

# Time stopping

An interview with Kelly Burk

## **Where have you experienced God in these extraordinarily difficult months?**

The grace of colleagues. The resilience of young adults. The unexpected opportunities that emerged. For example, “way opened” (a Quaker phrase) for me to complete the practicum portion of a graduate degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling while still working in full-time campus ministry when all requirements moved online due to the pandemic. Given the increased prevalence of mental health concerns in recent times, this additional skill set has proven to be invaluable in my ministry as a chaplain.

## **What do you believe is the contribution that chaplains uniquely make to a hurting world?**

Chaplains are in a good position to meet people wherever they find themselves. We have opportunities to make deep connections quickly, in part, because we can offer ministry without strings attached.

## **Where has God sustained you and where have you found yourself privileged to offer sustaining hope and healing to others?**

I learned a great deal about my own limitations in these difficult months. This, in turn, has helped me to offer grace and compassion toward others confronting their own limitations.

## **Can you share a story of campus ministry during the pandemic?**

When Earlham College’s campus closed with very little warning in March 2020 due to COVID-19, it was a traumatic experience for many students. Receiving word that with urgency they needed to leave campus or fly back from an off-campus program and return “home” (a complicated concept for many young adults) was an experience of time stopping for this generation of college students. They remember exactly where they were and who they were with when their confidence in the stability of the world significantly changed. Before the seniors left campus the following day, I worked throughout the night to assist them in planning a very meaningful “mini-graduation.”

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