

The [Association of Professional Chaplains](#) (APC) promotes clinically trained, professional chaplains in diverse settings to provide holistic spiritual care to the patients, families, institutions, and communities in which they serve. Through advocacy, education, research, the establishment of professional standards for core competencies and ethical behavior, APC encourages its members to strive for excellence when providing spiritual care. APC annually recognizes spiritual care providers who promote the standards of professional chaplaincy or advance clinical chaplaincy in an exemplary manner through its Distinguished Service Award. This year's recipient of the APC Distinguished Service Award is **Rev. Anna Lee Hisey Pierson**, an advance practice chaplain and member of the Church of the Brethren.

Anna Lee is recognized for her extraordinary contributions to the chaplaincy profession. She helped create the [Palliative Care and Hospice Advance Certification](#) (PCHAC), a specialty certification process that recognizes the unique skills and gifts needed when providing spiritual care to patients and families living with chronic illnesses and coping with end-of-life dynamics. Anna Lee has continued to implement changes in the specialty certification process to make it more accessible. Anna Lee has participated in research projects and educational opportunities to create, and advocate for "best practices" in the discipline of chaplaincy. She contributed significantly to the research and is co-author of a palliative care spiritual assessment tool, the PC-7, advancing standardization in chaplaincy. Her commitment and innovative approach to chaplaincy has resulted in elevating chaplains as equal collaborators with other disciplines providing holistic care.

Recognized as a "chaplain to chaplains", Anna Lee commented about her pioneering work in APC's Palliative Care and Hospice Advanced Certification. "This award and work have never been about me. It helps my colleagues to move forward and together we provide exceptional care to patients, families and staff." She opined "sometimes, chaplains can feel forgotten in the church. It is valuable work that we do." Anna Lee is the fourth person to receive the advanced practice certification in palliative care and hospice chaplaincy. Through her efforts more than fifty persons have been certified in advance practice chaplaincy through APC and the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC). Congratulations, Anna Lee, and thanks for your lifelong commitment to advanced education.

Kathy Gingrich, M.Div., MSW, LCSW, CADC, BCC, is an "on-call chaplain" at Rush Copley Medical Center, Aurora, IL and a member of the York Center congregation in Illinois/Wisconsin district.