that even the youngest family members understand the importance of keeping their deceased family members' and friends' memories intact. This is not done in a solemn and sad way, but rather in a very colorful and joyful manner.

In many cultures, a funeral reception has been changed into a celebration of life of the deceased, rather than a mourning event. Believing that the spirit lives on - and, in most cases - has a happy life on the other side, can be very helpful in overcoming the sadness over the loss and simply keep the memories of what we had going with a smile and not so heavy heart. And this applies to animals as well!

The belief that your loved one's spirit can also communicate with you, is also helpful.

When my partner of 15 years passed away in May of 2020, I prayed for a sign that he was OK. That night, I had a dream of him riding his bike past my living room window. He took his bike back into the garage and looked peaceful and happy. He rode his bike a lot. In my dream he showed me that he had come home and was happy! It really helped me to move on!

More recently, I was in emotional turmoil over a personal issue. Out of the blue, when decluttering my house, I came across my father's death certificate. He died in 1971. I broke down in tears of happiness, as I just knew that finding his death certificate at this very moment was a message from him, letting me know that he was still looking out for his little girl! I was four, when he left my mother and me. I was 12 when I demanded to see him, only to be told for the first time that he passed away when I was eight.

My turmoil was resolved a few days later...

Annemarie:

My mother made her transition on December 23, 2007. Being raised a very strict Catholic, and a divorcee, she had a fear of dying. It often seemed like she was tip toeing in and out of this world and another state of consciousness. Although she was a kind and gentle woman, she wasn't sure if she would be welcomed into heaven. This is her message to me in a poem by John Cenner

Just a little letter, I wanted to say
Everything is fine, I got here OK
I made it to heaven, this place is really great
Family came to meet me; they were waiting by the gate.

I am young again, no illness and no pain
Things I could no longer do on earth, I can now do again
This place is beautiful! I feel like I have come home.
There are waterfalls and flowers, and green fields where I roam.

Please don't worry about me, for I am in God's care
And when the time is right, I will meet you there.
Cherish every single day
Just wanted you to know
That I got here OK.

This second poem, I chose to share is because I often have dreams where my mother, sister, aunts and nieces, all of whom have made their transition before me, are sitting around having tea with me, as we often did when they were alive. We are chatting, just visiting like we did many years ago. I awaken knowing that we have spent time together.

Were they here with me? Or was I in heaven with them?

Love You Forever
(author unknown)

I send you butterfly kisses
You don't always know I'm there
But it's me peaking 'round the corner
Or touching a strand of your hair.

I see you on days you are crying
Or wishing we could talk once in a while
Even though I'm now in heaven
I still want to see you smile.

I visit you at night when you're sleeping
I come quietly into your dreams
And whisper words ever so softly
To say death is not what it seems.

I see you sometimes at the table
When you don't know that I am there
As you gaze over at my picture
I hope you know how much I care.

I'm sending a hug from heaven
I wish you could feel it today
The love that we share is forever
Time and space can't take it away.