2020-2021 Annual Report

CHAPLAINCY Innovation Lab
INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues,

We didn't know what this year would bring and - like the first year of COVID - it surprised, challenged and exhausted many of us. I remain in awe of the commitment and creativity you bring to the work of chaplaincy and spiritual care. I am deeply grateful for where and how you stood with others across the country this year in mourning, shock, loss and joy.

I spent some early mornings trying to finish my book about chaplains in Boston and reflecting on the in-between spaces you see, name, and hold with others. I watched many of you work around the presidential election and its aftermath, the early weeks of vaccines, and the continued pandemic among those not vaccinated and abroad.

In the conversation circles the Lab hosted for chaplains of color and in interviews with African-American chaplains, I heard the pain of isolation and institutional discrimination and the life-giving possibilities of connection. In interviews with Jewish chaplains, I was reminded, again, of the Christian history of this work and the legacies of those who pushed for more inclusive approaches in decades before our own.

As we embark on our second strategic plan, we will continue to support chaplains as our core constituency by striving to offer the services you most value. We will work to build a more diverse pipeline of chaplains by extending our educational and support offerings. We will conduct targeted research initiatives with practical applications. And we will strengthen our fundraising and infrastructure. We are thrilled to be in the early-stages of mapping demand for chaplaincy and spiritual care, and are excited to field a national survey about these questions with Gallup and the support of the Templeton Religion Trust in early 2022.

The spark for the Lab’s practical innovation is love and the not-so secret ingredient is collaboration. We were thrilled to see Lab collaborators in all fifty states in our community survey, and continue to care for you as you support others every day. Thank you to the Lab’s staff, advisors, and advisory committees, to our individual and foundation partners and - especially - to all of you for trusting us with your time, your connections, and your talents.

In awe and with continued gratitude,

Wendy
MISSION

The Chaplaincy Innovation Lab (CIL) launched in October 2018 to bring chaplains, theological educators, clinical educators and social scientists into conversation about the work of chaplaincy and spiritual care.

As religious and spiritual life continues to change, the CIL sparks practical innovations that enable chaplains to nurture the spirits of those they serve and reduce human suffering. Our work is shaped by four central commitments maintained by all who are connected to CIL:

PRINCIPLES

All are welcome. We foster care that is responsive to all individuals, regardless of present or past spiritual or religious affiliation (including none), race, nationality, sexual orientation, ability, and gender identity. We convene organizations, institutions, individuals and stakeholders interested in any facet of chaplaincy.

We respect differences. We do not seek to proselytize, convert, or otherwise convince others of a particular religious or spiritual conviction. We support a professional field cognizant of and responsive to cultural and individual differences in all forms.

We value learning together. We believe collaboration leverages our strengths and expands community benefits. People doing the work of spiritual care can learn much from (and with) one another beyond their specific setting.

Engaging those who become, train or work with chaplains fortifies the foundation for our field. Similarly, we nurture connections with social scientists, religious leaders, and civic leaders. We believe that spiritual care is best provided through collaboration across disciplines and communities.

We are research-driven. We gather, foster, and share rigorous academic research about the provision of spiritual care across a range of settings to enhance best practices and improve delivery of care.

We privilege applied, praxis-oriented research and feedback loops that include clients, practitioners, educators and researchers in a way that strengthens the work of spiritual care.
YEAR IN REVIEW - HIGHLIGHTS

Covenantal Pluralism
In March 2021, the Lab officially launched a project on covenantal pluralism with support from the Templeton Religion Trust. A key partner in the project is Gallup, Inc., which will assist the Lab in executing a national survey on interaction with chaplains.

COVID Support and Regranting
With support from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Lab re-granted nearly $380,000 to 16 teams around the United States, all working to build and support resilience in their institutions. Several grantees have presented their work in Lab webinars, and the project will also result in an eBook published by the Lab.

Additionally, and in partnership with the Albert and Jessie Danielsen Institute at Boston University, the Lab has hosted free, online support groups for over 150 chaplains. The Danielsen team presented their work on a webinar in July 2021 to foster awareness of the utility of the support group model. These groups will run through the end of 2021.

Finally, we published a series of five “Reflections from the Frontlines of COVID-19” by Chaplains Kaytlin Butler, Rabbi Jo Hirschmann, Esther Maria Roman, Rabbi Rachel Van Thyn, and Rachelle Zazzu.

Student Mental Health
We completed the project “Back to School: A Pilot Approach to Supporting the Mental Health Needs of College Students,” with the support of the Ruderman Family Foundation. This pilot project tested whether mental health professionals and spiritual care professionals could offer students more as partners than either group alone. This approach was based on research the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab has conducted in recent years as well as an awareness that the one-on-one support offered both by therapists and chaplains on university campuses cannot be scaled to meet current demand.

Enhanced Educational Offerings
Under the leadership of Professor Shelly Rambo (Boston University School of Theology) and Trace Haythorn (ACPE), the Lab hosted the project Innovating Chaplaincy Education, funded by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning.
Eight chaplaincy educators collaborated to build syllabi responsive to the needs of chaplains-in-training today. The syllabi are available for all at ChaplaincyInnovation.org, and a webinar on the project is also available.

As part of the project Educating Effective Chaplains, we launched a series of case studies available now and which will accompany a forthcoming textbook. These four case studies were developed by a team of chaplains and theological educators for use in the classroom or for chaplains anywhere to explore on their own. Each case study focuses on a different set of skills critical for chaplains in all settings. These case studies include:

- Healing or Hallucination?
- Transforming Chaplaincy at Vassar College
- Affirming the Sacredness of a Life
- Navigating Policy, Faith, and Identity

Boston University School of Theology Library now hosts a LibGuide with spiritual care resources across sectors in which chaplains work. This guide is designed for people considering work as spiritual care providers, educators of chaplains, and those conducting research about chaplaincy and spiritual care. It is intended to suggest places to start and to guide users through questions to ask and places to engage as they consider the field. This LibGuide was created by Chaplaincy Innovation Lab alum Markia Neufville and BUSTH librarian Stacey Duran, who also maintains the resource. This project is funded by the Henry Luce Foundation as part of the Educating Effective Chaplains grant.

Support, Networking and Outreach
Our private Facebook group now includes over 3,100 chaplains, who use the space to network, ask questions, seek resources, and generally support one another.

Over 800 students, second-career chaplains, educators, and more registered for our Field Guide for Aspiring Chaplains series in Fall 2021 and Spring 2021. The series helps those in degree programs leading to careers in spiritual care better understand the field in a space safe for basic questions and conversation. Topics covered have included introductions to endorsement, how to pursue chaplaincy if a tradition does not ordain, and more.
The Lab partnered with the Fetzer Institute to create spiritual care provider networks. Between January and June 2021, the Lab organized conversation circles for chaplains of color, facilitated by experienced chaplains of color. Eventually the program broadened to include other affinity groups, including conversation circles for Asian-American / Pacific Islander chaplains and LGBTQ+ chaplains. These conversation circles welcomed over 130 chaplains. In the fall of 2021, the project will kick off a three-part lecture series on the history and development of the intersection between race and spiritual care in the United States.

We launched a project called THIS is What a Chaplain Looks Like, where we feature images and stories of today’s chaplains. This included a series of Featured Chaplain profiles, as well as community-driven profiles of chaplains working all around North America in a wide variety of institutions and sectors. We look forward to readers finding both chaplains who may be well known, as well as the “proverbial” chaplain they know from down the hall.

In response to “Zoom fatigue” brought on by the many training and educational offerings from the 2020 pandemic, the Lab launched the webinar series “Music for the Soul.” The series welcomes musicians to perform and discuss how music relates to their own spirituality and contributes to healing. To date the series has included solo artists, a jazz trio, folk singers, musicians who perform for patients and family at end-of-life, and more. These events are held in the evening and offer a more relaxed space with no agenda for attendees or educational goals.

We expanded our resources section on our website to be sorted by faith tradition, adding Buddhist, Hindu, and Humanist approaches to chaplaincy.

We completed our first community listening survey in April 2021. We distributed surveys by email, newsletter and social media and had just over 1,700 people respond. We learned how helpful current Lab resources are, which additional resources would be helpful, and how people would place a monetary value on what they learn from the Lab. We considered these findings in writing our strategic plan and in thinking about who is currently in the
Lab’s community and how we might expand our reach. In addition to a wealth of demographic information, we learned that our community would like to see more webinars, more educational materials, and more networking opportunities.

**Ongoing Projects**

**Chaplain Demand: Chaplains as Facilitators of Covenantal Pluralism**
*Funded by the Templeton Religion Trust*

With the idea of covenantal pluralism, this project emphasizes that chaplaincy work is not just rooted in a single religious tradition but operates across a wide range of religious traditions and differences. We are shifting the conversation to better understand those who work with chaplains in various contexts, as well as those chaplains serve and how they experience chaplain care.

We are convinced that educators cannot train chaplains well without information about where and how the work of chaplains is in demand, how they are enacting covenantal pluralism in those settings, and what training best facilitates their key roles.

This project analyzes the present state of chaplaincy “supply” in the United States (i.e., educational institutions and training organizations) as well as “demand” for spiritual care services (i.e., who hires chaplains? What skills and competencies do they look for?). A key product will be a first-of-its-kind gap analysis to aid the field in connecting chaplains with those in need of spiritual care.

**Chaplain Resilience: Building and Supporting Resilience among Frontline Spiritual Care Providers**
*Funded by the Henry Luce Foundation*

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab has heard from chaplains in town halls, in our Facebook group, and in direct contact with us about their experiences on the frontlines of spiritual care.

As a result, we are happy to partner with the Henry Luce Foundation to support and enhance the work chaplains are doing and build resilience in places it is needed most, funding multiple projects through the end of 2021. During this project, the Lab re-granted nearly $380,000 over 16 teams across the country to foster resilience in frontline workers.
**Chaplaincy Disparities: Spiritual Care Disparities in the Culture of Health in Massachusetts Community Clinics**
*Funded by Blue Cross - Blue Shield of Massachusetts*

This project trains Massachusetts federally qualified health center clinicians and others in facilities that serve low-income residents to be spiritual care generalists that promote spiritual wellness in their patients and staff.

We are assessing and will develop a curriculum for Massachusetts CHCs that includes modules about spiritual screening, spiritual distress, and spiritual care for patients, family members and staff.

**Chaplaincy Education: Educating Effective Chaplains**
*Funded by the Henry Luce Foundation*

This partnership between the Henry Luce Foundation, Brandeis University, and Boston University School of Theology focuses on three tasks critical for preparing professional chaplains for effective ministry:

1. Synthesizing current scholarship and practitioner expertise about the nature of effective chaplaincy and evaluating the extent to which theological schools can and should support the development of effective chaplains.
2. Identifying specific skills and competences required for chaplaincy, both universally and in specific sectors (i.e. the military, healthcare, prisons, etc.), and analyzing how theological education currently supports the development of those skills and competencies.
3. Supporting theological educators in strengthening their scholarship, their curricula, and their partnerships with clinical educators to better train future generations of chaplains in light of broader changes in American religious demographics.

By the end of the project, the team will have produced:

- Four interactive, publicly available case studies on key themes in spiritual care (e.g., meaning-making, navigating institutions, and more).
- Online profiles of innovative chaplaincy educators
Conversation Circles by Chaplains of Color

*Funded by the Fetzer Institute*

With support from the Fetzer Institute to create spiritual care provider networks, the Lab partnered with experienced group facilitators who are chaplains of color to offer free conversation circles for chaplains of color. Significant demand for this resource resulted in adding multiple additional conversation circles over the course of the project. The project also includes a significant research component under the title “Race, Ethnicity and the Work of Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care.” This work is led by Barbara Savage, historian and Geraldine R. Segal Professor of American Social Thought in the Department of Africana Studies of the University of Pennsylvania. The Lab will host a lecture series on this theme in the fall of 2021.

Mapping Jewish Care: Leading Where Life Happens - Mapping and Building the Field of Jewish Chaplaincy

*Funded by the Charles H. Revson Foundation*

This project builds and strengthens Jewish chaplaincy as a field by supporting the strategic vision and practical innovation that will enable Jewish chaplains to do their work most effectively into the future. To date, we have interviewed 31 leaders in Jewish chaplaincy, gathered a Strategic Planning Group, and begun work on background materials to inform a strategic planning process over the next year.

Resilience Support: Caring for Interfaith Caregivers - Resilience and Support for Spiritual Care Providers in New Jersey

*Funded by the Russell Berrie Foundation*

This project supports recovery and resilience among chaplains across faith traditions in New Jersey as we begin to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. The centerpiece of this project is a series of online, professionally facilitated support / conversation groups for New Jersey chaplains to learn from one another and mutually support each other in their work. We are building a database of all organizations in New Jersey where chaplains work and all of the individuals doing that work. This fundamental task will initiate a state-based model of spiritual care information organization.
Looking Forward

In the next two years, we will focus on the following five goals, as outlined in our strategic plan:

We will continue supporting chaplains as our core constituency by striving to offer the services they most value. Based on the community survey, this includes continuing to offer free webinars, eBooks, sector-specific educational materials, case studies for learning, our newsletter and private Facebook group for chaplains, and resources for career and professional development. It also includes continuing the Field Guide series aimed at people in training to be chaplains and expanding the beginner's guide eBook into a series to cover more topics. We heard in the survey requests for more resources about social justice and antiracism, multi-faith topics, mental health, long-term care, and self-care.

We will expand our public voice about the current religious and spiritual landscape, the need for innovative spiritual care leadership, and the value proposition on which the work of chaplaincy and spiritual care is based. We will focus equally on the demand side and supply side in ways that will ensure chaplains are educated and trained to best meet current demands.

To expand our voice, we will organize a national survey with the Gallup organization to determine what proportion of people in the United States have engaged with a chaplain in recent years along with why and to what ends; conduct in-depth interviews with a subset of people who have engaged with chaplains across settings; and we will more consciously engage in related national conversations, such as placing op-eds with major national media outlets in addition to the more traditional publications currently utilized.

We will also work to pilot at least one demand-side intervention or demonstration project in nontraditional settings with an increased demand for chaplains to assess effectiveness and how it may be enhanced. These efforts will have a secondary benefit on the supply side by advancing our work for better educational and partnership collaborations with institutions (like theological schools and clinical training programs) in developing the “supply” of new chaplains. We will also begin to engage international partners substantively to enlarge the scope and impact of CIL outside of the United States.
We will work to build a more diverse pipeline of chaplains by extending our educational and support offerings. As we continue to support chaplains in traditional and newer settings on the supply side through support groups, conversation circles, and a mentoring program, we will do so with the focused intent to build a pipeline of chaplains more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and religion than at present.

This includes beginning to partner with more historically black seminaries, consulting with theological schools with diverse constituents looking to build educational programs for chaplains, and offering more substantive, semester-long modules or courses for those exploring chaplaincy as a profession. Aware of intersectionality, we will prioritize chaplains of color and non-Christian chaplains in developing new materials as we continue to bridge people and silos across the sectors within which chaplains are currently trained and work.

We will conduct targeted research initiatives with practical applications. We will engage in three to four high-profile, targeted research initiatives that will strengthen the evidence base for chaplains’ work, pilot new models of spiritual care that can be integrated successfully in organizations, and creatively address the spiritual needs of a changing demographic.

This includes continuing to map and tell the stories of groups of chaplains (Jewish chaplains, chaplains of color, etc.) that have not been integrated into traditional narratives. Some of these initiatives will be issue-specific, based on problems like social isolation, preventative mental health, resilience, staff care, individual-community connections, and so on. Others will be population-specific, focusing on two or three high profile populations and demands (such as spirituality in residential elder care services, or in colleges and universities) where we might be able to measurably reduce suffering.

We will strengthen our fundraising and infrastructure. As we transition from a start-up to growth mode, we will work to strengthen our fundraising and operational infrastructure to build stability beyond “the next grant.” This includes maintaining a full-time director of programs and financial administrator who can project revenue and expenses six to twelve months forward and cultivating financial partners.

We will work aggressively to expand our mailing list, conduct bi-annual fundraising efforts, and identify others engaged in this work capable of making larger contributions, financially as well as in other ways that provide sustaining value.
Supporters

All of this work is made possible with the support of many dedicated individuals, organizations, and foundations. We are deeply grateful to:

**The Chaplaincy Innovation Lab Advisory Group**

**Tahara Akmal** – Manager of Clinical Pastoral Education and Chaplain, MedStar Washington Hospital Center, Washington, D.C.

**Tracy A. Balboni** – Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School; Associate Physician, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; Clinical Director, Supportive and Palliative Radiation Oncology Service, Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women’s Cancer Center

**Claire Chuck Bohman** – Director, Sojourn Chaplaincy at San Francisco General Hospital

**Kevin Ellers, DMin** – Territorial Disaster Services Coordinator, The Salvation Army

**Koshin Paley Ellison** – Co-Founder, New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care

**John H. Evans** – Tata Chancellor’s Chair in Social Sciences, Associate Dean of Social Sciences, Co-director of Institute for Practical Ethics, UC San Diego

**Betty Ferrell** – Director and Professor, Division of Nursing Research and Education, Department of Population Sciences, City of Hope National Medical Center

**George Fitchett, DMin, PhD** – Director of Research, Rush University Religion, Health and Human Values

**Nancy Fuchs Kreimer** – Director, Department of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

**Rev. Dr. Janet Fuller** – Chaplain, Elon University

**Phil Gallagher** – Director, Human Resources, Morgan Stanley

**Kathy Gallivan, SNDdeN** – Director, Spiritual Care Services Department, Brigham & Women’s Hospital

**Linda Golding** – Chaplain, New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center; Coordinator of Pastoral Services, Milstein Hospital

**Ken Hawkins** – Executive Director, Seattle Seafarers’ Center
Sarah Jobe – Chaplain, Interfaith Prison Ministry for Women

Dan Judson – Dean of Graduate Leadership Programs, Hebrew College

Larry Kanarek – Private consultant; Director, McKinsey & Company

Rear Adm. Margaret Kibben (Ret.) – 26th Chief of Chaplains, United States Navy; Chaplain, United States House of Representatives

Sarah Knoll Sweeney – Director of Spiritual Care Education, St. Benedict’s Workshop / Iona Collaborative

Heidi Kugler – Chaplaincy Administrator, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Rabbi Irwin Kula – President, CLAL

Duleesha Kulasooriya – Head of Strategy, Deloitte Center for the Edge

CAPT, CHC Jack Lea (RET) – Executive Director, National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces

Dennis LoRusso – Visiting Fellow, Princeton University

Kristen Lucken – Chair, Religious Studies, Brandeis University

Janet R. McCormack – Director of Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling, Denver Seminary

Barbara A. McGraw – Director, Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism and Professor, Social Ethics, Law, and Public Life, St. Mary’s College of California

Helen B. McNeal – Principal, McNeal Rector

Zachary Moon – Associate Professor of Theology and Psychology, Chicago Theological Seminary

Steve Nolan – Chaplain, Princess Alice Hospice (UK)

Ronald Oliver – System Vice President, Mission and Outreach, Norton Healthcare

Colin Osburn – Victory CTO

Sara Paasche-Orlow – Director of Spiritual Care, Hebrew SeniorLife

Su Yon Pak – Senior Director & Associate Professor, Integrative and Field-Based Education, Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

Sue Phillips – Founder and Principal, Sacred Design Lab

Chris Piasta – Chaplain, John F. Kennedy International Airport

Christina Puchalski – Professor of Medicine and Health Science, George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences; Director, GWU Institute for Spirituality and Health; Co-Director, MFA-GWU Supportive and Palliative Outpatient Clinic

Shelly Rambo – Associate Professor of Theology, Boston University

Carolyn Richar – Chief Mission Officer, Capital Caring Health

Alan Rozen, MD, HMDC, FAAHPM – Chief Medical Officer, Platinum Palliative Care

CAPT, CHC Lyman Smith (RET) – Director, Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincy

John Schmalzbauer – Blanche Gorman Strong Chair in Protestant Studies, Missouri State University

Asha Shipman – Director of Hindu Life and Hindu Chaplain, Yale University
Rev. Dr. J. Eric Skidmore – South Carolina Law Enforcement Assistance Program

Rabbi Mychal B. Springer – Manager of Clinical Pastoral Education, NY-Presbyterian Hospital

Ronit Stahl – Assistant Professor of History, UC Berkeley

Tiffany Steinwert – Dean for Religious Life, Stanford University

Winnifred Sullivan – Professor of Religious Studies and Affiliate Professor of Law, Indiana University Bloomington

Lauren A. Taylor – Post-doctoral Fellow, NYU Grossman School of Business

Rev. Mary Martha Thiel – Director of CPE, Hebrew SeniorLife

Rabbi Seth Winberg – Director of the Center for Spiritual Life and Senior Jewish Chaplain, Brandeis University; Executive Director, Brandeis University Hillel

Robert Wuthnow – Gerhard R. Andlinger ‘52 Professor of Social Sciences, Princeton University

Frank Yamada – Executive Director, Association of Theological Schools

Jason Zuidema – Executive Director, North American Maritime Ministry Association
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Glean
ChaplaincyInnovation.org
Chaplaincy Innovation Lab Staff

Leadership

Wendy Cadge, PhD
Founder and Director

Trace Haythorn, PhD
Co-Founder

Michael Skaggs, PhD
Director of Programs

Shirah Hecht, PhD
Research Manager

Darra Sweetser, MBA
Finance Administrator

In Residence

Grace Tien, PhD
Postdoctoral Scholar

Cheryl Giles, PhD
Scholar in Residence
Consultants and Advisors

Aja Antoine
UC Berkeley
2020 PhD Cohort

Steve Dahl
Marketing Consultant

Helen McNeal
Senior Advisor

Jasmine Terry Okafor
Development Advisor

Shelly Rambo, PhD
Senior Advisor

Research Assistants and Associates

Olivia Combs
Brandeis ‘22

Lily deLaRue
Clemson ‘23

Juliane Ding
Swarthmore ‘22

Simona Shuman
Brandeis ‘22

Elena van Stee
Penn 2019 PhD Cohort
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Individuals

The Chaplaincy Innovation Lab is grateful for the generous contributions of its many supporters in Fiscal Year 2021:

Samsiah Abdul-Majid
Leora Abelson
Kamal Abu-Shamsieh
Dan Adivi
Tahara Akmal
Julia Allen Berger
Susan Allen
Ruth Alpers
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Audrey Anaradian
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Connie Woolcock  
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Patricia Young  
Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades  
Sisters of SS Cyril & Methodius
Appendices

In the News

“Chaplaincy Innovation Lab awarded grant to support frontline spiritual care providers,” Brandeis NOW, July 2, 2020.


“Pelosi names 1st female chaplain to serve Congress,” NPR, December 31, 2020. Retired Admiral Margaret Kibben, the House’s new chaplain, is an advisor to the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab.


“Chaplaincy Innovation Lab at Brandeis University receives $750,000 from Henry Luce Foundation,” Brandeis NOW, January 22, 2021.

“Templeton Religion Trust awards $1.5 million grant to Chaplaincy Innovation Lab,” Brandeis NOW, March 1, 2021.

“Chaplains and the rise of on-demand spiritual support,” Boston Globe Magazine, March 9, 2021. Lab founder Wendy Cadge is quoted extensively in the article.

“Why do chaplains have to pay for their internships?” Sojourners, March 30, 2021. Lab founder Wendy Cadge is quoted extensively in the article.

“Mayo Clinic chaplains launch program to ease stressors for staff due to COVID-19,” Mayo Clinic, April 20, 2021. The Lab’s project on resilience, and a local recipient team, are profiled here.

“Why chaplains are in high demand in an increasingly secular America,” Vice, May 3, 2021. Lab Director of Programs Michael Skaggs is quoted in the article.

“Code Lavender program receives grant to support front-line caregivers,” Carilion Clinic, May 21, 2021. The Lab’s project on resilience, and a local recipient team, are profiled here.

“In times of stress, turning to contemplation can be helpful - here’s why religions emphasize rest,” The Conversation, July 23, 2021. Author and scholar Kristen Lucken is an advisor to the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab.

“Lab advisor named BUSTH Distinguished Alum of the Year,” Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, July 30, 2021.
New eBooks

*The Lab’s full catalog of free eBooks can be accessed here.*

*Beginner’s Guide to Spiritual Care*, by Wendy Cadge and the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab.

*Student Mental Health and Spirituality*, by Chaplaincy Innovation Lab and Ruderman Family Foundation.


Webinars


*Innovations in Chaplaincy Education*, July 23, 2020

*Sons of Serendip*, July 23, 2020

*Music for the Soul*


*Spiritual Care in Healthcare: Identifying Decision Makers’ Perspectives*, July 30, 2020

*The COVID Pandemic: Experiences from the New Frontlines*, August 10, 2020

*Trauma and Spiritual Care*, August 13, 2020

*Moral Injury and Moral Distress*, August 18, 2020

*Series on resilience sponsored by Luce Foundation*

*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Spiritual Care*, September 9, 2020

*Sponsored by Cedars-Sinai*

*Mitigating Poor Bereavement Outcomes - Supporting Staff in COVID*, September 10, 2020

*From Education to Employment: The Demand Side of Spiritual Care*, September 25, 2020

*“I’m thinking about working in spiritual care”: Key Issues to Consider*, October 13, 2020

*Field Guide for Aspiring Chaplains, sponsored by the Fetzer Institute and partners*

*Best Practices in the Spiritual Care of TGNC Patients*, October 14, 2020

*Supporting Staff Well-Being in the COVID-19 Era*, October 19, 2020

*Series on resilience sponsored by Luce Foundation*
Reflections during the First Few Years of a Spiritual Care Position, October 27, 2020
Field Guide for Aspiring Chaplains, sponsored by the Fetzer Institute and partners

Michele Smart, November 14, 2020
Music for the Soul

Black Wellness in Higher Education, Session 1, November 16, 2020

Spiritual Care in Palliative Care Research, November 19, 2020

Black Wellness in Higher Education, Session 2, November 23, 2020

Black Wellness in Higher Education, Session 3, November 30, 2020

Racial Differences in Spiritual Care: Evidence and Future Research, December 1, 2020

Spiritual Care with LGBT Older Adults, December 3, 2020

David LaMotte, December 8, 2020
Music for the Soul

“What do you know now you wish you had known?” December 10, 2020
Field Guide for Aspiring Chaplains, sponsored by the Fetzer Institute and partners

Empathy and Anti-Racism: A Conversation with Simran Jeet Singh, December 14, 2020

Spiritual Care for Patients with Cancer and Big Data, December 15, 2020
Co-presented by the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab, Transforming Chaplaincy, and The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center – The James Comprehensive Cancer Center

The COVID Surge: What Have We Learned? January 6, 2021

Psychospiritual Development & Moral Injury, January 6, 2021

Chaplain Documentation: A Review of Charting Spiritual Care, January 11, 2021

Greg Wall & Portal, January 13, 2021
Music for the Soul

Chaplaincy to the Incarcerated, January 27, 2021

What Does Being Black and Buddhist Tell Us about Chaplaincy? February 4, 2021

Young Grief: Spiritual Care of Young Adults in the COVID-19 Era, February 23, 2021
Rebecca Jade, February 23, 2021
*Music for the Soul*

**Effective Zoom Techniques for Chaplains**, March 4, 2021

**Ambiguous Loss**, March 17, 2021

**Beginner’s Guide to Spiritual Care eBook Launch**, March 23, 2021

**Spiritual Care on the Border: Chaplaincy to Migrants and Asylum-Seekers**, April 12, 2021

**Harps of Comfort**, April 21, 2021
*Music for the Soul*

**Buddhist Chaplaincy in the US**, May 11, 2021

**International Perspectives on Humanist Chaplaincy**, May 17, 2021

**CIL Case Studies Launch**, May 19, 2021

**Fostering Spiritual Resilience in Frontline Staff**, May 25, 2021
*Series on resilience sponsored by Luce Foundation*

**Endorsement beyond Tradition**, May 25, 2021
*Field Guide for Aspiring Chaplains, sponsored by the Fetzer Institute and partners*

**Uniquely Positioned: Human Trafficking Course for Chaplains**, June 10, 2021

**Building Resilience during COVID-19 for Frontline Folx**, June 15, 2021
*Series on resilience sponsored by Luce Foundation*

**Innovating Chaplaincy Education: Redesigning the Syllabus**, June 22, 2021
*Sponsored by Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning*
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