

## Kay Warren hosts event for suicide survivors

by [Alejandra Molina](#) in the [December 18, 2019](#) issue

For the past seven years, Kay Warren has hosted an annual gathering at Saddleback Church in honor of Survivors of Suicide Loss Day. During that time, Warren said, there have been many strides in mental health awareness. One thing remains constant, though.

“The pain is the same,” said Warren, who lost her son Matthew to suicide in 2013. “The two hardest deaths to process, and mourn, and grieve and walk through, are suicide and murder.” Both involve deep trauma, she said.

The event at Saddleback coincided with International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day, which was designated by Congress as a day when those affected by suicide can gather for support. It was created after former US Senate majority leader Harry Reid, whose father died by suicide, introduced a resolution in 1999. This day is commemorated on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Warren and her husband, Rick Warren, pastor for Saddleback Church, have been outspoken about mental illness and grief since their son’s suicide. A year after his death, they launched a mental health ministry at Saddleback Church. Warren said it’s been encouraging to see church leaders and families joining mental health professionals in talking about mental health and ways to cope with anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder. But still more has to be done, she said.

“Incorporating it into our faith and walking alongside people who have particularly serious mental illness, is a place, I think, we’re still kind of weak,” Warren said.

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