

Tips for navigating the holiday season while grieving a loss

By Rev. Peter-Michael Preble

The holiday season is often described as a time of joy, celebration, and togetherness. But for many people, this time of year also brings an immense sense of grief, loneliness, and longing. When someone we love is missing from the table, the lights seem a little dimmer, and the familiar traditions feel different. If you are grieving this year, you are not alone. There are ways to move gently through the season and even find moments of peace amid sorrow.

Permit Yourself to Feel What You Feel

The pressure to be “festive” can be overwhelming, especially when you are grieving. It is okay, more than okay, to feel sad, tired, or disconnected. You have endured a loss. Grief doesn't follow a schedule, and it cannot be pushed aside for the sake of holiday cheer. Let go of the expectations you place on yourself and the expectations others may have of you. Allow your emotions to come and go as they need to.

Adjust Traditions Instead of Erasing Them

Traditions can bring comfort, but they can also stir deep pain. You are allowed to decide which ones you want to keep, which ones you want to set aside, and which ones you might choose to reinvent. You might find meaning in continuing a loved one's favorite ritual. Or it may feel right to pause it for a year. You may even begin something new that honors their memory. Remember: if you do something twice, it becomes a tradition.

Set Boundaries with Events and People

Boundaries are essential when grieving. You do not have to attend every gathering or celebration. Give yourself permission to say no without guilt. If you do choose to go, you may leave early or step outside for a moment of quiet if needed. Your wellbeing matters, and it is okay to pro-

tect your energy.

Plan for the Hard Moments

Difficult moments will come, but planning for them can help. Identify the days or events that may feel especially heavy and create a gentle plan for how to navigate them. Have someone you trust available to check in with you. Step outside for a walk. Find a quiet place to pray or meditate. Often, the anticipation of the day is harder than the day itself, so prepare, but don't overprepare.

Accept Help—Practical and Emotional

Many grieving people struggle to ask for help, especially if they are used to being the helper. But you do not need to carry everything by yourself. If you usually host a holiday gathering, ask someone else to take the lead this year. Let others support you with meals, rides, company, or simply their presence. Isolation can intensify grief; staying connected, even in small ways, can ease the burden.

Create Space to Remember

Remembering your loved one can be healing. Share stories, look through photos, prepare their favorite dish, or set a place at the table in their honor. Some find comfort in lighting a candle or displaying a picture. But if remembering feels too painful right now, you can set it aside. There is no right or wrong way to honor memory.

Care for Your Body and Nervous System

Grief is exhausting, emotionally and physically. Pay attention to your body's needs: drink water, eat nourishing food, rest when you can. Gentle movement, like stretching or walking, can help calm your nervous system. Listen to what your body is telling you; it often knows what you need before your mind does.

Seek Moments of Comfort, Not Joy

This season is often labeled as “joyful,” but joy can

feel out of reach when your heart is heavy. Instead of forcing joy, look for pockets of comfort: a warm cup of tea, soft music, a quiet corner, a pet curled beside you. These small moments of peace are enough. Joy will return in its own time.

Name Your Needs to Someone You Trust

People often want to help but don't know how. Tell someone you trust what you need, whether it's a phone call, company at an event, help with meals, or space to talk. Be honest about your struggles. Sharing your needs allows others to show up for you in meaningful ways.

Consider Simple Ritual or Spiritual Practices

Ritual can be grounding in seasons of grief. Lighting a candle, journaling, praying, reading Scripture, or attending a simple service can offer a sense of presence and connection. Rituals do not need to be elaborate; sometimes the smallest act can be the most comforting.

Seek Support When You Feel Overwhelmed

You do not have to walk this path alone. Counselors, chaplains, and grief groups can offer guidance, tools, and companionship. Don't wait until you feel overwhelmed, reach out early. Sharing your experience with others who understand can be deeply healing.

Grief does not disappear for the holidays, and it does not need to. But with tenderness, boundaries, and support, you can move through this season with compassion for yourself. May you find moments of comfort, rest, and light as you navigate the days ahead.

Rev. Peter-Michael Preble is the Chaplain for the Hull Fire Department and a Hospice Chaplain with Croí Health (Formerly Norwell VNA) in Norwell, Massachusetts. Follow him at www.peterpreble.net

2026 South Hadley Marshal announced for Holyoke Parade

SOUTH HADLEY – Andrew R. Beaudry, CFP®, is a lifelong South Hadley resident, respected community leader, and dedicated financial advisor. A proud supporter of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade for nearly five decades, he has long rallied local involvement and lent a helping hand through the South Hadley St. Pat-

rick's Parade Committee.

Founder of Private Financial Design (celebrating 36 years in business) Andrew has also served as a Meeting Member, Appropriations Committee member, and minister.

As the 2026 South Hadley Parade Marshal, he represents the spirit of leadership, service, and

community that has defined both his career and his life's work. He is honored to represent and lead the South Hadley contingent in the March 22, 2026, Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade.

Andrew will be honored at South Hadley Irish Night at Mitchell's Public House on Saturday, March 14, 2026.

GPD announced Code Red Monday, Dec. 8

GRANBY – The Town was notified of an issue with the Code Red Emergency Notification System. Code Red stated they suffered a cyber attack, and residents' names and phone numbers may have been compromised. Code Red created a new platform

and has uploaded some information. It doesn't appear that all of the information was transferred, as we believe there were about 4,000 numbers in the system, and the new system is displaying fewer than 1,000 phone numbers. We are asking that if res-

idents want to confirm they are still on the notification platform, either use this link, <https://accountportal.onsolve.net/granbytownma>

Or go to granbypd.org and click on the Code Red link. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Legal Notices

TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING

The Planning Board will hold a virtual public hearing on **December 22, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.** to consider an application for Site Plan Review filed by Jennifer Caisse to construct a detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on a parcel with an existing single-family home at 373 Granby Road, Assessor's Map 29 Parcel 158. This application is being filed pursuant to South Hadley Zoning Bylaw Chapter 255 Article XII (Site Plan Review); 255-50 (Accessory Dwelling Units); and the Zoning Use and Dimensional Regulation Schedules.

The public hearing will be held through virtual format with log-in information below:

URL to join: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86756960747?pwd=BdOA8q4X4J89fZgJ1aJOR5HeJBrNV.1>

Or join by phone: +1 (305) 224 1968 Webinar ID: 867 5696 0747 Passcode: 847516

The subject property is located within the Residential A-1

Zoning District and is an existing single-family home.

The application is on file in the Planning & Conservation Department Office (Room U6) in Town Hall and is posted at www.southhadley.org on the Planning Department page under 'Permit Applications'- 'Site Plan Review' under section 'Granby Road (373) - ADU' or can be viewed at: <https://www.southhadley.org/1179/Site-Plan-Review>. Any person interested in, or wishing to be heard, should appear/join the hearing at the time and in the manner designated.

Brad Hutchison, Clerk
South Hadley Planning Board
12/05, 12/12/2025

GRANBY PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Granby Planning Board will conduct a Public Hearing on **January 5, 2026 at 5:35 P.M.** in the Old Carnegie Library (Top Floor Meeting Room), 1 Library Lane, Granby, MA, to consider an application sub-

mitted by Dan's Construction, 715 West Street, Ludlow, MA 01056, for approval of a Definitive Subdivision Plan entitled **MUNSING ESTATES**, a proposed subdivision of seventy-six (76) residential lots located on approximately 157 acres Zoned Single Family Residence (RS) located generally on the northerly side of Carver Street at the Belchertown town line (also identified as Assessor's Map 17, Block B, Lots 15.4 & 16).

The complete applications and plans are available for public inspection during regular business hours (8:00AM - 12:00 PM, Tuesday-Thursday) at the 1 Library Lane (top floor), Granby, MA 01033, and at the following website: <https://www.granby-ma.gov/planning-board/pages/public-hearing-notice>

Anyone wishing information and/or to be heard on this matter should appear at the time and place designated.

James Trompke, Chair
Granby Planning Board
12/12, 12/19/25

EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES

New Year's will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in **TURLEY PUBLICATIONS** the week of Dec. 29, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026:

- Friday, December 26 at 2 PM for January 1 issue**
 - Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times
 - Agawam Advertiser News
- Monday, December 29 at 2 PM for January 1 issue**
 - Sentinel • The Journal Register
 - Ware River News • Barre Gazette
- Tuesday, December 30 at 2 PM for January 2 issue**
 - Quaboag Current • Town Reminder
 - The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

TURLEY PUBLICATIONS
24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069
413-283-8393 • www.turley.com

EARLY DEADLINE

In observance of **NEW YEAR'S** for Dec. 29-Jan. 2 newspapers there will be an **EARLY CLASSIFIEDS DEADLINE!** Place your advertisement no later than **Thurs., Dec. 26 at 3 p.m.**

A TURLEY PUBLICATION
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CLUES ACROSS

- Spiritual leaders
- Type of solution
- Fortified wine
- Edible mollusk
- They precede C
- A way to compare
- Government lawyer
- "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
- The eighth month (abbr.)
- Very willing
- __ ex Machina
- Makes happy
- Type of berry
- A doctrine
- Popular Dodge truck model
- Dekagram
- Naturally occurring solid
- Company officer
- Villains
- Cricketer frogs
- Influential German
- psychologist
- Endured
- A female domestic
- You can get stuck in one
- Cigarette (slang)
- Fiber optics network
- Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
- Employee stock ownership plan (abbr.)
- Belonging to the bottom layer
- Sound
- MLB legend Hank
- Very attractive person
- Late beloved sportscaster Craig
- South Dakota
- Mocking
- Symbol for gold
- Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
- Humor
- Shawl
- Preliminary patient assessment
- Swedish krona
- Start over
- Field flowers
- Fourteen
- A visual way to interact with a computer
- Up-to-date
- Campaigns
- Touch lightly
- "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- Violent seizure of property
- Supporter of the Pope
- Anxiety
- Body fluid
- One who's faking it
- Title of respect
- Chilean city
- City in central Japan
- Silk garment
- A form of dance
- Automobile
- The man
- Justice Dept. head honcho

CLUES DOWN

- Animal disease
- Commercial
- Necklace material
- Containers
- A way to save for your future
- Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
- Dipped down
- Head injury (abbr.)
- Lay about
- Intestinal
- Opposite of yes
- Caused to be loved
- Spiritual leader of Islam
- Businesslike
- Not in
- Number above the line in a fraction
- An animal with its own day
- Pouch