

Brock University Ecumenical Chaplain's Report 2021
Submitted by the Reverend Krista Hilton



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It is my pleasure to introduce myself as the new ecumenical chaplain at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, jointly sponsored by the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United churches. I began in the position on April 1, 2021 and I've been settling into the role these recent months.

Chaplaincy at university provides spiritual and pastoral care to students and staff via a ministry of presence, outreach, and faith exploration. I now have the privilege of walking with university students as they discern the pathways for their future and learn to listen to how God is guiding them. Entering university is both an exciting and scary time for many of them. It is often a time of budding independence, exploring new ideas and ways of being in the world. This can be challenging, confusing, and mind-broadening all at the same time. A university chaplain provides a ministry of presence: a person who will walk alongside and provide a safe space for wrestling with new concepts, light bulb moments, and even discovering new identities.

This fall I'm offering a program called "The Sanctuary Course" which is an online, ecumenical program focussed on the intersection of mental health and faith. The nine week program explores the topic from a psychological, social, and theological perspective. Additionally, each session is accompanied by a compelling film featuring the story of an individual who has journeyed through mental health challenges as a person of faith. This course was created to raise awareness and start conversations about mental health in the Church and it combines clinical research, theological practice, and lived experience. The program helps reduce stigma, support mental health, and promote mental wellbeing. More information can be found here: www.sanctuarymentalhealth.org

I welcome the support of local churches in a variety of ways: if you know of students at Brock University, I would be happy to make a connection (please feel free to share my email!); I'm also glad to facilitate shared ministries between local congregations and Brock students, who are often looking for volunteer opportunities. As students attend a campus for the first time, or return to campus, I encourage students to reach out to the campus chaplain as a resource for support, encouragement, and spiritual guidance. And I welcome prayers for all campus ministries, that they may be a place of welcome and acceptance for everyone.

"We have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1: 9b-10

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