



Bishop Anderson House

Newsletter • November 2021

Rebuilding

By The Rev. Tommy Rogers

My first call out of seminary was to Texarkana, Texas and, after having my head in books for nine years (4 for my undergraduate degree; 4 for seminary; and 1 year doing a clinical pastoral education residency), I decided I was ready to do something new and different, so I bought a house! When the real estate agent and I walked through the home, I knew it was the one—but the description was definitely a “fixer upper.” After all, that was all I could afford and I had watched enough shows on HGTV to think that all I to do was rip up some carpet, restore hardwood floors, and slap on some paint.

we shifted to caring for staff since families couldn't come into the hospital; our spiritual care visitor training program shifted to an all-online learning experience; and our board wrestled with social responsibility and racial justice in honest, real, and at times painful ways.

Now, as we are finding ways to live with the COVID-19 pandemic since it doesn't appear to be going away anytime soon, we are continuing to rebuild and reimagine our programs and services in a changed world. Prior to the pandemic, I was resistant to embracing technology in chaplaincy and spiritual care, but have been surprised at the depth of relationships students have been able to develop in our Spiritual Care Visitor Training program via Zoom. We even managed to have a successful Spring fundraiser on Zoom! I don't know what the future



At first, I enjoyed the projects and getting it “good enough” to live in—new carpet, fresh coats of paint. But then there were the harder projects like restoring the floor in the garage or delicately painting a built-in bookshelf that had two very different colors of paint (one of the features I fell in love with when walking through the house). Then, after 16 months, I had a new call to the East Coast, and it was time to say goodbye to the house that had become a home after a lot of work on nights and weekends.

In many ways, these last two years living through the COVID-19 pandemic have felt the same. Bishop Anderson House had to quickly rebuild our programs – instead of chaplains caring for families in the hospital,

holds, but I do know that Bishop Anderson House has been supporting patients, families, faith communities, and individuals who want to learn the art of spiritual care for 73 years. And our staff and board are committed to keeping this holy house relevant in the 21st century, even if that means doing more than just some new carpet and fresh paint, and engaging in some deeper foundation work to continue to advance the well-being of individuals and communities where healthcare meets the human spirit.

Join me in making a year-end gift as we rebuild Bishop Anderson House while staying true to our values and mission.

Rebuilding in the Aftermath of a Pandemic

By The Rev. Dr. Micheal A. Smith

I confess at the onset that the title of this article is misleading, or at least misapplied. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word rebuilding as (a) to make extensive repairs to, or (b) to restore to a previous state. Both definitions imply that something has been damaged, dismantled or in some manner no longer functions. This is the reason why the word rebuilding cannot be utilized in describing the essential work of the medical and support staff of John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital and Bishop Anderson House that has occurred during the past 20 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. At no point during the COVID-19 pandemic, did the medical and support staff cease to function or cease to provide critical care to some of the most ill and injured in Cook County. That does not mean that the work of the medical and support staff was not without challenges. Evolving knowledge of the disease and medical protocols, staffing turnovers, responding to patient isolation from family and friends, concerns for personal health and mental well-being, fears of contracting and spreading the disease to loved ones within their homes, were just a few of the ample challenges daily faced by those who work within the hospital.

And so, it was in the midst of these daily challenges that I found myself doing my most worthwhile and rewarding work as a Bishop Anderson House Chaplain. My daily conversations with medical and support staff provided a "safe space" to process individual and at times collective concerns and fears. I continually responded to requests for individual prayers, unit prayers and prayers for all humanity by patients and staff. The memorial service I conducted for a recently retired nurse provided her entire unit an opportunity to gather, mourn, and laugh together within the hospital because the health protocols of COVID-19 dictated that the funeral service would be restricted to immediate family members. The continual refilling of unit snack baskets with chips, crackers, cookies,



candy, peanuts, and the occasional health bars is always a welcomed contribution to the well-being of medical staff who often are unable to take time for a full lunch break. For three of my four critical care units, the introduction of a massage therapy wellness event was definitely a defining moment in the expansion of how Bishop Anderson House supports spirituality and wellness within the hospital. Drawing from the conducted survey of the doctors and nurses who participated, one nurse stated "it was a nice escape and helped me return to work more refreshed." At the conclusion of each massage therapy session, a card was given from Bishop Anderson House that read, in part, "Your compassion, optimism and kindness do not go unnoticed. You are appreciated!" I know that the continual work of Bishop Anderson House does not go unnoticed. I believe that Bishop Anderson House is critical to not the rebuilding in the aftermath of a pandemic, rather the "sustaining and flourishing" of patients and medical and support staff within the hospital. *If you believe so also, I would ask that you consider supporting the chaplaincy and spirituality and wellness efforts of Bishop Anderson House.*

Same Room, Different Experiences

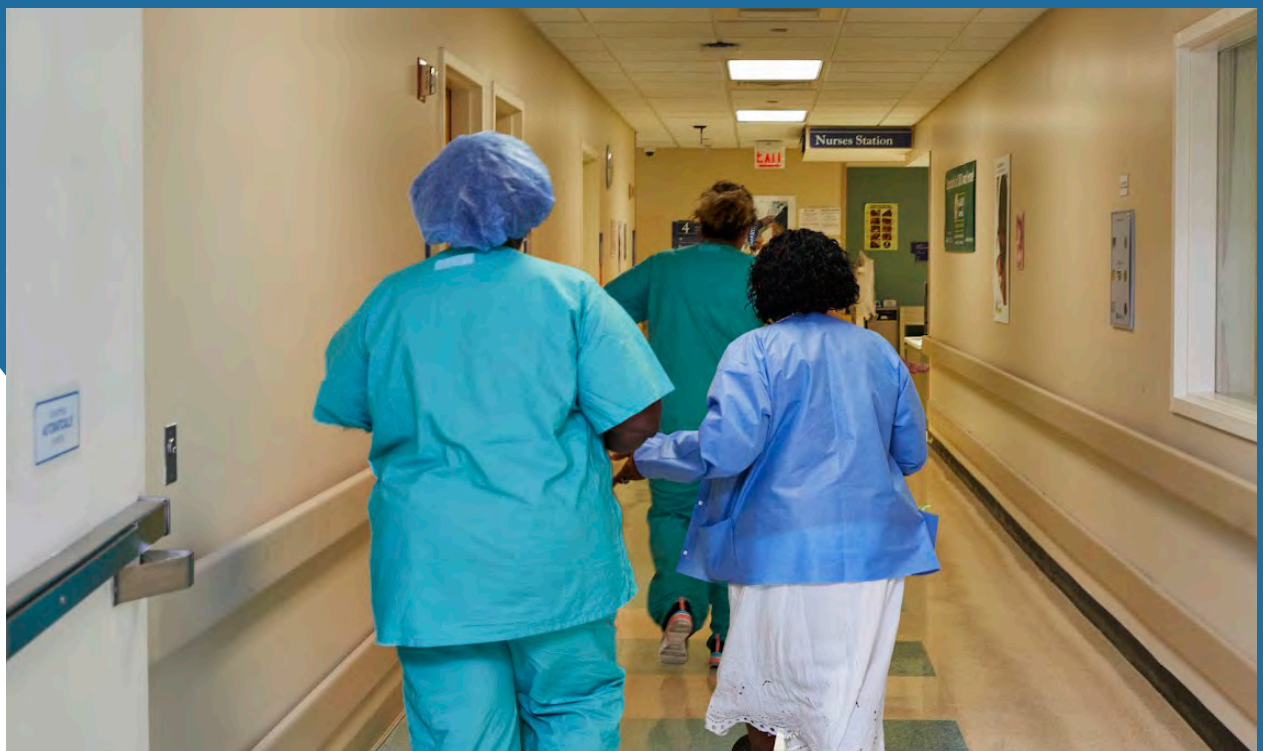
By The Rev. Rose Cicero

In my role as chaplain in the Labor & Delivery (L&D) unit at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, I encounter a range of emotions. One day, I entered a room in L&D to find a young father who was admiring his newborn son as he slept peacefully in his bassinet. When this father saw me, he couldn't contain his excitement and said "Look at him, he is so beautiful. I never expected it would feel like this. People told me I would feel different. I just want to give him everything." This man was overflowing with joy for his newborn son. The energy in the room was electrified with this new father's exuberance.

One week later, I entered the exact same L&D room, where another couple was waiting for a decision about their 21-week-old fetus who most likely would not survive. This same room had a silence and heaviness to it that seemed to make breathing the air difficult. We talked and we prayed.

When I departed that room, I was struck by the contrast of emotions I found behind that door. This was the exact same door I entered a week prior and the emotions behind it were very different. I reflected on my belief that God was present for both families and I believe God will continue to be present as they return to their lives which were so profoundly changed in that room.

We, too, have experienced much change at Bishop Anderson House during this last year and a half. It has been my privilege to support the staff, patients and families at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County in the midst of this pandemic and the change it has brought. *Because of your generosity, we have been able to maintain consistency in providing care at Stroger Hospital, so thank you!* Thank you for making those we serve a part of your priorities as we navigate the change brought on by the pandemic, together.

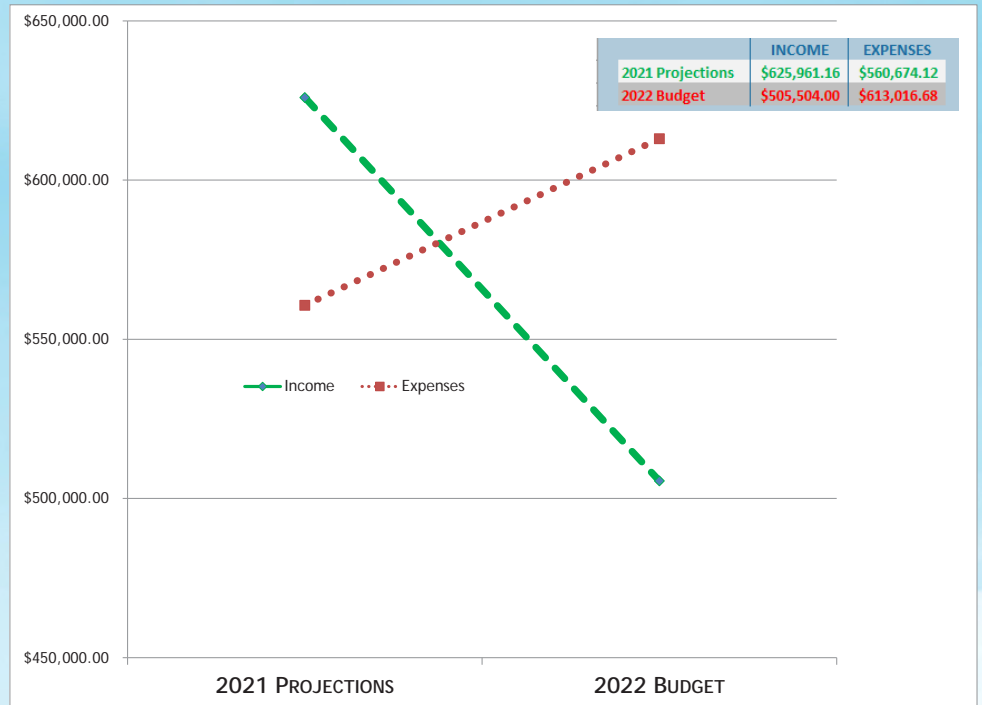


2021 Financial Snapshot

Ending 2021 and building a strong foundation for 2022 . . .

We cannot thank our loyal donors enough for helping us survive 2020 and 2021 during this pandemic. In spite of not having a benefit in 2020, people responded to direct mail solicitations which helped us end the year in the black. In 2021, we had a virtual benefit which surpassed our expectations bringing in nearly double what we had budgeted! A wholehearted thanks to each of you for your generous spirit.

As we turn our thoughts to 2022, we are aware that this will be a challenging year for us financially.



- A donor-designated gift which has supported our Spiritual Care Visitor Training Program will be complete in 2021. We would love to hear from some of our alumni to help close this \$25,000 gap for our hallmark program and to support its expansion into the Spanish-speaking community.
- We have heard from a number of faith communities that have supported us through their outreach budget that they will have to either significantly reduce their giving in 2022 or forgo it all together. Perhaps your faith community has never supported Bishop Anderson House in the past – can you speak with your vestry/board/or other governing body to see if this might be something you can do in 2022 to help us continue our mission and programming?
- Our board took a risk in 2021 hiring a community-based chaplain because we saw the incredible need on the near West Side of Chicago and wanted to respond. Our board stepped out on faith knowing that without margin there is no mission! If we truly believe our calling is to "advance the well-being of individuals and communities where healthcare meets the human spirit" it makes sense to start in our immediate neighborhood. We are also reaching out to a number of foundations to further underwrite our work in our immediate neighborhood.

While 2022 is a challenging year for us financially, it is also a year of great potential. With your financial support, we can have a greater impact at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, educating laypeople in the art of spiritual care, engaging social responsibility and racial justice on the near West Side of Chicago, and continuing self-care events for healthcare workers experiencing fatigue, anxiety, and exhaustion as the pandemic continues on. But none of this is possible without you. Your gift makes all that we do with our small staff of four full-time employees and one part-time employee possible. *You can always make a gift using the enclosed envelope, on our secure website <https://www.bishopandersonhouse.org>, reaching out to Kim Lessner at Kim_Lessner@rush.edu to make a gift of stock, or leaving Bishop Anderson House in your estate plans by becoming a member of our Willing Spirits Fund Society.* Thank you for helping us go into 2022 ready to meet whatever challenges lay ahead.

Sometimes Rebuilding Means Asking the Right Questions

By The Rev. Dr. Ebony D. Only


I believe I can say without fear of contradiction that each of us will forever be changed because of what we now know to be COVID-19 and its variants. We are almost two years into our realization of this pandemic and I still believe something good has already begun to come out of this. Well, how does my suggestion relate to you and how does it relate Bishop Anderson House?

This pandemic has challenged and changed our lives. It has challenged and changed us because it has robbed us of our routines and traditions, and it has caused many of us to reprioritize. We no longer shop, commute, work, learn, celebrate, visit, worship and pray the way we did before the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, I believe despite all that we have suffered through and struggled with, some good has come out of this.

During this pandemic, we have developed new vision and opportunity to increase and enlarge the ways live and love. And for Bishop Anderson House, it has provided new vision and opportunity to increase and enlarge the ways in which we provide spiritual care. We are beginning to operate and provide care in new and exciting ways we might not have ever tried before, had we continued to be confined to what we had always done.

One of those new things is this Community Chaplain Fellow position and our recent clergy wellness presentation in partnership with Rush University Medical Center. While, like this pandemic, this position is presenting us new opportunities like cooperating closely with local congregations to promote physical health and spiritual wellness and address social impediments to health, it is also presenting new questions. It is presenting questions like, what do Social Responsibility and Racial Justice in relation to healthcare really mean, and how can Bishop Anderson House affect real and lasting change?

While we don't yet have all the answers, I am confident we are growing and maturing because we are asking questions. Questions, as I have come to learn, are an invitation to participate in the solution. So, let's keep asking questions like: What role can I play, how can I help and in what ways can I support the realization of the vision to provide access to wholistic care to the patients, families and friends in the communities we serve?



RUSH

MENTAL RESILIENCE WORKSHOP FOR PASTORS

- Raise awareness of the risks and signs of burnout
- Develop awareness of your own mental health
- Learn ways to support ultimate well-being through available spiritual, medical and community resources.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021
9am - 1pm

Rush University Medical Center
Professional Office Building (POB)
Searle Conference Center - Brainard Room
1725 W. Harrison Street, 5th Floor, Elevator II

For Questions Contact LaDawne Jenkins @ 312-942-3139

Continental Breakfast and Lunch Provided Free Parking in Main Garage



Building a New Spiritual Care Visitor Training Program

By Kim Lessner

Over the last two years, there have been many changes in our lives. During this time, I have taken time to reflect on what a new “normal” might look like as we continue in our ever-changing, daily lives. What was important at one time may not be as important now, and for many of us, we can see that we possess an inner strength greater than anything we ever imagined.

At Bishop Anderson House, our Spiritual Care Visitor Training program has remained an “inner strength”. The vision to create an online version of this program became a reality and equipped us to continue to provide this training during a time when we were unable to meet face-to-face. In response to the pandemic and the ever-present disparities in health and spiritual care, we are launching a virtual version of our flagship training program to the Latinx community!

We are grateful to have received a grant from United Thank Offering that is allowing us to produce culturally relevant recorded content presented by professional chaplains and healthcare professionals from the Latinx community. This newest training opportunity will enable more people to be a source of resiliency in our changing world. And as I like to say, “the only constant in life is change”. May the changes you experience in this life provide you with the opportunity to become resilient, trusting your inner strength.



Reconstruction During the Pandemic

By Laura Jenkins

I was fortunate to have the option to retire early when the COVID-19 pandemic pretty much eliminated the work I loved as a children’s librarian. I grieved the earlier-than-expected end to my career, doing work that had purpose and meaning. But as a happy coincidence of the pandemic, Bishop Anderson House developed a Zoom-based version of Spiritual Care Visitor Training program (SCVT). I had been interested in the training for some time, thinking it would be helpful for my Lay Eucharistic Minister visits, but I had been unable to attend because of my work schedule. My parish priest agreed to be my sponsor and mentor for the training and worked with me to identify a remote experience as a substitute for a clinical placement. With astounding grace, she suggested that I become a spiritual companion, walking alongside a parishioner on her journey as she faced the impending death of an adult son. The invaluable SCVT course equipped me with necessary spiritual care provider tools, like how to truly listen, and the regular Zoom meetings offered peer and expert support through this sacred time.



I have a sense of wonder as I see the path that has led me to this point. I used to believe that I had a calling to ordained ministry, perhaps because I didn’t know the wealth of other opportunities. I believe the Holy Spirit calls me to sacred experiences, and that saying “yes” to those calls has brought me to this place and these people, for which I am so very grateful.

Rebuilding the World We Live In

By Linda McMillan

In the spirit of Bishop Charles P. Anderson, we are called to be change agents. Change doesn't happen by sitting on the sidelines and watching. Change requires action!

While it may seem a bit daunting to have a goal of ending systemic racism, the only way to get there is to start somewhere. We have all clearly witnessed injustice and inequality in our society and we can envision a world where all people are treated with the same dignity and respect. The first step toward effective change toward realizing this vision requires that we identify and call out injustice when we see it, and work to drive changes in our own communities.

The board and staff at Bishop Anderson House are committed to doing just that. We have made the

commitment to our Social Responsibility and Racial Justice work by recognizing the disparity in access to healthcare and working to find ways to connect community members with available healthcare resources. In addition, we will be incorporating new training modules into our education programs that address racism and unconscious bias. Finally, we have expanded our chaplaincy work with a new role, a community-based chaplain focused on Chicago's near West Side.

Our work is just beginning, and the path forward is not always clear, but what is certain is that *by continuing to work together we can facilitate incremental positive changes that will break down barriers to healthcare and healing.*





Bishop Anderson House

1653 W. Congress Parkway, JEL 64
Chicago, IL 60612

Save the Date to Celebrate!

Healing **ONE** *Healing the*
WORLD

May **1** 2022

Sunday @ 5pm

