

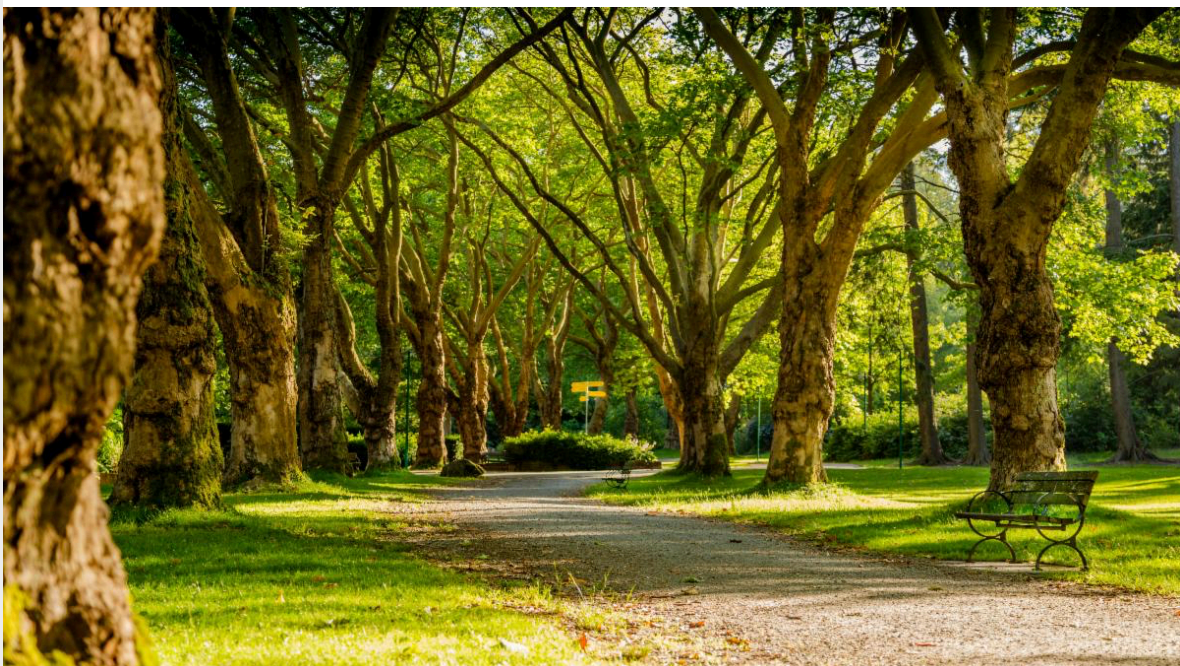


North American Division
of Seventh-day Adventists

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



When Hope Walks In

There are times when a chaplain enters a crisis-filled setting and something begins to change not because we have all the answers or can alter the circumstances, but because we carry a message that suffering cannot erase: there is still hope.

Hope does not deny grief, disappointment, or uncertainty. It reminds us that even in suffering, the story is not over yet.

There is strength for the next moment, courage for the next decision, grace for the next step, and light even in the darkest places.

Often, hope takes the form of compassionate presence, a bedside prayer, a listening ear, a word of encouragement, or simply being present when words are not enough. As chaplains, we have the sacred privilege of walking alongside those in difficult moments, reminding them that they do not walk alone.

Our hope is not dependent upon favorable outcomes. It is rooted in God, in who He is, what He has promised, and His enduring faithfulness. As we continue in the sacred work of chaplaincy, may the profound words of the Apostle Paul strengthen and encourage us:

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

May we continue to walk where hope is needed most, trusting the God of hope to work through our presence, compassion, and care. Even in the most difficult moments, suffering does not have the final word, **hope** does.

Washington Johnson II
Director
Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries



RECENT EVENTS

Chaplain Caleb VinCross, serving at Loma Linda VA Medical Center, was ordained by the Southeastern California Conference on July 11.



Chaplain Kelly Kessinger, serving at the Adventist Health Simi Valley, was ordained by the Southern California Conference on July 18.



Chaplain Jahdiel Matos, serving at the Adventist Health Glendale Hospital, was ordained by the Southern California Conference on July 25.



Congratulations to Chaplains Nathaniel Gracia and Jose Galvez (left to right), who recently graduated from the Naval Chaplaincy School in Newport, Rhode Island.



Congratulations to Chaplain Justin Walker (left), who was recently promoted to the rank of Captain at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, where he is currently assigned. Also present was Chaplain Lemuel Sapien, a Chaplain Candidate in the United States Air Force.

In May 2026, Chaplain Cicely received the Bee Award from Wintergarden AdventHealth Hospital.



Chaplains Denny Rengifo and Gustavo Mujica received their BCCI certificate at the Annual APC conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Chaplain Francisco Cross received the BE Award for his embodiment of the value to Be a Force for Good. He is known by all for the warmth, care, understanding, and comfort he brings to patients, their families, and our staff. His leadership of the Chaplain office has made Rideout the Gold Standard within Adventist Health.



Have a recent career accomplishment or milestone to share? Reply to this email with a brief description and photos for possible inclusion in our next newsletter.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

WINTER 2026 (IN-PERSON) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING DECEMBER 5-6



Moral and Professional Decorum In Chaplaincy

Ivan Williams

Vice President of Strategic Planning and Leadership,
North American Division



The AI Advantage:

What Chaplains Should Know About Artificial Intelligence

Neat Randriamialison

Director of Professional Services,
North American Division



Everything You need to Know about VA Chaplaincy

Robert Mackay

Domiciliary Chaplain,
Board Certified Chaplain, National Association of Veterans Affairs
Chaplains (NAVAC)



Ministering to All:

Serving a Religiously Diverse World While
Maintaining Our Seventh-day Adventist Identity

Denny Rengifo

Associate Director,
North American Division

Dean Darroux

Chaplain Manager of Spiritual Care,
Adventist HealthCare's White Oak Medical Center

SAVE THE DATE

Chaplain's Appreciation Sabbath • December 5, 2026
Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries Training • December 6, 2026



North American Division
of Seventh-day Adventists

[Professional Development Registration](#)



The North American Division supports the following initiative from the General Conference. For more information click on the link below:

[All Things New 2027](#)



OneVoice²⁷

CHAPLAINS, USE YOUR VOICE

Join the Proclamation Stage in
Bogotá, Colombia

 **September 18-25, 2027**

We need 300 chaplains from
all over the world who are willing
to preach the Good News that Jesus came
"To Make All Things New."

— Competent • Committed • Compassionate —

 **More information**
will follow through
your Division and
Attached Fields
ACM Directors.

 Travel is covered by the
chaplain or their hiring
organization.

 The local union will
provide housing.

 The local churches will
provide very good
Colombian cuisine.



REGISTER HERE:
<https://forms.gle/6ECRiCAqmSiGzyAQA>

[Chaplain's Registration Link](#)

IMPORTANT DATES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

2026

Dec 5-9

Pastoral Evangelism Leadership Council (PELC)
Oakwood University

2027

Jun 21–24

North American Division- Ministerial Conference

Lexington, KY

Dec 4- 8

Pastoral Evangelism Leadership Council (PELC)

Oakwood University

2028

Jun 19-21

Professional Development Training

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Berrien Springs, MI

Dec 2-6

Pastoral Evangelism Leadership Council (PELC)

Oakwood University

2029

Mar 19-21

Professional Development Training

North American Division Headquarters

Columbia, MD

Dec 1-5

Pastoral Evangelism Leadership Council (PELC)

Oakwood University

2030

Jun TBA

World Congress - Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

Indianapolis, IN

Dec 7 -11

Pastoral Evangelism Leadership Council (PELC)

Oakwood University



ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS' CORNER

Dear colleagues and friends,



Praying you and yours are blessed by God's unfailing love and grace. It was great meeting some of you at the APC Conference in New Orleans back in June. My plan for the next two months is to learn more about the Education Chaplaincy ministry in the field and looking forward to connecting with our young people. This December, I unfortunately will not be able to attend PELC but look forward to seeing you at the APC and/or Called Conventions next June, if not sooner.

As Fall is around the corner, we will soon begin the busy holiday season, and this year may be extra stressful with the uncertainty of our country and our world. May we continue to bring peace and strength to our communities and be a light of healing to whoever God brings to our corner. May you find time to reflect on God's goodness and partner with God on the plans and goals for next year.

With care and prayers,
Angela

Chaplain Angela Li , Healthcare & Campus—Mid-America, Southwestern, & West Regions
Cell: 310-617-2897 / angelali@nadadventist.org

Dear Chaplains,

It has been an incredible pleasure getting to know many of you and hearing about your calling to ministry and your experiences in chaplaincy. Each conversation has reminded me of the important and unique role Adventist chaplains play in bringing God's care, compassion, and hope to those we serve.



I want to **congratulate all our newly endorsed chaplains**, as well as those who have recently become **board certified**! These accomplishments represent important milestones and are another affirmation of God's calling into this sacred work. For those who have not yet begun the journey toward board certification, **I encourage you to get started!** It is not always an easy journey, but it is a rewarding one. The process will challenge you, strengthen your skills, deepen your reflection, and help you grow into an even better chaplain.

I will be traveling to several areas in September and would love the opportunity to connect with you in person:

- **Orlando, Florida: September 14–18**
- **Chicago, Illinois: September 18–21**
- **Andrews University: September 21–24**

If you are in any of these areas and would like to meet, please contact me at **717-377-2690**. I would love to hear about your ministry, learn how you are doing, and explore how Adventist Chaplaincy Ministry can better support you.

Thank you for answering God's call to chaplaincy. **Your ministry matters, your presence makes a difference, and God is using you to bring His care to people in some of the most important moments of their lives.**

May God continue to bless you and your ministry!

Blessings,

SPOUSE'S HIGHLIGHT

Before We Were a Chaplain's Spouse...

Who are we when no one is introducing us as “the chaplain’s spouse”?

It is a beautiful privilege to walk beside someone called to chaplaincy. It means loving and supporting someone whose calling often takes them into some of life’s most sacred, difficult, and unexpected moments. It also means celebrating victories, absorbing some of the pressures that accompany the calling, adjusting to unpredictable schedules, and, more often than not, providing quiet support behind the scenes.

Yet, somewhere between ministry, family, and the expectations of others, it can become easy to lose sight of our own God-given identity.

Before we were chaplaincy spouses, we were, and always will be, beloved children of God.

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1, NIV).

Our identity is not found in our spouse’s title, assignment, uniform, congregation, institution, or ministry. Rather, it is rooted in whose we are. Supporting our spouses does not require losing ourselves. Instead, we can embrace the dreams, interests, gifts, and possibilities that God has placed within each of us. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that *“we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.”*

There are specific things God desires to accomplish through each of our lives, not simply because we are married to chaplains, but because we, too, have been personally called, uniquely gifted, and divinely positioned to fulfill the purposes God has entrusted to us.

Knowing who we are in Christ allows us to walk faithfully beside our chaplains without disappearing behind their calling. The chaplain’s calling may shape our journey, but it is God who defines our identity. Let’s walk boldly in the joy of knowing that we are chosen, called, and identified by the almighty God of the universe!



Joyce Johnson, PhD
Chaplaincy Spouse Coordinator



SPECIAL FEATURES

HOLY GROUND

A Journey Toward The Character of God

by Dr. Larry Black

Holy Ground shows us the difference between Holiness and perfection. God never commands us to achieve sinless perfection in our own strength before coming to Him, but He does call every believer to a life of holiness. Perfection, as many people understand it, focuses on flawless performance. Holiness focuses on belonging to God and being transformed into His likeness. Perfect or Holy? "God Is Not Looking for Perfect People—He Is Making Holy People." Holiness means being set apart for God. The word holy literally means: Set apart. Consecrated. Belonging to God. When God called Israel holy... They weren't perfect. They were His. The temple utensils were called holy. Not because they were alive. Not because they were flawless. But because they belonged exclusively to God. Likewise... The church is holy because we belong to Christ. Holiness begins with ownership before it shows itself in behavior.

I Am There to Bear Witness:

A Reflection on the Ministry of Chaplaincy

by Latoya Hazell-Alcide

One of the things that stayed with me while listening to the testimony in the Lindsay Clancy case was the unexpected intersection between chaplaincy and the legal system. Most of us probably do not enter chaplaincy imagining ourselves sitting in a courtroom answering questions about our care. That part of our training: ethics, confidentiality, documentation, legal responsibilities, may feel like only a thumb, or maybe even a pinky finger, of everything we do. Until suddenly it isn't.

Chaplain Sheila Cavanaugh testified about her more than 200 visits with Lindsay Clancy. When questioned about what she had and had not documented, she explained, **"I'm not there to evaluate the patient. I'm there to bear witness to their suffering."**

That sentence stayed with me.

Because, in many ways, that is chaplaincy. We get into the boat with people. We walk alongside them. We make room for their stories without immediately needing to explain, defend, diagnose, or fix them. Bearing witness does not mean abandoning accountability or professional responsibility. It means recognizing that suffering deserves to be seen and that the person experiencing it should not have to experience it unseen.

Interestingly, research on the "ministry of presence" found that people receiving chaplain care experienced that presence as reassurance, support, and, importantly, a space

where they did not feel judged. Research on Clinical Pastoral Education describes something similar: chaplains learn to stay with another person's painful emotions instead of rushing to fix them or move away from them.

Scripture already gives us pictures of this. Before Job's friends started talking, and eventually talking far too much, they sat beside him for seven days and seven nights because they saw that his suffering was great (Job 2:13).

For a while, they simply witnessed.

And then there is Jesus at Lazarus's tomb. Jesus knew resurrection was coming. Yet knowing the ending did not make Him rush Mary and Martha through the middle. He listened to Martha. He received Mary's grief. He stood among mourners.

And Jesus wept.

Ellen White describes that scene by saying Jesus “**witnessed the sorrow**” of the sisters and “felt every pang of anguish.” I love that language because Jesus did not observe their suffering from a safe theological distance. He entered it.

Henri Nouwen describes ministry in much the same way. In *The Wounded Healer*, he argues that ministry calls us to enter suffering rather than approach wounded people as the strong coming to rescue the weak. We come as human beings ourselves—aware of our vulnerability and willing to be present with another's.

And from a Nazi prison cell, Dietrich Bonhoeffer pushed this theology even further: “**only the suffering God can help.**” For Bonhoeffer, Christ helps not by remaining untouched by suffering, but by entering human weakness and suffering Himself.

Maybe that is what makes the ministry of presence so profoundly theological. The God we proclaim does not merely send help into suffering.

God comes into it.

- At Lazarus's tomb, God weeps.
- At Gethsemane, God agonizes.
- At Calvary, God suffers.

And perhaps chaplaincy, at its best, offers a small reflection of that kind of divine presence.

Sometimes we cannot change the diagnosis, undo the tragedy, resolve the grief, or answer the question. But we can get into the boat.

- We can listen.
- We can stay.

And sometimes, after we have stayed long enough, our ministry becomes the ability to say:

I was there.

I heard you.

I saw your suffering.

I can bear witness.



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