

## Deacon Report to The Table UMC Charge Conference

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**Mallory Naake**

**November 14, 2023**

I am happy to report that I was Board Certified by the Association of Professional Chaplains this past Spring! It was a long and involved process, but ultimately a supportive experience. Both the extensive written competencies and the certification interview gave me space to intentionally reflect on my Spiritual Care practice, calling to this ministry, and where I had settled into routine responses in my practice.

Support of the interdisciplinary staff in the hospital has been an important piece of my spiritual care role and leadership this year; through numerous difficult cases, and an increase in staffing transitions and elimination of positions across the hospital. I feel many staff members trust me to be a confidential support. I have taken a leadership role in our monthly employee Schwartz Rounds where we review a hospital case or a specific theme, and help the staff focus on how they are emotionally affected by our work. In April I took the lead in our department on planning our Pandemic Transition Ritual which seemed to be very meaningful for the staff.

In my bedside practice I feel a sense of God's presence and peace when supporting people in crisis, new diagnosis, and death. I feel my gifts include being calm in the storm, living out a mission of being God's hands and heart in the world, spiritual authority for patients and their support persons, and spiritual leadership for our diverse staff and physicians. I continue to deepen my support and practice in the Trauma/Surgical and Emergency Departments.

This summer I joined the hospital Ethics Committee as the Chaplain representative. We are called on to review cases with ethical questions like appropriate level of medical care, disagreements on treatment with no clear patient decision-maker, or to support physicians' decision for unrepresented patients. The discussions and decisions are often solemn and difficult, however I feel a real sense of God's presence in the process when we come together in these tense situations. I have learned a lot already, and had the opportunity to participate in an excellent two-day Ethics Intensive led by our parent organization.

I took the lead this year in our Spiritual Care department to restart our annual Hospital Remembrance Service after a 4 year hiatus due to the pandemic. We invited staff, physicians, volunteers, and the families of patients who died in the hospital during the last year to participate. We began with a Memorial Table/Ofrenda in our hospital entrance for about 10 days where people could place pictures and names of their deceased loved ones. Then we moved the table into our chapel for a Remembrance Service on On Souls Day. It was a meaningful service with many family members, our chaplains, and hospital president participating.

This has also been a difficult year for our hospital organization. Our on-site Chaplain manager position was eliminated in the spring. This was difficult for me to see a compassionate mentor lose her job. She was a very big support for me in the office, and it has been disheartening to see the removal of a potential career development path for myself. We now have a Spiritual Care Director who oversees about 25 chaplains and therapeutic musicians across 5 hospitals. Additionally, there have been significant middle management and director cuts across departments in the hospital, and other managers have chosen to leave.

In January I was invited to be on the Professional Advisory Group (PAG) for the UC Davis Medical Center Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Our duties are to mentor chaplain residents and interns, interview candidates for their programs, conduct exit interviews, and support the educators and oversee the program to ensure they are in compliance with ACPE (spiritual care & education) standards.

Professionally I feel I have grown in my boundary setting, and this is somewhere I continue to focus my growth. My manager shared in my review last year, "I would also encourage Mallory to continue to reflect upon how she is triggered in situations that may cause her to over function or over empathize with others- taking on more anxiety that is not specifically hers." I have kept that in mind, and really try to recognize in-the-moment when my first reaction may be to over function or over empathize.

In self-care, I have taken advantage of meeting with a Lyra (EAP) coach this year. Some of the things we have been working on are boundary setting, as well as self-compassion. As someone who finds value in my supportive role, self-compassion is sometimes difficult for me in my work and personal life. I can see growth in myself in this area. I also continue to find strong support and great meaning in my weekly Kitchen Table and monthly Spiritual Direction.