



Bishop Anderson House

Newsletter • November 2024

Answering the Call: Our Journey to Spiritual Care Visitor Training

By Deborah Kallback -
Grace Episcopal Church, Galena, IL

James tells us that we are to be “quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger” (James 1:19). Often, people with numerous needs just want someone to talk to, and a good listener can make all the difference to them.

As my husband Eric and I observed the members of our church's Ministry of Care Team, we started getting a nudge—you know that feeling when you sense an elbow or a push that makes you think over an idea. We decided to approach Bonnielynn, the Head of the team, and asked her about their responsibilities. She explained that our church has a “tiny team” and an older congregation, which equals extensive work some weeks! We wondered: Do we have the knowledge, experience, time, and energy to help? Bonnielynn recommended that we look up the Bishop Anderson House website to read about their Spiritual Care Visitor Training program to see if it might be what we wanted. Kim Lessner was very helpful, sending us information about what responsibilities we would be undertaking to complete this coursework.

We both decided to apply for the Spiritual Care Visitor Training. All the elements seemed like they would help us prepare to assist the needy in our church and community. The program consists of a full-day retreat, completing nine online learning modules, and participating in “Chat with the Chaplain”. We were also asked to do at least 2 hours of visiting per week. We were blessed that Bonnielynn offered to be our mentor for this new path in our lives. After 4 months of very disciplined participation and effort, and meeting with our mentor often, we completed this very educational program.

Some takeaways from our coursework were:

- Learning the ****ART**** of being a healing presence through basic skills of active listening
- Understanding the importance of faith, sacrament, and prayer in spiritual care
- Learning about addiction, cognitive impairment, advanced directives, cultural diversity, serious illness, death, and loss

Both Kim and Rev. Tommy Rogers were excellent guides on our journey!

The coursework was very interesting, easy to access, and thought-provoking. We shared numerous conversations together and with others about many topics and discussion items throughout our courses. We both feel this training has improved our lives because it can be applied to many aspects of our daily life, not just as Ministers of Care. We would highly recommend this training to anyone who is interested in getting involved with Spiritual Care.

Our Rector, Rev. Dr. Paula Harris, recently commissioned us at our Sunday service. Since then, we have accepted many challenges to be part of this team, but we have not looked back! It feels so good to know we can make a difference in someone's day by holding someone's hand, sharing a prayer, a meal, taking them to an appointment, or just making them smile.

Grace Episcopal Church, Galena:

Rev. Dr. Paula Harris, Eric Kallback,
Cathie Elsbree, Bonnielynn Kreiser,
Deborah Kallback (not pictured Minister of
Care member: Terri Jackman)



Healing Hearts, Changing Lives: The Ripple Effect of Compassionate Care

By The Rev. Dr. Ebony D. Only

In a world often marked by division and disparity, the power of compassionate care stands as a beacon of hope. As the Community Chaplain for Bishop Anderson House, I've witnessed firsthand how a single act of kindness can spark a chain reaction of positive change. Today, I want to share with you a simple yet profound truth: You can make a difference.

Throughout my journey, I've had the privilege of providing spiritual care to what we call "second victims of trauma." These individuals – healthcare workers, chaplains, clergy and care providers often bear the weight of others' suffering silently. By offering them a space to heal and be heard, we not only support their well-being but also enable them to continue their crucial work in our communities.

One particularly moving experience was with a clergyperson who had lost several members in a short period of time unexpectedly. She felt overwhelmed and questioned her ability to continue in the ministry. Through our sessions, she found the strength to process her emotions and rediscover her calling. Months later, she shared how our conversations had not only helped her heal but also inspired her to start a support group for her colleagues.

This ripple effect of care is what drives my passion for promoting dialogue on health equity and healing communities. As a panelist and facilitator, I've seen how creating safe spaces for open conversations can bridge divides and foster understanding. In one workshop, a diverse group of healthcare professionals and community members came together to discuss the challenges faced by marginalized populations in accessing quality care.

The insights shared led to concrete action plans and collaborations that are beginning to make a difference in our local healthcare system.

Furthering health justice through training and workshops has been another powerful avenue for change. By equipping individuals with knowledge and skills, we empower them to become advocates for equitable healthcare in their own spheres of influence.

As we navigate the complexities of our world, remember that every interaction is an opportunity to make a difference. Whether you're offering a listening ear to a stressed colleague, volunteering for a local organization like Bishop Anderson House, or speaking up against healthcare disparities, your actions matter. Like ripples in a pond, the impact of your compassion extends far beyond what you can see. You have the power to heal hearts and change lives. Embrace it, nurture it, and watch as your small acts of kindness transform the world around you, one person at a time.

The work we do at Bishop Anderson House is only possible because of your generosity. Your donations directly fuel our ability to provide spiritual care, conduct vital training, and advocate for health justice. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps us extend our reach and deepen our impact.

Will you join us in making a difference today? Your gift can provide comfort to a healthcare worker in distress, fund a workshop that sparks community change, or support our ongoing efforts to create a more equitable healthcare system. Together, we can create a world where compassion and care know no bounds.

The Healing Touch of Compassion: A Chaplain's Journey Through Hospital Halls

By The Rev. Rose Cicero

As a chaplain at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, I encounter a wide range of emotions during my unit visits. On a recent visit to the Obstetrics Unit, I met a woman—whom I'll call Thelma—who had just given birth. Due to complications, her baby was immediately transferred to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) after delivery.

Upon entering Thelma's room, I observed several IV bags connected to her arms. As we began our conversation, the sound of a newborn's cry pierced through the drawn curtain separating the two beds in the double room. Thelma began to sob upon hearing the infant. Throughout our visit, she wept each time the neighboring baby cried. She expressed her sadness at being unable to visit her daughter in the NICU and voiced her fear that her newborn might forget her voice. I reassured her of the excellent care provided in the NICU and that she would soon be well enough to visit her daughter. The promise of special prayers for her baby during my NICU visits seemed to comfort Thelma.

As our visit concluded, Thelma requested a Bible. After providing her with one, I offered her a mini prayer shawl, also known as a prayer square. These are knitted or crocheted by volunteers from various churches for hospital patients. At Bishop Anderson House, we attach a tag to each one that reads: "May this mini prayer shawl be a symbol of God's healing grace, peace and love. When you are feeling lonely, or need comfort, reach for me in your pocket. You are not alone. God and our prayers are always with you."

I carry an assortment of these mini prayer shawls, allowing patients to select their preferred color, size, and shape. Thelma's eyes brightened upon seeing them. She chose a white one for herself, symbolizing purity, and a pink one for her newborn daughter. Thelma shared that her daughter would have this prayer shawl throughout her life, like a cherished charm on a necklace, to support her during challenging times.



Several weeks later, during a NICU visit, I encountered Thelma again. This time, she was holding her newborn, no longer confined to her bed with IVs. Her face beamed with joy as she cradled her beautiful baby girl. She reiterated her gratitude for the mini prayer shawls and expressed happiness knowing her daughter would have one to help her navigate life's difficulties.

My interaction with Thelma and her newborn daughter was made possible by the care and generosity of our donors. John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, lacks a dedicated spiritual

care department. Through your kindness, Chaplain Micheal and I can visit those in need there. The generosity of individuals crafting mini prayer shawls and full-sized prayer shawls allows us to bring joy, comfort, and hope to patients and their families. Each teddy bear that brightens a child's face in Pediatrics comes from generous donors. I'm also grateful to those who have contributed snacks to the staff. Many are excited to choose their favorite snack to help them through challenging days.

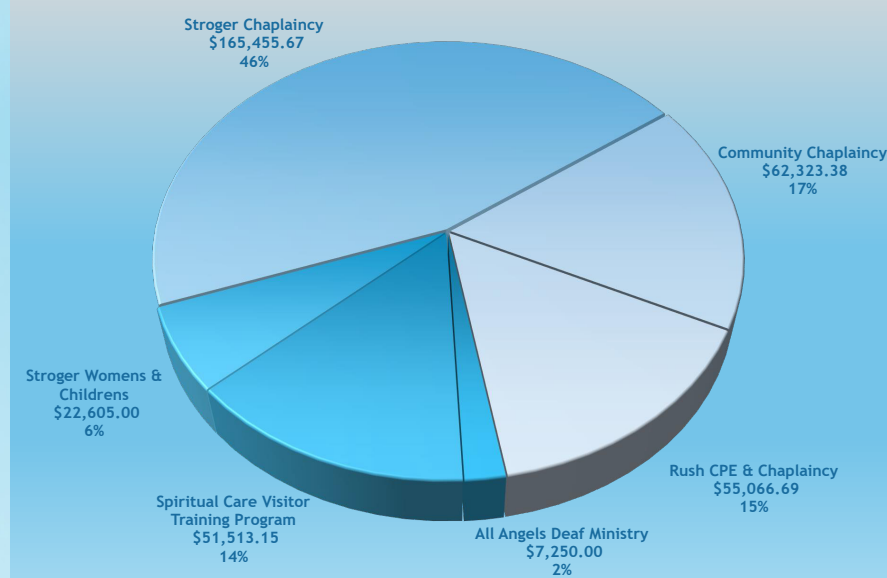
I extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you! Your generosity makes a significant difference in the lives of those in need. Words cannot fully express the tremendous impact you have on those who need it most.



To donate, please visit our website at <https://www.bishopandersonhouse.org/donate/> or call us at **312-563-4825**. Your generosity today will ripple outward, touching countless lives tomorrow and beyond. Thank you for being a crucial part of our mission to heal, empower, and transform.

2024-25 Financial Recap

Program Expenses



I've been very proud of the shift in the last few years at Bishop Anderson House to be more embedded in the communities we serve and exploring mutually beneficial partnerships with other nonprofits which allow us to strengthen our impact. While we might be small, we become mighty when we leverage the power of those partnerships whether it is Rush University Medical Center, the Episcopal Church, the Chicago and IN/KY ELCA Synods or other nonprofits where our missions are aligned.

This is where YOU come in. You are critical to our success. Next year is going to be a challenging year for us financially. Our 2025 budget currently has a deficit of over \$166,000. This is due to several factors: the biggest is the need to hire a temporary chaplain at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County from May – September to cover Chaplain Micheal Smith's well-deserved sabbatical. As you'll recall, I was granted a sabbatical in 2022 and it was such a gift to recharge after all the stress of COVID. All of our staff put their heart and soul into this work, and we want them to be with us for the long haul. One way of supporting that vision is giving them an extended amount of time away to rest and recharge and next year is Chaplain Micheal's seven-year anniversary with us and he will be taking leave over the summer.

As you plan your year-end giving, we want to make it as easy as possible. We can receive gifts by check using the enclosed envelope; using a credit card on our secure website or by filling out that section on our giving envelope; or you are welcome to give the gift of stock. Just call our office at 312-563-4825 and we are happy to help!

As you are aware, individual giving is so important to Bishop Anderson House thriving! And it's not just us – 70% of giving in the U. S. is from individual donors donating directly to a nonprofit. While we have been fortunate in years past to get considerable support from foundations, this support isn't always steady – many times foundations change priorities and sometimes we don't meet the new criteria of what they are looking to fund. The other problem with foundation support is those gifts are usually restricted to fund a program area or expansion, and we can't necessarily apply those funds to the areas of greatest need. For example, a grant that supported the expansion of our spiritual care visitor training program the last few years at \$50,000 per year is ending in 2024. While we are actively looking for financial support to continue its growth as of this writing, those monies have not been secured. The other reality we are dealing with is declining support from faith communities. As fewer people worship communally, faith communities have less financial resources for outreach to support our mission and ministry.

If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make a gift from your IRA called a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). Among the advantages of a QCD are:

- You can give any amount up to \$105,000 this year on a tax-free basis
- If you are at least 73 years old, your gift can count toward any required minimum distribution you must take
- QCD benefits are adjusted for those who continue to make deductible IRA contributions

Making a gift of appreciated securities, such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds that you have owned for longer than one year, can have multiple advantages such as:

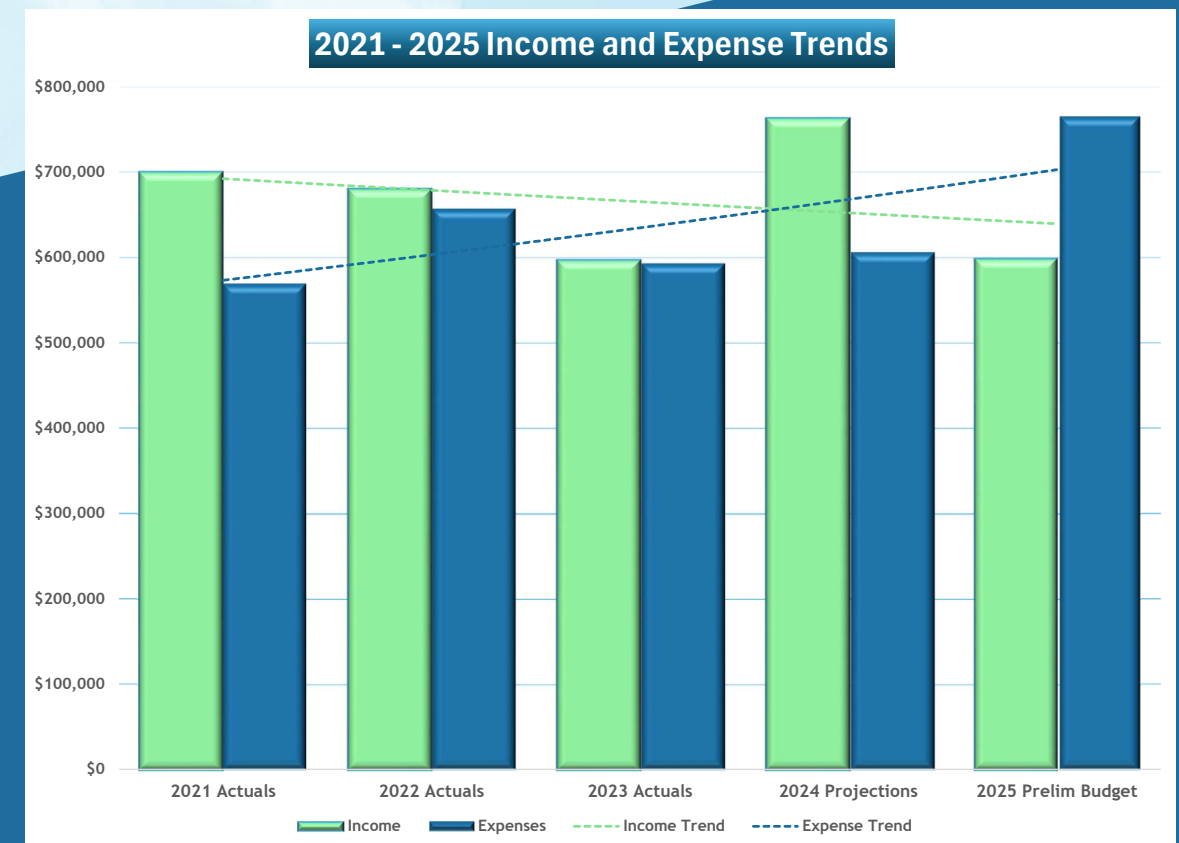
- You avoid capital gains tax that would be due if you sold the assets
- If you itemize, you can deduct the full fair market value of the securities, not just what you paid for them
- Any excess contribution over the current AGI limit can be carried over for up to five years

In recent years, donor advised funds (DAFs) have been one of the fastest growing and most popular ways to make charitable gifts. DAFs are attractive because a gift to your DAF may allow you to itemize deductions on your 2024 tax return. You can donate cash, stocks, or other appropriate assets to a DAF when circumstances are most beneficial from a tax standpoint (those funds grow tax-free!) As a donor to a DAF, you can recommend (or advise) grants from the DAF to your favorite charities.

If you are working on or updating your estate plans, we invite you to join our **Willing Spirits Society** which is for those who have remembered Bishop Anderson House in their plans. If you have chosen to include us in your plan, please let us know. This is a great way to sustain the mission and ministry of this holy house in perpetuity and leave a lasting legacy to **equitably caring for the human spirit**.

You 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.



You Can Make a Difference

By The Rev. Thomas S. Rogers, III

As a staff, we chose the theme for this year's Annual Report/End of Year Newsletter. All of us can make a difference in any context we find ourselves in.

The cover story you read from Grace Episcopal Church began when a retired priest, The Rev. Linda Packard, approached Ann Ryba at the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago's Convention. She asked when the Spiritual Care Visitor Training Program would be available in a format that could be delivered outside of Chicagoland. Fast forward many years, and that dream became a reality in 2019 when we introduced the program in a hybrid format:

- One face-to-face all-day retreat
- Modules on an online learning management system
- Monthly Zoom calls where participants can:
 - Ask questions about a module
 - Get consultation on how a spiritual care visit went
 - Receive support as caregivers

I can't believe we're approaching our sixth year of delivering the program in this format, allowing us to reach far beyond just the city of Chicago and its environment.



Compassion in Action: Navigating Hospital Chaplaincy in Critical Times

By The Rev. Dr. Micheal A. Smith

“One person can make a difference, and everyone should try.”

President John F. Kennedy

This powerful quote encapsulates a belief in individual agency and responsibility. It highlights the idea that significant change in the world often starts with a single individual who decides to take action. Although global challenges like climate change, inequality, or poverty can seem overwhelming, history has shown that many of the most impactful movements began with a single person's idea or effort. Think of figures like Rosa Parks, whose refusal to give up her bus seat ignited the civil rights movement, or Greta Thunberg, who while still a teenager, became a global climate activist.

I carry the essence of Kennedy's quote with me in my work within John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County. Hospital chaplaincy is a unique ministry that blends spiritual care with emotional support, each often playing a crucial role in the recovery process for patients and their families. My work as a chaplain requires that I approach each patient and family member with empathy and active listening, ensuring that each person I encounter—regardless of their faith or belief system—feels heard and supported.

The time taken to listen to a patient's life journey (including faith and spiritual development, when applicable) provides the substantive material to craft each patient's spiritual care plan for their hospitalization. My work transcends religious boundaries, offering a compassionate presence to patients who are often regarded as the most underserved and underrepresented in Chicago and surrounding communities.

Within the trauma units that I support, chaplaincy is not about presenting well-rehearsed scripted refrains appropriate to the trauma or illness being faced. Rather, chaplaincy is about being present, offering a calm, stabilizing presence during times often heightened by severe pain, fear, grief, and uncertainty.

My work within the hospital also necessitates the support of hospital staff, recognizing that healthcare workers often face severe emotional exhaustion and compassion fatigue. Whether in an impromptu conversation regarding a particular passage of scripture, interpersonal dynamics and conflict resolution in the workplace, whether Tom Brady is the GOAT, or within planned wellness events such as snack days or professional massage therapy, I have attempted to cultivate relationships and safe spaces where doctors, nurses, and other staff members can reflect and engage with their current physical, spiritual, and emotional state. This facilitates their ability to continue their workday focused on the demands of the most critically ill patients.

In a world where problems can feel insurmountable, whether on a global, national, or regional level, within your workplace or within your neighborhood, Kennedy's quote is a reminder that change starts with individuals—and that each of us, no matter how small our actions may seem, has the power to make a difference in the life of another person.

In the last year,

our chaplains have touched

4,078 lives

547 teddy bears

have been distributed

365 pairs of hands

**were anointed with oil
during Nurses Week.**

This is just a small picture of the difference Bishop Anderson House makes each and every day through its mission and ministry, with your faithful and generous support.

Next year, Bishop Anderson House celebrates its 77th anniversary, and in June, I will celebrate my 10th anniversary as executive director (as well as my 20th anniversary of ordination). I hope you will join me in making a year-end gift in gratitude for all the ways in which Bishop Anderson House has made a difference and will continue to make a difference in the future as we equitably care for the human spirit.

**Will you be a person who will
make a difference today?**

Your gift will directly support our chaplaincy work within John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County.

To donate, please visit our website at bishopandersonhouse.org/donate/ or call us at 312-563-4825.



Bishop Anderson House

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



We Need Your Help!

This is our annual appeal to all Bishop Anderson House friends and followers, and a primary source of income for us. Your support sustains our work and programs providing spiritual care to people during their most vulnerable moments. Thank you for giving.

Save the Date 2025 Spring Benefit

May 4, 2025

at the Halim Time & Glass Museum
1560 Oak Ave Evanston
4:30pm

