

November 5, 2022

Dear COMISS Network Member,

We share warm greetings with you from our Leadership Team, and hope that this letter of invitation finds you doing well.

Because of continued uncertainties related to COVID 19 and travel by airline, the Annual Forum of the COMISS Network will be held virtually on **Sunday, January 8, 2023, from 12 noon until 5:00 PM EST**. Recognizing that many organizations may still be experiencing a loss in revenue, there will be no charge for participating in the Forum. Registration, however, is required. We offer our appreciation again to The Association of Professional Chaplains for hosting this meeting via Zoom as they did last year.

**Given the format of the Forum, we need extra information from you:**

- **Please designate and include on the registration form the person who will cast the vote for your organization.**
- **Please prepare a written Celebration Report that will be shared as a part of the materials for the Forum.**

The Registration Form for the COMISS Network Forum is enclosed.

This year's theme is:

## **Advancements in Chaplain Ministry**

The objectives are:

1. Define areas of significant development in our chaplaincy arena
2. Discuss how these advancements may impact on spiritual care
3. Reflect on the interdisciplinary team as related to spiritual care

Our spiritual caregiving contexts continue to adapt to both internal and external changes. This year we will highlight significant changes coming from within and beyond spiritual care, and impacts related to them. We hope that this year's presentations will not only assist us in navigating these and other changes in our respective ministry contexts, but to be energized toward doing so creatively!

Please see the attached agenda outlining our time together. The agenda includes the schedule for the day, the focus of our plenary sessions, and biographies of our presenters.

At this year's business session, we will be electing a secretary for the Leadership Team (completing a two-year term), and re-electing our treasurer, Carole Collins who is willing to continue serving. The Nominating Committee Report is attached with a candidate for secretary. Denise Parker Lawrence, our current secretary, is willing to serve as Chair-Elect, and will be formally elected into this role at the Forum as well. We will also need three members of the Spiritual Care Week Committee, so nominations can be forwarded to the committee chair. If you wish to make a nomination from the floor, please do so with the agreement of the person/s you will be nominating. Please consult the Guidelines at [COMISSnetwork.org](http://COMISSnetwork.org) for qualifications.

We hope that the 2023 COMISS Network Forum will be a significant opportunity for learning and fellowship. Please plan to be with us for this important time of communication and sharing together!

*The COMISS Network Forum Planning Team*



# COMISS Network: The Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings

## REGISTRATION FORM

COMISS NETWORK ANNUAL FORUM MEETING  
January 8, 2023

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the COMISS Network  
Annual Forum will be virtual again this year!**

**REGISTRATION:** There will be no charge for registration or attendance this year. However, Registration is required to receive the virtual meeting link.

---

So that we will know how many to expect from each Membership Category, please complete this registration form and return it by fax (817-400-7683) or email ([info@COMISSNetwork.org](mailto:info@COMISSNetwork.org)) by **Friday, December 9, 2022.**

**Note: The Link to join the virtual COMISS Forum will be emailed a few days before the meeting. Registration is required to receive the virtual meeting link.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I am the voting member for my organization as named below.

Association Representing: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Please check here if this is your first time attending a **COMISS Network** meeting.

## 2023 COMISS NETWORK FORUM

January 8, 2023  
Meeting Virtually by Zoom

### Advancements in Chaplain Ministry

(Please note that times listed below are in the Eastern Time Zone)

**Sunday, January 8, 2023**

- 12:00-12:05 Welcome **The Rev. Darryl Owens, MDiv, BCC, CT, CPLC, Chair, COMISS Network**
- 12:05-12:10 Opening Meditation: **The Rev. Tim Staker, M.Div., BCC**
- 12:10-12:20 Overview of Agenda, Meeting Format Details, introduction of Speaker  
**The Rev. Steven Voytovich, D.Min., LPC, COMISS Chair-Elect**
- 12:20-1:35 Plenary 1 **James Pruett, Ph.D., D.Min., Ed.S., Th.M, M.R.E.**  
*“Ministry at the Grass Roots of Pastoral Psychotherapy Post AAPC”*  
AAPC Diplomate, CPSP Diplomate (Dual), AAMFT Fellow and Approved Supervisor  
Board-Certified: ACS, TMHP, NCC, CCMHC; ACPE Spiritually Integrated  
Psychotherapist/Faculty Convener, Chapter of Diplomates, College of Pastoral  
Supervision and Psychotherapy SC LPC/S, LMFT/S; NC LCMHC/S. LMFT, CFBPPC;  
TN LPC(MHSP), LMFT, LCPT, GA LPC.
- 1:35-1:40 Break
- 1:40-1:45 Introduction of Speakers
- 1:45-2:55 Plenary 2 **Kimberly Willis, M.Div., BCC, ACPE Certified Educator**  
*Department of Veteran Affairs Clinical Chaplaincy: Hybrid 38 Conversion*  
Executive Director, VA Chaplain Service  
National VA Program Manager – Clinical Care and Professional Development
- 2:55-3:00 Break
- 3:00-3:50 Plenary Discussion Reviewing Completion of Previous Strategic Plan
- 3:50-3:55 Break
- 3:55-4:40 Business Meeting **The Rev. Darryl Owens**  
Minutes of Forum 2022  
Report of Chair  
Report of Budget & Finance -Treasurer  
Report of CCAPS  
Report of Spiritual Care Week  
New Business  
Election of Leadership  
Election of Nominating Committee

## 2023 COMISS NETWORK FORUM

4:40-5:00 Closing Remarks and Adjourn, **The Rev. Steven Voytovich**  
**Advancements in Chaplain Ministry**

The objectives are:

1. Define areas of significant development in our chaplaincy arena
2. Discuss how these advancements may impact on spiritual care
3. Reflect on the interdisciplinary team as related to spiritual care

*The description of the program:*

Our chaplain ministry arena is continually changing. We are excited about these two presentations that reflect significant advancements in chaplaincy ministry. The American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC, then a member of COMISS) consolidated with ACPE in 2019. Dr. James Pruett will talk about advancements in pastoral psychotherapy since then. He has been assisting in coordinating unique initiatives with ACPE and CPSP in advancing the work of pastoral psychotherapy, and will share these developments. Chaplaincy in the VA hospital system has been identified formally as clinical caregivers solidifying their identification as members of the interdisciplinary treatment team early in 2021. The Rev. Kimberly Willis, now Executive Director of VA Chaplaincy, will share how this development has impacted on chaplaincy in the VA hospital system.

Our third session will be an open forum. We plan to share a completion summary of our most recent strategic plan, along with forum topic areas that member organizations identified as important, looking for your input to aid in guiding our next steps.

*Our Presenters:*

**Dr. James Pruett** has been deeply involved in the *American Association of Pastoral Counselors* (AAPC) that had been a credentialing body member of the COMISS Network. Dr. Pruett holds: a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Carson Newman University (1967); Master of Arts Masters of Theology (Th.M.); Masters of Religious Education (M.R.E.); Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) New Testament and Greek; Psychology and Counseling from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1971); Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) Psychology and Counseling from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1981); and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Counseling and Supervision from Louisiana Baptist Seminary (1997).

Dr. Pruett was especially active in the Southeast Region of AAPC. Dr. Pruett chaired membership and certification committees, and was part of founding not only several accredited training centers for AAPC in multiple states, but also the Co-founder of COAMFTE accredited post-degree training program Westgate Training and Consultation Network and graduate program at Converse College (now University) In Spartanburg, SC. He was recognized with a distinguished service award by AAPC in 2005. Dr. Pruett serves as field supervisor and adjunct professor for psychotherapy and supervision for 18 graduate programs. Upon the consolidation of AAPC in 2019, Dr. Pruett has led initiatives related to furthering the work of pastoral counselors with both ACPE and CPSP. He will be sharing some of the history of pastoral counseling related to these past years, along with the current initiatives underway.

## 2023 COMISS NETWORK FORUM

**The Rev. Kimberly Willis** is the current Executive Director of the Department of Veterans Affairs Chaplain Service for the Veterans Health Administration. Rev. Willis holds: Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Psychology, Park University, Parkville, MO (2007); Master of Divinity, Howard University School of Divinity, Washington DC (2008).

Chaplain Willis served in the USAF Reserves. In 2011 she provided spiritual care for 1800 airmen and most notably delivered “on-target on-time” spiritual care to deployed members during the September 2011 *Operational Readiness Exercise*. She served in VA Hospitals in Texas, and in Hampton Virginia where she became Chief of Chaplains in 2016. While there she worked to build relationships with Department of Defense partners to make this location the setting of choice for Clinical Pastoral Education. Chaplain Willis is already a sought-after national speaker, and presenter, who engages clinicians, ministry leaders, and other community stakeholders to effectively communicate the intersectionality of spirituality with the physical and mental health of Veterans. As a true champion of Veterans and those charged with their care, she received the coveted Henry Luce Foundation Grant (2020) for her grant proposal “Wellness is Essential,” which focuses on building and supporting the resilience of front-line workers. Chaplain Willis was promoted to National Program Manager Clinical Care and professional Development in 2021. Earlier this year she was promoted to Executive Director of Chaplain Service for VA’s Veterans Health Administration.

## **Barbara Sachs Speyer**

Barbara works as the Jewish Chaplain at the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center. Her work is both in the hospital and at the Community Living Center (CLC). She leads Bible study once a week as well as religious services every Saturday. She coordinates the quarterly memorial service at West LA.

Barbara is a board certified chaplain by both Neshama Association of Jewish Chaplains and NAVAC. She has been working as a chaplain since 1999 and also served as President of NAJC and NAVAC. She is currently secretary of NAVAC.

Barbara serve on the Bio Ethics Committee at the VA Hospital and is a member of the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity committee. She is also certified in Moral Injury. She is Red Cross certified in case of disaster and a certified Mediator.