

Historical Notes:

Hospital Chaplaincy Service was initiated in 1950 by the Evangelical Ministerial Union, an interdenominational, Protestant fellowship. They sponsored Rev. Harry Hoffs, of Garfield Park Reformed Church, for hospital ministry. Within months, two other pastors joined the ministry: Rev. James M. Ghysels, a Christian Reformed pastor, just retired from the pastorate in 1951, began visiting Nursing Homes, and Rev. Henry Berends, a Baptist pastor, began serving Sunshine Sanitarium. Others involved in the early years were Rev. Arnold Brink, CRC, and Rev. David Otis Fuller, Baptist. For many years Hospital Chaplaincy Service was under the Evangelical Ministers' Union, and much of the early ministry was done on a volunteer basis.

Rev. George Douma was chairman of the Chaplaincy Board in 1952. Baldwin De Korne served as a board member beginning in 1979 and as board chairman from 1982-1986. W. David Luikaart was chairman of the board from 1986-2000. Don Kosten began serving as board chairman in 2001.

Charles R. Werner was a member of the original Board of Directors. Other former board members are: Gerald Anman, Gerald Battjes, Joan Beelen, Perry Boermans, Karen Bolthouse, LaVern Boss, Dr. Harvey Bratt, Bob Bultema, Al Bulhuis, Howard Claus, Karen Clausing, Dave Crawford, Ruth Crossman, John Damon, Stan DeHaan, Baldwin DeKorne, Dr. Lewis DeKryger, Jim De Vries, Del Dunn, Frank Gordon, Bill Kooistra, Jim Koppenol, Don Kosten, Duane Kuik, Bob Laarman, Maurice Lehman, Jay Loye - 1980-87, Joyce Loye, W. D. Luikaart, Tom Meyers, Bernie Mollema, Bev Morrison, Jodi Naum, Duane Schut, Lloyd Steinfort, Dr. Robert Ribbe, Jan Treur, Dan VanLaar, John VanLaar, Wayne VanWylen, John Verwolf, Tom Wiersma, Hubert Willson, Curt Witte and Ken Zaagman.

Directors of the ministry include: Rev. E. J. Holtrop (1968 - 1971), Rev. J. F. VanderSchie, Joseph Smith, and Rev. Fred Dolphin (1983-1985). The first full time Executive Director, Rev. Stanley J. Bultman, has served from September, 1986, to December 2005. Rev. John DeVries accepted the position of Executive Director in December of 2005 to present.

In 1971 Rev. Vander Werff, pastor of Remembrance Reformed Church served as chaplain at the Kent Count Juvenile Court Center, and William Ridley at Kent Oaks Hospital and the Kent County Jail.

Little information is available regarding the early history of Hospital Chaplaincy Service. Since it was under the EM Union which has disbanded, we have no records of that period. We do know that it has had several names. Originally it was called Evangelical Hospital Chaplaincy. It was incorporated in 1973 as Hospital Chaplaincy Service Inc. The corporate name was changed to Chaplain Services Inc. in 2000 to accommodate the new workplace ministry, then being planned. Chaplain Services now serves with two divisions: Hospital Chaplaincy Service and Workplace Chaplains. The workplace ministry began in 2001.

In March of 2010 Chaplain Services began ministry at the Ronald McDonald House in Grand Rapids, MI. In 2012 the Chaplains spend two to three hours, three times a week at the house ministering to the guests and staff at RMH, and visiting patients upon request. The house serves families who have a child at DeVos Children's Hospital, Mary Free Bed, Pine Rest or Forest View and the CLC, a rehab program for children with Cerebral Palsy and Spina Bifida.

Chaplain Services Inc. has chapters in Kalamazoo and Muskegon. They have their own boards and raise their own support. HCS began in Muskegon in 1978 and the Kalamazoo chapter began in 1986.

The Muskegon workplace ministry is under the direction of the Grand Rapids office of Workplace Chaplains.

Muskegon Hospital Chaplaincy Board

Dick Fry, Chairman
Rev. John Shyne, Harold Weaver

Muskegon Healthcare Chaplains:

Dave Tabler, chaplain, and Rev. Bill Blakeslee, substitute chaplain

May 2010 the Muskegon Chapter disbanded.

Kalamazoo Chaplain Services Board:

Jerry Davis, Chairman; Dave Pease, President, Treasurer;
Noreen White, Secretary; Rev. Walt Francis, Dr. Ray Lord,
Dr. Harry Zemmer

Kalamazoo Healthcare Chaplains:

Frank Bishop, Margie Francis, Rev. Walt Francis, Bradley McGee, Jack Raven, Vernel Shannon, Nan Wilgenhof

Kalamazoo Chapter: Disbanded in September 2012, due to lack of activity and their President, Dave Pease was killed in a motorcycle accident. Two groups of Chaplains still visit nursing homes in the area.

The Banner Design

The banner highlights the name, Chaplain Services, and the two divisions, Hospital Chaplaincy and Workplace Chaplains. The center of the banner is the cross, representing the centrality of Jesus Christ in our ministries. The circles surrounding the cross depict our ministry infused with the shining sun, symbolic of Jesus as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings. He brings light, life and healing to all who look to him in faith. Christ radiates into our institutions, businesses, communities and world with His saving grace.