

My Christmas Letter

How could I find peace in the Christmas season after the death of our two-year-old son?

By Robyn Marie Allgood

Christmas 2006 was to be our first Christmas without our son, Kyle. It was three months since he had passed away, and we had started trying to adjust to a new normal. I was determined not to allow Christmas or his birthday (just before Christmas) to be sad, but it was still hard to enjoy all the usual preparations for Christmas—I longed to buy a little train or car for my son.

Soon it was Kyle's third birthday, and I didn't want it to be a sad day. Of course there was sadness and grief, but there was joy and peace too. We hosted a small party, and we released three balloons, symbolic of Kyle's three years. We even sang to him and my mother, whose birthday was the day before.

A few days later, it came time to write our annual Christmas letter to friends and family. I wasn't sure what to write this year, and the thought of writing about Kyle overwhelmed me. I had spent the morning reviewing my journal from the past summer. I remembered how Kyle was too scared to take swimming lessons by himself. Although I had to get a babysitter every day for two weeks for our daughter Megan, I was soon grateful that I got to be the one who taught him to blow bubbles, dip his head under the water, kick his legs, and jump from the side of the pool so I could catch him in my arms.

Reading my journal entries jump-started my mind, and I knew exactly what I wanted to write in the Christmas letter—everything I was grateful for. I sat down at the computer and wrote:

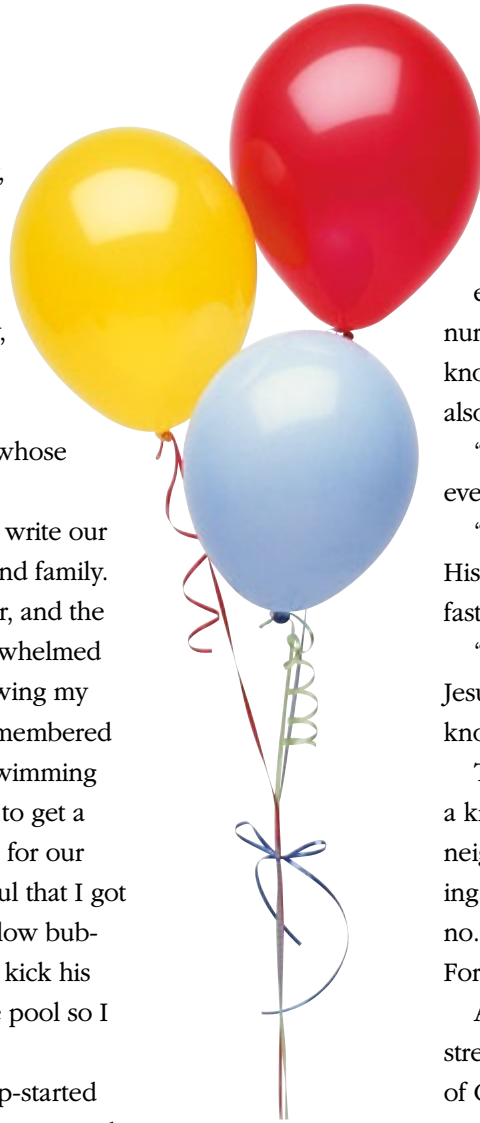
"I am grateful that I could read piles of books with Kyle while he sat in my lap so contentedly.

"I am grateful we spent hours playing in the park.

"I am grateful that I could play hide-and-seek and hear him squeal when he was discovered.

"I am thankful for his adventurous ways because they kept me on my toes.

"I do not regret staying home to be his mom.



We hosted a small party on the day Kyle would have turned three. I didn't want it to be a sad day.

"I do not regret staying up all night with him while he was sick.

"I do not regret taking him to church every Sunday, even if the report back from nursery wasn't always a positive one. (He was known to tackle the other children, but he was also the most enthusiastic singer!)

"I am grateful that I could teach him to pray, even if he hadn't yet mastered sitting still.

"I am grateful that he shared his testimony. His first and last trip to the pulpit was his last fast Sunday before he died.

"And I am thankful I could teach him about Jesus Christ and his Heavenly Father, for I know he is with Them now."

The day after I sent the letter out, there was a knock at our door. Our yard was filled with neighbors, friends, and ward members caroling to us. They sang "Silent Night" (*Hymns*, no. 204) and then "Families Can Be Together Forever" (*Hymns*, no. 300).

As I listened, tears of joy and gratitude streamed down my face, for I felt the power of God's plan to seal our families together for eternity. How grateful I am for our loving and kind Father in Heaven, who is so mindful of us and willing to let us learn from our weaknesses and trials. How grateful I am for the plan of salvation and for the babe Jesus, who was born in a humble stable and would bring to the world the gift of forgiveness through His Atonement for our sins.

The Savior taught, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). I am grateful for this comfort and peace. May that peace be with each of us this Christmas. ■