Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies

Newsletter SUMMER 2026

Pastoral Letter Sent to our Serving VA. FBOP. and Military Chaplains

Grace and peace to you,

It is a true privilege to serve as your endorsing agent and to walk alongside you in this sacred pastoral calling. I welcome your calls and emails and count it an honor to listen, pray, and support you as you faithfully shepherd those entrusted to your care through both the joys and the challenges of ministry.

These are not easy days. We live in a time marked by uncertainty, change, and at times disruption. Decisions beyond your control may shape your daily work and affect those you serve. Such seasons can be unsettling and raise difficult questions. Yet even here, we are grounded in the steady promise of Scripture: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). The One who has called you remains near—your refuge in uncertainty and your strength in every demand.

Your pastoral calling has not changed. The ministry entrusted to you remains deeply important and divinely appointed. You are called to be a steady presence in the lives of others—to listen with compassion, to pray with sincerity, to lead with humility, and to faithfully bear witness to God's nearness and grace. Through your quiet perseverance and daily faithfulness, you embody the hope you proclaim.

Even in seasons when the work feels heavy or unseen, your calling matters. The care you offer, the prayers you lift, and the presence you provide are sacred acts of ministry that God continues to use in powerful ways.

Please remember that you are not alone. Doug and I are here for you, grateful for the opportunity to offer encouragement and support, just as others have done for us.

I encourage you to reach out—whether in a moment of need or simply for connection. It would be our joy to listen, to pray, and to walk with you wherever you find yourself today. May the Lord sustain you in your calling, strengthen your heart for the work of shepherding, and fill you with His peace as you continue to serve Him faithfully.

With gratitude and prayer,

Dennis E Hysom

Field Notes

In October, Andrew Stockstill and his Religious Professional visited a team of Marines operating forward, where they are part of a multinational coalition exercise. There, he led 2 Bible studies and 2 Protestant Divine Services, including Communion. It was a beautiful gathering of young service members from various nations who demonstrated a hunger for the Word and opportunities to explore and grow in faith.

When Bo Seok (Peter) Soe transitioned from 13 years of pastoral ministry at Good Stewards Church (KPCA) to enter the Army Chaplaincy, he still wrestled with doubts about whether this was truly God's will. But through the ministry this year, he has found confirmation and peace. His brigade chaplain attended his first award ceremony and affirmed that God has indeed called him to serve here for His glory and for the spiritual well-being of Soldiers.

Young G. Jung, staff chaplain at Jesse Brown Veteran Affairs Medical Center was recently assigned to Palliative Care and bereavement programs at the VA Hospital. He writes: From the moment a veteran or their family member faced a critical or end-of-life situation, I was committed to providing timely and compassionate spiritual support. Within 24 hours of ICU, palliative, or family contact, I would reach out to offer comfort and reassurance

Updates

ANNUAL TRAINING

The PFC will conduct a time of professional training, fellowship, renewal, and shared faith for endorsed chaplains and their families. We will gather at either Calvin Crest from June 21–26, or at Montreat—either virtually or in person—from August 10–14. May these days be a blessing of rest, connection, and spiritual growth for all who attend. This year's theme is: *Resilience in Times of Transition.*

AWARDS

Congratulations to Ch (LT) Garrett A. Burns for his recognition by the Military Chaplains Association for his ministry and leadership providing for the religious freedom and spiritual welfare of the men and women of the armed forces. Chaplain Burns was awarded the MCA Distinguished Service Award for 2025.

RETIREMENT

Ch (COL) Martin Cho retired from the Army in May 2026. We are grateful for his service to God.

GRADUATION

Congratulations to
Air Force Chaplains:
Ch, Capt Joseph Song &
Ch, 1 Lt David Taekjin Kim.
They graduated from the Basic Chaplain Course on 15 May 2026.

General Assembly Presence

Dennis Hysom was able to set up a table at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church General Assembly and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly. We look forward to getting the word out about Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies to the wider church.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Joseph Kim, Air Force Chaplain, writes: Last February, I had the privilege of serving as Chaplain of the Day at the Georgia State Capitol. As I stood before the House Representatives, I felt a profound connection to a legacy of selfless service and its lasting impact. I chose to speak on the theme of hope, drawing strength from the enduring promise found in our faith. I shared a personal story, my experience at Tower 22 on January 28th, 2024, the day our brave brothers and sisters in arms, Georgia natives, were killed in action. I recounted the solemn memorial service, the empty boots, helmets, and rifles, and the heart-wrenching silence when the first sergeant called out the names of the fallen: Specialist Kennedy Sanders, Specialist Brianna Moffett, and Sergeant William Jerome Rivers. I wanted the representatives to understand that even in the face of profound loss, hope and resilience are possible. I challenged them, as representatives of the people, to live lives of sacrifice, giving, serving, and loving others, to listen to the needs of their constituents, especially the challenging circumstances faced by military families, and to legislate laws that protect our children and promote justice. I closed with a prayer, asking God to grant them wisdom, strength, and compassion, and to bless their service with humility and integrity. It was my hope that in sharing this message, rooted in both personal experience and faith, I could offer a moment of encouragement and reflection for those who serve our state.

Haley Stephenson, VA Chaplain, writes: As a chaplain serving multiple outpatient behavioral care teams, I often assist patients in exploring how their spiritual needs intersect with their mental and emotional well-being. For example, a patient was able to share with me their concerns about ongoing auditory hallucinations that they have managed alone for the last 20 years. I provided spiritual support to this patient regarding the sense of shame they carry about these hallucinations while also relaying the patient's concerns to the appropriate care team. The patient had been working with mental health providers for over a year, and he had not felt comfortable addressing these concerns with them due to their own shame. I highlight this story because it shows the unique way chaplains are utilized in the outpatient setting by the VHA to ensure patients receive the care they need, and how chaplains can assist patients working through shame that inhibits access to care. Please pray that this kind of creative ministry can continue and expand at this VA and other VA systems.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD. cont.

Chaplain Cheol Yi, Navy Chaplain, writes: As a KPCA minister and Chaplain, I remember that our first and most important goal is to be faithful to what God has called me to do, a higher calling. This is my spiritual core value for the chaplain ministry, which is the foundation for why the ministry exists and how it will achieve its goals, often grounded in specific biblical convictions and a vision from God. I appreciate the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincy's support in establishing a strong biblical foundation for my chaplaincy ministry. It provides clear spiritual direction and intentionality for my serving Sailors, helping them to pursue God's call amidst other challenges and pressures. Our denominational teaching bridges theological doctrine and practical ministry activities by outlining core values, principles, and goals to guide decision-making in the ministry field, focus resources, and ensure effectiveness in impacting people, making disciples, and glorifying God.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Thank you PFC partners in ministry for your good support for those of us out here in the field. May the care you extend to others return to you in kind and may God richly bless you in your work.

For over 50 years, the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies (PFC) has lived out the call of Matthew 25 by supporting our chaplains as they minister among those in Veterans Affairs hospitals, federal prisons, and the military—people often carrying heavy burdens and in need of hope. The PFC recruits, equips, sustains, and endorses ministers who bring compassion, presence, hope, and spiritual care to people in some of life's most challenging circumstances. This ministry is a celebration of over five decades of faithful leadership, compassionate service, and the enduring promise that when we care for "the least of these," we serve Christ himself.

As we give thanks for this legacy, we also look ahead with gratitude and hope. Please pray for our chaplains, their families, and all those they serve and inspire the church to continue supporting this vital ministry of presence, mercy, and love.

Donate online: *presfedchap.org*

NOTE: All of our funding is crowd-funded and community-sourced from sister denominations and local fundraisers directed to the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies nonprofit, a 501(c)(3) organization, and is tax-deductible. Any financial support provided by our donors and supporters is greatly appreciated and is essential to the continuation of our programs and services. We are committed to transparency and accountability, and we ensure that all donations are utilized in the most effective and efficient manner possible to achieve our mission. Thank you for your support!

Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies

I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Matthew 25

CHAPLAINCY: IS IT FOR YOU?

As you discern God's calling to ministry, the Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies invites you to consider using your spiritual gifts as a Federal Bureau of Prisons, Veterans Affairs, or Military Chaplain.

CONNECT WITH US!

Please contact us if you are considering federal chaplaincy and/or if you have a minister or candidate under your care who is considering federal chaplaincy.

Endorsement by Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies is required for federal chaplaincy programs, but does not guarantee an applicant will be accepted into a federal chaplaincy program.

Applications and information are available online: *presfedchap.org*

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We are a joint ministry of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, the Korean Presbyterian Church Abroad, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).