

Chaplaincy Update, May 2023

Last Thursday was quite a day.

Besides my regular patient rounds, I was called to pray at the bedside of an incarcerated patient as they succumbed to their disease. No one else was there. Their crimes had chased away family, colleagues, even the other inmates.

I was also called to pray with the shell-shocked family of a young patient who had died unexpectedly in the operating room an hour earlier, asking for God's help as the young children learned the terrible news.

I was also called to pray with a patient who's disease had taken "everything". This patient's days are numbered and they most likely won't leave the hospital, they have no hope for a cure and a slim hope for pain control.

God was very busy last Thursday.

It was a privilege to accompany these people and remind them of God's love and provision and presence. It was my particular privilege to do so on behalf of Presbyterians in Southern California.

As a seasoned chaplain, I admit, last Thursday was a heavy lift. AND as I walked out of the hospital, I felt a deep confirmation in my call to chaplaincy ministry and gratitude for being one of many instruments of God's peace and love.

Last week, I also tendered my resignation to the Presbyterian Consortium. It has been my joy and honor to serve as the Presbyterian Staff chaplain since February, 2015. I am grateful for the many opportunities this role provided to mature my chaplaincy skills and widen my circles of connection across presbytery boundaries with opportunities to preach and teach and get to know so many of you! The prayers and resources of God's faithful people in the Presbyteries of Los Ranchos, Pacific, San Fernando and San Gabriel (with special thanks to San Marino Community Church) and the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii have made this possible.

My last day at Los Angeles General Medical Center will be June 2, 2023. The following week I will begin a new chapter of chaplaincy ministry with the patients at the West Los Angeles VA Hospital serving as Palliative Care Chaplain.

The Presbyterian Consortium will continue to provide leadership to the Presbyterian Chaplaincy Ministry at Los Angeles General Medical Center. Please reach out to them with your questions, comments and interest in supporting this legacy ministry.

Co-Chairs: Rev. Sara McCurdy (Los Ranchos) & Areta Crowell (San Gabriel)

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+peace,

Rev. Elizabeth Gibbs Zehnder, Chaplain