

Mallory Naake
Charge Conference Annual Report
December 2022

Greetings The Table Church –

In June of this year I was ordained as a Deacon in Full Connection in our California-Nevada Annual Conference! It was a celebration with family, clergy peers, and members of the Annual Conference. The Bishop has reappointed me full time to Mercy San Juan Medical Center in Carmichael, with a secondary appointment at The Table. Here I continue to attend worship periodically and participate in my Kitchen Table. It is a life-giving and meaningful group both for my personal spirituality and processing vocational call.

The ordination process in the UMC is extensive with many educational and practical ministry requirements. In the final months leading up to my ordination, I completed my “immersion” requirement at the hospital Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU). The CSU is a county funded program to provide a safe space for people experiencing mental health crisis to stabilize and have access to resources. This experience came out of my desire to have an immersion/mission experience with folks who have mental and behavioral health issues. In the hospital I found myself sometimes uncomfortable with this population. I often focus so much on "do no harm," that I don't know if I am supporting or creating more harm (especially in situations where someone is in a crisis which manifests itself as religious ideation). For the immersion I met with approximately 15 patients in a variety of crises, and I feel my spiritual care practice grew as a result.

I remain connected to the UMC on a conference level as well. I continue with quarterly meetings of the Order of Deacons. For the past four years I have been a member of Christian Unity & Interreligious Relations (CUIR). Our focus is on promoting relationships and dialogue among Christian communities and among communities of different religions. In May of this year I planned and facilitated an Interreligious Chaplain webinar to both educate clergy and lay members of our conference about the role of chaplains across a diversity of settings, and as an introduction on how to support our neighbors from different religious backgrounds or no faith background, particularly in times of tension and crisis. We had a wonderful panel that represented an inclusive diversity of religious backgrounds and chaplain settings, including: a Buddhist prison chaplain who worked in San Quentin and is now a spiritual coach, the Director of the Interreligious Chaplaincy Program and Assistant Professor of Practical Theology at Graduate Theological Union and founder and director of Ziraya Muslim Spiritual Care, and the Certified Educator for Clinical Pastoral Education (chaplaincy training) at UC Davis Medical Center. A recording of the webinar can be found here: ["Interreligious Spiritual Care: Chaplains Crossing Faith Traditions"](#) on the CUIR page on the conference website.

At Mercy San Juan in my Spiritual Care practice I have grown in boundary setting, adaptability, staying calm in stressful situations, following my intuition, and developing my Spiritual Care skills further. I am motivated by the meaningful work to be with people in times of crisis, leaning into sacred presence, and continuing to endorse my sense of calling.

It is especially inspiring to have the honor and privilege to walk with families at the time of the death or after the death of their loved one, knowing I cannot change what is happening, but helping them through those minutes and hours. I have become an integral part of the interdisciplinary Emergency Department team, the Surgical and Trauma ICUs, and the Birth Center/NICU. I also feel I have become a leader in my Spiritual Care department.

In the hospital I have had several interesting leadership experiences this past year. As part of the interdisciplinary Labor and Delivery team I was invited to participate in The Joint Commission review of our Perinatal Certification - Fetal Demise Tracer. I also participated as a Spiritual Care representative for Palliative Care chaplain interviews. Finally I am part of the planning and leadership team for our Schwartz Rounds - a monthly gathering where medical professionals share openly and vulnerably about the emotions of their work, usually around a specific case or topic.

In personal and professional self-care, and in addition to the Kitchen Table, I continue to participate in monthly Spiritual Direction. Last December and January, I also had the opportunity to participate in a five session Chaplain Support Group through the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab which focused specifically on distress and overwhelm for Spiritual Care providers during the pandemic.

I hope this provides a snapshot for my ministry at The Table and Mercy San Juan Medical Center. Peace.

- Mallory Naake