

FAITH IN THE CITY



The Rev. Florine Thompson's congregation is constantly changing at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital. Photo by Jeanne Noonan

Faith and healing for the sick

HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY AND
ST. LUKE'S-ROOSEVELT HOSPITAL CENTER

Religious affiliation: Nondenominational Protestant

Spiritual leader: The Rev. Florine Thompson, board-certified chaplain, director of pastoral care

Address and neighborhood: 1111 Amsterdam Ave., Manhattan

Years in present location: 1

Size and character of congregation: "Serve 6,000 patients, loved ones, staff and volunteers a year. Diverse by race, ethnicity, faiths, cultures, beliefs," Thompson said.

What makes the congregation special: "A ministry of beds and gurneys instead of benches and pews. Our parishioners are as likely to be prone [as they are] sitting up," she said.

How we serve the congregation: "We help those in difficult situations find meaning and comfort regardless of religion or beliefs. We often meet our flock on the

fly, quickly establishing trust at first meeting. We help them make informed decisions, and find peace with the decisions they make," Thompson said.

Memorable moments: According to Thompson:

■ "The daughter of a woman patient in her late 70s was not ready to accept that mom had but a few hours to live. I convinced her that it was more important that she be present for her mother. I downloaded to my iPod her mom's favorite song, 'Amazing Grace.' While her mom listened in comfort, the daughter began to call her siblings to join them at bedside."

■ "A middle-aged Jewish patient felt ostracized by members of her Jewish temple, because she had married a Catholic. She loved her faith but was so deeply hurt because they told her that God turned His back on her. She was

angry with her religious leaders and angry with God. She wanted to pray but just could not. I held her hand and provided active listening and prayer. We dialogued about forgiveness, and she confessed that she was holding onto her anger for too long and needed to set herself free.

"The next time I saw her she was able to move on in her prayer life and was forgiving of those who had spiritually wounded her."

Contact: (212) 523-2014

Compiled by Maxine Simpson

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP

Send its name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and name of the spiritual leader to:
Vote@NYDailyNews.com