



*With you*

*Hospital Chaplaincy*



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF FINLAND  
EVANGELISCH-LUTHERISCHE KIRCHE FINNLANDS

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## ***I speak***

I speak as my body speaks,  
as sings the curled up bird of my soul.

Truth knows no bounds  
in this time, this hospital,  
in this room.

Speech is not silenced by my body  
not a single word,  
nor by the silence that sits by my bedside  
or the jab that deadens the pain.

Where suffering has taken root,  
with greedy roots,  
only you can reach, oh Lord,  
who bore the cross of the world.

**Niilo Rauhala**

Taivas käsissä sykkii

SRK, Jyväskylä 1993



### ***The Christian understanding of human life and health care***

According to the Christian understanding of human life, a person is a holistic entity. Pastoral care is one part of all round health care allowing for the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs.

We humans are living beings created by God, cast in His image, for dialogue and cooperation with Him.

Lack of harmony, sickness, suffering and guilt are among the realities of life. Redemption, forgiveness and a chance to begin a new life are all part of being human.

## ***Hospital chaplaincy***

was ordained by Christ: "I was sick, and you visited me."  
(Matthew 25:36)

is giving people spiritual help and support in times of need

is a form of service in which the church acts for the good of people by receiving them, sharing their distress and offering consolation through the Gospel

tries to see that God's goodness, love and forgiveness are revealed to those in need is founded on Christ's promise: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20)

is carried out in the field of health care, where people are seeking help and support

is based on the freedom of religion, respecting the religious convictions and worldviews of all



## *The hospital chaplain*

is there for patients, their relatives and the staff

is called, sent and supported in his/her work by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

is a champion and supported of humanity

is an expert on questions of pastoral care

is a friend in need, with time for you

- when you need someone to talk to and to listen to you
- when you are afraid or depressed
- when you are worried about the fundamental questions and are in need of spiritual guidance
- when you wish for prayers on your behalf
- when you wish to receive the holy communion
- when the time has come to take leave of a dear-one



## *The hospital chaplain's work includes*

private discussions and pastoral care groups

the arrangement of spiritual events

occasional services: baptism, private confirmation, communion, marriage, prayer for persons in the terminal stage of life, and funerals

training, instruction and supervision

planning and preparation

contacts with Lutheran and other congregations and Center for Hospital Chaplaincy

pastoral education and reflection





### *“Our chaplain”*

Modern hospitals and nursing homes differ greatly according to their speciality. The hospital chaplain therefore covers a wide field, ranging from the busy outpatients’ clinic to the long-term rehabilitation ward for psychiatric treatment and care for the elderly. The hospital chaplain is well informed about the special nature and fields of his hospital. He/she is a member of the nursing community and can easily be reached in an emergency. The hospital chaplain is our chaplain.

The hospital chaplain can be reached by phone or through the nursing staff.

Anything you say to the hospital chaplain will be treated in the utmost confidence.

## ***How have we come to this?***

The church sends chaplains to people who are sick, suffering or dying.

It is the job of each chaplain to help all those in need of spiritual assistance. The challenges facing pastoral care have grown as a result of the changes in society. The Evangelical Lutheran Church has, since the Second World war, therefore established various special services in answer to these challenges. Hospital chaplaincy has also been singled out as a complementary branch of health care requiring its own specialist training.

The first hospital chaplains were preachers whose most important task was to preach the Gospel to the sick, to perform the sacraments and to comfort the dying. The first full time hospital chaplain in Helsinki began his work in 1925.

Nowadays the pastoral work in hospitals involves the joint encounter of the nursing staff, relatives and the hospital chaplain.

## ***Qualifications of a hospital chaplain***

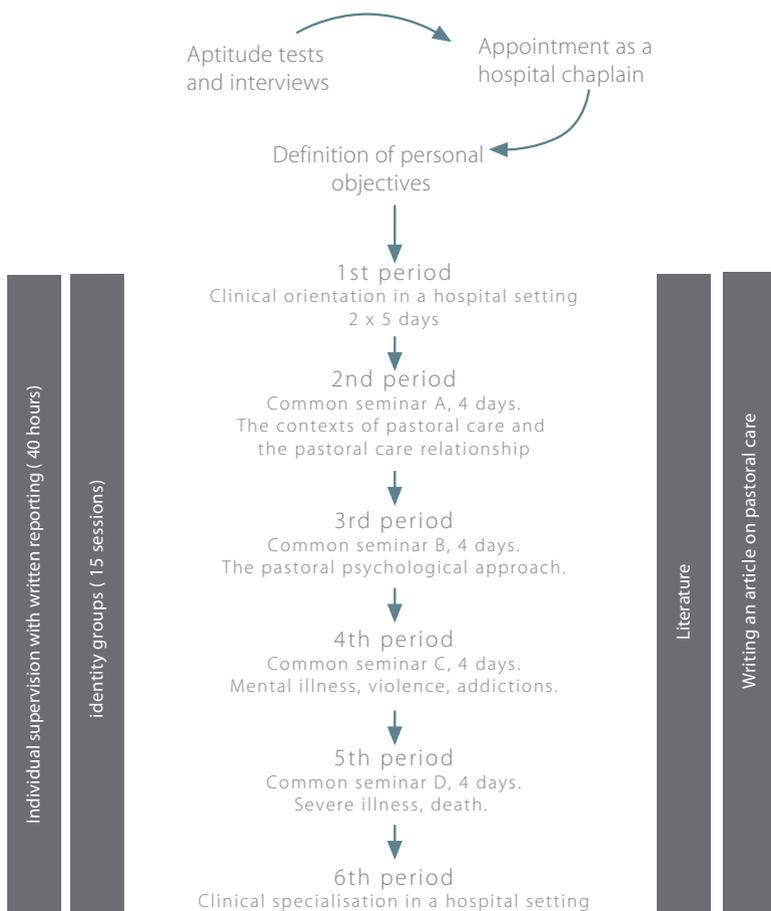
A hospital chaplain is a pastor of the Lutheran church with a degree in theology.

Before being appointed as a hospital chaplain, candidates undergo an aptitude test assessing their suitability for pastoral work in hospitals, their motivation for helping others, and their ability to use their own personality as a working tool.

Chaplains are selected by the church council of one or more congregations following the aptitude test and interviews.

Successful candidates can then begin the specialist training in hospital chaplaincy.

## Hospital chaplaincy specialisation programme



## *Specialist training*

The training usually takes two-and-a-half years and includes theory, practical placements in hospitals and study of the professional literature.

More than half of the hospital chaplains have also received the church training in supervision lasting a good two years. In addition to theoretical seminars this includes a supervised trainee period.

The hospital chaplains provide supervision for church workers and health care personnel.



## *Pastoral Care for outpatients*

Pastoral care has become well established in hospitals and nursing homes, but the work of the hospital chaplain also extends for outpatients. This aspect is important in psychiatric treatment, and increasingly in the other fields of care as well.

The changes in hospital care and the trend in community health care are demanding that the pastoral work conducted by the church be planned jointly by the congregations and health care authorities to achieve the best possible balance of care. As community care becomes more common, hospital chaplaincy is expanding into health care chaplaincy.

Tasks of a hospital chaplain for outpatients

- pastoral visits in homes
- grief groups and other groups
- providing support for relatives
- consultation, supervision and training
- spiritual care in times of catastrophe and other emergencies

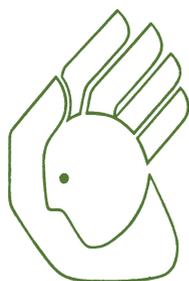
## ***Hospital Chaplaincy at the Office of the Church Council***

The Center for Hospital Chaplaincy is an expert and cooperative body which plans and develops pastoral care in hospitals, institutions and care for outpatients. The Center maintains contact with the health care field. It belongs to the Department for Parish Services at the Office of the Church Council.

The Center maintains contact with hospital chaplains by providing material on pastoral care and arranging conferences, training and special seminars.

The Center conducts the aptitude tests for chaplain candidates and contributes to the resulting statements.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has 120 full-time and 17 part-time hospital chaplains. More than half of them are women. More than half of hospital chaplains also act as supervisors.



*"See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."* (Isaiah. 49: 16)

Symbol by Sinikka Rossi

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The Committee on Hospital Chaplaincy was appointed by the Expanded Bishops' Conference in May 1965.

[www.evl.fi](http://www.evl.fi)

[www.eurochaplains.org](http://www.eurochaplains.org)

My father's kingdom

the sea

whose depths reveal not

our yesterday.

My father's kingdom

joy,

that radiates like a waking morn

when the long rains are over.

My father's kingdom

consolation,

for the softest of words,

a rush singing in the breeze,

catches the soul

and the sickness is gone.



European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy  
7th Consultation, Turku, Finland 12-16 June 2002

## **Standards for Health Care Chaplaincy in Europe**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Standards for Health Care Chaplaincy in Europe* is a collective statement, which expresses the caring work of faith groups in the area of health care throughout Europe. It is meant to be a point of reference and a guide for all faiths and denominations in shaping spiritual care offered in the area of health care. The title of the person who offers spiritual care varies from faith to faith, denomination to denomination, tradition to tradition, nation to nation. In this document the terms *chaplain* and *pastoral* are considered as generally accepted terms, but are not restrictive.

This document is the result of the 7th Consultation of the European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy, meeting at Turku, Finland 12-16 June 2002, at which 40 representatives of churches and organisations, representing 21 European countries participated. The document draws on the experience of the different traditions represented and brings together standards in health care chaplaincy from Europe and beyond.

### **1. HEALTH CARE CHAPLAINCY**

Chaplaincy provides pastoral services in a variety of health care settings, ministering to the existential, spiritual and religious needs of those who suffer and those who care for them, drawing on personal, faith, cultural and community resources.

### **2. THE ORGANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHAPLAINCY SERVICES**

1. Chaplaincy services are organised in different ways in different European countries. This is shaped by:

a) religious faith group administration.

- b) health care institutions.
- c) state health care regulations and policies.
- d) chaplaincy associations.

2. Chaplaincy services are delivered by clergy and lay persons who have been professionally trained in the area of pastoral care. They are authorised by their faith community and recognised by the health care system.

3. Chaplaincy services work as part of the multi-disciplinary team.

### **3. AREAS OF ACTIVITY OF CHAPLAINCY**

Chaplains are present for patients, relatives, other persons close to them, visitors and staff:

1. to proclaim and defend the infinite value and dignity of every person.
2. to be a reminder of the existential and spiritual dimension of suffering, illness and death.
3. to provide a reminder of the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling power of religious faith.
4. to endeavour to see that the spiritual needs of people from different religious or cultural backgrounds are met, respecting everyone's beliefs.
5. to try to protect patients from unwelcome spiritual intrusion or proselytising.
6. to provide supportive spiritual care through empathic listening, demonstrating an understanding of those in distress.
7. to provide religious worship, ritual, and sacrament according to one's religious tradition.
8. to serve as members of the multi-disciplinary health care team
9. to provide and participate in teaching programmes for health care professionals.
10. to act as mediator and reconciler and provide advocacy for those who need a voice in the health care system.
11. to support and participate in research programmes about spiritual care.

12. to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of providing spiritual care.

13. to facilitate community awareness of the needs and demands of the people they serve, the carers and health care systems.

#### **4. THEOLOGICAL, PASTORAL AND ETHICAL MATTERS**

Chaplaincy is a resource on theological, pastoral and ethical matters, being involved in programmes and discussions concerning:

- a) theological and pastoral issues.
- b) spiritual/existential needs and values.
- c) ethical (including biomedical) issues.
- d) the improvement of pastoral health care.

#### **5. EDUCATION, FORMATION AND SUPERVISION**

Those working in chaplaincy receive professional training throughout their ministry at a level appropriate to their appointment. This process includes:

- a) theological and pastoral education and reflection.
- b) awareness of health care issues.
- c) practical/clinical supervision.
- d) spiritual guidance.



# ***Principles of Hospital Chaplaincy in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland***

## **1. POSITION OF HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY**

The foundations of the hospital chaplaincy maintained by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland lie on one hand in the fundamental mission of the Church and, on the other hand, in the joint decisions and recommendations\* of the Church and the health care system. Hospital chaplains are employees of parishes working in a health care setting.

## **2. MISSION OF HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS**

Hospital chaplains are employees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church ordained pastors whose duty is to serve patients, their families and the health care staff as experts in questions concerning the values and view of life stirred by illness. Hospital chaplains promote holistic care by supporting the whole care community, and serve as a link between the parish and the health care system. Hospital chaplains' duties also involve the non-institutional care setting, as well as supervision and training for both parish and health care staff. Hospital chaplains also participate in the deliberation of ethical questions in health care.

## **3. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

In order to work as a hospital chaplain, one must pass an aptitude test and complete a specialisation programme approved by the Church. Continuing education and supervision help hospital chaplains to develop their ability to understand human illness and crises and to enhance their self-knowledge and interpersonal skills.

## **4. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Legislation concerning the Church and health care system lays down in detail the obligation for hospital chaplains to maintain confidentiality.

## 5. PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

At the core of hospital chaplaincy is the confidential pastoral care relationship between the hospital chaplain and patient, in which the patient can address all issues of his/her life and illness and receive spiritual support and consoling. The contact between the chaplain and the patient is usually initiated by the patient or his/her family. Discussions with a doctor or nurses may also motivate the initial contact. In the interest of maintaining the autonomy of the patient, the chaplain first ensures that the contact is indeed the will of the patient him/herself, and then agrees on the goals and principles of the cooperation.

The chaplain respects the human dignity, beliefs and integrity of the patient, regardless of his/her background or outlook on life. The chaplain will, if necessary, be in contact with other Churches or religious groups in order to secure the pastoral care that the patient wishes for.

## 6. CARE TEAM

Treating a patient is a cooperative effort involving several professional groups in the health care system. The hospital chaplain can, if given permission by the patient, act in an advisory capacity in his/her own area of expertise regarding matters concerning the patient. The hospital chaplain is responsible both to the care team and parish administration.

*\* Sairaalaliiton yleiskirje no 8/1965 (Directions from the Hospital Association No. 8/1965) Suositus sielunhoidosta sairaaloissa, terveystieteissä ja sosiaalitoimissa. Kirkkohallitus: Ohjeita ja tiedotuksia 13/1983 (Recommendation for pastoral care in hospitals, health centres and social services. Central Church Board: Instructions and Communications 13/1983) and Lääkintöhallitus Dno 2013/101/83 (National Board of Health, registration number 2013/101/83)*

*Kehittyvän avohoidon haaste seurakunnan sielunhoitotehtävälle. Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon piispaainkokous, kirjelmä no 6, 12.9.1989 (The challenge of the developing outpatient care to the parish pastoral care givers. The Bishops' Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, letter No. 6, 12 September, 1989)*

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