

# The VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System Program of Clinical Pastoral Education 1 Oct 2024 – 30 Sep 2025

## Why CPE at VA TN Valley?

- **Education First:** Students are there to learn the art of spiritual care while staff chaplains are responsible for coverage of assigned units and all on-call rotations.
- **Integrated Curriculum:** The curriculum addresses VA healthcare priorities and prepares students to become Board-Certified Chaplains in VA medical centers.
- **Clinical Experience:** Placements highlight spiritual needs related to grief, trauma, moral injury, addiction, and mental health issues connected to military service.
- **Supportive Staff:** Students provide care with the guidance of formal clinical mentors to assume greater responsibility and independence as they are ready.

## Stipend and Benefits

- **First-year residents:** \$36,711.00 for Academic Year 2024-25.
- **Second-year fellows:** \$39,281.00 Academic Year 2024-25.
- **Vacation and holidays:** All students receive 13 days of paid annual leave, 13 days of paid sick leave, and 11 paid federal holidays.
- **Fees:** No application or tuition fees.

## Certified Educator

Chaplain Fred Ehrman is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) with an MDiv from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a PhD in German Literature from the University of Texas/Austin. As a scholar, he specialized in discourses of magic, mysticism, and alchemy expressed by pietist communities in the 17th and 18th centuries. Fred is unapologetic about his love for Herman Hesse's *Narziss und Goldmund* and Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, which still top his list of favorite books. He is a Board-Certified Chaplain (NAVAC) and began at the Louisville VAMC as a Hospice/Palliative Care Chaplain in 2008. He completed the certification process to become an ACPE Certified Educator in 2019. He enjoys the works of Thomas Merton and engaging students to discover their "hidden wholeness" to strengthen their ministry of care. He started at the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System as the ACPE Certified Educator in January of 2022 after he retired as the Air National Guard Assistant to the Command Chaplain, United States Air Forces in Europe – Air Forces Africa with more than 17 years of Active Duty experience to include deployments for Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom. Fred is the very proud father of his son, Micah, who graduated from the University of Kentucky in the College of Engineering. Fred loves traveling to soulful places, meeting people from diverse and interesting backgrounds, bicycling, and martial arts.

## **Application Criteria**

The TVHS CPE Center does not discriminate against any individual for reasons of race, gender, age, faith group, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. Equal access to educational opportunities is extended to all qualified persons. Efforts will be made to assemble a diverse group of participants to enhance the learning experience of each participant.

An applicant's suitability for admission is a matter of judgement by the ACPE Certified Educator in consultation with the Admissions Sub-Committee of the Professional Advisory Group.

Applicants must meet educational readiness criteria as defined below:

- Evidence of personal motivation and an ability to articulate how CPE aligns with vocational goals.
- Ability and willingness to share one's personal history, thoughts and feelings, and theological perspectives with sufficient openness to learn in the CPE educational environment.
- Openness to the learning that comes from others; ability to give constructive feedback as well as to receive it; willingness to reflect critically upon one's own functioning in ministry and in relationships with others.
- Ability to communicate clearly, orally and in writing, with patients, families, and staff members to include sufficient English language proficiency.
- Capacity to relate to others in an empathic and sensitive manner.
- Sufficient emotional maturity, stability and physical stamina to minister in a variety of stressful situations; ability to identify personal stress and care for self in a responsible manner.
- Willingness and ability to minister within the values and mission of the Veterans Health Administration, within the policies and procedures of the Chaplain Service, and within the policies and procedures of the TVHS.

## **Application Requirements**

- Completed two-page ACPE Application, signed and dated. Applicants use the standard ACPE application form available at the ACPE website - [www.acpe.edu](http://www.acpe.edu). Applicants complete and send the application form with supporting documentation as described below to the Certified Educator. Applicants prepare their written narratives (items 2 through 6 below) using Times New Roman font, size 12 point, and single spaced. Applicants are expected to use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
  - a. A reasonably full account of your life. See ACPE Application and Instructions for guidance in preparing this statement. A length of 5 pages is credible.

- b. A description of your spiritual growth and development. Include significant events and persons that impacted your spiritual growth and development. A length of 3-5 pages is credible.
  - c. A description of your current work/ministry and work/ministry history.
  - d. An account of a helping incident. See ACPE Application and Instructions for guidance in preparing your account – if you have no prior CPE. Applicants with prior CPE should follow guidance provided on ACPE Application and Instructions. Applicants for Residency should submit a verbatim.
  - e. Your impressions of Clinical Pastoral Education. See ACPE Application and Instructions for guidance in preparing your statement.
  - f. An admissions interview – to be scheduled.
  - g. Applicants with prior CPE must include ALL previous all final written evaluations including the self-evaluation. This center will NOT request this information – you must provide it.
  - h. A current resume dated within 6 months.
  - i. U.S. citizenship is required.
- Provide the following documentation along with the completed application items cited above:
    - a. Verification of membership and participation in a local faith community. Provide a recent letter from an official of the faith community dated within the last 12 months.
    - b. If ordained/commissioned/licensed/appointed, include a recent letter from the authorizing body/official verifying your current standing within the faith community. The letter should be signed in blue ink and dated within the last 12 months.
    - c. Certification of educational attainments, including:
      - i. Undergraduate degree transcripts or diploma from institution.
      - ii. Graduate degree transcripts or diploma from institution.
  - Also return the signed FERPA form with your application.

**Applicants accepted to the TVHS CPE program must show proof of all immunizations required by the VA including Covid-19 prior to the program start date.**

**Mail or email the Admission Materials packet to**

Chaplain J. Fred Ehrman, Ph. D., M. Div., BCC  
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