

The Spiritual Caregiver

A Newsletter of the Ecumenical Institute for Pastoral Care



Autumn

Let the field be jubilant and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

Psalm 96:42

Ecumenical Institute Continues to Reach More Students

Covid restrictions affected how many CPE facilities operated, with many facilities closings. The Ecumenical Institute has offered in person and online units for several years. Our transition from in person to complete online units during Covid times was seamless. The demand for CPE has increased and students are looking for facilities to offer online units. These students are from all over the country. There are from a variety of denominations and seminaries. Parishes, hospitals, hospice, and social service agencies are looking for employees who have had CPE.

The Ecumenical Institute expanded in 2021

with Reverend Jennifer Hall as an ACPE Certified Instructor. Roger Cauthon our ACPE Certified Instructor also expanded his units. During the years between 2015-2017 EI offer one unit per year. Prior to 2021, EI offered two units per year. The Ecumenical Institute in 2021 offered 10 units, 2 of these units will end in March 22.

From 2015-2020 EI had a total of 42 students. In 2021 to date, EI has a total of 46 students, plus the extended Spring of 22 units of 12 students.

The Ecumenical Institute is certainly growing and expanding to reach students throughout the country.

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† Robert C. Alexander (1993-2003)

Leaving a Legacy for Your Community

**Times are
definitely changing.**

**Our nation's future
is unknown.**

**Our future
with God is known.**

Is there something you can do for EI to continue our legacy of faith based training?

The value of some assets like farm land is high. What planning can you do this year to optimize your taxes and also help your favorite charities including EI?

Contact Denise for more information at 712-225-0202 or denisegreen608@gmail.com

One of our Ecumenical Board Member writes:

“So tell me a little more about what you mean by that” I ask a young woman giving me a vague description of her feelings around a difficult circumstance at a weekly TreeHouse group at The Bridge of Storm Lake. Everyone desires to be heard and have their feelings acknowledged. At TreeHouse we know that we may not all have the same life experiences but that we can often relate to the emotion behind the experience which helps create empathy within our groups and an opportunity for affirmation as students learn to give and receive support from each other.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is not just for pastors and chaplains. The Ecumenical Institute “provides training and resources for caregivers who strengthen their communities through caring and faith in daily life.” While completing my CPE unit in 2018 for my master’s degree from Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, one of my internship sites was at a positive youth development ministry called The Bridge of Storm Lake, in the culturally diverse city of Storm Lake, IA. The Bridge strives to care and advocate for Storm Lake youth in vulnerable places of life by meeting them where they are, building a supportive community there, and providing training toward a more hope-filled future. All youth are welcome at The Bridge but we intentionally focus on three neighborhoods with high immigrant and refugee populations where due to social barriers, students and their families often need extra support. We believe that all kids regardless of their background should have the opportunity to live well, and we exist to help build up healthy and resilient youth for God’s Kingdom purposes.

In addition to the TreeHouse program

www.treehousehope.org, The Bridge has a large summer youth program and two youth social enterprises: the cultivate CSA training garden and the Endless Sea Coffee Enterprise www.endlesseacoffee.org. We roast our own coffee using beans from around the world. The Storm Lake blend mixes our four different bean roasts, symbolizing our diverse community. As students build skills, confidence growth. Mentoring is simply a natural result of working together.

There is definitely something that I learn from everyone I meet at The Bridge. CPE helped me to be aware of that and to stay curious! There are days when I am overwhelmed and tired as I check my own internal capacity and I simply tell God, “I will show up, but this is your thing.” God always makes that enough. For more information about The Bridge of Storm Lake visit www.thebridgeofstormlake.org.

Shelly Rock

Executive Director

The Bridge of Storm Lake

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Venmo Donation Option Now Available!

We now offer Venmo on the EI website for easy access when donating.

Check it out at ecumenicalinstitute.org



Scholarship Fund Invitation

“CPE is the best preparation for ministry,” is the common response of the CPE participants. Seminary students often say, “CPE helped me to do ministry more than any other seminary course.”

Clinical Pastoral Education is a graduate level process of adult, experiential learning. From pastoral formation and reflection to pastoral competence, the action/reflection model of learning prepares people to be conscious, effective pastoral care givers. Often required by denominations before ordination and required by health care systems for chaplaincy positions, CPE is at the core of pastoral preparation and discernment of a calling.

CPE is often greatly funded by hospitals as students do clinical work at the hospital giving ‘free labor’ which support the spiritual care department, patients, and staff. This model also involves the student being able to live near the hospital to complete both the educational and clinical aspects of CPE. With financial constraints on medical systems, spiritual care training is less available than has been historically true.

This is where the Ecumenical Institute has a profound and much needed place in pastoral care training. The Ecumenical Institute is a ‘stand-alone’ CPE center. It is not dependent on the cycles of health care funding, because you, the donors to Ecumenical Institute, support the ministry. Ecumenical Institute allows students to do clinical work in hospitals, parishes, nursing homes, and social service institutions. With an online option for learning, students can complete the education and clinical work where they live.

The Board of Ecumenical Institute has worked to fulfill its historic mission given by Fr. Gene Sitzmann to provide pastoral training in northwest Iowa. By setting tuition at a reasonable cost and raising funds through donations, EI is prepared to continue meeting its mission.

How can you participate in encouraging trained, effective pastoral care?

You are invited to donate to Ecumenical Institute’s Scholarship Fund. These funds will support students with full or partial scholarships. While some students are supported by their home church or denomination, others are in places where this support is limited. Those students could be greatly helped by a scholarship. Current tuition for one unit of CPE at EI is \$2200.00. Helping a student is a personal gift as well as support for the ministry of pastoral care wherever that student is serving.

Gifts to the Scholarship Fund will go entirely to support students gain pastoral care training.

Please consider how you might participate.

Training Faith Based Caregivers



Everyone, may
your holiday
season be filled
with joy and
good health.

- Ecumenical
Institute Board
of Directors

Thank You Recent Donors of Ecumenical Institute

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Donating

None of this work is possible without the generous support of donors. Since the inception of the Pastoral Education Center in the late 1960's, the number of students participating has now grown well past a thousand. Imagine the countless lives these students have touched with the skills they've learned. With your assistance the number of students will continue to grow.

Please consider supporting the work of the Ecumenical Institute for Clinical Pastoral Education.

- New Gift for Ecumenical Institute
- Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____
- I pledge \$ _____ for _____ years.
- Please send information about a stock transfer.
- Memorial Gift in the name of _____
- A Donation for the Scholarship Fund \$ _____

Please note personal prayer concern below.

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† Ralph Harwig
† David Patterson
† Adrian Rupp

Thanks to those who have helped plan for the longevity of Ecumenical Institute. These fine individuals have given; and their gift will continue after they are gone. If your name was inadvertently missed or you would like to be added, please contact Denise Green.

Thank You

Special thanks to the
Erlandson Foundation for
their continued support.



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Ecumenical Institute is Accredited to Conduct
Programs of Level I and Level II CPE by:
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