

Celebration of Life Service

Opening prayer..... Pastor Mark Smith

Comfort:

God Will Make a Way.....Don Moen video

“Remember, I Love You” reading..... Dick Rooker

DevotionPastor Bryan Glanzer

Remembrances:

Reflections..... Trent Watford

Memories Jonathan Watford

Closing:

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee.....Congregation

Prayer Pastor Mark Smith

Cemetery:

Military Honors..... U.S. Navy

Prayer Pastor Mark Smith

Pallbearers

Rick Lull, friend/former employer

Sieg Priebe, grandfather

Steve Priebe, uncle

Dick Rooker, uncle

Zack Rooker, cousin

Navy representative

In Honor of Your Life



Nathan L. Watford
Machinist Mate 3rd class
United States Navy

February 10, 1990-December 20, 2010

Nathan's Story

God answered our prayers and blessed us with the birth of Nathan Lee Watford on February 10, 1990. Even as a young child, it was obvious that Nathan had enough spirit to keep up with (and even take on) his older brother Jonathan, he was exceptionally intelligent, and that most of his waking moments would be spent in motion.

At an early age Nathan prayed to receive Jesus Christ as His Savior and was baptized about four years later. For a number of years, he spent a week of summer camp at Five Pines and was a camp counselor there as a high school freshman.

Nathan was employed by Espress Go for three years from age 15 until he left home for the Navy. He fulfilled his barista responsibilities well and was well-liked by the "regulars." During his senior year of high school, he took three classes at St. Joseph High School and graduated from our home school in June 2008. That fall he went through basic training at Great Lakes Naval Station. He then left for the naval base near Charleston, S.C., for his training and resided there until this November.

His training in Charleston consisted of the following: Machinist Mate's A-School (3 months, received honor for the highest GPA in his class of about 30), Nuclear Power School (6 months, received honor for the highest GPA in his class of more than 200 machinist mates), Nuclear Power Prototype School (6 months), and advanced training for Engineering Laboratory Technician (ELT) (3 months, received honor for the highest GPA in his class of about 15).

In November, Nathan moved from Charleston and came home for a 30-day leave. We spent a great deal of time with him, including a week in California where we had a fun time and made lots of special memories. On December 15, Nathan flew to his first assignment — a nuclear submarine, the USS Buffalo, based in Guam. On December 20, we were notified there was an incident on base and he was missing. The next day we received the shocking news that he had died. There is an ongoing investigation being conducted by the NCIS.

We have many questions, but this is what we have been able to piece together so far. Nathan was facing a very challenging responsibility on a nuclear submarine. It appears he had struggles in his life that he had not shared. He was put in a temporary housing situation where he had access to alcohol and chose to use it, for the first time as far as we know. That combined with other factors and thoughts that we may never know resulted in him taking his own life.

There are two lessons that can be learned from this, and we hope that by sharing these details others will be helped. It should be remembered that alcohol is a dangerous substance and may have very negative and unpredictable effects on a person's life. Also, it is important that if someone has struggles, they don't keep them to themselves, but instead get appropriate help.

This has been an incredibly painful time, but in this darkness the light of God's love has shown through your cards, kind words, phone calls, visits, and efforts to help us with various needs. We are deeply grateful. We are also grateful for your gifts in memory of Nathan that we are directing to go toward helping Five Pines build a new climbing tower.

We are very proud of Nathan's service to our country and his successful completion of the most difficult academic training program in the military. We will always remember his wit and humor, his love for his cat Pudge, and the great times we had with him.

While we deeply grieve the loss of his life, we are grateful for the 20 years we shared with him. In our hearts we ask, "Why are we going through such hurt?" Part of the answer is because we were privileged enough to love someone and have him as part of our life. Although the end of his life was a tragedy, we don't believe that he should be defined by the death that he died, but rather the life that he lived.

