

Globally tens of thousands of bereaved families expected to participate in annual event Sunday, Dec. 12.

No one is exaggerating to say there will be a wave of light encircling the globe Dec.12 as hundreds of services are held in remembrance of all children who have died. These will be joined by thousands held informally in homes and other locations.

The Compassionate Friends 14th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting will unite grieving families through an event that is so far-reaching, no one truly knows how many services will be held and how many people will participate.

It officially is held at 7 p.m. local time for one hour, although services are held throughout the day.

The North Platte Chapter of The Compassionate Friends will gather at 6:30 p.m. CT with the candle lighting at 7 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 1600 West E Street.

Everyone is invited to bring their child's picture, a votive candle and holder and a card with the child's name on it.

Refreshment will be served following the candle lighting.

Last year nearly 530 services open to the public were submitted to and listed on The Compassionate Friends national website at www.compassionatefriends.org.

Services were held in all 50 states plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico and at least 15 additional countries around the world. The event is believed to be the world's largest mass candle lighting.

“Our organization has united with sister groups, funeral homes, churches, hospitals, hospices, and community groups around the world to celebrate this annual day of remembrance,” says TCF executive director Patricia Loder. “Over the past few years we’ve been joined by chapters from MISS, MADD, Parents of Murdered Children, SIDS Network, Gilda’s Club, Twinless Twins, and BPUSA. This year we anticipate welcoming more bereaved families whether through services open to the public, small gatherings in the home, or individuals lighting candles.”

The Compassionate Friends, with nearly 630 U.S. chapters, is the nation’s largest self-help bereavement organization for families going through the natural grieving process after the death of a child. Members

include bereaved parents (or anyone in that role), siblings, and grandparents.

Those remembering children also have the opportunity during the event to post their thoughts in a Remembrance Book on TCF’s national website. Last year in just a little over 24 hours, several thousand messages were posted.

“We invite everyone to participate whether to support someone you know, or because you have been personally touched by the death of a child,” says Mrs. Loder. Information on events can be submitted on TCF’s national website, and information on services received can also be reviewed. “As we move closer to the event, we’ll receive information on as many as 20-30 services daily.”

For more information, visit www.compassionatefriends.org or call the National Office at 877-969-0010.

TCF’s Facebook Page with more than 14,000 members can be reached through the organization’s website at www.compassionatefriends.org. The organization also has an Online Support Community with trained moderators and daily sessions.

