



## Be Prepared for the Coming Dawn

Van Wai-Chuen Lo

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” ~ 1 Peter 5:6-7 NIV~*

In the first quarter of 2022, the outbreak of the fifth wave of Omicron pandemic together with the Winter surge in Hong Kong almost caused our healthcare system to be collapsed. It was such a hard time we ever had experienced before. Public and chaplaincy visitations were almost completely suspended again. The whole society was filled with fear, anxiety, anger and grievance. Chaplaincy teams tried every effort to make use of all possible electronic and audio-visual media productions to deliver messages of care and love to patients, families and medical staff. As Leo Tolstoy says, “Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them.”

### To Learn to Lift Up to God and to Comply to the Policies

As a faith community, we trusted that God is still in control. There is a time for everything. We learnt to wait patiently. We initiated prayer chains through local churches and prayed unceasingly for the distressed souls in the whole community. As non-government service partners, chaplaincy teams understood that to comply with the policies was an important endeavor for a sustainable and reliable partnership. The suspension and high restriction of visitation, however, as a result that highlighted the indispensable and irreplaceable needs of healing care and love inside healthcare facilities.

The Association continued to communicate timely with the representatives of the Hospital Authority to reach out a balance between providing essential spiritual care service and following precautionary measures. In the fourth quarter of the year, the Hospital Authority approved regular spiritual care services in hospitals could be gradually resumed provided that a set of reasonable precautionary measures were observed by chaplaincy teams. We were thankful and grateful.

### To Embrace Virtually and to Connect Caringly

Although social distancing prohibited us from embracing each other in persons, technology helped the chaplain community stay connected for mutual support. Chaplain Continuing Education programs, included seminars and CPE run in hybrid moods. Chaplain-in-charge meetings provided precious moments for sharing hospitals updates, frontline experience, wisdoms and peer support.







Chaplain Seminars

Month	CCE Programs / Seminars	Counts
Jan-Apr	Spring CPE for Staff Chaplains	6
March	How to Write Funeral Sermons for Unusual Deaths	104
May	Understanding Spiritual Needs from the Perspective of Motivation	104
June	The 18th Chaplains' Day: Walking in Pandemic – looking at the Light through the narrow gap	100
July	Chaplains In-charge Day: COVID Is In THY Control	23
August	Reflection on Using Personality Tools and Spiritual Care	103
Sept	Understanding the Practical and Pastoral Care Needs of Financially Restricted Family in Managing Funeral Service	18
Sept-Nov	Fall CPE for staff chaplains	5
Oct	Orientation for Novice Chaplains	23
Nov	The Interaction of Personal Story, Theological Reflection and the Practice of Pastoral Care	48

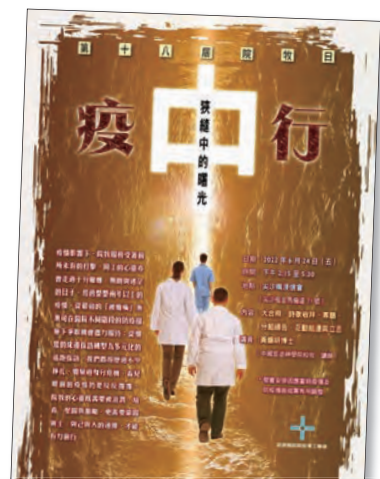


Spring CPE for Staff Chaplains



Fall CPE for Staff Chaplains

The 18th Chaplains' Day



Orientation for Novice Chaplains



Chaplains-in-charge Day

## To Prepare Ourselves for the Days Ahead

Learning from the statistics, about 25% of the staff chaplains left the positions because of retirement, migration and other various reasons in the last few years. This population gap was partially filled up by a group of novice chaplains who were employed by different chaplaincy teams within the last three years. Uniquely, their beginning frontline clinical experience was in the context of tele-chaplaincy during pandemic.

Like in other professional groups, the succession gap of chaplains and chaplain-in-charges are becoming more challenging in the field. Due to the status of “emergent contingency”, all public hospitals suspended clinical placements for chaplain interns. Almost in three years, congregational pastors and seminarians could not enroll in any CPE programs that required supervised hospital visitation. We are looking forward to seeing the door will be reopened in the next year.

As Chinese says, “Crisis can be an opportunity in the midst of danger.” This unprecedented experience in chaplaincy ministry has challenged our sense of identity, ministry mode, and operational flexibility. The extended ambiguity of chaplaincy services forced ourselves to reflect on as well as to practice what is meant by “professional”.

Although there was no candidate sought for certification in the last year, gratefully the Christian chaplain community continues to hold each together through registration and continuing education activities. By the end of 2022, there were 84 staff chaplains have registered with the Association, included 29 Certified Chaplains, 32 Registered Chaplain I, 21 Registered Chaplain II, and 2 Auxiliary Chaplains.



Spring CPE for Congregational Pastors



Summer CPE for Seminarians



## Being Loss Teaches Us to Cherish

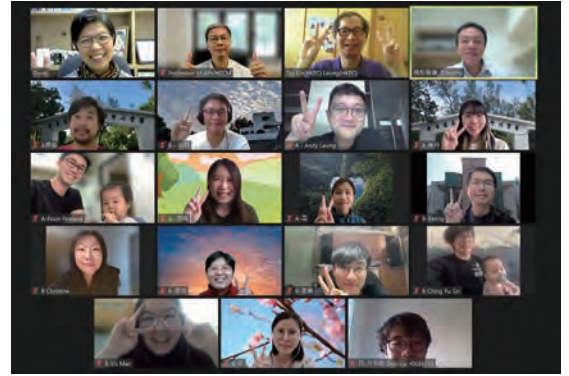
With experiences of isolated, unavoidable, unpredictable and irreversible death and dying, people both in churches and public sectors are more realized the important lesson of loss and grief in our lives. Most of the congregational and public pastoral education programs were resumed in second half of the year after the social distancing policies were relieved.

Month	Events / Programs	Counts
Jan-Apr	Spring CPE for Congregational Pastors	4
Jan-May	Pastoral Education Program for ABS Chaplaincy Team (4 lessons)	80
Jun-Aug	Summer CPE for Seminarians (in Hong Kong Baptist Hospital)	5
July	Seminary Workshop, “Understanding Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy Ministry.”	30
July	Public Health Workshop, “Self-Care and Needs of Caregivers.”	20
July	Seminar for Volunteers, “Sustaining Your Passion of Co-Walking and Personal Well Being.”	20
Aug	Congregational Seminar, Open to Talk about Life and Death Across Generations	90
Sept	Health Talk, “Celebration of Life: Life & Death Education”	60
Oct	Pastoral Education Program for ABS Chaplaincy Team (2 lessons)	30
Nov	Seminar for Pastors and Lay Leaders, “A Matter of Life and Death”	25
Dec	Congregational Seminar, “Facing the Death, Mattering the Life”	100





Pastoral Education Program for ABT Chaplaincy Team



Seminary Workshop

## Conclusion

Percy Bysshe Shelley writes, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" Like Psalmist David proclaimed, "Even though I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." (Psalm 23: 4) Chaplaincy teams surely had gone through different forms of hardship in 2022. With the call and divine presence of the Holy Spirit, we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. We, therefore, always remind ourselves to be prepared for the coming dawn.

*"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldiers of Christ Jesus." ~ 2 Timothy 2:1-3 NIV ~*

February 28, 2023

### Corporate Honorary Overseas Consultants:

Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE)

Association of Professional Chaplains, Inc. (APC) & its subsidiary Board of Chaplaincy Certification, Inc. (BCCI)

**Individual Honorary Overseas Consultants:** The Rev. James T. Pollard, The Rev. Dr. Theodore E. Hodge, The Rev. Kjell Aas, The Rev. Dr. Mark E. Jensen, The Rev. Dr. John H. Moody, The Rev. Kathy A. Turner, The Rev. Dr. Dennis E. Kenny, The Rev. Dr. Hendrik Adriaan van Sluijs, Chaplain Robert Kidd, Chaplain John K. Swift, The Rev. Sandra Yarlott, and The Rev. Rodney W. Seeger.

**Individual Local Consultants:** Professor Simon Kwan, Professor Jason Yam, Dr. Raymond Chen, Dr. Beatrice Cheng, Dr. Cheung Tak Hong, Dr. Susie Lum, and Mr. Ng Kin Yuen.

Rev. Lo is Board Certified Chaplain of APC and Certified Educator of ACPE. He currently serves as General Secretary of the AHKHCCM. He can be reached via [vanwclco@hospitalchap.org.hk](mailto:vanwclco@hospitalchap.org.hk).

Address : G/F., 4-6 Heng Lam Street, Lok Fu, Kowloon, Hong Kong Tel : (852)2339 0660 Fax : (852)2339 0966

Email: [profession@hospitalchap.org.hk](mailto:profession@hospitalchap.org.hk) Web: [www.hospitalchap.org.hk](http://www.hospitalchap.org.hk)