

Chaplaincy Update, September 2021

The cruel rollercoaster of Covid-19 continues to take us all for a ride. We are weary. We are all weary. And. We are bracing for a winter surge.

While many things have been changed beyond recognition in our new version of normal at LAC+USC, some aspects of the hospital remain the same...patients find themselves suddenly injured or sick and alone. As their chaplain, I knock on their door, sit down if they let me. I ask them about what matters most to them and they tell me about precious children or beloved parents, the faith their grandmother instilled in them or the miraculous way that Jesus liberated them from addiction. They share what happened, what they have lost and how desperately they long to be well. I prayerfully listen as they do most of the talking. We remind each other that God is with us in the room offering love, comfort and strength. Sometimes we pray. Then, as I am leaving, they will often tell me, "thank you for taking the time to come and listen to me." Humbled by their vulnerability and courage, I tell them, "its my privilege".

Its truly your partnership that makes this possible. And I am very grateful.

We don't know how Covid might change our plans, but we hope to share at least 631 handmade blankets with our patients in December. Thanks to those of you who have been knitting, crocheting, quilting and sewing already this year! For those of you who have yet to start your handmade blanket, now is the time to get creative! We would love colorful, handmade blankets to give to patients during the Christmas season as a reminder that they are not alone, that, in fact a complete stranger has taken over 40 hours to hand craft a special gift with love and prayer for their healing. Finished blankets need to be at least 36" x 36" and we need to receive them by December 10, 2021. We ask that with each stitch, that you pray into that blanket your blessings for healing and hope.

Please email with questions at 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.