



# THE PULSE

A publication of the Northern Ireland Healthcare Chaplains' Association

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Executive Meeting | A Hospice Chaplain | Post Graduate Certificate | 'I'm a Union Man' | CPE

## Upcoming Training 2023

### Transforming Chaplaincy - Spiritual Care Research

Rev Prof George Fitchett

Tuesday 7th February

Zoom - 2.00pm - 4.00pm

### Training Residential -

#### The future of Healthcare Chaplaincy in Northern Ireland: Thriving as Individuals and as a Profession (Part 1)

Rev Dr Ewan Kelly

Monday 13th March & Tuesday  
14th March

9.30am - 5.00pm & 9.30am -  
4.00pm

Dromantine Retreat and  
Conference Centre

### MDT Training Day - Honouring the Indispensable: Disability, Inclusivity, Healthcare and Spirituality

Dr Jill Harshaw & Dr Ian Dickson

Monday 17th April

9.30am - 4.45pm

Seagoe Parish Centre, Portadown



## Should a chaplain join a trade union?

### I'm a Union Man - Rev Ken Connor

I'm a Union man, amazed at what I am...

These are the opening words of a song by the Strawbs in 1973. This song really summed up the mood of the country in the midst of the Miners Strikes in the late 60's and early 70's. Maybe for some the image you have of unions is people on the Picket lines with placards.

I have been a member of a union since I was 16, over 40 years. In the Electricity Industry I was a member of GMB/APEX and now as a Healthcare Chaplain, Unison. (Other Unions as they say are available), and I have appreciated the work they do, often behind the scenes.

For me the Union card I carry shows a form of solidarity with my colleagues, especially in these challenging times. As a union member I feel more informed on the issues as local branch keeps me up to date on issues that are relevant to me and my place of work, often simple things that I would not otherwise be aware of.

As a union member I have access to a catalogue of training courses through the Unison NI College, just this week I received information about courses on Promoting Dignity in Health and Social Care and an Introduction to Dementia.

## NIHCA Executive Committee

Summary minutes from Executive meetings are available on the website. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 28th February.

## Chaplaincy Resources - Helpful Websites

<https://www.transformchaplaincy.org>

<https://www.nahc.ie/>

<https://www.ukbhc.org.uk/>

<https://www.spiritualcareassociation.org/>

<https://chaplaincyinnovation.org/>

<https://www.healthcarechaplains.org/>

## Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

The NIHCA Executive is committed to supporting an acceptable, suitable and sustainable training/development pathway into chaplaincy and for the enhancement of chaplaincy, which we believe should include CPE as part of the package. We are supportive of the Ulster Hospital seeking accreditation as a new CPE centre. We would encourage you to think seriously about undertaking a unit of CPE.

The next unit is planned for Spring/Summer 2023 - Thursday 13th April - Friday 30th June 2023. Applications welcome from January 2023. Please contact Rev Don Gamble ([don.gamble@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:don.gamble@setrust.hscni.net)) for further information. Applications forms available for the ACPEI website. NIHCA members must submit a Grant Application Form if they wish their fees to be paid. Funding may also be available for non-members who are exploring chaplaincy.

Other less well known benefits, Wellbeing, Legal Advice, Insurance, Travel... We all benefit from the pay awards negotiated by the union and their officials so I feel it is important to be part of the process.

In a world when we talk a lot about Social Justice, as a Methodist I think about the six Tolpuddle Martyrs - early trade union activists who in 1834 were unjustly sentenced to seven years transportation to Australia for the illegal swearing of oaths. At least four, possibly five, were Methodists and three were preachers. This was a form of what we would today call Social Action.

Such was the outcry at this injustice that the campaign to win free pardons and safe passage home for the Tolpuddle Martyrs was successful. The victory confirmed the right of working people to organise themselves into trade unions as part of a free society.

Often, we may say, we have no voice, no one is listening to me, but a union offers a collective voice, and practical support. It's not all picket lines and placards.

*Rev. Ken Connor, Methodist Chaplain, Lagan Valley Hospital*

## A Hospice Chaplain - Rev Matthew Hagan

For over 13 years I have been a chaplain at the Southern Area Hospice in Newry. As a part-time chaplain I along with my colleagues brings a listening ear and an open heart giving a space for a person to explore their deepest feelings and thoughts whilst upholding confidentiality and being non-judgemental – seeing the person for who they are and where they are at on their journey.

As a chaplain I feel it is a privilege to draw alongside new patients and their family and journey with them whilst working as part of a dedicated and committed multi-disciplinary team of professional colleagues in a peaceful environment. I feel chaplaincy is a vital role in hospice as we address the individual's spiritual needs at a very critical time in their lives.

Chaplains also support anyone on their bereavement journey individually or as part of the Bereavement Support Programme. Chaplains also provide bereavement support on the telephone should someone wish to avail of this support.

If the patient has a local church connection, the chaplain will offer to contact his or her clergy, informing them of the patient's admission. A chaplain provides specific spiritual care through prayer, reading of Scripture and religious services.

Chaplains are very attentive to patients and their families by providing pastoral, religious and spiritual support.

Following the death of a loved one the chaplaincy team are involved in providing bereavement support on a one-to-one basis, drop-in basis or as part of a group. These are confidential spaces where people can share and talk about their grief.

It can be very beneficial to the person to reflect on the journey of illness and to express how they are feeling and share their thoughts in a safe space and to think of their own journey into the future.

*Rev Matthew Hagan, Chaplain, Southern Area Hospice*

## Pause for Thought

Recently I met a man who was suffering from PTSD. As I listened to him believe it or not a part of the Christmas story came to my mind. It was when the shepherds were out in the fields keeping watch over their flocks by night. When an angel appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terrified. Now you and I might have responded with terror if the same thing happened to us just out of the blue when we were working. But this is what the angel said;

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people”.

We have much to be afraid of in these uncertain times; work pressures, family pressures, health issues, financial stresses. But I hear the angel’s voice in my head which says – “Do not be afraid”. It reminds me of a children’s song which goes like this...

Consider the stars in the sky, Look up and wonder, can you count their number? Consider the stars in the sky, Umbrella to hide in, a dance floor of heaven. Do not be afraid, Do not be afraid.

Consider the stars in the sky, When it is darkest they shine out the brightest. Consider the stars in the sky, In every anguish, oh child take courage. Do not be afraid Do not be afraid.

He who made all of this And who holds all of this. Holds you in His hands – So do not be afraid.

*Mrs Vivienne Manley, Chaplain, Belfast and South Eastern Trust*



## Post Graduate Certificate at Newman University - Rev Jackie Whyte

I am two months into the Post Graduate Certificate in Chaplaincy at Newman University in Birmingham which involves five weekends of in class tuition as well as virtual tutorials. The course focuses on;

- Chaplaincy,
- Spirituality, &
- Reflective Practice

Margaret Holland (Catholic Chaplain at Newman) oversees the course which has a significant faith dimension to it. The current cohort of students provide chaplaincy to a range of settings; healthcare, education, civil service, LGBT+ community, emergency services, armed forces.

The students gelled together very quickly, and technology has enhanced our interactions with one another. It has also facilitated our out of class learning with lectures posted online for the duration of our studies. This has proven to be particularly helpful. The Faculty at Newman provide us with great support, especially the librarians who offer a 30 minute session to help us find appropriate Journal articles for the Seminar Paper

The reflective element to the course is similar to that of Clinical Pastoral Education, and the written work requires critical thinking and writing. Assessment takes the form of a seminar paper, reflections, and a portfolio. I am hoping to increase my chaplaincy skill set, and to grow in my understanding of Paediatric Palliative Chaplaincy in particular.

I am very grateful to the Association for the financial support provided and would encourage fellow members to avail of similar opportunities for professional development.

*Rev Jackie Whyte, Lead Chaplain, Northern Ireland Hospice*

Supporting & equipping chaplains