The Blessing of the Hands*
Avera@Home Power of Presence 7/28-7/29/16

Rev. Dr. Carla Cheatham, Chaplain

Extending your hand is extending yourself
—Rod McKuen

If you touch one thing with deep awareness, you touch everything.”
—Thich Nhat Hahn

Invitation
We invite all – whether or not you have direct contact with patients – to participate in the blessing of hands. Everyone here uses their hands to bring about a communion between giving and receiving care. Your hands, the hands of healthcare, are everyday, in some way, an answer to someone’s prayer or deep desire for comfort. Come and receive the blessing. It is a symbol of blessing on your daily work and your life as you answer the call for compassionate care.

The Hands of Healthcare
Blessed are they who are called to the labors of love known collectively as healthcare, for your hands are the hands of comfort to all children of the Divine as they face both days of challenge and triumph in life here on earth. Your hands help make the journey meaningful and peaceful.

- These are the hands of skill –
  o using stethoscopes
  o inserting catheters
  o and bathing those so easily bruised and broken.

- These are the hands of knowledge –
  o understanding lumps
  o knowing about firm abdomens
  o palpating for palliation

- These are the hands of comfort –
  o giving medicine for relief from pain
  o gently holding an arthritic hand
  o kindly stroking a worried brow
  o combing freshly washed hair and shaving white whiskers

*Adapted from an original work by Rev. Dr. Rodney Bolejack
• These are hands of the spiritual –
  o clasped for praying
  o holding open the holy text
  o giving divine blessing
  o pointing to family in a picture frame
  o simply holding space with another in deep and quiet listening

• These are hands of direction –
  o showing community resources
  o obtaining DNR signatures
  o witnessing to decisions and choices
  o calling those who can help

• These are the hands of support –
  o answering phones
  o filing records
  o calling for those who need to be present

• These are the hands of testimony –
  o recording in medical history and log books all that was done in the care of
    those in need so this one story will never be lost

• These are the hands of compassion –
  o wiping tears
  o embracing those who grieve
  o giving encouragement to those who work alongside us, knowing that their
    hands, like our hands, are the hands of blessing and comfort.

These are the hands of healthcare.

Blessing the Hands “In every task and touch, may these hands of bring comfort.”

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