

Lay Pastoral Visitors

The Chaplaincy Committee oversees, at the diocesan level, a programme of training, supervision and commissioning of lay pastoral visitors. The opportunity for a trained and effective extra-parochial lay ministry has attracted hundreds of volunteers to take part in this training programme over the last few years.

This course usually is offered in institutional settings with training by the chaplains of those institutions to volunteers who have been carefully screened and show a sensitive and responsive nature. The course itself, which can be ecumenical or denominational usually involves a minimum of six, two-hour sessions with orientation in hospitals.

Upon completion of the course, these lay pastoral visitors will be commissioned by their area bishop and designated to work in a particular hospital or other institution. There is ongoing supervision of these lay volunteer chaplains, and they are encouraged to consider themselves part of a chaplaincy team - attending meetings, sharing their experiences of visitation, participating in an evaluation process.

The Chaplaincy Committee has found the Lay Pastoral Visitation programme to be one successful and effective method to assist co-ordinating chaplains and clergy. It provides a meaningful area of lay ministry, including the possibility of personal and spiritual growth for those involved.