

Chaplaincy Update December 2020

***We asked, you RESPONDED!* Acts of Kindness**

On Tuesday, December 15, staff chaplains shared blankets with over 400 patients at LAC+USC Medical Center as part of the annual Acts of Kindness.

This is something that happens every year, but like much of 2020 the experience unfolded much differently than usual. Because of the global pandemic, the hospital limited the community volunteer program, so none of our faithful volunteers were able to join us in distributing the blankets to patients. We missed you terribly!

Also, because of COVID, patients are not allow visitors, so they are feeling especially isolated and in need of prayer, not to mention frightened about being in the hospital.

One thing that didn't change this year was the generous outpouring of hand-made blankets from the faith community! The blankets are always made with love, but this year they seemed particularly beautiful and infused with prayers for healing. It was wonderful to have such bright, warm colors that everyone could enjoy.

Another thing that was familiar was the smiles and tears of gratitude from the patients as they learn that a stranger has handmade a beautiful gift for them. One woman told me as tears streaked down her cheeks, that it was the prettiest thing she's ever been given "I don't know where I will be living when I leave here, but this blanket will remind me that someone cares about me". An elderly man kept running his fingers over the colorful rows of stitches, smiling, "thank you! thank you!"

If you knit, crochet, quilt or sew its not too early to start - we welcome your donations for 2021! Blankets need to be hand made (knit, crocheted, quilted or sewn) and prayed over - and at least 36"x36".



Burial of the Unclaimed

On December 3, we laid to rest the remains of 1547 of our fellow Angelinos at the county cemetery. Covid and gathering guidelines reshaped the burial to an online experience, with just 10 of us at the interfaith graveside service. Together we offered prayers and blessings to those who had died three years ago. This is the link to the LA Times article that has a link to the full service on Facebook.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-12-03/los-angeles-mourns-unclaimed-dead-in-annual-event>

Pandemic Prayers

COVID-19 continues to claim a toll on the life and wellbeing of our community. The experiences of hardship and heartbreak are excruciating. The stories of love and generosity and sacrifice nourish us as we press on. Please continue to pray for the chaplaincy ministry and the hospital staff. We so need your prayers for strength, health, compassion and resilience in the days still to come.

– 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 (special 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.