

**Background to ‘Chaplaincy Sunday’:**

***The Ballarat Regional Healthcare Chaplaincy ministry is a ministry endeavour for the whole of the Presbytery of Western Victoria.*** *Its aim is to provide quality and meaningful pastoral support to patients and residents while they are in Ballarat for healthcare and aged care. It does so through the twin ministries of the Assistant Chaplains Program and the Worship Teams program.*

*This year, for the first time, congregations across the Presbytery will be simultaneously spending a moment together focusing on the work and the people involved in this ministry. Given that many Uniting Church congregations across Ballarat and the Presbytery of Western Victoria support the Chaplaincy ministry in a variety of ways, this is an opportunity to celebrate, to acknowledge and inform.*

*Today is a unique opportunity to join with other Uniting Church congregations across the Presbytery in acknowledging and celebrating the work and ministry of chaplaincy.*

*The focus of today’s Service is to look at how chaplaincy partners with the patient, the resident, the staff member, the family member and seeks to share their journey.*

***Your congregation may choose to use the whole liturgy from start to finish, adding your local flavour as necessary. You may also choose to use a smaller section of the liturgy within the context of your regular worship that day.***

**Suggested Order of Service:**

* **Call To Worship**
* **Opening Hymn/Song**
* **Introduction to the Theme**
* **Prayers of Adoration and Confession/Declaration of Forgiveness**
* **Passing of the Peace**
* **Chaplaincy Focus**
* **Hymn/Song**
* **Readings**
* **Message**
* **Hymn/Song**
* **Offering & Notices**
* **Prayers of the People**
* **Hymn/Song**
* **Following Up**
* **Blessing**

**Lectionary Readings for Sunday August 25th 2019**

* **Psalm 71:1-6 or Psalm 103:1-8**
* **Jeremiah 1:4-10**
* **Luke 13: 10-17**
* **Hebrews 12:18-29**

**Suggested Hymns/Songs:**

* **Praise My Soul, The King of Heaven**
* **The Servant Song**

***(Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You)***

* **Blest Be The God and Father**

***(The Chaplaincy Hymn – see attachment)***

* **I Heard The Voice of Jesus Say**
* **When I Needed a Neighbour**
* **For You, Deep Stillness**

**Call To Worship:**

Praise the Lord, O my soul!  
**With all that is within me, praise his holy name!**Praise the Lord, O my soul!  
**Do not forget all his kind deeds!**He is the one who forgives all your sins,  
**who heals all your diseases,  
who delivers your life from the Pit,**who crowns you with his loyal love and compassion,  
**who satisfies your life with good things,  
so your youth is renewed like an eagle’s.**The Lord does what is fair,  
and executes justice for all the oppressed.  
**The Lord revealed his faithful acts to Moses,  
his deeds to the Israelites.**The Lord is compassionate and merciful;  
**he is patient and demonstrates great loyal love.** *Based on Psalm 103:1-8 (NET Bible)*

**OR…**

One: Lord, you are our refuge and our fortress. You rescue us from shame.

**All: In your righteousness, deliver and rescue me. Hear my prayers and save me.**

One: Lord you are our rock, a fortress of hope to save us.

**All: My mouth is filled with your praise and with your glory all day long.**

One: God, remember us through the ages of our life, fill us with strength when our own is spent.

**All: God, stay with me and I will hope continually. I will praise your righteousness.**

*Based on Psalm 71*

**Opening Hymn/Song:**

**Introduction to the theme:**

**The theme for this first Chaplaincy Sunday is ‘A companion on their journey’.**

**When a person enters healthcare or aged care, it marks a change in the landscape of their journey. Whether it is expected, planned or otherwise, we sometimes find ourselves in need of a companion during this time to help make sense of what’s happening to us, around us and within us.**

**Just as Jesus walked alongside the travellers on the Road to Emmaus; just as Ruth and Naomi supported each other on their journey, the Uniting Church, through the chaplaincy ministry walks alongside those who need healthcare or aged care.**

**Chaplains do this by listening to their story, their fears and their joys.**

**Worship Teams do this by helping aged care residents reconnect with their faith and their church, creating a brief worshipping community where they live.**

**It is about walking the journey with the other person, not imposing our agenda.**

**It is about being a companion through a challenging time, not a dominating presence.**

**It is about helping identify the movement of God in their life, not imposing God on it.**

**Prayers of Adoration & Confession with Declaration of Forgiveness:**

**Prayer of Adoration**

**(with reference to Psalm 128)**

**God of light and truth,**

**Your ways are beyond our understanding.**

**When we cry out, you are there.**

**In our pain and joy, you are there.**

**In the richness of your love, you gave us Jesus, who walks with us, loves us and heals us.**

**In you, the fruit of all labour is sweet and fulfilling.**

**So, we praise you and thank you.**

**In the name of Christ.**

**Amen.**

**Companion God,**

**We confess that there have been times we have wandered off on our own journeys.**

**We have taken the road easily travelled.**

**We have worried unnecessarily about ourselves instead of those around us.**

**God who journeys with us,**

**Remind us that we are travelling together.**

**Remind us that you are travelling with us.**

**Strengthen us to be the companion to others and grant us the grace to accept the company of others when they walk alongside us.**

**Forgive us and renew us, we pray.**

**Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

**Amen.**

**OR…**

**Based on Isaiah 58:9-14**

One: When we fail to love each other and do not honour your blessings,

**All: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

One: When we fail to unshackle the yokes of oppression, when we are malicious and cannot see your light in the darkness.

**All: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

One: At times we reject your strengthening work. We choose to let the spring waters of your love pass us by, rather than attend to your praise through each other.

**All: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

One: When our feet break the sabbath and our words do not comfort or bring joy. When we hide our gifts, rather than share them with people whose need is greatest.

**All: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

One: Help us to find our joy in you, so that we may ride in triumph and share in your bountiful inheritance.

**All: Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

**Passing of the Peace:**

**Chaplaincy Focus:**

**The Ballarat Regional Healthcare Chaplaincy ministry is a ministry endeavour for the whole of the Presbytery of Western Victoria. Its aim is to provide quality and meaningful pastoral support to patients and residents while they are in Ballarat for healthcare and aged care. It does so through the twin ministries of the Assistant Chaplains Program and the Worship Teams program.**

***While this ministry is in the healthcare and aged care venues in Ballarat, Chaplaincy acknowledges that people from all over the Presbytery come to Ballarat for healthcare, and as such, they are far from home. In these encounters, Chaplaincy often becomes an extension of the patient’s pastoral support from home.***

**The Assistant Chaplains are a team of trained and supported volunteers who provide regular and intentional pastoral support to a healthcare or aged care venue. Currently, the Chaplaincy ministry supports Assistant Chaplains at both the Ballarat Base Hospital and St. John of God Hospital, as well as a number of Aged Care venues across Ballarat. During the course of a regular month, the Uniting Church’s Assistant Chaplaincy program makes around 300 pastoral contacts.**

**Assistant Chaplains are trained to support patients, residents and their families during times of healthcare and aged care, talking over issues such as life, death, faith. Chaplains can be a listening ear as people make sense of their healthcare needs**

**Worship Teams provide a monthly church service to an Aged Care venue, tailored to the needs of the residents. Uniting Church members from most of Ballarat’s Uniting Church congregations are involved in leading and presenting these church services which allow residents to take part in a church service, even if they no longer can get to church. God’s promises to hear us and love us forever are expressed in each church service presented.**

*…A comment can be made here if there is a local connection between church and healthcare or aged care…*

**Hymn/Song:**

**The Readings:**

**The Lectionary readings for the day are:**

* **Psalm 71:1-6 or Psalm 103:1-8**
* **Jeremiah 1:4-10**
* **Luke 13: 10-17**
* **Hebrews 12:18-29**

**Other readings that may suit the theme could include:**

* **The Road to Emmaus journey (Luke 24:13-35)**

**The Message - Telling the Story:**

***Starting points…***

Chaplaincy and ministry – as in the reading from Jeremiah – can take us out of our comfort zone. We are asked to ‘not be afraid’. In the encounters we have with patients/residents, we often find we are – again, like Jeremiah – given the words to say.

* + Has there been a time you were called to be outside your comfort zone?
  + Have there been times you were aware of being given the words to say?
  + How have you/your church been ‘a companion on their journey’ to someone in your community?

Chaplaincy and ministry – as in the reading from Luke – often puts us in contact with people who are in search of healing. Furthermore, providing healing or care can put us at odds with various groups/people.

* When have you provided comfort or healing?
* When has being ‘a companion on their journey’ put you at odds with someone/a group?

Alternately…

* If you have arranged a Guest Speaker from the Chaplaincy ministry, invite them to speak about an aspect of the work they do.
* If a member of the Chaplaincy ministry cannot be with you during Worship, the worship leader can use the ***Stories of Chaplaincy*** notes provided.

**Hymn/Song:**

**Offering & Notices:**

**Prayers of the People:**

Space is given here for the person leading prayers to create their own prayer, sensitive to the local congregational setting. The prayer points below are suggested topic areas.

* Give thanks for the support provided by local UCA congregations and the Presbytery of Western Victoria.
* Give thanks and pray for the volunteers involved in the Chaplaincy ministry: Assistant Chaplains and Worship Team Members.
* Give thanks and pray for those on the Chaplaincy Committee: that they will continue to seek God’s guidance.
* Pray for Chaplain Coordinator Andrew Shearer-Cox
* Pray for those who need healthcare and aged care (especially from your local congregation) and their families & friends.
* Give thanks for the Healthcare/Aged Care providers who work with Chaplaincy for the best pastoral outcomes of patients and residents.
* Pray for wisdom and direction as Chaplaincy discerns future directions and opportunities.

**OR…**

**Prayers of the People**

*Based on Hebrews 12*

One: Loving God who blesses and endures all

**All: In your faithfulness, Lord hear our prayer.**

One: We pray for all people as children of God. Help us to endure the trials of difficult circumstances: illness, pain, anger. Strengthen us with perseverance for the race that is set before us, with Jesus as our pioneer and perfector of our faith, who has for our sake, endured the cross to be seated at your right hand.

**All: In your faithfulness, Lord hear our prayer.**

One: In our fragile world, we pray for all people who are deprived of their own voice that through your grace, peace and courage will fill them with hope. Bless all who seek your grace and shield us from the root of bitterness. Let their repentance be sweet water to your light. Give strength to those who heal and those who listen. Breathe into them the healing knowledge of your infinite understanding and patience.

**All: In your faithfulness, Lord hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world which is shaken by disaster and the terror of conflict, that it can be replaced by your unshakable kingdom. Give us the discipline to care for the abundance of gifts you have bestowed on our world. Open the ears of the world to hear the good news of your everlasting love proclaimed. Give us the voice to proclaim your love in every space of life, that we may draw comfort and strength from each other in our faith.

**All: In your faithfulness, Lord hear our prayer.**

Once more, shake not only the earth but also heaven. Shake us free from the bonds of our own captivity and deliver us into your certain love. Live in us that we may feel your grace in our uncertainty. In our fatigue and torment, give us the gifts of acceptance, trust and humour that we may share your ministry with all whom we meet. Bless all people as your children, deserving of your abundant love.

**All: In your faithfulness, Lord hear our prayer.**

**Hymn/Song:**

**Following Up: How can we work together?**

If what you have heard today has inspired you, then there are a number of ways you can partner with the work of Chaplaincy.

You can:

* Offer your time as a volunteer
  + as an Assistant Chaplain
  + as a member of a Worship Team
  + as a member of the Chaplaincy Committee
* You can offer accommodation as part of the Welcome Mat Project – standing ready to provide brief emergency accommodation for people accompanying their loved one to hospital.
* You can collect and set aside your small change – 5’s, 10’s, 20’s, 50’s and gold coins – to donate to the Chaplaincy program.

As a church, you can:

* Host a fundraising event
* Pray for the work of Chaplaincy, for those who minister and those who may need pastoral support.
* Refer members of your congregation to the Chaplaincy program when they go in to healthcare or aged care.
* **If your church has an existing relationship with a healthcare/aged care venue nearby – OR WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP ONE – then Chaplaincy can support your church through training, liaison and ongoing support**.

**The Blessing and Sending Out:**



**Chaplaincy Sunday Worship Resources:**

*The following pages provide material that may enhance your service of worship on the 25th.*

**A Reflection - The Infirm Woman (based on Luke 13:10-17)**

A Voice Unseen:

Infirm - I guess that means you can’t do very much - probably nothing at all.

Inactivity had left you flabby, loose of flesh - lacking firmness or solidity,

limbs all twisted and stiff.

So you must have shuffled along, all bent down like a crab never seeing the sky or wondrous stars. Never looking evenly intro the eyes of another but encountered only the brush of their bodies hurrying past you, pre-occupied with the business of the healthy, leaving you behind - always behind…trailing insignificance.

Your world, sister, was largely the swirling sand that rose from the shuffling feet, leaving you gray and dusty as it made its home in your dragging skirts.

People hardly notice you creeping by - they rarely do pay attention to the disabled - but avert their eyes, somehow embarrassed by the spectacle of disfigurement.

Does such a sight perhaps remind us of how vulnerable we all are to the ravages of age or illness? Are you our shadow terrifying us as you scuttle along, anonymously, at the edges of our lives?

Ah, little lady, will you, like so many marked by physical disability be a  continual affront to our false dignity, a distraction from our own infirmity of spirit?

Will you be to us, so self-assured of healthy body, a person to be spurned and rejected, doubly disabled by our prejudice and fears? For we rarely open our hearts to people like you, sister. Nor have we crafted our world to accommodate your bent form. So you must creep around our perimeters seeking access, a way into our spaces. You must double-check entrances, exits, stairs and heights to see if they welcome you or leave you standing helpless, like an infant before a rising cliff.

Will we slip past you, embarrassed? Or will we see in you a graced opportunity to stretch our own crippled spirits, recognising your inherent dignity, and respecting the courage of your endless silent struggle to be part of a world not fashioned for your infirmity?

Will we, blessed with healthy bodies, heal and soothe yours simply by honouring your whole bent self?

Will you become whole by how we perceive you? And will we, loving like    Jesus, then become whole too?

Ah, Infirm Woman, received and healed by Jesus, stretch our souls - shrunk small by insecurity. Challenge us to a deeper vision that sees beneath the broken, and celebrates the unique wonder of every human Spirit.

Light up our shadows, sister, and make us honest, make us whole, like you soul sister.

And being embraced by you may we hear Christ’s words of grace to us - your sins are forgiven.

**Thanks be to God.**



**Chaplaincy Hymn: Blest Be The God And Father**

*Words: Graeme R. Sutton – 1993, 2019.*

Tune: TIS202 (Cruger) or TIS 457 (Aurelia – *‘The Church’s One Foundation’*)

**Blest be the God and Father of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**The Father of compassion. One God, to be adored.**

**Who comforts in our suffering, who strengthens when we’re weak;**

**So we may comfort others when they His comfort seek.**

**This care that Christ embodies is like God’s ‘welcome mat’.**

**Embracing age or sickness through worship, bedside chat.**

**As agents of Christ’s presence for when you’re ‘far from home’.**

**This prayer a chaplain’s off’ring: May Christ be your shalom.**

**Remembering Christ’s sorrow, may we receive His power**

**To reach out to each other with comfort every hour.**

**When grief or death o’erpower us, when God seems far away**

**We ask that God sustain us, and turn our dark to day.**

**Our God of consolation Your Son, our Saviour, Lord;**

**By dying death He conquered, by rising, life restored.**

**Now in this firm hope grounded, by day and night may we**

**Care hand in hand, together, through all eternity.**



**Stories of Chaplaincy:**

*The following are snapshot stories written by members of the Assistant Chaplains Team. They highlight the range of emotion often felt in pastoral encounters.*

## When Their Eyes Light Up.

Part of the work I do is to lead church services in Aged Care venues.  My guitar and I visit a few places monthly and lead a half-hour service that seeks to connect the resident with their faith or remind them of it.  
  
I do my best, though,  to keep the talking to a minimum and make sure there is plenty of singing.  Amazing Grace.  Jesus Loves Me.  What A Friend We Have In Jesus.  This Little Light Of Mine.  These are the regular songs we sing.  I often get concerned that that someone will say "Hey, we sang that LAST time."  No-one has yet.  Either they don't remember or they don't mind.  
  
At one of the venues I regularly visit is a lady I'll call Joy.  
  
Joy has been there for a few years now, but she'll tell you she only just moved in.  Joy has no immediate family as far as I'm aware and the staff tell me her extended relatives come only a couple of times a year.  I find that sad.  
  
Joy's faith keeps her good company.  She seems to be of a Salvation Army tradition but doesn't mind that I'm not a Salvo.  She rides that journey of the Bible story like a little kid hearing it for the first time - the horror on her face when Daniel was thrown in the Lion's Den was priceless.  She genuinely did not see THAT coming.  
  
But it is when we are about to sing that her eyes light up.  
  
I introduce the song as I'm putting my guitar on, and by the time I have finished saying which song we'll sing, Joy's face lights up with recognition and she begins to recite the words.  In that moment, I do not mind that I have sung Amazing Grace 6 times that month  already - I know that Joy hasn't and she is hearing and engaging with something that is profound and meaningful to her.  
  
It is like when you have given someone a gift - and yet you get the buzz in seeing them open it.  
  
***I hope I never lose that feeling***

**“You are not JUST a Chaplain.”**

I was accompanying one of our Assistant Chaplains – Val - during a visit to Ballarat Base Hospital. We had gone to the Intensive Care Unit to visit with one of our volunteers from a local Uniting Church congregation who had needed some urgent healthcare attention.

The ICU at the Base is a busy place with people rushing to and fro with great purpose, intensity and focus.

When we were shown the Bay our volunteer was a patient in, we discovered he was being attended to by one of the doctors. Aware that patient times with the doctor are of paramount importance, especially while in ICU, Val and I waited nearby, but as out of the way as possible.

After a few moments, the doctor noticed we were waiting to see his patient. We made eye contact, nodded and indicated that while we did wish to see his patient, we weren’t in any rush. At the end of his consultation, the doctor left the Bay and came over to us to thank us for waiting. Val said that that was OK – we were just from the Chaplaincy team wanting to see how our friend was going. The doctor looked at Val with understanding and said to Val: “You are not JUST a Chaplain. You’re job is very important” and he continued on his way.

I’m pretty sure Val floated into the room after that.

**A Young Man and His Two Wonderful Aunties**

My story is about a fairly young man and his two wonderful aunties. This man was at the end stage of a degenerative illness. He was unable to speak, even move at all, but his eyes were wide open. I found the first visit to be quite challenging because he was unable to communicate at all.

The following week there were two ladies visiting with him. They were his aunties, and I learnt that his closer family had given up visiting. Maybe it was just too difficult. These wonderful ladies were there for the next few weeks when I visited. They would shave him and do other things for him to let him know that they cared, and sometimes just sit with him.

I could feel the love that they felt for their nephew. In fact for me to visit with him and them felt like entering into a state of grace.

After a few weeks he was gone, but I have never forgotten the dedication of these two aunties, and for me it was a wonderful example of what love is all about.

***By Val Dickins (Assistant Chaplain)***

**Enjoyable Moments in Aged Care.**

Recently, a new project began which created heaps of interest and proved to be an outstanding success. The project involved the setting up and the successful incubation of a small amount of coloured Bantam chicks.

The residents and staff were so excited and the naming, feeding, petting etc was a delight to see. So many smiles and comments. All too soon, these ‘babies’ outgrew their first home. Then a very kind and generous person built a special outdoor hen house. It even has a container from Red Rooster on the roof as a chimney! This means if weather is unsuitable for outdoor activities, the hens can still be seen from the windows.

Having the hens gives me a topic of conversation with the residents and a way of connecting with them. This is just one example of the positiveness of my chaplaincy visiting.

***By Joy Moreton (Assistant Chaplain)***

**Deep Faith.**

It is always a privilege to meet people of deep faith. I meet two women who were in hospital for a long time - 6 and 4 months respectively. Both had a similar story. They were diagnosed with cancer which required extensive surgery. One was left with an ileostomy and the other a colostomy, which they would have to manage for the rest of their lives. However, each had several complications, requiring further surgery and challenges in post- operative management. One was eventually discharged home, back along the western highway and although she had to return a couple of times, was relatively well the last time I saw her. The other had short spells at home, having to manage complicated nutritional regimes. Unfortunately, her condition deteriorated, and she passed away in hospital.

Both these women were remarkable in their display of faith. They constantly affirmed that God was with them throughout their entire journey, no matter what happened to them. They had every right to be disappointed at the repeated setbacks they suffered, but they had the assurance that they would be given the strength to work through each complication. They were thankful for the strength they received.

I felt humbled and privileged to be able to share some of their journey. We discussed their journey and they were able to express how they were feeling, their deep faith, their thankfulness for the faithfulness of God and the support of their family. We also shared readings and closed each visit with prayer. Both had very supportive families and although one was far from home, the family kept in close touch.

Although many people I visit have deep faith, the journey through which each of these women had gone was unbelievable. But each continued to grow in faith and did not waver from their firm belief in the love and care of God, present every step of their journey. They were an inspiration.

***By Margaret Bennett (Assistant Chaplain)***

**The Grump.**

Many of our visits help people to express their views of their hospital experience and to talk about whatever is of importance to them. However, some are a bit wary of us as they are not sure about our role

Having introduced myself to an older man, I got the feeling that he was concerned about what I was going to say to him. He was quite grumpy. He started off with a few negative comments, but soon, after a few questions, was talking to me about his reason for hospitalization and how he was feeling about it . He then told me about his life, his family his work and his interests. We had a few laughs along the way.

I needed to terminate the visit and as I was going, he said to me “Well what did you achieve in this visit?”. I replied to him along the lines that when I first came to him, he was very grumpy, but “look at you now”! He was chuckling as I left.

***By Margaret Bennett (Assistant Chaplain)***

**The Challenge of the 4-bed ward.**

Several wards in the Ballarat Health Service accommodate four people. Mostly, visits are conducted without any problems. A one-on- one conversation occurs often behind closed curtains. Each person can pay full attention to the other. However, this is not always the case.

One of three things may happen.

1. There may be so much noise that both hearing, and concentration can be achieved only with effort.
2. The ward is so quiet that you are aware that other people can hear your conversation.
3. There is a bond between patients, and they are drawn into the conversation, so you can have either a two-, three- or four-way conversation. Most of these are light-hearted and no doubt break the monotony for the people.

Not infrequently, as you leave the person you have visited, you may be called over to another bed, and the question asked” who you are and what do you do”. After you have explained your presence the person invites you to sit down with him or her. You never know where the conversation will go. So far, they have involved

* pleasant social chats
* discussions of their illness, their family or other relationships
* diatribes about the church
* discussions of abuse
* venting of anger about God and the church
* discussions of spirituality verses religion.

There is no doubt that God moves in mysterious ways and is with us , no matter who we speak to.

***By Margaret Bennett (Assistant Chaplain)***