

143<sup>rd</sup> Session of the West Tennessee Annual Conference  
Annual Report  
Rev. Benita Livingston, Chaplain  
Memphis VA Medical Center

Bishop Jeffery N. Leath, Presiding Prelate of the 13<sup>th</sup> Episcopal District  
Bishop Frank Madison Reid, III, Ecumenical Officer & Endorsing Agent  
Presiding Elder Linda Thomas Martin, South Memphis District  
Rev. Byron Moore, Pastor of St. Andrew. A.M.E. Church

I consider it an honor to submit my annual report of my ministry for the conference year 2016-2017. I am supremely grateful for the opportunity to serve some of the finest men and women I know.

By the time this report is read at the Annual Conference I will have been a Chaplain to the Palliative Care Unit one year. Although I have worked in hospital ministry for 20 years; 5 at Regional One and 15 at the VA in various areas, none have been more challenging for me as Palliative Care. I wish I could say that it has been the best year in ministry of my life but I can't. It has been "different." It has challenged and stretched me. It has drained and revived me. It has made me cry and given me joy. It has made me angry and given me peace. I have watched patients and families wrestle with life and death in various degrees and as they wrestle so do I, in depth and intensity. Our patients come to our unit for palliative care but as time passes they can and usually do become hospice patients. My role on the Palliative Care Team is to address the spiritual issues in dying and bereavement, their theology of suffering, their struggles in dying, what brings them meaning and hope. We talk about forgiveness and acceptance, where God is in the midst and hopefully have enough time to possibly redefine death and dying.

I offer bereavement services to families and conduct bi-annual Memorial Services for families of patients who have died in the hospital.

Along with Palliative Care I serve in the Women's Clinic where I provide ministry and pastoral counseling to women veterans, I serve as a member of the inter-disciplinary team of the Women's Clinic, and as a consultant to other health care professionals within the medical center on women's issues. I also provide Healing Touch to the women veterans which helps reduce stress and anxiety especially those who have experienced trauma.

As a PAIRS Instructor I work with veteran couples on communication and listening skills to enhance their marriage.

Other responsibilities include preaching for worship services where this year 15 people rededicated their life to Christ, organizing the Blessing of the Hands for Nurses Week, serving as Chief in absence of my Supervisor and providing pastoral counseling for staff.

I serve on the West Tennessee Board of Examiners where I teach Pastoral Care & Counseling, I am the Secretary for the Henry McNeal Turner Chaplain's Association and one of the liaisons for the Connectional Women In Ministry.

I am currently serving in my local church as Co-Counselor with Rev. Dr. Sarita Wilson for the Center for the Soul where we provide individual and family counseling. This year we coordinated for Mental Health Month a Mental Health Forum with an emphasis on Children and Youth with mental health disorders.

Gratefully submitted,

Rev. Benita Livingston, Chaplain  
Memphis VA Medical Center  
St. Andrew A.M.E. Church

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