Gifts to Give, Gifts to Accept

This is the season of gifts. From Thanksgiving to the end of December, many different religious communities celebrate the blessings of their faith. At this time of year, those who are in need have a special place in our hearts. With unemployment so high and many people without even the basics, including health care, there is much need. Advocate Christ Medical Center continues to provide medical care for many who are uninsured. In 2010, the hospital will have provided nearly $30,000,000 in charity care for those unable to pay. This is a gift we lovingly offer our community.

The end of the year is a particularly busy and stressful time for many faith leaders. A couple of years ago, I picked up a wonderful little book which addresses the realities of leading a congregation. *Leadership Prayers* was written by Richard Kriegbaum and published by Tyndale House in 1998. Each prayer has a theme built around the challenges of leading a faith community, and Kriegbaum has the rare gift of being able to capture the struggles at the heart of such leadership.

Please stop by my office between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day for a copy of *Leadership Prayers*. The Office for Mission & Spiritual Care is 100 feet from the main entrance of the hospital, Fran or Karen will welcome you warmly, and this book is waiting for you. It is my gift to you – in appreciation of all you give and who you are.

May the God who blesses us all provide your every need now and in the year to come,

Rev. Wendell Oman, Vice President, Office for Mission & Spiritual Care

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Grace Notes

*Readings selected by Rev. Stacey Jutila*

Be prepared at all times for the gifts of God and be ready always for new ones.

For God is a thousand times more ready to give than we are to receive.

*Meister Eckhart*
Like a Ship at Sea: Grief and the Holidays

On the ocean, one might see old houses up along the waterfront that have a tiny window at the top peak of the house; it is called “the widow’s peak.” Folklore speaks of a woman who is ever watching the deep cold waters. She is hoping for the return of the sailor in her life. Perhaps he has been lost in the stormy depths of the sea. Perhaps he has somehow been saved from harm.

People who have lost a loved one often speak of the hope that their loved one is somehow still with them. They sense a presence in the room, a movement of the slippers under the bed, a scent of tobacco, a momentary feeling of renewed companionship.

The stained glass window featured in this issue of Connections depicts a storm at sea. The sailors are terrified and yet the Savior is rowing the boat, calm and in control. In the story in Scripture, they cry out to him. He speaks out to the wind and the waves, and calm comes over the seas. He asks them, “Where is your faith?” and they say to each other, “Who is this that commands the wind and the waves, and they obey him?”

Losing a loved one at the time of the holidays is much like that. The rituals of celebration seem unthinkable in the midst of a storm. How do we navigate through a season of family celebrations when one’s heart is breaking? It seems that everyone around you is preparing for a happy time, but you would rather be alone. You may even feel as if you have lost your faith.

It’s okay not to celebrate. Allow yourself to feel what you feel. It’s also okay to celebrate the holidays without feeling guilty. Often we think it is how much we grieve that signifies our love for the one who died. But the truth is that our love is not measured in such a way. The best gift we can give others and ourselves during the holidays and every day is to live our lives wholeheartedly.

Follow your heart. May you find strength and comfort, knowing you are not alone. May God be with you and calm the storms that rage. Even the winds and waves obey the one who created them.

Try these practical suggestions to deal with grief during the holidays:

✴ Keep a candle lit each day during the holidays. Use it as a daily reminder of your loved one.
✴ Do your shopping by mail or during the early hours of the day. You may find that grief takes all your energy this year.
✴ Enlist others to help wrap gifts.
✴ Consider giving gifts such as a picture of your loved one or a book he or she once loved.
✴ Make a contribution to your favorite charity in your loved one’s name.
✴ Pamper yourself.
✴ Plan on taking time to cry.

Hospice Corner

Coping with Grief for the Holidays
Fri., Nov. 19, 1 – 3 p.m
Trinity Lutheran Church
9701 Brandt, Oak Lawn, IL

During the holidays, many people are dealing with the grief and loss of a loved one. Learn how to best plan for these challenges and take care of yourself. This Advocate Hospice workshop offers survival tips, shows how to create new traditions and offers self-care suggestions. There will be time for discussion and sharing. To register, phone Joe Masbaum at 530-963-6800.

Special Memorial Service for Recently Bereaved
Sun., Nov. 14, 4 – 5 p.m.
Wm. Siemens Chapel, Advocate Christ Medical Center

A special memorial service will be held for those who have recently lost a loved one. Chaplains from Christ Medical Center and Advocate Hospice lead this service as a comfort for the families they serve. For more information, contact Penelope Gabriele at 630-829-1753 (penelope.gabriele@advocatehealth.com) or Fran Genender at 708-684-5175 (fran.genender@advocatehealth.com).
Chaplain’s Choice
Recommended Reading for the Faithful

Without hope our spirits die; with hope our spirits flourish. Yet few of us understand what we can do to keep hope alive. This book is a guide to rediscovering the power and the promise of this amazing gift that fuels our dreams, lightens our spirits and lifts our despair. All who want to explore the power of hope in the midst of an uncertain world will find this an excellent resource and guide.

By Lewis Smedes
Keeping Hope Alive

Cannato’s book brings us face to face with the challenges the new universe story presents: to be attentive to a new vision, to stretch our imaginations in a way that allows us to see our connection to a larger family than we ever thought possible. For those open to expanding their prayer experience.

By Judy Cannato
Radical Amazement: Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas, and Other Wonders of the Universe

Today death is increasingly more likely to result from trauma which complicates the normal processes of grief and mourning. Families and caregivers must be prepared to address the post-traumatic elements of bereavement, as well as its loss-related elements. A good read for grieving families and caregivers.

By John A. Rich
Wrong Time, Wrong Place: Trauma and Violence in the Lives of Young Black Men

Through his professional encounters with gun violence survivors, Rich profiles their humanity, illuminating the delicate balance between their personal responsibility and our collective responsibility.

For those who feel called to help the least of these.

By Lewis Smedes
Keeping Hope Alive

Cardinal Bernardin’s autobiographical letter details the last few years of his life. It’s a very emotional journey that he shares.

I gave copies of this book to my siblings last Christmas. It is a very easy read for those who practice any faith tradition and is appropriate for both men and women from high school age to senior citizens.

By Joseph Cardinal Bernardin
The Gift of Peace

This book contains some amazingly relevant poems by a 12th century Persian poet and philosopher. The poems explore how we can live life more fully and passionately through the love of and trust in God. I recommend it for those who like poetry and are interested in other spiritual points of view.

By Coleman Barks
The Essential Rumi

Dr. Remen is a physician who eloquently writes about the sacredness and wonder of life. She writes brief essays about her faith, her work as a physician and living life in the face of illness. Anyone working in health care or facing the reality of illness or the loss of a loved one would appreciate these profound essays. Most are 2-3 pages long and can be read as a daily devotion.

By Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen
Kitchen Table Wisdom & My Grandfather’s Blessings

Mary Anne Cannon

Casimir Eke

Christy Howard-Steele

David Safeblade

Stacey Jutila

Peggy Nau

Corky DeBoer
A Special Gift for Those You Love:

**Advance Care Directives**

Families face difficult decisions when ill loved ones become unable to communicate their preferences regarding medical procedures. Dedicated children and siblings often become distraught trying to guess their loved one’s wishes, and well-meaning relatives seeking to do what’s right may disagree because of lack of concrete direction from their loved one.

This holiday season is a wonderful time to show a true kindness to your family by completing your Advance Care Directives now – while you are in good health. It is a truly thoughtful and kind gift to give them.

Completing your Advance Care Directives gives you the opportunity to state your preferences – about some of life’s most difficult situations. There are two types of directives:

1. The *durable power of attorney* for health care enables you to appoint a particular person to act on your behalf if you become unable to make health decisions on your own.

2. The *living will* enables you to inform your physicians of your desire for comfort care in situations of an irreversible terminal condition when death is imminent.

Upon entering any of the Advocate hospitals, each patient is asked to complete Advance Care Directives. Chaplains at Advocate Christ Medical Center are trained to discuss these decisions compassionately with a patient, explaining that these directives go into effect ONLY if the patient becomes unable to communicate his or her wishes. Completing the directives gives the chaplain the chance to have a spiritual conversation with the patient. It’s a wonderful service for which there is no fee and is a true help to patients and their families.

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**In Upcoming Issues**

- **Kidney Transplants**
- **Prolonging Life vs Prolonging Death**
- **Palliative Care**
- **CPE Training**

To continue receiving *Connections*, your email address must be current. Please inform us of any changes of email address or other contact information. Email Christ-Mission-SpiritualCare@advocatehealth.com or call 708-684-5175.

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**Advocate Christ Medical Center**

**Advocate Hope Children’s Hospital**

**Staff Chaplains:**
- Refat Abukhdeir, Moslem Ministries
- Cathy Arsenaught, Mennonite
- Fr. Bill Browne, Roman Catholic
- Mary Anne Cannon, Roman Catholic
- P.V. Chandy, Quaker
- Fr. Casimir Eke, Roman Catholic
- Christy Howard-Steele, Christian
- Richard James, Southern Baptist
- Stacey Jutila, Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Marjorie Kooy, Christian Reformed
- Sr. Peggy Nau, Roman Catholic
- David Safeblade, United Church of Christ
- McKinney Sawyer, National Baptist

**Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisors**
- Angie Keith, Pentecostal
- ACPE Supervisory Candidate/Chaplain
- Janet MacLean, United Church of Christ
- ACPE Supervisory Candidate/Chaplain
- Phyllis Toback, Jewish
- ACPE Supervisor/Chaplain

**Clinical Pastoral Education Chaplain Residents**
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- Denise Duncan, United Church of Christ
- Mary Johnston, Roman Catholic
- Eliza Leatherberry, United Church of Christ

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- CPE, Ethics Committee, Office of Vice President
- Fran Genender, 708-684-5175
- Eucharistic Ministers, the Department, Office of Manager of Spiritual Services

**Administrative Staff**
- Corky DeBoer, Christian Reformed
- Manager of Spiritual Services, ACPE Supervisor
- Wendell Oman, Evangelical Free Church of America
- Vice-President, Mission & Spiritual Care

**Advocate Christ Medical Center**

**Advocate Hope Children’s Hospital**

4440 West 95th Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453
708-684-8000

**Other Advocate Health Care Facilities:**
- Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, Normal
- Advocate Condell Medical Center, Libertyville
- Advocate Eureka Hospital, Eureka
- Advocate Good Samaritan, Downers Grove
- Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital, Barrington
- Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Chicago
- Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, Park Ridge
- Advocate Lutheran General Children’s Hospital, Pk. Ridge
- Advocate South Suburban Hospital, Hazel Crest
- Advocate Trinity Hospital, Chicago

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Juvenile Diabetes: How to Identify It

In the United States, 17 million people have been diagnosed with diabetes. Of those, 1.4 million have type 1, often called juvenile diabetes, and each day 35 American children are newly diagnosed.

Usually the symptoms of type 1 diabetes develop very quickly in children, sometimes over just a few weeks. Often the very first sign is unexplained weight loss (despite eating more perhaps) and/or a yeast infection. Such an infection may cause a very severe diaper rash in young children or a genital yeast infection in a girl.

Other signs are increased thirst and more frequent urination, extreme hunger, fatigue, irritability and blurred vision. Talk to your doctor if you see any of these signs in your child.

If your child does have diabetes, your encouragement and guidance are critically important. This requires a 24/7 commitment on your part and may involve some significant lifestyle changes for your family. Here are some of the ways you can help your child:

✦ Encourage him to be active.
✦ Teach him how to make the right food choices.
✦ Make sure she wears a medical ID tag.
✦ Bring her into the process of diabetes management.

Staying positive is one of the best ways to help your child, but there may be days when you need help with that. Your faith community and your faith leader may offer just the support you need – especially as you begin this journey.

November Is American Diabetes Month

Prayer: Dear God, some days I am so anxious and fearful. Forgive me my uncertain steps. Guide me on my journey and fill me with hope. Amen.

Your Advocate

Dr. Farah Hasan

Dr. Hasan is an endocrinologist at Advocate Christ Medical Center.

“My first year of med school, I was fascinated by nutrition and metabolism, how biochemistry plays out in people’s lives, by the physiology of it all,” says Dr. Farah Hasan when asked how endocrinology became her specialty.

She is keenly aware that the rise of type 2 diabetes (also known as adult onset diabetes) parallels the rise of obesity. “Fortunately, research for diabetes is growing, too.” During her eight years of practice, Dr. Hasan has seen the technology of diabetes change dramatically. “Today a lot of help is available to manage diabetes. Many people now use the pump which allows continuous glucose monitoring.”

Dr. Hasan’s advice to her patients is to live in a healthy way. “Control weight. Control portion size. The key is managing diabetes. Every person – not just those with diabetes – should take responsibility for his or her health.” She warns patients to stay away from sugary foods and high fructose corn syrup in particular. “I ask them, ‘Why are you drinking pop? It’s not nourishing you at all!’”

Diabetes usually requires lifestyle changes, but there is no way to know who is ready to make the necessary changes and who is not, so Dr. Hasan gives each patient the benefit of the doubt. “You can’t have a preconceived notion of who will listen. Sometimes the ones I think won’t do it make all the needed changes! People constantly surprise me, so I always take the time and make the effort for each patient.”

- www.advocatehealth.com – Advocate hospitals have many classes and groups built around living with diabetes, including diabetes boot camp, holiday cooking with diabetes, support groups, self-management, and more. To learn more phone 1-800-323-8622.
- childrenwithdiabetes.com – Children write of their experiences with diabetes.
- jdrf.org – Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation
- diabetes.org – American Diabetes Association

Related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ
(www.advocatehealth.com)
Volunteer . . . and Thrive!

Yes, society benefits greatly from the activities of volunteers. Hospitals, service groups, congregations of all faiths, and non-profit organizations help others because of the work and dedication of volunteers.

But volunteers themselves also benefit by their volunteering:

✦ 79 percent believe their interpersonal skills (understanding people better, motivating others, dealing with difficult situations) improved due to their volunteer work.

✦ 68 percent say they developed better communication skills.

✦ 23 percent see volunteering as an opportunity to acquire job-related skills and improve job opportunities. In fact, 28 percent of unemployed volunteers say that volunteering had helped them obtain a job in the past, and 62 percent believe volunteering will help them find a job in the future!

Recent research indicates that helping others is a true win-win situation. It may even slow the aging process in ways that lead to a higher quality of life for older adults.

In one study, women ages 60 to 86 volunteered to help children in Baltimore public schools with their reading. Most signed on for this work because they loved children and wanted to help. After two years, 44 percent felt stronger, cane use decreased in 50 percent of the users, and TV viewing dropped 18 percent – all indicators of a better quality of life.

With the new year right around the corner, resolve to do yourself and your community a favor by becoming a volunteer. A phone call will get you started, and the rewards for those you serve and for yourself could be life-long.

December 5 Is International Volunteer Day

Prayer: Gracious God, you have showered me with blessings. Is it now my turn to reach out to help someone else? Show me, Lord, how this is a possibility. Amen.

How to Become a Volunteer

There are wonderful volunteer opportunities for teens, college students, business executives, homemakers, and retirees. If you have never before volunteered but are thinking of becoming a volunteer at a place of worship, a hospital or other organization, these steps should make the process more comfortable for you:

1. Decide where you’d like to volunteer. List two or three places that align with your interests and are easy to reach. Check them on the Internet, and find their phone numbers.

2. With paper and pencil handy, phone your preferences and ask for volunteer services. (Phoning usually gets better results than emailing.) Try to call between 9 - 11 a.m. when it’s more likely that someone will be able to help you. Indicate your interests and your reason for volunteering. Be ready to answer specific questions.

3. Note what you’ll need to complete to become a volunteer – paperwork, orientations, screenings, training. Write down times, places, and phone numbers you might need.

4. Begin completing what’s needed.

There are many different ways to help. At Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, for example, volunteers are needed to help with recreation crafts (sewing), in the office as clerks, by delivering patient flowers and mail, at the Health & Wellness Center, at the information desk – and in so many ways!

Most places that need volunteers offer a wide variety of ways to help. It’s likely that with just a little research and one or two phone calls, you’ll find something you will enjoy and which you will find deeply rewarding.

- advocatehealth.com
- chicagohopes.org
- chicagosfoodbank.org
- volunteermatch.org
- 4homeless.hypermart.net/soup_kitchens.html
- lvillinois.org (literary volunteers of Illinois)
- scouting.org/FILESTORE/marketing/pdf/02-658.pdf

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