CommonSpirit

Sacred Stories

As CommonSpirit Health, we make the healing presence of God known in our world by improving the health of the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, while we advance social justice for all.

Sacred Stories convey ways our mission is being lived out by the gifted people in our ministry. We invite you to use these stories for inspiration, as a meeting reflection, or to encourage discussion with your team.

The Door is Open

TEXT

In the universe there are things that are known, and things that are unknown, and in between there are doors." – William Blake

SACRED STORY

He was awake, alert, chanting prayers with us, and offering commentary until his very last breath. He was an elderly, Buddhist man. As a father of multiple children and a husband of over four decades, he was loved by many who were gathered and praying at his bedside.

In my ministry as a hospital chaplain, families often ask me to be with them as their loved one passes away. This, however, was a passing unlike any other in the 11 years I have engaged in this work.

I entered the man's room, which was brimming with family members, and I was ushered to his side. His family chanted softly, and the room was warm with familial love. It was a privilege to be drawn into their circle, to be made a part of them. I was gently encouraged to join in the chant.

Before long, I realized that he was softly speaking. As we continued to chant, which seemed to me so comforting, I heard him say, "The door is not open." As we kept chanting, the man told us several more times, "The door is not open." Finally, he looked up at us, his eyes wide open with an expression on his face that was somewhere between utter delight and perfect peace. He said slowly, "Oh! The door is open!"

His breathing stopped. His eyes gently closed. There was a peace-filled silence. Amen.

Submitted by

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What sacred moments have you witnessed in your work?

How have these experiences encouraged, changed, or given you a sense of deeper purpose?