



Bishop Anderson House

Newsletter • November 2023

Living in a VUCA World

by The Rev. Tommy Rogers

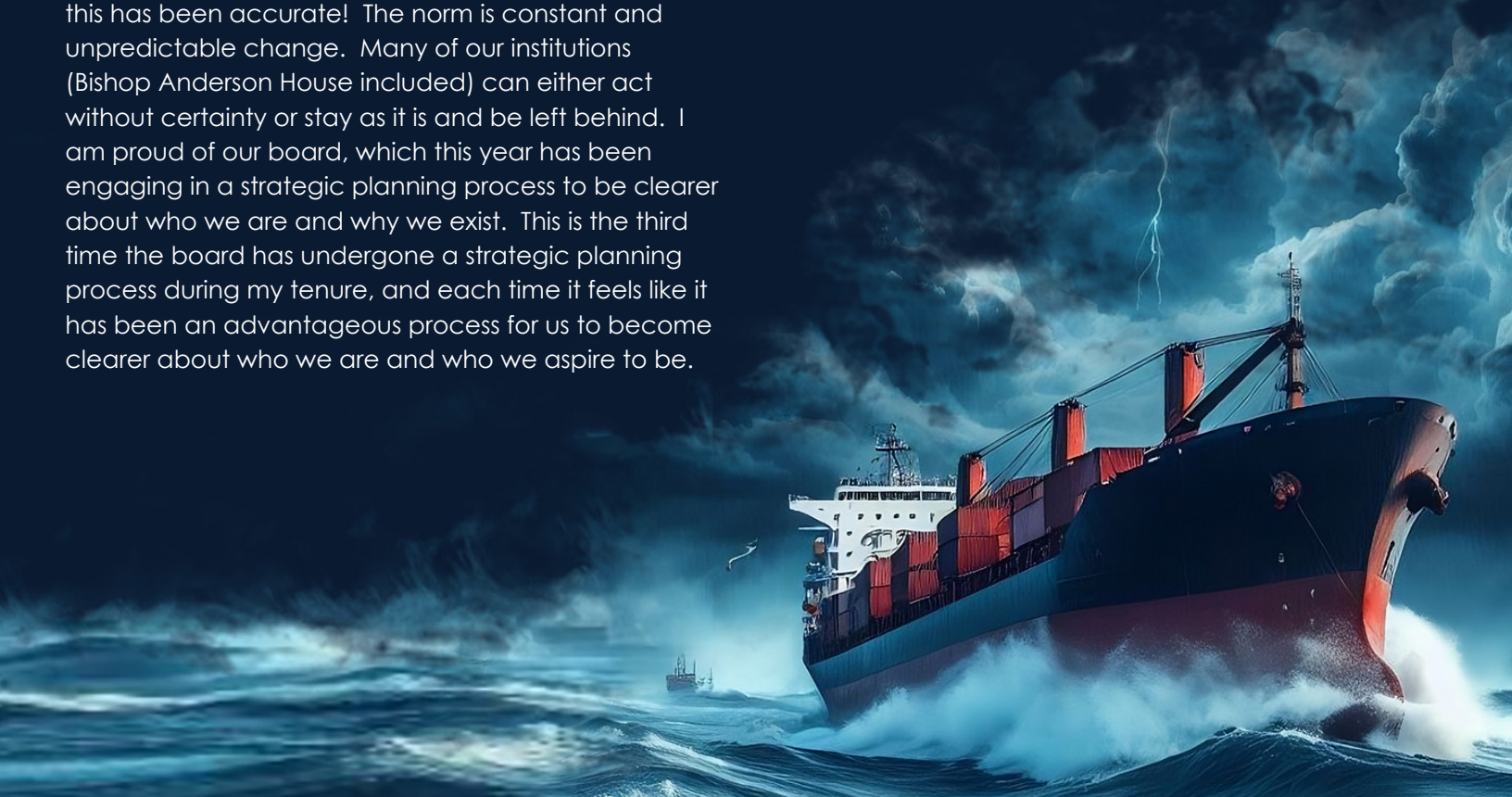
Believe it or not, my first trip to Chicago was in 2011 for the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes meeting. Even though that meeting was 12+ years ago, there were two things I remember: one was the cold and snow (this was the year of "Snowmageddon" with more than 21 inches of snow which stranded drivers on Lake Shore Drive, for those of you who don't remember or who weren't in Chicago in 2011), and the second was a presentation by a group called Institute for the Future. The goal of Institute for the Future was to help organizations plan for the long-term future (20 years out rather than just 3-5 years as most organizations look).

The prediction I remember most from their "future-casting" was that the world of the future would be much more volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). I think any of us that have lived through the last few years can testify that this has been accurate! The norm is constant and unpredictable change. Many of our institutions (Bishop Anderson House included) can either act without certainty or stay as it is and be left behind. I am proud of our board, which this year has been engaging in a strategic planning process to be clearer about who we are and why we exist. This is the third time the board has undergone a strategic planning process during my tenure, and each time it feels like it has been an advantageous process for us to become clearer about who we are and who we aspire to be.

So, what is the answer to living in a VUCA world? It is to lead with vision, understanding, clarity, and agility. We can't reduce the rate of change going on around us, but we can control our response. As the board sets the vision for Bishop Anderson House and is as clear as we can be about our aspirational goals, the easier it will be to navigate these waters. Because of our small size, we can be agile and responsive to the changing needs of the world around us.

When I was in college, I was a leader in the Wesley Foundation, and we had t-shirts made that said, "A ship in a harbor is safe; but that isn't what ships are built for." I feel the same way about Bishop Anderson House at this juncture in its history. In much of our 75-year history we have played it safe and perhaps stayed in the harbor more than we could or should have. The next few years I believe it is time to take some risks and get into the open seas. I don't know about you, but I am excited about what the Bishop Anderson House of the future might look like.

I hope you will join me in making a year-end gift to help this holy house continue to have an impact in this VUCA world in which we find ourselves right now.



How Spiritual Care Can Improve Post-Traumatic Growth in Community

by The Rev. Dr. Ebony D. Only

Last year I hosted several workshops on The Trauma of Resilience. During those workshops, I discussed the idea that resilience is only a stop on the road to being well. Resilience is a necessary part of maintaining mental and physical health, while dealing with whatever trauma, challenge, or matter affecting a person's well-being, but the goal isn't resilience. The goal is to move past resilience to post-traumatic growth (PTG).

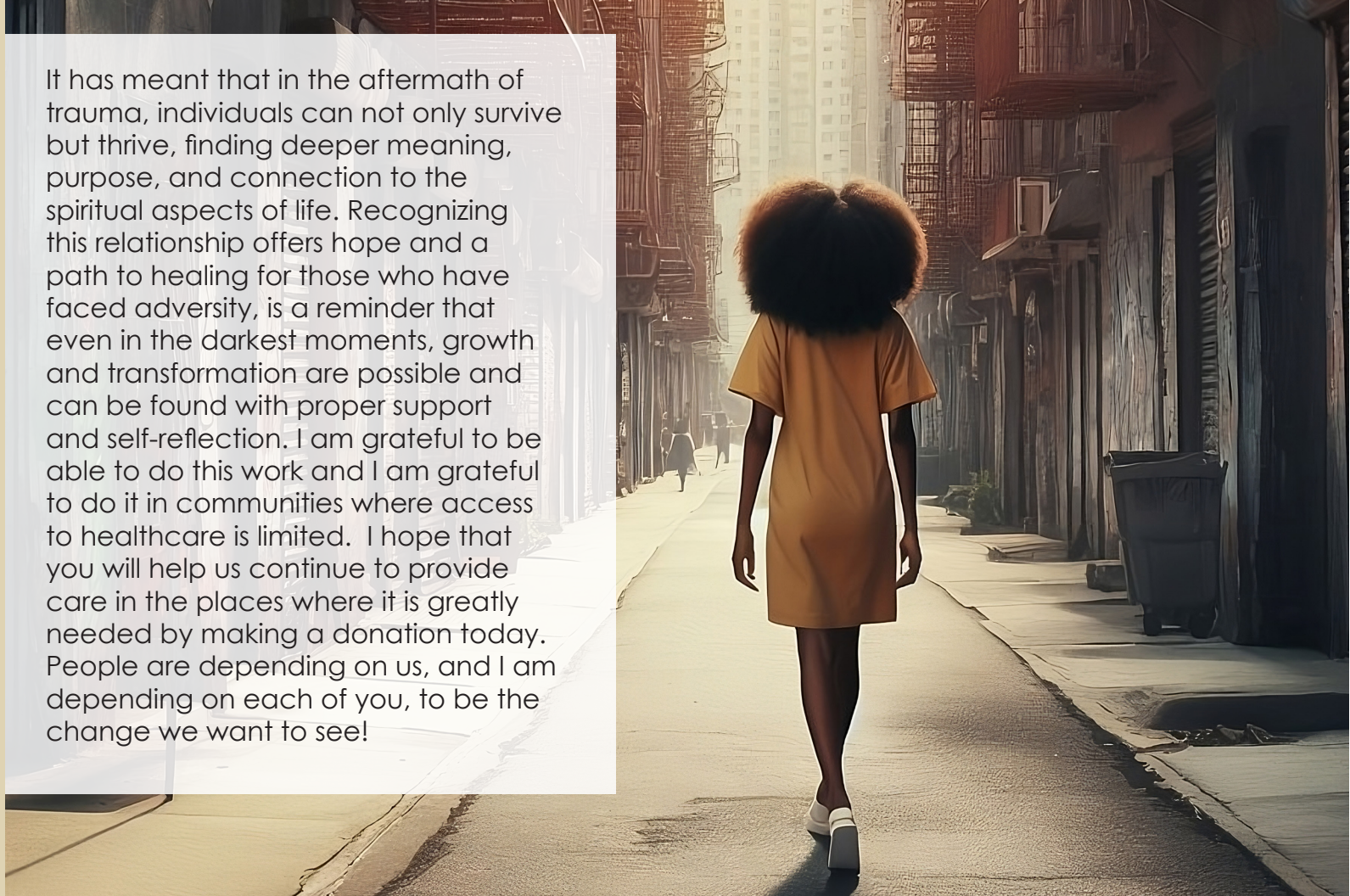
Post-traumatic growth is a term coined by psychologists Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun in the mid-1990s. It describes the idea that individuals who have faced trauma can experience profound positive changes in various aspects of their lives. These changes often manifest in five key areas:

- Greater Appreciation of Life: Many survivors of trauma report a newfound appreciation for life's preciousness, leading to a deeper sense of gratitude and mindfulness.
- Improved Relationships: PTG can foster stronger social connections as individuals prioritize relationships and seek support from loved ones.
- Personal Strength: Survivors often discover inner reservoirs of strength and resilience they never knew they possessed.
- Spiritual Growth: A notable component of PTG is the deepening of one's spiritual or existential beliefs, leading to a heightened sense of purpose and meaning.
- New Possibilities: Trauma can open individuals to new opportunities and perspectives, inspiring them to explore previously uncharted paths.

The communities we serve are more likely to experience poverty, violence, and discrimination, which all can result in compound and complex trauma. Community members have less access to support and resources, which can lead to feelings of isolation and hopelessness. Our provision of spiritual care has played an important role in helping care receivers who have experienced trauma achieve PTG. Spiritual care has provided our care receivers with a sense of meaning and purpose and connected them with a supportive community.

In my spiritual support of one care receiver who had experienced a trauma, I journeyed with them to help them find meaning in their crisis, and to see their trauma as an opportunity for growth. I encouraged resilience while navigating their trauma and offered hope. The care receiver reported feeling supported and equipped to begin the work of forgiveness and reconciliation.

There is a growing body of research that suggests that spiritual care can improve patient outcomes and I suggest the same is true in community. Spiritual care can improve the negative health outcomes of those living in environments latent with chronic stress. A study published in the Journal of Psychotherapy, Theory, Research & Practice found that patients who received spiritual care reported lower levels of anxiety and depression, and better overall quality of life. What would it mean for those in community who are facing daily traumas to receive the same level and quality of care?



It has meant that in the aftermath of trauma, individuals can not only survive but thrive, finding deeper meaning, purpose, and connection to the spiritual aspects of life. Recognizing this relationship offers hope and a path to healing for those who have faced adversity, is a reminder that even in the darkest moments, growth and transformation are possible and can be found with proper support and self-reflection. I am grateful to be able to do this work and I am grateful to do it in communities where access to healthcare is limited. I hope that you will help us continue to provide care in the places where it is greatly needed by making a donation today. People are depending on us, and I am depending on each of you, to be the change we want to see!

Giving Each Their Time

by The Rev. Dr. Micheal Smith

Record keeping is critical to the work of a hospital chaplain. Each month for the past five years, I have compiled the number of spiritual care visits provided to patients, patients' families, and hospital personnel throughout the hospital. My record keeping also details the number of bibles, Qurans, communions, blessings, baptisms, and teddy bears that have supported my spiritual care visits. These numbers are important, but the numbers alone would not tell the entire story of this past year at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County because the one measurement that I do not record is the duration of each spiritual care visit. While a spiritual care visit can be measured in increments of minutes, quarter-hours, and hours, it can be an imprecise tool in the measurement of a spiritual care visit.

I cannot suggest an optimal duration of time for a spiritual care visit. During this past year, I have shared in positive and supportive spiritual care visits that have



lasted 15 minutes to 2 hours. I have provided spiritual care and comfort for a family that spanned more than 80 days. Within those 80 days, the daily spiritual care visit may have lasted only the length of a prayer for the surgery planned for the next day or the duration of a slow walk around the outside of the hospital to allow a mother an opportunity to practice her self-care. In supporting patients who experienced lengthier hospitalizations, the numerous spiritual care visits provided opportunities for meaningful conversations with a breadth and depth not normally obtained in one or two spiritual care visits prior to discharge from the hospital. For a patient with an extended hospitalization, the opportunities to share one's life story, faith journey, joys and even disappointments often provide the patient with the needed diversion from the daily medical regiment he or she was experiencing. As with patients during an extended hospitalization, the time provided to hospital personnel is best measured in increments of days or even months. The support of a nurse or doctor may comprise a brief conversation or prayer concerning a current or evolving professional or personal issue. Yet, for many hospital personnel it is the continuous presence and the availability of the chaplain that provides support.

I believe that the spiritual care and support that Bishop Anderson House provides within John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County is important and critical for patients, patients' family members, and hospital personnel. It is also my hope that you know that the financial support that you generously provide to Bishop Anderson House is the main reason I can give each their time.

2023/2024 Financials Write Up

As you know with any nonprofit, individual gifts are critical to our survival. We are so grateful for the ways in which donors have shown up for us through their financial support and volunteering of their time whether that is tagging Teddy Bears or being a spiritual care visitor.

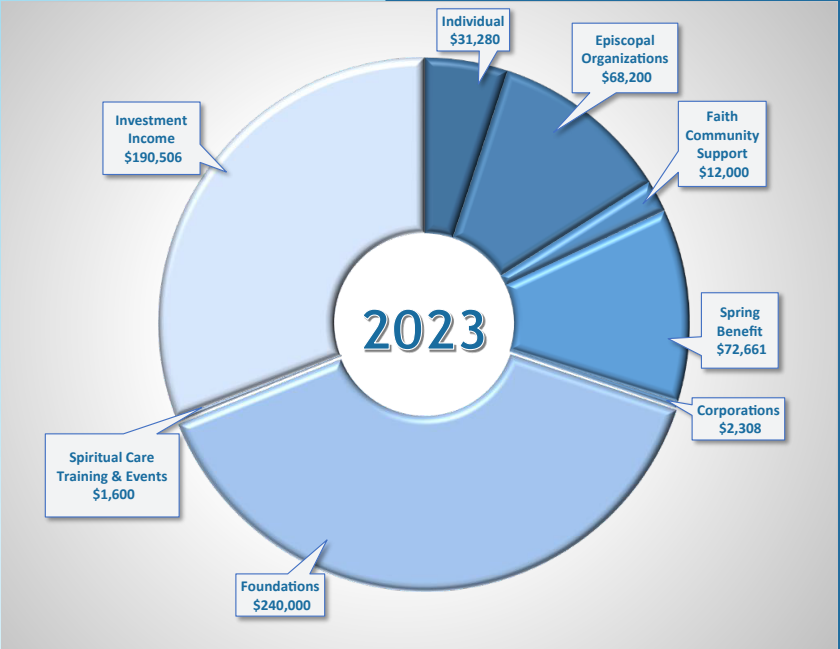
Income

This year, we are projecting a \$5,500 shortfall in faith community giving. In one case, a church's own technical misstep resulted in our annual proposal not being reviewed which left us having to pivot programming and re-evaluate ministry focus. This was a devastating blow to us because they had been a partner for over 27 years.

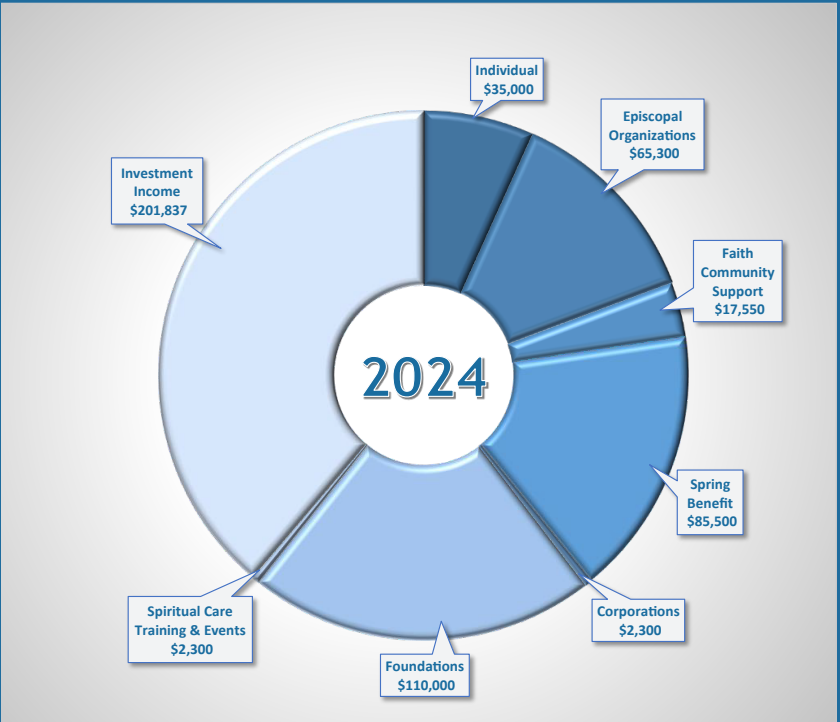
There are several individual donors whom we have not heard from yet in 2023. If this is you, we would appreciate your taking the time to make a year-end gift, especially if you have been a recipient of spiritual care.

This year we are also planning to launch our Spanish-speaking Spiritual Care Visitor Training program. You might recall a few years back we received funding from the Episcopal Church Women's United Thank Offering to design this program from the ground up and to videorecord modules. That funding has now ended so we bear the costs of getting this important program to our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters. If you have seen the news about the immigrants arriving in Chicago, you know that this is needed now more than ever.

One of our biggest funders at just over 10% is Episcopal Charities. They are currently undergoing a strategic planning process and while the outcome is up in the air, it appears that they will be looking at moving away from their current model of funding a number of nonprofits (legacy agencies) and instead locate a cause (i.e. homelessness) and do impact giving.



Income - 2023 Projections vs. 2024 Budget



Expenses

As noted above, offering the Spiritual Care Visitor Training program at reduced or no cost has been important for us to reach a wider audience while at the same time having a negative impact on the budget. If you were able to participate in our Spiritual Care Visitor Training program due to the reduced cost in 2023, can you "pay it forward," allowing someone else to be trained in the art of spiritual care?

We were able to significantly reduce our expenses around our Spring fundraiser by having it at a restaurant rather than a venue which meant no set up fees, liquor license, etc. We held our fall event here at our office which meant the only cost was the caterer.

Some things we have not been able to control the cost of – the increased expenses of travel for continuing education which three of our staff are required to have 50 hours per year for their professional certification or the higher costs of employee medical insurance which is projected to rise nearly 8% in 2024.

This is where YOU come in. Your gift, no matter the amount, has a huge influence on the impact we can make.

To assure you that every dollar is managed well, we have an annual audit and each month after the executive committee or the board review the financials, they are posted on our website. Simply go to bishopandersonhouse.org, then click on "About Us" then "Annual Reports, Audits, & Financials." We try to be as transparent as possible in all our work since the ministry we do is public.

Another easy way you can help is to reflect on setting up a recurring monthly gift. This is a great way to help us through the summer months which tend to be leaner for us. This steady stream of income can help us give year-round support.

You can also speak with your financial advisor or attorney about leaving a gift to Bishop Anderson House in your will or estate plan. Let us know when you've done this and we'll include you in our Willing Spirits Legacy Society.

As always, if you would like any budget information, help transferring a gift of stock or leaving Bishop Anderson House in your estate plans, feel free to reach out to Tommy at 312-563-4824 or Thomas_Rogers@rush.edu

We Can Help!

Every gift is meaningful and helps us continue our mission.
Contact Rev. Tommy Rogers at
312-563-4824 or Thomas_Rogers@rush.edu
to discuss how your will can make a difference.

A Day Well Spent!

by The Rev. Rose Cicero

On September 16th, Bishop Anderson House hosted a workshop entitled, "Racial Diversity & Spiritual Care: An Unconscious Bias Workshop" presented by The Rev. Dr. Ebony D. Only. During the presentation participants learned that biases have historically been beneficial to humans as they were needed to discern danger, thus being essential for our survival. The Rev. Dr. Ebony stressed the importance of recognizing our own unconscious biases when providing spiritual care so that we can give the best care possible. In order to recognize our own biases, she suggested we look at the way we think, slowing down our thought processes, reflecting on where our biases come from, and looking at our past experiences and opinions of others. An aid that could be used to help identify our own biases is the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) which is a free assessment that can be found online at the following link: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>. To provide the best spiritual care possible, it is essential to name our biases and be self-aware of our blind spots. Some questions Dr. Only encouraged us to ask ourselves include the following:

- Would I treat this person differently if they were like me?
- Do my biases help or hurt anyone?
- How did I come to this conclusion?
- Where did I learn to think this way?

This was extremely helpful to me as I reflected on the ways my own unconscious biases affect my interactions with patients. This first became apparent to me during my training in CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) where I learned to pay more attention to what was going on inside me as I interacted with each patient and their families. For example, a few months ago I visited a pregnant patient with severe mental illness. It was difficult to engage with this woman as she restated whatever I said and it was an effort for her to participate in a conversation. I was able to notice my reaction to her situation and discovered that sometimes just being present is the most helpful thing a chaplain can offer. I have found that taking time to notice and investigate my own biases has helped me to provide better

spiritual care to those I serve. Rev. Dr. Ebony said that recognizing our own biases is the first essential step to being able to provide the best spiritual care possible. She provided suggestions to help change our biases. Exposing ourselves to new media and meeting others who are not like us could help change our biases, as long as new biases do not result from such encounters. Recognizing individuality by asking open-ended questions of our care-recipients would be helpful as well as asking everyone to contribute to broaden our viewpoint. Getting feedback from others can also assist us in determining if our biases are interfering with our work. A Q&A session followed the presentation during which participants were able to receive valuable insights from The Rev. Dr. Ebony in dealing with their own experiences regarding this topic.

In the afternoon of this same day, alumni of the Spiritual Care Visitors Training program met virtually, co-facilitated by The Rev. Tommy Rogers and The Rev. Rose Cicero. This group meets quarterly to check in, share experiences, and provide and receive support around spiritual care visits or issues that arise in our ministries. Tommy began our meeting by centering us with the hymn, "Bring Many Names" by Brian Wren, which was followed by rich discussions about our various ministries. Alumni have found these quarterly meetings to be a helpful extension of our Spiritual Care Visitors Training program.

Our next workshop will take place in January with a morning presentation about addiction, mental illness and anxiety, followed by our quarterly alumni gathering in the afternoon. Look for an invitation to attend to arrive soon. In the meantime, we hope that you will consider making a gift so that we might continue these important educational opportunities.



Lives Being Transformed

by Kim Lessner

What a year it was! After three years, we were able to host multiple live retreats for the Spiritual Care Visitor Training program as well as one virtually via the Zoom platform during 2023. We had over 40 students apply to participate in this transformational training program from a variety of faith backgrounds. Our thanks to St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge and Grace Lutheran Church in LaGrange for hosting two of the live retreats and using this as a step to engage lay spiritual care teams within their congregations. We also had a large group from First Immanuel Lutheran Church in Chicago take part as they assist their vicar in providing care to their congregants after their pastor accepted a call to a new congregation. And our heartfelt gratitude to the generous grant we received that allowed us to offer the Spiritual Care Visitor Training program at a reduced cost in 2023. We have started initial conversations with Episcopal Dioceses in Indianapolis, Michigan, and Milwaukee to expand the opportunity and touch lives outside the Chicagoland area as we dreamed when I began working at Bishop Anderson House early in 2020.

We have put all the pieces in place to launch the Spanish language version of our Spiritual Care Visitor Training program. Under the leadership of The Rev. Edward Peñate and Daniela Barrios Morello, we are hoping to have the inaugural class this fall and are in the planning stages for two sessions of the program to be held in 2024. We are grateful for the generous grant from the Episcopal Church Women's United Thank Offering which allowed us to produce the online learning materials and offer this training opportunity at no cost to the students. We look forward to taking this core program of Bishop Anderson House to the Spanish-speaking community in 2024.

I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to journey alongside all those who feel called to walk deeper into their spiritual lives by becoming visitors to those who need someone to sit beside them, provide space and a caring heart to listen, and know that they have been heard. If you have been blessed to receive the gift of being heard, can you help us to train more individuals to enhance their listening skills by making a year end gift?



Bishop Anderson House

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We Need Your Help!

Please make a donation today to help us provide spiritual care to those with limited access and who need it the most.

Contact Rev. Tommy Rogers at
312-563-4824 or
Thomas_Rogers@rush.edu
to discuss how you
can make a difference.

