

2010 Julius Varwig Award The Rev. Dr. Judith H. Blanchard

The Julius Varwig Award is presented annually by the United Church of Christ Professional Chaplains and Counselors and the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries to a UCC Professional Chaplain or Counselor who has demonstrated dedication and commitment to serve persons in the name of Jesus Christ. This year, the award honors the Rev. Dr. Judith Blanchard of Freeport, Maine.

Judith was ordained in the United Church of Christ in 1979 and became a Board Certified Chaplain in 1986 while serving St. Elizabeth's Hospital, a 1600-bed psychiatric facility in Washington, D.C. She has been the Protestant Chaplain at Maine Medical Center in Portland, Maine since 1997.

Judith's colleagues regard her as a consummate professional who holds up for others examples of faith and deep spirituality as she functions on a health care team of a major medical center. She has the respect of the wider Portland community where she is the chaplaincy "face" of both the Protestant Hospital Ministry, an independent agency that has supported her ministry, and Maine Medical Center where doctors and hospital personnel claim her as one of their own. A prominent voice for chaplaincy, Judith has published articles in the *Journal of Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy Today*, as well as writing columns for local newspapers.

Judith has generously and skillfully served the Association of Mental Health Chaplains and the Association for Professional Chaplains. She has served on the APC Board and is currently on the Professional Ethics Committee and as the Maine State Advocacy Chair. She is trained in disaster relief ministry through UCC Disaster Ministries. She has been a solid, wise and reliable influence in the life of these organizations.

Judith is a pioneer. She did her Doctor of Ministry degree at Bangor Theological Seminary where her project focused on the spiritual life of cardiac patients. She was later honored with their "Distinguished Alumni/ae Award for Service in a Specialized Ministry." She received a Sabbatical Grant for Pastoral Leaders from Louisville Institute, breaking new ground for chaplains who seldom receive this grant of renewal that is enjoyed by academics and parish clergy.

In her proposal requesting support for her sabbatical pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in northwestern Spain, she wrote: "Much as the experience of those I serve (critically ill patients), this will be a journey in a new language, carrying all of my belongings and sustenance on my back, and dependent on God and the hospitality of strangers who care for pilgrims. The journey will be both inner and outer, exploring how I might live more prayerfully, intentionally in the present moment, and filled with gratitude for my calling."

For all of her accomplishments, contributions to the profession of chaplaincy, and her humble response to God's call, we are pleased to present the 2010 Julius Varwig Award to the Rev. Dr. Judith H. Blanchard.