

Chaplaincy Update, September, 2019

CLOUD WHITE

Cloud White is the name of the paint that covers 95% of the walls at LAC+USC Medical Center. It blends with the ivory floor tile, cream bed and the white sheets. It is crisp and clean and sterile - like any good safety-net hospital.

Every year dedicated stitchers, knitters, quilters & crocheters create glorious blankets to give to the hospital patients at Christmas. These vibrant creations reflect the many colors of God's creation as well as hold in their fibers the healing prayers of those faithful artisans.

It turns out that sometimes there are some blankets left over. The chaplains use those blankets throughout the year to give to patients who are coming to the end of their lives. When I enter the room, the dying patient is often frail, swimming in the tumbled white bedsheets, their eyes becoming fixed on those who have gone before, disease or injury sapping their strength. Their loved ones are there too, trembling and tearful, watching their beloved pull away and make their way home to God.

I explain who made the blanket as I unfurl it on their bed. Without fail, the colors fill the room and light the hearts of those gathered around the patient. It's strange, I don't remember the faces so much as their hands running across the quilted squares or double crocheted stitches, trying to take in this extravagant shock of color and love. I explain that the blanket is a gift from a stranger, made by hand and created with love and a prayer - that even in this terrible moment you will know that you are not alone and that God loves you. That blanket becomes the best kind of Spiritual Care, it becomes an enduring witness to God's love for those most vulnerable in our community.

We are collecting handmade blankets again this year. We hope to have over 631 of them by early December. If you are a knitter, crocheter, seamstress, or quilter (or know someone who is) we would love it if you could create a blanket! The finished blanket needs to measure at least 36"x36"/46". We ask that as you create each stitch, that you pray into that blanket your blessings for healing and hope. Please email with questions at Elizabeth.GibbsZehnder@gmail.com.

AND if you would like to be a part of the volunteer team that distributes the blankets on December 17, 2019 from 9:00 - 1:00 p.m., please email Elizabeth.GibbsZehnder@gmail.com.



– Rev. Elizabeth Gibbs Zehnder serves as Presbyterian staff chaplain at LAC+USC Medical Center. The Presbyterian Chaplaincy is made possible through the Consortium

funded by the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, the Presbyteries of the Los Ranchos, Pacific, San Fernando and San Gabriel (thanks to San Marino Community Church). To find out more about this ministry and how you can be involved, please contact her at Elizabeth.GibbsZehnder@gmail.com.