

## Chaplains Sunday 2021

### ***"Doing it all for the sake of the gospel"***

**I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. 1 Corinthians 9:23**



Standing on deck and singing hymns while your ship sinks beneath the waves is not normal behavior. And yet the Four Chaplains did exactly this on February 3, 1943. Through their sacrifice many were spared, and we are inspired. Perhaps the words of Paul from our lectionary today guided some of them, "I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings."

Chaplain John Sears serves in Okinawa as a Navy chaplain today. Though he has not gone down with his ship, his life as a chaplain is a model of "doing it all for the sake of the gospel".

Chaplain Sears ministry is far reaching. Having helped new Marine recruits through bootcamp, he went with Marines to Haiti to assist following a devastating earthquake.

In early 2019 Chaplain Sears created a foodbank for his "Guardsmen" (all genders) and their families as they tried to make ends meet in New York City during the 35-day government shutdown. He also accompanied his flock to the Mexican border to help care for migrant families and individuals. There he led discussions on how we treat migrants as people and children of God. His Guardsmen helped young migrant children obtain soccer balls, connected them with older siblings, and even helped unite them with parents. The Guardsmen took to heart the insight that they were to humanize an institutional process.

In 2020 Chaplain Sears was with his people again. When the hospital ship USNS Comfort was dispatched to New York City to aid in treating victims of the pandemic, the Coast Guard was tasked to provide security. This involved literally hundreds of Guardsmen at all times of the day and night, seven days a week. Over the course of the few weeks the Comfort stayed in NYC, Chaplain Sears made more than 1,300 personal phone calls to check on his Guardsmen and their loved ones, ensuring that as they cared for others, they knew they were cared for themselves. The Chaplain brought assurance and peace during fear and confusion.

Today Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies endorses more than 150 ministers of the word and sacrament who, like John Sears, do it all for the sake of the gospel. Like Paul, they serve around the world, on ships, in the field, with incarcerated individuals, and alongside veterans in hospitals. All of this that they may share in the blessings of the gospel of peace. Please keep our chaplains in your prayers.



If you would like to share in support of them or are discerning a call to serve as a chaplain, please contact us and/or visit [PCCMP.org](http://PCCMP.org).



## ***The Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel***

### ***Who we are and what we do?***

We are Presbyterians who ensure ministers of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, and the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad can serve as federal chaplains.

All chaplains require a letter of endorsement to serve. We provide that service but go beyond as we care for chaplains, their families, and the men and women to whom they minister by

- **Recruiting** - We seek to work with candidates and other inquirers to help them discern their call to the chaplaincy.
- **Equipping** - We provide specialized training and credentialing to equip our chaplains for their special calling.
- **Enabling** - Our chaplains are prepared for service thorough counsel and mentoring helping them to make the transition to institutional ministry.
- **Sustaining** - Chaplains serve in remote locations under stressful conditions often separated from their traditional support networks. We visit with our chaplains to provide pastoral care to our pastors.
- **Celebrating** - At career's end we celebrate our chaplains when their service concludes. We seek to provide meaningful opportunities for their service to the larger church body.

*Our member denominations fund a third of our budget. Our chaplains, both active and retired, contribute as well. Would you please consider donating to help us carry on this ministry? You may send a check, sign up online, or use the QR code.*

*We covet your prayers for all who serve. Thank you.*

### **Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies**

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