

# THE PULSE

A publication of the Northern Ireland Healthcare Chaplains' Association

[president@nihca.co.uk](mailto:president@nihca.co.uk) | [secretary@nihca.co.uk](mailto:secretary@nihca.co.uk) | [treasurer@nihca.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@nihca.co.uk) | [training@nihca.co.uk](mailto:training@nihca.co.uk)

Welcome from the President | VBRP Report | Pause for Thought | Training Opportunities

## Upcoming Training

### Caring for the Non-Religious

Lindsay Van Dijk

Tuesday 25th October

10.30am - 12.30pm

Zoom - 2 hours - link available from the Training Director

### MDT Training - Religious, Spiritual and Pastoral Care in Mental Health

Rev Prof John Swinton

Tuesday 29th November

9.30am - 4.45pm

Knockbracken Hall (Booking Essential - Email [trainingdirector@nihca.co.uk](mailto:trainingdirector@nihca.co.uk))

### Journal Club

Various Facilitators

Tuesday 11th October - 11am - 12noon

Monday 28th November - 7pm - 8pm

To register, email [research@nihca.co.uk](mailto:research@nihca.co.uk)



## Welcome from the President

Welcome to our new regular chaplaincy bulletin, with thanks to Michael for taking it on in his role as Director of Training.

I was honoured to be appointed NIHCA President at the AGM on 25th May 2022. It is appropriate, firstly, to express our gratitude to Fr Robert Sloan for his commitment and service as President, to the vice-Presidents who stood in during Robert's absence, to Rev Norman Harrison who stepped down as Director of Training, and to Mrs Carolyn Patterson, Canon Kenneth Hall & Rev John Gilkinson who completed their terms on the Executive. Welcome to Mr Michael McMillan (Director of Training), Mrs Vivienne Manley (Others VP), Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth (CoI members' rep) & Rev Ken Connor (Methodist members' rep).

Thanks also to all the Executive for their patience, commitment and support.

I believe that chaplaincy needs to hold together, promote and develop both the vocational/faith and professional agendas to enable chaplains to be people who share hope and compassion in a way that promotes wellbeing and confidence in healthcare chaplaincy. The NIHCA is an example in NI and beyond of how chaplains from different backgrounds can work together for the common good, share together, learn together, grow together and make a positive difference for good and for God.

We shared a very worthwhile and beneficial two days in Drumalis 20-21/9, with Dr Simon Harrison, President of the College of Healthcare Chaplains (CHCC), who lead our thinking on "What does good chaplaincy look like?"

## Pause for Thought

Ezekiel writes... *I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.* – Ezekiel 36:26

This is Organ Donation Week 26th September to 2nd October and World Heart Day 29th September.

In Chaplaincy, I have had the privilege of being with many waiting for, receiving and recovering from a transplant. I have also been alongside families facing decisions about organ donation.

A ward sister ask me to visit a family whose young child's heart had failed and had been moved to PICU. I will never forget receiving word that they would receive a transplant. Another family's deep and painful loss made life possible for this family. This broken heart was literally removed, and a new heart was put in its place. It is now beating, pumping blood; it is giving new life.

God is clear about our utter need for new, not better – self-replacement, not self-betterment. That is why the gospel isn't a recipe for self-improvement. We can't do it on our own by ourselves. No self-sacrifice is enough, no amount of right living, or religious effort can give us a new heart. It is all Jesus.

He transforms us into a new creation and gives us a new start. May God give us a new heart for Him, for our calling to chaplaincy and sharing His transforming good news, and for our Association.

## NIHCA Executive Council

The next meeting is 1st December 2022. If you have any issues you would like raised please contact any member of the Exec Council.

I would encourage all chaplains to attend as many training/development opportunities as possible. Remember, however, to keep your employer mandatory training up-to-date as well or line-managers may be unwilling to allow you work time to attend non-employer training.

As President I am willing and available to visit colleagues across NI, if invited, to learn from, support and encourage each other. If you have any chaplaincy queries or issues of concern that you feel the President can help with, please get in contact.

Very sincere thanks to all chaplains for the vital ministries you are exercising. May the Lord bless you and keep you!

## Values Based Reflective Practice

There and Back Again – Twice!

Following on from the excellent training earlier in the year at Drumalis, six of us chaplains readily took up the offer of a further course with Andy Gillies, NHS Scotland. Organised, and very much supported, by the NIHCA we headed off to Irvine in Ayrshire for the course on Values Based Reflective Practice. For me it was a return to my ancestral homeland of Cunninghame.

The training was split over two consecutive weeks. Initially I thought it a bit annoying but actually quickly came to appreciate the in-between time to reflect on what we had been studying – Trust the Process!

Our wee group consisted of Heather, Marie, Patricia and Rosie from the Belfast Trust and Ken and myself from the SE Trust. We were joined by a few Scottish colleagues for the course.

As many of us are aware, reflective practice can take you on quite a journey without leaving your chair – and this was no exception. The sessions were brilliantly facilitated by Andy and everyone had ample opportunity to contribute – and lots of time to 'wonder'. Each of us found the course well worthwhile and for me it was a time to remember what motivations spurred me to undertake my journey into chaplaincy. Lessons learned will help improve our service to patients and colleagues.

Along with the teaching, I think each of us found the time together a great blessing. Friendships were deepened and new ones forged – especially around the table. The food was great but the fellowship and craic was even better!

On behalf of our group I would like to thank Andy and NHS Scotland for their generosity. Also, the NIHCA executive for their support – not least financially. This was an excellent course and opportunity to connect with chaplaincy colleagues, to support each other and strengthen bonds.

Time well spent with great people!

Revd James Cunningham - Church of Ireland Chaplain  
Ulster Hospital