



Not in my seventeen years of living has a close relative, friend, or neighbor passed away. I have never been to a funeral, cemetery or morgue and have never seen a spirit or apparition. Although I am completely unexposed and inexperienced in dealing with the end of life, it strikes a chord of fascination inside me. No, this is not a phase of buying black clothes and wearing dark eye shadow while talking about my favorite death metal bands in a conveniently artistic monotone. This is more of a spiritual wonder, an interest turned obsession that I've been compelled to explore. What is death? This is the question to which I posed an answer in the form of a screenplay earlier this year: life is a long hallway with a blind turn at the end, that turning point is death. It is not an end, but it is the start of a new hallway where no one in ours has been. Perhaps the purpose of our present hallway is to ponder what lies in the next one, but for now all we know is that this is what we have. This life is our only guarantee right now; we are already here, so we should live to the fullest. To help us handle the reality of death, some of us need faith, others need religious text, and many don't believe we continue after death. Because there is no proof on what comes after this life, do a person's beliefs on afterlife affect the way they live their lives here on earth?

Charlie Cohen

I find it hard to think that when I die, pass away, or expire, I will just sit as ashes on my family's fireplace, or lay in the ground, or inside a columbarium forever.

I'm not religious, so I don't have an explanation of what is supposed to happen to my soul after my body is gone. I don't have a clue as to what happens to me, and I think that's what lured me to this topic of other people's views on death and the afterlife. Hopefully researching how other people feel about death, and what they think happens after you die, I can come up with an idea of my own, and have something to look forward to, not just this life and then nothing. People have asked me "would you rather know you're going to die, or have it be random?" Before I did this documentary, I wasn't quite sure which one I would pick. When you know you're going to die, you are able to tell your loved ones goodbye and finish any business you need to. On the other hand, I think I would be scared and depressed, because I want to live and I know that no matter what I do, I can't change the fact that my days are numbered. I don't think I'd want to die randomly either though. I wouldn't be able to tell my loved ones goodbye and I feel like I would leave them with all of my unfinished business. In researching this question, I spoke to Dirk and Carol who knew Roy, a terminally ill man and Holley, whose best friend Nancy, passed away at random

Rachael Eichner



Dirk Damonte

Is Minister of Worship and Community Life at Los Altos United Methodist Church. He has been working at the church for 30 years, and death is a subject that is in frequent exchange around him.







“I do
believe that there’s *something*
after this life ,
and that the **soul**
lives on
after the **body**
gives out.”





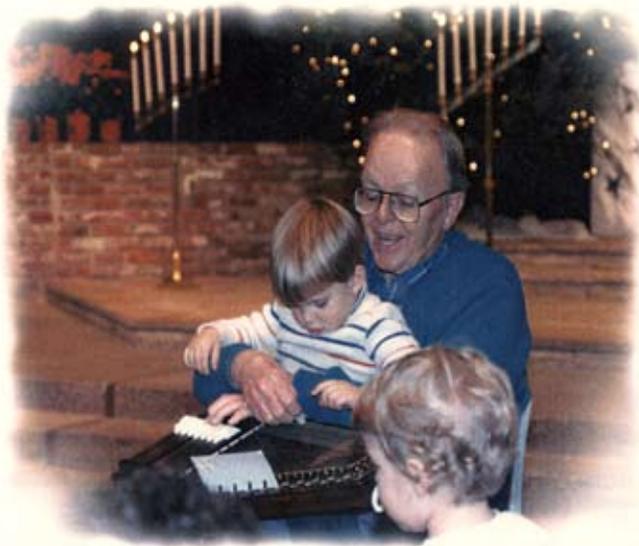
“It’s funny, there’s a lot of different opinions in Christianity, I mean Christianity is a huge faith tradition. I guess the most traditional view would be that there’s a heaven and a hell in the afterlife, and heaven is where the faithful go and hell is where the not-so-faithful go. There are passages in the bible that are interpreted as referring to heaven and hell, and that’s probably the most traditional Christian view, but it’s not the only Christian view.

I, for instance; I can’t believe in a good and loving God (which is a huge part of what Christianity teaches), a good and loving God who at some arbitrary point, gives up on us. We’re taught that God never gives up on us while we’re alive. I just can’t believe that when the body dies, then God gives up on you and sends you to hell if you somehow haven’t made the mark.

So, I guess I believe it’s theoretically possible to always choose separation from God, I think certainly there are people in this life who choose separation from God. I guess it’s probably possible that even after death, it’s possible to choose separation from God. I don’t think God ever chooses that, I think God always wants to be in relationship with us. So for me, life is not complete until you are in right relationship with God, and that may happen after the body dies, or it may happen now.”

“Well, my dad, Roy, worked here at the church also, he was the director of education. He retired in 1991 and was in sort of declining health. The year before he retired, he had a fairly major heart attack, and a lot of complications associated with that. He had been diagnosed a diabetic I think when he was 50. He had been living with diabetes for a long time.

He was not a particularly in-control diabetic, he took insulin but his blood sugar went back and forth pretty wildly. Right before he retired and the ten years after, his body showed the deterioration from the effects of diabetes, including heart things and circulatory things. Probably the last two years of his life, he just really, really declined dramatically, and it was a slow decline until that point.”



**All eyes are on him,
All ages smile through tears
...story teller retires!**

Don Fellers

Family of Roy Damonte:

Mary Damonte, wife

Dirk and Carol Damonte, son and daughter-in-law

Dustin and Dylan, grandsons

Darren Damonte, son and Fusako Watanabe

Shohei and Kaicho, grandsons

Devon Damonte and Sarah Walker, son and daughter-in-law

The Wheatley clan, extended and beloved family



Assisting in the service:

Rev. Dr. Mark S. Bollwinkel, Senior Pastor, Los Altos United Methodist Church

Dave Howell, Director of Christian Education, First Congregational Church, Palo Alto

Rev. Kristie Olah, Minister of Discipleship, Los Altos United Methodist Church

Rev. Don Fado, Senior Pastor, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Sacramento

John Herrell, Close Friend

Ira Wheatley, Brother-in-law

Dr. Larry Crammer, Organist

Marie Cieslak, Memorial Service Coordinator

Eddie Kuhr, Hostess

F. G. Cope, III, Head Usher

Bob Liljegren, Bill Moller, Vivian Walker, John White, Ushers

Coye Vincent, Al Lokker, Sound

A SERVICE OF CELEBRATION
for the life of

ROY DAMONTE

July 24, 1923 September 22, 2000

Thursday, October 12, 2000, 4:00pm
Los Altos United Methodist Church

PRELUDE		Larry Crumser
WELCOME AND CALL TO WORSHIP		Mark S. Bellwicksel
HYMN (sing by all)	"A-Loch Hymn" translation: Steven Sumerville	(see insert)
CHILDREN'S MOMENT		Dave Howall
SCRIPTURE READING	Mark 10:13-16	Dustin Damon
ANTHEM	"Let the Children Come to Me" Starfire/Lighthouse Choirs	Dirk Damon
PASTORAL PRAYER		Kelcie Oak
REMEMBERING ROY Mary Damon		
SONG	"O, Mary, Don't You Weep" Cockade Worship Band	Spiritual

CHORES
Oh, let them come, let the children come to me,
Let them belong to our faith community,
Let them be taught by those that love them,
and loved by those that teach them,
and led by those who let them lead us, and set us free.
Oh let them come, let the children come to me,
Oh let them come, let the children come to me.

2. See him walking on the beach in early morning mist,
See him talking to the children, a puppet on his fist,
See him in his Mickey Mouse tie, See the twinkle in his kind eyes,
See him turn the saddest child's cries into squalls of joy.

3. See him sitting in his chair, a child in his lap,
"Just one more story, Grampie, and then I'll take my nap."
Flicking, and clasping hands, and riding on the train,
Droxy time, walks to the park, and patience to explain.

And as we see, we understand the message now made clear:
The underlying truth displayed is "all are welcome here."
It doesn't matter if the story doesn't make much sense,
It's being there to tell it that makes all the difference.



L'Arch Hymn

Lord Jesus, if you I will sing as I journey,
I'll tell all my neighbors about you wherever I go,
For you give us life, give us power, give us love,
Lord Jesus, if you I will sing as I journey.

Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey,
May all of my joy be a faithful reflection of you,
May the earth and the sea and the sky join my song,
Lord Jesus, I'll praise you as long as I journey.

I fear in the dark and the doubt of my journey,
But courage will come with the sound of your steps by my side,
And with all of the family you hold in your love,
We'll sing to your dawn at the end of our journey.

Let the Children Come to Me

Written by Dirk Damon in 1991 and dedicated to his father, Roy,
in celebration of a lifetime of ministry

"Let the little children come to me; do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom
of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child
will never enter it." Mark 10:14-15

1. See him sitting on a bench, suitcase in hand,
See the children cluster 'round, eager to understand,
See thirty wisemen, forty sheeps, put happily in place,
See Christmas hope and love's bright glow shine out from every face.

And as we see, we understand the message now made clear:
The underlying truth displayed is "all are welcome here."
It doesn't matter how many kings or shepherds that there are,
What matters is we're all together, following a star.

REMEMBERING ROY...

Dirk Fado
Mark S. Bellwicksel
Dustin Damon
John Howall
Ina Whantley



"You Were Always On My Mind" Willie Nelson
Dustin Damon

HYMN "Hymn of Promise" Hymnal #707

BENEDICTION Dirk Fado

(As you leave the sanctuary please take a polished stone or shell, collected by Roy, in keep
as a reminder of Roy Damon, and what he has meant to your life.)

POSTLUDE Larry Crumser

Our family suggests memorial gifts be made to:
The Roy Damon Scholarship Fund
c/o Los Altos United Methodist Church
655 Magdaleno Ave., Los Altos, CA 94024, or
Hospital of Northern California
700 S. Claremont St., Suite 220, San Mateo, CA 94402

The family of Roy Damon thanks you for coming. Please join us in Cockade Center
immediately following the service for a reception where we can all share together our
favorite "Roy stories!"

“Finally, about six months before he died, he had been in the hospital for quite a while so the doctor was even preparing us that he may never get out. My mom was just determined to bring him home, so she convinced the doctor to put him in hospice care. The doctor said he couldn’t see any way he could recover, so they put him on home hospice care.

It was just amazing, hospice is one of the most wonderful things our society has. They put a hospital bed in the house and my mom cared for him, and it was a really tough time for her. Hospice care is supposed to be for the last six months of your life, and almost to the day, he died six months after he started hospice care.”

“Part of it was just watching him; it was almost like he had a foot in each world.
He would come back to reality here, and sometimes be very lucid and know
everyone around him and know what was going on. And sometimes
he would be just so far gone that you

really

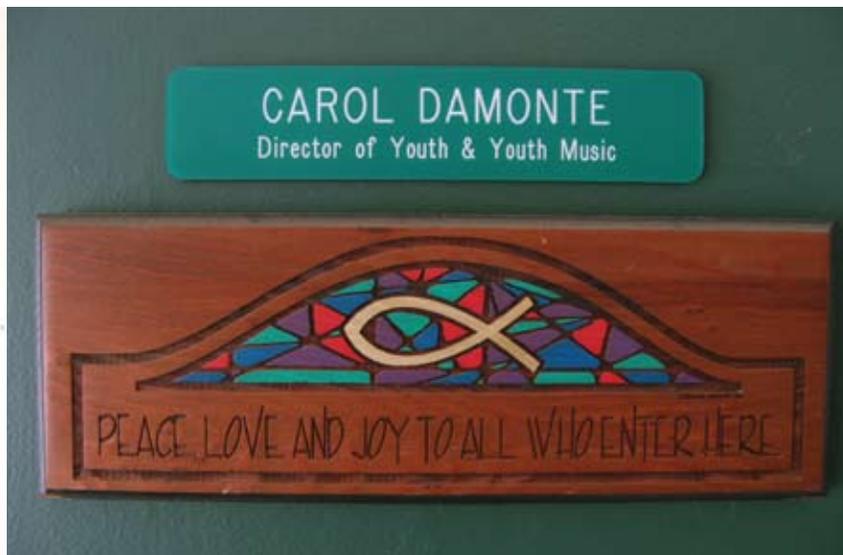
got a sense

that he was

moving into another reality.”

–Dirk Damonte





Carol Damonte

Is the Director of Youth and Music Ministries, especially focusing on Junior High and High School kids. Carol has been working at the church for almost 25 years.



THE LIGHT
THAT COMETH
BY WORD



Handwritten notes on a binder cover.

I Will Call Upon the Lord
C. D. Williams

I Will Call You Faithful
Dunstan

Micah 6:8
Shawcross

Mustard Seed
Dunstan

My Country 'Tis of Thee
Friedrich/Green

My Great Redeemer's Praise
TOWNS

New Beginning
Simpson

New Village
Dunstan

One Less Stone
HSA

One Less Stone
HSA

O Holy Spirit
Muller

In Your Presence
Muller

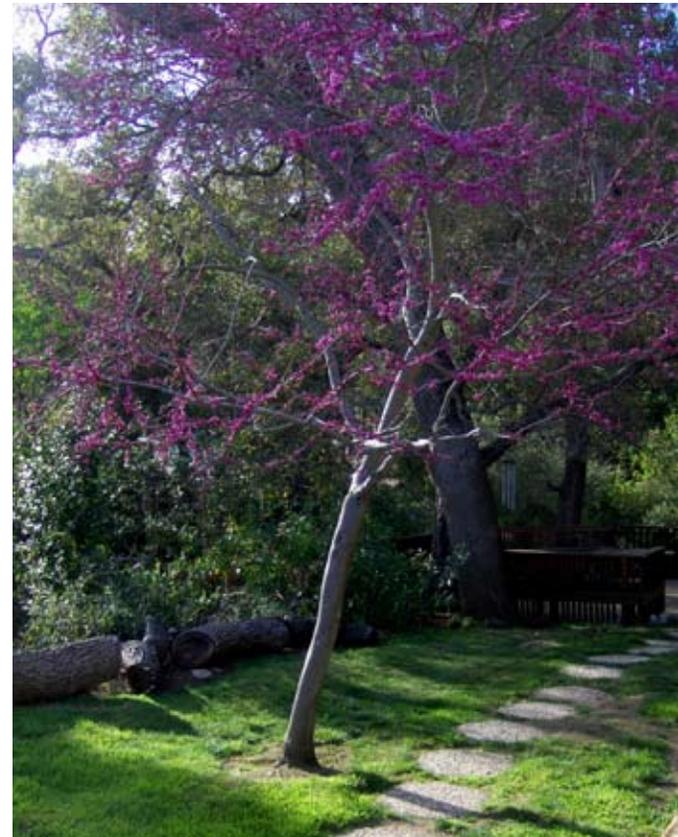
In This Very Room



“I love my job.

I love everything about it,
I love being in a
community with people
who are trying to live life
now, and be present in the
now instead of waiting for
perhaps what’s coming in
the next world.”





“Probably the person that has been closest to me that has died most recently is my father in law, and it took him a long time to die, a long time. He was in bed the last year of his life, at home. And one of the stories that comes out to me was at a period of time, maybe a couple months before he died, he shared with us about the lady in black who came to talk to him.

And I was really fascinated with this because it was clearly a spirit form and he said, ‘She didn’t say anything, she was just a presence that was very vivid.’ And I asked was he scared, and he said, ‘Oh no, it was very peaceful,’ and my recollection is she didn’t say anything, but the presence was calming. It wasn’t a negative dark, you know, the lady in black, it wasn’t negative, it was positive.

So for the next couple months before he died, and just even right before he died, I asked him, ‘Have you seen the lady in black again? Has she come back to see you?’ he said, ‘No she hasn’t been back.’”

“You know, when you’re dying, where are you?

Are you not delusional, but more clear about what is to come?

And some people think they’re just seeing things because they’re having drugs in the hospital, or because they are near death and so their minds aren’t clear.

Perhaps they are getting a glimpse of something because they are more clear.

My mother and father’s experiences with angels, my nephew when he was two, very clear. And these angels that they saw were all very different experiences. I asked, ‘Were they translucent? Or did they almost look real?’ Absolutely, they looked real like you’re sitting in front of me.

Like I could touch them,

but it was very clear that they were not human form
because they *dissipated* like a spirit would disappear.

So I have to many people in my life that are very credible who don’t talk about it a lot. They’re not looking like thrill seekers would and not writing the book for all the money that comes in. But they’ve had really very real experiences in their living, and in their near death.”



“I think that we never know when it is our time to die and I think that’s important to remember whether you are here in high school or ninety years old. And since we don’t know when it’s our time, I think it is important we make right all of our relationships throughout our lives. I think we need to heal the hurts that are within us and hurts that come from relationships. We need to know that those of us behind will be ok and when we leave they’ll be ok. I think it is important to honor your dying as you honor your living. And that it is just simply a transition into the great mystery.”



“I was in college, no, I was probably in my early twenties when she passed away and she said when she died, you know, the same vision comes for people of all faith as people with no faith. This long tunnel of light moving towards something that feels remarkably peaceful, safe, like the journey you just are longing to get there, and at the end there’s always some sort of figure that is recognizable. For some people they see Jesus, for some people probably of other faiths, maybe they see people in their faith that are significant, I don’t know that, but generally people see figures of people who have meant something to them, perhaps who they are married to, a child who has died earlier, significant people in their lives, and they feel this sense of “ah, I’m ready to go. I just want to be there” they just want to go towards that light. And then when they’re pulled back, my grandmother said ‘I don’t want to go back,’ and she said, ‘I just want to go.’ ...

...I have yet to hear from anyone that they
wanted to come back.”

- Carol Damonte





The two in the middle are Nancy and Holley, who have been best friends since they were in grade school. Nancy, second from the left, passed away in December, 2005.

“When death happens it is so sad
and its so hard
for the people that they leave behind.
Even when you know that person is in a better place, or at rest
its how bad you feel
until you get to a point
where you can actually feel good about the memories,
and you’re not so heart broken.”

-Holley Eichner



To
Abby

From
Nancy
Sharp



HILLVIEW
 1966-67
 MRS. BEEN - GRADE 3
 PRINCIPAL - MR. WEST



“I was at work, I got my cell phone out of my purse just to see if I had any messages, and there was a message from my other best friend Stephanie, and she was crying and she said,

‘Nancy is no longer with us.’”

“And I just wasn’t sure that’s what I really heard, because two weeks before, another friend had passed away from an aneurysm in her sleep...so I was still thinking about Elaine dying in her sleep, so I didn’t expect two weeks later to get a call from Stephanie saying that Nancy passed away. I just couldn’t believe that’s what I’d heard. I still think about it, and that was 2005. I still think about it, and it’s like

‘That really happened.’”



**Hillview School
El Sobrante, California
1967-68**

MISS WILLS - GRADE 6
MR. HARRIS - PRINCIPAL





“If there is such a thing as watching over, then I know she’s with her kids, watching over them. If that’s at all possible, I know that’s what she’s doing.”



Nancy made this necklace for Holley, something they would often do for each other.



Nancy, Holley, and their friends would make the long beaded earrings together, and Holley would keep one from a pair, and Nancy would keep the other.



“You know, I wonder. Everything I’ve done on this earth and everywhere I’ve been, and know, and survived, I just have a feeling that there is a God. You just go through a process where you’re in a peaceful place, and a happy place, and you meet your maker”



“I just don’t want people to

suffer, that's all I know”



“I would like to think
there’s *something* after
this life on earth.”





This life is the only thing we are given when we are born, and the only thing we lose when we die. When it is our time, we leave our materials, our bodies, and our loved ones behind on earth. Something inside every human connects at some point with a force that some call science, others call the paranormal, and many call God, and this force births a natural amazement of life, death, and beyond that within our minds. Death is a part of life; and whether it is the blind turn at the end of a hallway, or the light at the end of a tunnel, right now is our only guarantee. This life is all we can know for certain, and perhaps in this time, it is our job to wonder what is to come.

