



Bishop Anderson House

Newsletter • June 2023

Moving Toward Normal

By The Rev. Tommy Rogers

I don't know about you, but 2023 has begun to feel much better than the last three years in terms of where we are at with the pandemic. Now that masking is optional in most hospitals, it feels like we are going back towards what feels like the new normal – gathering as we once did yet probably still being cautious by wearing face masks during winter months when respiratory illnesses peak.

In our return to normal, Bishop Anderson House began in October 2022 by having a face-to-face Fall Harvest Festival in Oak Park. On May 7th, we gathered live, face-to-face in Lake Forest to celebrate our 75th anniversary. Our staff are also going back to live, face-to-face continuing education after the last three years on Zoom. What I've noticed having just returned from a live, face-to-face conference was the increase in energy. When we gather on Zoom, we log on right before it begins, missing some of the social interaction that happens getting coffee together in the hallway or finding the "right" table to sit at next to people we might know already. During one break, I could hardly hear myself talk because of all the joy in the air as people hugged (sometimes a bit tearfully) at finally being able to gather again.

As human beings, we are wired to be in community with each other, so the last three years have been hard with the social isolation the pandemic required so we could stay safe. As we enter into this new season, I hope you will start to once again gather in community, whether that is with family and friends, your reading group, your faith community, or Bishop Anderson House at an alumni gathering, a social event/fundraiser, or our Spiritual Care Visitor Training program.

If I learned anything the last three years, it is that we need each other. One of my favorite poets is John Donne, and I would like to close with one of his poems, slightly edited:

No [one] is an island,

Entire of itself,

Every [one] is a piece of the continent,

A part of the main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea,

Europe is the less.

As well as if a promontory were.

As well as if a manor of thy friend's

Or of thine own were:

Any [one]'s death diminishes me,

Because I am involved in [hu]mankind,

And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;

It tolls for thee.





What a way to return . . .

By Kim Lessner

On a Saturday morning in late March, a group of eleven gathered together in person to begin the journey of becoming Spiritual Care Visitors. What a milestone it was! This was the first time since the start of the pandemic that we were able to gather in person rather than by video conference to introduce the newest cohort to the skills of active listening, caring for those who are grieving a loss, and learning about advanced directives. The group started by providing space to connect with one another through shared stories about their individual spirituality.

This program was such an important part of my spiritual journey when I took the class ten years ago, and I deepened my passion for spiritual care by becoming the Registrar for the Spiritual Care Visitor Training program in February 2020. My first day was a live retreat at the Bishop Anderson House offices. It was only six weeks later that our ability to meet in person came to a halt. I am grateful that we have been able to continue to offer this training opportunity online, but to be together again in person was soul restoring.

Thank you to St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge for their gracious hospitality. Thank you to The Rev. Dr. Micheal Smith and The Rev. John Schumacher for sharing their gifts of time and talent in presenting materials to our group. And most importantly, thank you to the participants who spent the day learning how to provide a ministry of presence, journey alongside those who are facing challenges in life, and make the needed space for care receivers to share.

This is just the start of our return to in-person events. Our annual spring benefit "Healing One, Healing the World" was offered in both live and virtual formats during the month of May. Additionally, our alumni from the Spiritual Care Visitor Training program will return in September for in-person learning opportunities and we will offer two more retreats for the Spiritual Care Visitor Training Program on Saturday, September 23 from 9a-3p at Grace Lutheran Church LaGrange as well as Saturday, September 30 from 9a-3p at our Bishop Anderson House offices in Chicago.

If you have been able to join us in person, I hope that you enjoyed seeing me as much as I enjoyed seeing you. If you have not yet been able to do so, I look forward to seeing you really soon.



Smiles and Tears

By The Rev. Rose Cicero

Some of the happiest moments I experience in my role as chaplain on the Pediatrics unit at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County are when I give children teddy bears. A hospital room is not a place where a child or any parent or guardian wants to be. Just the mention of a teddy bear brings a light into the room that can be seen on all faces. Huge smiles follow as a child hugs the bear they have chosen. Parents are grateful to see the smile of their child once again, even if just for a moment.

Some of the most difficult moments I experience on this same unit occur when I enter a room where a young, healthy body bears the evidence of violence. The trauma that bullets, knives and fists can inflict on a young body and mind is devastating. Teens struggle to make sense of a world where such violence can be done to them. Parents lament all the ways they are unable to protect their children from such harm. "If only I didn't let her go out that night" said one mother in tears as her daughter with a gunshot wound to her thigh was learning how to walk again instead of leaving for her first day of college.

Yet as I listen and walk with these patients and their families, I also hear hope and gratitude. There is hope that things will be better and gratitude that the violence did not cut these young lives short. Some talk about God, while others do not. A mother was surprised when her teenage daughter who had been shot exclaimed, "I don't believe in God." This young girl struggled, trying to understand how, if there is a loving God, so many bad things can happen. In another room I found a boy of 13 who could not easily communicate because of autism. He sat listening, trusting his mother who could not stop the bullet that invaded his body, nor her own tears.

God is present through the tears and the suffering of these families, as well as through the smiles when a teddy bear is received. Knitted and crocheted prayer squares are donated to Bishop Anderson House and are given to those in the hospital who are in need. A small tag on each prayer square reads: "May this mini prayer square be a symbol of God's healing grace, peace and love. When you are feeling lonely, or need comfort, reach for me and remember you are not alone. God and our prayers are always with you."

John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County does not have a spiritual care department. It is only through the generosity of our donors that Bishop Anderson House can provide spiritual care for these patients and their families. Let me take this opportunity to pass along the thanks I receive from the many patients and families I walk with on their journey to healing. Whether through smiles or through tears, there is appreciation at the end of each visit. All of that is because of you!



Bishop Anderson House extends it's
heartfelt gratitude to all who supported our
2023 Healing One, Healing the World Spring Benefit.
Thanks to your generosity, as of May 22, 2023,
we raised a total of

\$72,786!

Ellen Ahern

The Rev. N. Luke Back

Anne Bent

Carol Berman

The Rev. Andrea Billhardt

Jen Boyle-Tucker & Patrick
Tucker

Sharon Bullion

Maureen & William Burke

Ida Butler

Nancy Carney

The Rev. Rose Cicero & Donita
Ries

Rev. Rhonda Daniels

Dave & Patty Dattilo

Emil DeJulio & Sharon Spellman

Daniel Dorman & Bryan Shrouf

Inez Drayton

Rabbi Dr. Yaacov & Robin Dvorin

The Rev. M.E. & Kathleen Eccles

Michael & Janis Ennis

Dr. George & Judy Fitchett

Nancy Flowers

Dr. Martha & Rick Gano

Ben George

Kathleen Gillespie

The Rev. Kevin Goodman &
Anton Pulung

Grace Episcopal Church,
Galena

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Richard & Jackie Kraus

Bonnielynn Kreiser

The Rev. Dr. Jo Ann Lagman &
Julie Hanson

Kim Lessner

Randy & Kay Lewis

Tom MacMillan & Katherine Metz

John & Elizabeth McDonald

Steve & Linda McMillan

You still have time to pay for your Paddle Raise Pledge!

<https://www.bishopandersonhouse.org/paddle-raise-donation/>



Healing **ONE** *Healing the* **WORLD**

CELEBRATING OUR

75TH Anniversary

Jim & Trish Morris

The Rev. Tim Murray & Toni Daniels

The Rev. Jihan Murray-Smith

The Rev. Sue Nebel

Rev. Dr. Ebony Only

Bill & Eva Pearson

Jeff & Michele Phillips

The Rev. Trenton Pitcher & Richard Brown

The Rev. Sam Portaro & Christopher Dionesotes

Nathaniel & Yvette Powell

Dr. Hal Rees & Emily Culbertson

The Rev. Jay & Paula Risk

Betty Rogers

The Rev. Tommy Rogers, III & Jason Sutton

Rush Dept of Religion, Health & Human Values

Rick & Ann Ryba

Rev. John Schumacher & Judy MacPherson Schumacher

Christine Shillestad

Rev. Dr. Micheal Smith

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, Oak Park

St. James the Less, Northfield

St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Park Ridge

St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Barrington

Dr. Anna Stefaniak & Denise Butera

The Rev. Mark Tabbut & The Rev. Robert Petit

James & Judith Tammi

Rev. Jasmin & Michael Taylor

The Church of the Holy Spirit, Lake Forest

Dr. Mary Kay Tobin & Dr. Peter Thompson

Bill & Jackie Totsch

The Rev. Ron & Debby Valentine

Rev. David Watkins, III

Drs. Bob & Kaye Wertz

Jon Wes

The Rev. Robert Wyatt & Terri Lackey



A Healing Touch

By The Rev. Dr. Micheal A. Smith

Brandon was admitted to the hospital's Trauma ICU with a severe head injury. I met his mother and father at his bedside just prior to the first family meeting to discuss his prognosis and the plan of care. Brandon's mother welcomed me into his room and immediately proclaimed that, "we are people of faith and wanted all the prayers that could be offered on behalf of our youngest child".

This was the beginning of a 65-day journey of spiritual care and support for Brandon's family and the medical staff. While each spiritual care encounter with a patient and their family members is unique, I reflect on the prominence of touch throughout this experience.

I recall a nurse commenting on how she was moved in the first few weeks by witnessing Brandon's parents each day sitting bedside, each holding a hand from the beginning to the end of visiting hours. The only time that one of his parents was not holding his hands was when his mother or father would place a small family cross or his favorite spinner in his hand. I think about all the family pictures Brandon's mother placed around the room. Because of the massive swelling to his face caused by the injury and the subsequent surgeries, Brandon's mother wanted the medical team to see her "beautiful boy" in happier times and with family.

At the end of each day, his mother places a handmade blanket on him in hopes of him feeling a sense of home and known comforts.

The spiritual care provided to Brandon, his parents, and siblings was a combination of prayers, scripture readings, anointings, self-care reminders, sharing of family memories, and lots of humor. I hold a special memory of Brandon's parents asking me to baptize their son because I was now grafted into their family. As the newest member of her family, Brandon's mother always insisted that I would hold her hands when we prayed and would occasionally conclude a visit with a hug. She would laugh and always say, "Even a chaplain needs a hug every now and then" to which I would always reply, "true and thank you."

I share this spiritual care encounter because so often the patients that I support are admitted and discharged within a week or two. But with Brandon and his family, I had an opportunity to journey with them from a time of deep despair through many difficult days to the commencement of a new beginning. I know that is one reason I cherish my ministry as a chaplain. But I am also reminded that we can touch and encourage others in so many ways. There is a truth and wisdom in a quote I once read: "Our sorrows and wounds are healed only when we touch them with compassion."

Healthcare Equity Begins With You!

By The Rev. Dr. Ebony D. Only

Did you know black women are three times more likely to die than white women from pregnancy-related complications in the United States?

A history of structural racism (defined as a “system in which public policies, institutional practices, and cultural representations work to perpetuate racial inequity”) has created greater barriers to health for people of color than for white people. Structural racism is a major factor contributing to people of color's higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity, low birthweight and infant mortality, and lower life expectancy.

Racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality — deaths related to pregnancy or childbirth — in the United States may be larger than previously reported, suggests a study funded by the National Institutes of Health. By re-examining information on death certificates from 2016 and 2017, researchers found that the maternal mortality rate among non-Hispanic Black women was 3.5 times higher than among non-Hispanic white women. Previously, standard analyses had indicated a 2.5-times-higher death rate for Black women.

These alarming racial disparities in maternal mortality were discussed at a recent roundtable held at Malcom X College in Chicago. There, I was one of the

facilitators who helped to explore why black women are at a higher risk of dying from pregnancy-related complications. What I learned from community members is that they often do not feel seen or heard by healthcare providers and that they feel rushed through their visits.

As Chaplains and Spiritual Care Providers there is an opportunity for us to give a voice to the voiceless. We have the unique chance to take the time to assess spiritual, physical and emotional needs, provide reflective listening and facilitate not only an open expression of feelings. Sometimes those expressions may require our intervention on behalf of the mother.

How can we intervene? We can share with care providers unaddressed needs and barriers to care, and provide referrals to enhance support for mothers and families. As well, we have the ability to advocate for the improvement of access to critical services and the quality of care provided to these mothers. We must be willing to contribute to the research that investigates the links between social and biological determinants of infant mortality to unravel the true social determinants of health disparities so that effective mitigating policies can be developed and implemented. As Chaplains and Spiritual Care Providers, healthcare equity can begin with us.



SAVE THE DATES!

Spiritual Care Visitor Alumni Training:

Saturday, September 16

Registration is Open on the Website for:

Spiritual Care Visitor Training in La Grange:

Saturday, September 23

Spiritual Care Visitor Training in Chicago:

Saturday, September 30

Fun Fall Benefit:

Thursday, September 28

