October - 2019

Dear COMISS Network Member,

As we write this letter, we hope that you are well and that you are in the midst of celebrating the COMISS Network initiative--Spiritual Care Week.

The Annual Forum of the COMISS Network will be held January 12-13, 2020, at Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport, 1999 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA. This is the sister hotel to the Crystal Gateway Marriott where AREB and NCMAF are meeting later in the week. The hotels are connected by underground tunnel with restaurants and shopping. The room rate for this year’s meeting is $119.00 single or double. National/Reagan Airport and Dulles International are the nearest airports to the meeting location. By far, National/Reagan Airport (DCA) is the closest to the hotel.

Please make your plans now to attend. The number for the Marriott reservations is 1-800-228-9290 or (703) 413-5500. You must make your reservations before Monday, December 16, 2019. Please ask for the “COMISS Network” group rate. Also, we know that many of the Religious Endorsing Body representatives will be staying at the Crystal Gateway Marriott hotel for the NCMAF/ECVAC meetings. So that the COMISS Network can get credit for your stay, please book your time with us under our room block. It saves us money!

The Registration Form for the COMISS Network Forum is also enclosed. You will note that the registration fee is $205.00. This covers all expenses for the Forum (speakers, lunch, two breakfasts, meeting rooms, etc.) Please remember that there will be a continental breakfast on Sunday morning and a plated breakfast on Monday morning of the Forum.

This year’s theme is: "COMISS: Our Past, Our Present, Our Future."

At this year's business session, we will be reviewing and discussing proposed updates to the COMISS Network Guidelines, located at www.comissnetwork.org and electing a secretary and two member-at-large positions for the Leadership Team. Additionally, your organization will want to report on the events of the past year that you are pleased to announce during the Sunday morning “Celebration Reports” session.

We hope that the 2020 COMISS Network Forum will be a significant time of discovering new and classic resources for professional spiritual and pastoral care. Please plan to be with for this important time of communication, learning, and sharing together.

The COMISS Network Forum Planning Team
COMISS Network Credit Card Form:

**Credit Card Information** – MasterCard – Visa – Discover - American Express

Name: ___________________________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________

City: ___________________ State:___________________  Zip: _______

Card Type:  □ MasterCard  □ Visa  □ Discover  □ American Express

Card Number: __________________________

Card Verification Number (3 or 4 digit number): ______

Expiration Date: Day____  Month _____Year __________

Amount: $_______________

Authorizing Signature: _____________________________________________
COMISS Network: The Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings

REGISTRATION FORM

COMISS NETWORK ANNUAL FORUM MEETING
January 12-13, 2020

RESERVATIONS: A block of rooms has been reserved at the Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport, 1999 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA. When making your reservations, please indicate you are with The COMISS Network Forum 2020. Reservations for the Event will be made by calling Marriott reservations at 1-800-228-9290 or 703-413-5500.

The deadline for hotel reservations is Monday, December 16, 2019. After the deadline, any reservations will be taken on a space available basis and the room rate is subject to change. To avoid any cancellation charges on individual rooms, please cancel if necessary, 24 hours prior to your arrival date.

RATES: Single and double occupancy: $119.00

REGISTRATION: COMISS Member Registration $205.00/Non Member Registration $305.00 — included in the all registrations is Breakfast on Sunday and Monday mornings January 12th and 13th and Lunch on Sunday, January 12th.

Please complete this registration form. Return it with the registration fee of $205.00 or $305.00 (make checks payable to The COMISS Network by Friday, December 13, 2019 to:

The COMISS Network
1802 Green Trail
Keller, TX 76248-5397

Name: ____________________________________________
Title: ____________________________________________
Preferred name on badge: ________________________________
Association Representing: ________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
City: __________________________ State: __________ Zip: __________
Telephone: ___________ Email Address: _________________________

Special Meal Requirements: (The registration fee includes the standard meals and breaks, including vegetarian. Some special meals may incur an additional expense to be billed to the attendee.)

☐ Please check here if this is your first time attending a COMISS Network meeting.
2020 COMISS NETWORK FORUM

January 12-13, 2020
Crystal City Marriott at Reagan National Airport
Alexandria, Virginia

RESEARCH—A TOOL FOR ADVANCING THE PRACTICE OF CHAPLAINCY

Sunday, January 12, 2020

8:00 AM  Continental Breakfast and Forum Registration

9:00 - 9:10  Welcome  Karen Ballard, Chair of the COMISS Leadership Team

9:10 - 9:15  Opening Meditation:  Rev. Selena Fox
Senior Minister & Endorser, Circle Sanctuary

9:15 - 9:30  Introductions of Attendees, New Members & Overview of Agenda

9:30 – 9:45  Election Information and Nominating Committee Ballot for Officers Serving 2020-2021

9:45-10:15  Celebration Reports I

10:15 -10:30  Break

10:30 - Noon  Plenary 1: COMISS – Our Past
Russell Davis, PhD

Noon -1:15PM  Lunch

1:15-2:45  Plenary 2: COMISS – Our Present
Karen Ballard, MCM, Steven Voytovich, PhD

2:45 - 3:15  Break - Refreshments on your own

3:15-3:30  Presentation of Proposed Changes to the COMISS Guidelines
3:30– 5:00  Plenary 3: COMISS – **Our Future**
           Trace Haythorne, PhD

5:30  Reception for COMISS Network Members, Guests & Leadership

**Monday, January 13, 2020**

8:00 - 9:00 AM  Plated Breakfast

9:00 - 9:05  Opening Meditation:  Jeanne Hale & Peter Strening
           Federation of Christian Ministries

9:05 -10:35  Plenary 4: COMISS – Imagining our Future: Table Discussions

10:35 -11:00  Break

11:00-11:30  Business Session
           .  Minutes of Forum 2019
           .  Report of Chair
           .  Motion Regarding the Chaplaincy Innovation Lab
           .  Report of Budget & Finance -Treasurer
           .  Report of CCAPS
           .  Spiritual Care Week Report
           .  Presentation of New Members
           .  New Business:  COMISS Guidelines, Changes
           .  Report on COMISS Google Drive
           .  Election of Leadership
           .  Election of Nominating Committee

11:30-11:45  Celebration Reports II

11:45  Adjourn
COMISS Network Guidelines

Revised for the January 2019 Annual Forum in Arlington, VA.

I. Name, Purpose, Mission and Objectives

a. The name of this group is COMISS Network; incorporated as a 501.c3 in Atlanta, Georgia.
b. The purpose of the COMISS Network is to provide its membership with a unique forum for communication, networking, and advocacy.
c. The Mission of the COMISS Network is to serve as the pre-eminent network of professional organizations, institutions, and faith communities that promotes and supports collaboration among its member organizations which are committed to the theological and clinical education and the competent practice of interfaith spiritual care through chaplaincy and pastoral counseling and research in specialized settings.
d. The Vision of the COMISS Network is to facilitate advocacy for specialized ministry by developing and sharing evidenced based best practices in chaplaincy and pastoral counseling and research.
e. The Objectives of the COMISS Network are:
   i. To provide a forum for dialogue among its member organizations.
   ii. To encourage shared programs/resources toward creating greater collaboration among specialized ministries.
   iii. To advocate professionalism in standards and in the provision of interfaith-based care and counseling.
   iv. To educate our constituency and various publics about the value of professional interfaith-based spiritual care and counseling.
   v. To propose and plan initiatives that further our mission, vision, and purpose.
   vi. To promote ongoing research in order to establish evidence-based spiritual care and counseling.

II. Membership:

a. Membership is available to organizations which subscribe to the purpose, mission, and objectives of COMISS. Organizations applying for membership and those renewing current membership may self-select the organization’s membership category. The characteristics of each category are recommended guidelines for assisting the organizations in selecting the most appropriate category for membership:
   i. Professional Certifying or Accrediting Organization: These organizations certify individuals for the practice of and or training for professional spiritual care. They will demonstrate how certified chaplains, pastoral counselors, or other pastoral care professionals conform to a code of ethics that prohibits proselytizing, conflicts of interest, and crossing of professional
boundaries. Or, organizations in this category accredit institutions, facilities, centers, or systems for the practice, education, and training of chaplains, pastoral counselors, and/or other spiritual care professionals.

ii. Religious Endorsing Bodies: These organizations include faith groups, denominations, or religious organizations which endorse individuals of their respective group for chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and/or other professional spiritual care ministries. A Religious Endorsing Body will be able to demonstrate a process of endorsement which includes on-going accountability between the endorser and the endorsed individual. Also, these organizations will be able to demonstrate recognition as a religious endorsing body. They will be able to demonstrate that they are recognized as a 501 (C) (3) religious organization and have primarily a lay constituency.

iii. Professional Membership Organizations: These organizations exist as groups of chaplains and/or other pastoral care professionals whose work focuses on ministry in specific specialized settings. These organizations may be for profit or not for profit.

iv. Chaplain and Pastoral Counselor Employing Organizations or Agencies: These organizations utilize the services of chaplains and/or pastoral counselors who are certified by one of the Certifying Organizations of the COMISS Network. These organizations may be for profit or not for profit, but they must demonstrate, via their mission statement and table of organization, that they operate in accordance with the purpose, mission, and objectives of the COMISS Network.

v. Academic and Educational Institutions: These institutions prepare students for chaplaincy/ specialized ministry through academic degree programs and/or conduct research related to ministry in specialized settings. These institutions are accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and/or the U.S. Department of Education.

III. COMISS Network Forum

a. Membership
   i. Members in good standing are current in membership dues and have filed all reports required.
   ii. Each member organization may be represented by up to three participants.
   iii. There will be one vote per member organization in good standing.

b. Annual Forum
   i. The COMISS Network will gather for one or more meetings annually in Forum.
ii. All Forum business will be presented for agenda approval to the COMISS Network Leaders no later than 24 hours prior to the opening of the Forum.

iii. The conduct of business at the Annual Forum will include presentations, discussion and action on:
    1. Annual reports
    2. Financial report
    3. Presentation of a budget and its adoption
    4. Election of officers
    5. Election of nominating committee
    6. Presentation of new members
    7. Proposed new initiatives

iv. All mailings pertaining to an upcoming Forum are to be sent to the member organizations.

IV. COMISS Network Leadership (Officers and At-Large Members)

a. Network Leadership shall be members of one of the member organizations of the COMISS Network in good standing.

b. The COMISS Network Leadership annual elections shall take place at the Annual Forum.

c. New COMISS Network Leaders will begin their terms of office at the conclusion of the Annual Forum.

d. The officers of COMISS Network will be:

   i. Chair
      1. Presides at all meetings of the COMISS Network Forum and the COMISS Network Leadership.
      2. Presents an annual report to the Forum.

   ii. Chair-Elect
      1. Assumes the duties of the Chair in absence or disability of the Chair.
      2. Serves as chair of Forum Program Planning Task Force.

   iii. Treasurer
      1. Is responsible for preparing a budget for review by the COMISS Network Leadership and for approval by the Forum Membership.
      2. Provides financial reports to the COMISS Network Leadership and to the Annual Forum.
      3. Schedules an audit every three years with an outside professional auditor.

   iv. Secretary
      1. Attends all sessions of the COMISS Network Leadership and Annual Forum and records all votes and minutes.
e. The officers of the COMISS Network will serve as the officers of the corporation and as such are responsible for its business and direction as approved by the COMISS Network.

f. At-Large Members: There shall be two at-large members elected at the Annual Forum by and from the membership groups to insure diversity.

g. Spiritual Care Week Committee Chair: The Spiritual Care Week Committee Chair will be the liaison between the COMISS Network Leadership and the Spiritual Care Week Committee.

h. CCAPS Chair: The CCAPS Chair will be a member of the COMISS Leadership Team.

i. The COMISS Network Leadership will act on business responsibilities between meetings of the Forum. They will:
   i. Contract services
   ii. Hire and annually evaluate staff
   iii. Implement decisions of the Forum
   iv. Be responsible for the budget
   v. Engage the membership in strategic planning
   vi. Establish and appoint Task Forces as needed to support the mission and objectives.
   vii. Financial Mgt

j. Terms of Service
   i. The Chair and Chair-Elect will each serve one two-year term. The Chair-Elect succeeds the Chair. If the chair position is vacated before the end of the two-year term the chair-elect will assume the position and fill the unexpired term (and afterwards, fulfilling the term to which s/he was elected.) An election will be held at the next Forum to elect a succeeding chair-elect.
   ii. In the interest of continuity, a nominee for Chair-Elect is selected by the COMISS Network Leadership from the COMISS Network Leadership or from former COMISS Network Leadership members who have served within the last 5 years.
   iii. The Secretary, Treasurer and two Members-at-Large of the COMISS Network Leadership will serve a two-year term and may be re-elected to one successive term.
   iv. The Chair-Elect and Treasurer will be elected in odd-numbered years; the Secretary and two At-Large members will be elected in even-numbered years.
   v. Spiritual Care Week Committee members will serve a four-year term and may be reappointed to a second term. The Chair will serve a four-year term and may be reappointed to a second term.
vi. CCAPS Commissioners will serve three-year terms and may be re-appointed to one successive term.

vii. Individuals who are completing an unfulfilled term are eligible to serve a two-year term and be re-elected to one successive term.

viii. The chair can appoint an individual for Secretary or Treasurer if the position is vacated prior to the Forum.

V. COMISS Network Staff and/or Outside Services

a. The Executive Administrator

b. The Bookkeeper

VI. Standing Committees and Commissions

a. A Nominating Committee of four (4) will be nominated and elected annually from the membership categories at the Annual Forum. They will be responsible for the process of nominations and conducting the election.

   i. Solicit names from each of the membership groups.
   ii. Secure agreement to being nominated from the nominee.
   iii. Prepare the slate to be mailed to the membership with registrations packets for the Annual Forum.
   iv. Conduct the election at the Annual Forum.
   v. The Committee may receive nominations from the floor.
   vi. They are administratively accountable to the COMISS Network Leadership.

b. The COMISS Commission for Accreditation of Pastoral Services consists of two members.

   i. The Network Leadership will appoint two commissioners drawn from the COMISS Network Membership, one of which will be Chair. When there is a commissioner vacancy, CCAPS will receive applications and then make their recommendation to the National Leadership who will make the appointment.

   ii. CCAPS will:
   1. Propose and revise CCAPS standards
   2. Conduct accreditation site visits of pastoral services
   3. Represent the COMISS Network to external national accrediting bodies
   4. Submit an annual report to the Network
   5. Recommend nominees to the Network Leadership for the at-large commissioners from outside the Network.

   iii. COMISS Network Leadership will:
   1. Approve membership criteria for CCAPS
2. Appoint CCAPS commissioners. The commissioners will elect their own chair from among themselves.
3. Approve policies, procedures, and standards of CCAPS.
4. Approve CCAPS accreditation recommendations for pastoral services.

c. Spiritual Care Week Committee

   i. The purpose of the committee is to plan and implement the annual observance of Spiritual Care Week. A committee will be appointed by the COMISS Network Leadership from among the membership categories. The Spiritual Care Week observance is intended to raise awareness of the importance of pastoral/spiritual care. This includes, but is not limited to:

      1. Determination of a theme for a three-year cycle in advance.
      2. Promote and manage an opportunity for constituents to design and submit a graphic promoting a theme.
      3. Produce publicity and educational materials to support the theme.
      4. May contract with and supervise a manufacturer to supply materials
      5. May supervise sale and distribution of materials

   ii. The committee will nominate its own chair with approval by the COMISS Network Leadership.

   iii. The committee will present an annual report to the Annual Forum.

VII. Amendments and revisions to the Guidelines

   a. Will be developed as needed by the COMISS Network Leadership
   b. Will be sent to the voting member of record of each member organization 60 days prior to the Forum.
   c. Changes to the Guidelines shall be ratified by a simple majority of the voting members present at the annual Forum.

VIII. Required Quorum

   a. At the COMISS Network Leadership meetings, a simple majority (one more than half of the Network Leadership) is sufficient to take action.
   b. At the Annual Forum a simple majority of the voting members present is sufficient to take action.
Nominating Committee Report
COMISS Network Forum 2020

Secretary – Stephen Brandow

Stephen is a native of New York State. He graduated from Northwestern State of Louisiana with A.D. and B.A. Degrees. Later he attended and graduated from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, LA. He has served at Woodview Regional Hospital, Central Louisiana State Hospital, as well as Christus Frances Cabrini. Father Stephen is a staff Chaplain at the VA Medical Center in Alexandria, LA. He is active in the Louisiana Chaplain’s Association; Inc. having served two terms as their President and he currently serves as Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Association of VA Chaplains.

At-Large Member: Carole Collins

Carole completed a one-year unexpired term as an At-Large member in 2019. She has agreed to have her name placed in nomination for a first term after filling the unexpired term. Carole Collins is the Endorser for the Alliance of Baptists. Carole received a Bachelor’s degree in Accounting from Clemson University and is a Certified Public Accountant. Prior to working at the Alliance of Baptists Carole held several accounting jobs in publicly traded companies ranging from Accounting Manager to Chief Financial Officer. After leaving Corporate life Carole accepted a position on the Alliance of Baptists board that lead to working full time with the Alliance as Director of Operations and Finance. As Director of Operations and Finance Carole is also one of two co-directors who lead the Alliance. Carole has been with the Alliance for 11 years and served as Endorser the last 6 of those years.

At-Large Member: Steven Voytovich

Steven has completed one term as an At-Large Member on the COMISS CNL and if elected, this will be his second term. Father Steven serves as the chaplain for Orthodox Christians attending Yale University. He holds a BA Degree in Business from the University of Minnesota. M.A. in Liturgical Music, M.Div. and D.Min. Degrees from St. Vladimir’s Seminary in Crestwood, NY. In January 2019 Fr. Steven was appointed to serve Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church in New Haven, CT. He is certified as a chaplain and a CPE Educator and he has served hospitals in CT and New York.

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor during our meeting.