

stuffed teddy bear used to hold against his chest when he coughed, Stefan related his story to all those who came to visit. Always with a smile, and more importantly his own personal expression of faith in stating, "...it's in God's hands..." those who visited saw Stefan's faith in action in a real and personal setting.

Not knowing at the time that in some cases the visits would be the last time some would see Stefan alive, all who visited knew the peace that Stefan had.

A routine office check up on June 1, 2017 was cut short when at the doctor Stefan started feeling bad, and this feeling quickly escalated with Stefan being admitted to the ER and then rushed via ambulance to Centennial Medical Center in Nashville. Sadly those who knew and loved Stefan did not know that this would be Stefan's final days and hours on this earth and despite valiant efforts of multiple medical professionals Stefan's heart stopped and he left this life on earth for Heaven.

While those here on earth mourn his loss, peace is achieved in knowing that Stefan is at home in Heaven today in the Loving Arms of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We also rest in the peace that Stefan is once again reunited with his mother, brother Viorel and sister Emilia as well as his father Dumitru who on this earth Stefan barely knew, but in eternity will get to know forever.



## **Stefan Iacob** **February 27, 1968 - June 1, 2017**



Born on February 27, 1968 Stefan Iacob was the ninth of ten children, and the final son to Dumitru and Mariea Iacob. The joy of childhood was cut short when 2 days after his fourth birthday his father had passed. The entire family was devastated with the knowledge that they'd never see their father again. Dumitru Iacob father to Stefan and husband to Mariea had left this world to be with his Heavenly Father. Although the love and respect he bore from others offered comfort, growing up without his father impacted Stefan charting the course life would layout.

Faced with the sorrow and tears of his loss, Stefan grew up in a house dominated by prayer, and our Heavenly Father appeared to Stefan offering both support to the young Stefan, but his mother and siblings alike.

An organ that once belonged to his father filled the house with music that offered comfort to all those in the house as well as those passed by, and although those songs sometimes brought tears, comfort prevailed bringing hope and joy to Stefan and his family.

Stefan bore more than a little resemblance to his father, and perhaps that is what so fully defined his character in life. Growing up without the toys and other activities other young children had, Stefan developed gifts that brought joy to the people he was around. Preferring service to others versus gain for himself, Stefan at even a young age truly had the heart of a servant. His brothers and sisters all adored him, and his expression of love to them came through the service he provided throughout his lifetime to not only them, but others he crossed paths with in life.

Over the course of several years the family left their native village in Romania, along the way counting numerous nut trees that had been planted by their father as they set out for the long journey to America and a new life.



The symbolic nature of the trees that had been planted by their father and still produce fruit today is manifested in the man that Stefan became as he planted seeds of hope and faith in those he met throughout his life. The entire family with the exception of one brother were reunited in America, the journey served as distance both from his childhood home as well as the pain of loss experienced as a child. Stefan exchanged sorrow for joy and he began the next chapter of his life.

In the spring of 1992, Stefan married the love of his life, Lidia Mihaela Gheletca making the 24<sup>th</sup> of May the start of a beautiful journey through life together. Recognizing the beautiful hardworking woman Lidia was, he thanked her parents (Gheorghe & Aurelia Gheletca) for giving him his bride. While the list of reasons Stefan had to be thankful for with Lidia, knowing she



was a Godly woman who, like himself loved and feared God was top on his list, and set forth the foundation upon which their lives would be built upon.

From humbling beginnings and a small apartment Stefan and Lidia shared with excited family members the announcement of a new member of their young family. David was born bringing immediate joy to the young newlyweds. In addition to being the firstborn, David was also the first grandchild to Lidia's parents.

A year later, Daniel joined the growing family as the second child again reaffirming both Stefan and Lidia's love to each other, and to their growing family.

As the family grew, Stefan and Lidia bought a house in Corona, California and with the increased space they welcomed Cristian, and not long after their first daughter Daniela and then another son Marcel.



In 2004 Stefan and Lidia moved to Gallatin, TN and during the next few years welcomed sons Matthew and Nathan to their growing family. Stefan's love of God and his servants heart was manifested once again as he volunteered not only his time, but his equipment to assist in the construction of the new Romanian church building.

Time and again in life, Stefan's servants heart was on clear display, whether encouraging his own children to walk closer to God through prayer and the reading of their Bibles, or to extended family. Sister-in-law Doina recalls how Stefan had encouraged her to read the Psalms as the wisdom offered there served as an excellent guide to life. Stefan also never shied away from

speaking the truth in love offering counsel and wisdom that truly could have only come from a deep rooted faith in God.

In 2014 Lazar Tiboca, brother-in-law and friend to Stefan passed. Stefan stepped up immediately filling in and helping the family in a selfless manner helping his wife's sister, Dana, during her time of need and loss. No request

was ignored by Stefan as he served both his own family as well as the additional needs of Dana and her family.



Tragedy struck again in 2015 when Viorel Iacob passed. Once again and without hesitation Stefan stepped and filled in the



needs of his brother's family never ceasing the call for the support needed in their time of loss. Selfless acts of kindness once again demonstrated themselves, but his service to his own family never suffered either as Stefan balanced the needs of those around him.

May 10, 2017 Stefan began to experience difficulty breathing along with swollen feet. Stefan attempted

to shrug off the pain however in the early hours of May 11<sup>th</sup> Stefan left for the emergency room seeking help for his labored breathing. Knowing he had to be at work in a few hours, Stefan asked the attending doctor for some pills so that he could be on his way. The doctor told Stefan that he wasn't leaving anytime soon, and after tests and x-rays it was determined that Stefan had major blockages of his arteries leading to his heart.



On May 12<sup>th</sup> Stefan was admitted to Centennial Medical Center in Nashville for open heart surgery. Content that he was stable, the doctors scheduled Stefan for surgery the following Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. Prior to entering surgery Stefan called multiple loved ones to express remorse if anything he had said in life had offended and also expressed peace in the knowledge of his faith in Jesus.

Surgery was a success, and Stefan was up and walking only a few short hours after surgery. Released to return home, Stefan was thrilled to be back home once again with his family. Well wishers and other visitors filled in the next few days as Stefan began his recovery. With his new found friend, a