

THE YOKE

*The newsletter of the Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors Chapter
of the Ministers Council, ABCUSA*

MAY 2023

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CELEBRATING PATRICIA RAY

*by Sarah Fogg, President of the C&PC Chapter and
retired chaplain and spiritual care department head*



Patricia Ann Ray, BCC, winner of the 2022 Paul Strickland Chaplaincy Merit Award for outstanding pastoral and spiritual care in an institutional setting.

Patricia Ray is a wife, mother, grandmother, ordained minister, and life coach with a passion for helping others through ministry, education, and volunteer work. A highly trained leader, she has been commended for demonstrating “compassion, dignity, justice, excellence and integrity on all levels.” She was employed by Chugach Electric Association for 36 years while simultaneously volunteering as a police chaplain for the Anchorage Police Department for 20 years.

Today, Chaplain Ray is the Mental Health Staff Chaplain at Providence Medical Center. For the last 12 years, she has ministered to teens and adults in crisis recovery from depression, anxiety, PTSD, and alcoholism. She is known throughout the hospital, especially as the voice behind the daily morning prayer.



She has continued volunteer work as a chaplain for Love Inc, Eagle River, Alaska, which helps churches care for people with material, emotional, or relational poverty. She served as a volunteer chaplain for Hiland Women's Prison for 20 years and is an ordained deaconess and Director of Membership Care for her Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church. She has earned several certificates in mental health and most recently was selected by her hospital to participate in the University of San Diego's Behavioral Health Ministry certification program, which she completed in 2022.

Having personally experienced Chaplain Ray's care, and knowing of her many contributions to her hospital and community, one of Chaplain Ray's colleagues nominated her for the 2022 Paul Strickland Chaplaincy Merit Award. In so doing, she commends Chaplain Ray and helps the larger ABC denomination better understand the impactful work chaplains do.

APPLE JUICE IN THE GARDEN

*by Rick Barnes, C&PC Member-at-Large and
Chaplain at Imperial Regional Detention Facility, Calexico, CA.*



Each Easter, I offer a sunrise service at the facility for anyone who would like to attend. During the three years of Covid restrictions, I had to modify my approach and go dorm-to-dorm, offering a meditation as well as communion. This year, I was able to have the residents together in a new worship space that has become available to us: a garden. The garden is just starting out, but we can see vegetable plants peeking out. It's a reminder of new life in an environment with so much heaviness, as demonstrated by the concrete and steel.

As part of my service, I offer communion. The "table" (often an industrial cart with some sort of covering) is open to all who want to partake. As usual, I had arranged with Food Services to have grape juice and the hand-made dinner rolls ready, so I would pick them up in the kitchen. This time, even though I could see on the whiteboard in the kitchen the instructions to have these things ready for the chaplain, the supervising cook looked at me in surprise. Hmm... He scrambled around, but could not find the juice. "Chaplain, I don't know what to tell you," was his response. To say I was not pleased is an understatement. Then I thought for a minute. Whenever a resident is transported away, we include a sack lunch with juice boxes, so I asked for a flat of juice boxes, and away I went.

We called the residents out. They came out into the fresh air (in the mid 60's). We had just started mixing dormitories after only being able to interact within the dorms, so there was excitement in being together. When I explained they were going to get apple juice instead of grape juice, we all had a good laugh about it, but it didn't interfere at all with what we were there to do: proclaim the resurrection of Jesus.

I know we have expectations of what Easter should look like. We want our Easter dinner just so, and Easter is when we put on the finest of our clothes. There is much pomp and

circumstance in many of the church celebrations. In the simplicity of our being together in the garden that morning, Christians of varying stripes from all over the world celebrated acapella with song sheets, the scriptures in several languages, and apple juice and dinner rolls for the occasion of the day. And because of the resurrection hope, we could proclaim that the concrete walls and concertina fence were not the end of their story, but that God has something far different for them when they leave this place.

MORE RESOURCES FROM THE “BEHIND THE WIRE” WEBINAR

Rick Barnes mentioned Enrique’s Journey, by Sonia Nazario (Random House, 2007, ISBN - 13 978-0812971781). This is a story of a Honduran boy who travels alone to the US in search of his mother who left her starving family to find work in the US. While Enrique’s story does not capture every immigrant experience, it gives a compelling look at why many try to emigrate to the US and the dangers they face.

Lee Rader suggests The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander (The New Press, 2020, ISBN-13 : 978-1620971932) and the movie, Just Mercy, by Bryan Stephenson (2020).

ANOTHER DAY IN THE CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL



As shared by Petra Van de Water, C&PC Member-at-Large and chaplain at Stanford Children’s Hospital.

A few years ago, I took on the position of relief chaplain at the Children's Hospital while pursuing my Doctor of Ministry studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. One of my reasons for this career choice was to balance work and study while also having time for myself and my family. The intensity and complexity of working with children and families in a trauma hospital seemed to be a good fit.

My role as a relief chaplain is to substitute or provide extra coverage for staff chaplains working in, for example, intensive care units for newborns and children with cardiovascular complications. Patients come from all over the country and globe, so we often work with interpreters. Sometimes I am called in at the last moment when there is an influx of trauma cases. From moment to moment, I put my arm around a parent's shoulder, seeing their child fade away after a severe accident.

I thought being a relief chaplain would be more straightforward. But I discovered that this specialized role requires adaptability, flexibility, and changing clarity of purpose to provide continuity and consistent quality of care in pediatric intensive care units. I enjoy collaborating with the spiritual care team and the manager, who have my back and help coordinate where I am most needed. I recently developed a workflow and goals for relief chaplains to optimize their support and grow the team.

I do my work not because of my human abilities but because of God in and through me. God's presence is the foundation of my work. During the time of Lent, I remember how Jesus suffered despair, rejection, and injustice throughout his lifetime. During his last hours, we see his physical suffering, anguish, and crying out to God. While facing his humanity, Jesus continued to abide in God and encouraged me with the words: *"Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit."* (John 15:5b). That is what keeps me grounded, guided, and living into my work, being a blessing to others.

What Abides by Jan Richardson

You will know this blessing
by how it does not stay still,
by the way, it refuses to rest in one place.

You will recognize it
by how it takes first one form,
then another: now running down
the face of the mother who watches
the breaking of the child she had borne,
now in the stance of the woman
who followed him here
and will not leave him bereft.

Now it twists in anguish

on the mouth of the friend
whom he loved;
now it bares itself
in the wound, the cry,
the finishing and final breath.

This blessing is not
in any one of these alone.
It is what binds them together.
It is what dwells
in the space between them,
though it be torn and gaping.

It is what abides in the tear the rending
makes.

Jan Richardson, Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons

Wanton Gospeller Press, 2015

MAY AND JUNE: YOUR MINISTERS COUNCIL CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

by Sarah Fogg, President of the C&PC Chapter



Our spirits are lifted and expectations high as we approach our time together at the Biennial in San Juan. Thanks be to God for his bountiful mercies and care! We rejoice in the hope of meeting you face-to-face at our dinner meeting on Thursday, June 22. Chaplains and pastoral counselors from Puerto Rico will be sharing the special blessings and challenges of their work on the island. We'll have a chance to listen in, ask questions, interact, and perhaps learn new things we can use in our own ministries on the mainland and beyond. Be sure to sign up for our dinner meeting on the 22nd from 5-7 PM, so we'll be sure to save a seat for you!

And this just in. Our chapter's executive committee of five will be leading the national Ministers Council Third Thursdays Webinar this month. Jacki Belile, panel moderator, has challenged us to see the themes of Pentecost in our work as chaplains and pastoral counselors. Once we started brainstorming ideas, we were amazed at how much of what we do is inspired by Pentecost. Please tune in on zoom with your prayers, support, and comments on Thursday, May 18, at 8 PM Eastern Time. We're hoping your ideas, joined with ours, will provide new insight that will enliven our ministry.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83404699633>
FIND YOUR LOCAL ZOOM LINK <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/kcLoKHXuRr>

June 30 is an important date as well. It's the day by which we hope those of you who haven't yet sent in your 2023 membership dues will have done so. The 2023 information form is attached. Please join us again this year--or for the first time. It's a great way to stay connected to your ABC colleagues in chaplaincy and pastoral counseling and to the denomination.



Name: _____ Title: _____

Date: _____ ABHMS Endorsement Year: _____

Submitted my 2022 or plan to submit my annual report to our Ecclesiastical Endorser. Date: _____

Preferred Mailing Address: _____

Preferred Email Address: _____

Phone Number: Home: _____ Cell: _____

Place of Ministry: _____

Job Title: _____

Areas of Expertise: (lecture, workshop, etc.) _____

1) Ministers Council Dues (choose one from below)

Annual Income of: \$ _____ .00
\$60,000 or more: \$100.00
\$25,000-59,999: 50.00
\$10,000-24,999: 25.00
Under \$10,000: 10.00

2) C & PC chapter Dues \$ 25.00

3) Total Dues Submitted: \$ _____ .00

Mail your check and this completed form to:

(Check payable to **Ministers Council**)

Rev. Lee Axtell, Secretary/Treasurer
C & PC Ministers Council
1248 Onioni Street
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

Once your check is processed, you will receive a membership card and/or this year's sticker for your permanent membership card from the national office.