



## Seeking and serving Christ

The work of Episcopal Chaplains at home and abroad

In a time of war, the work of military chaplains is critical to the well-being of thousands of men and women serving in the armed forces and their families. The Office of the Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies in the Episcopal Church oversees chaplains in all branches of the military, as well as other federal chaplaincy programs for veterans, prison inmates, and their families.

As the war in Iraq approaches its sixth year, and conflict continues in Afghanistan, chaplains stationed with

the troops offer counseling, sacramental and moral support. They also work with local faith leaders, helping commanders understand the unique religious environment.

On the home front, chaplains help service members and their families cope with the stress caused by long deployments and the return to civilian life. They are assisted by the Home Support Team (HoST) program, made up of clergy and laypersons from local congregations and dioceses who help develop outreach support programs for

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individuals and families—both church members and non-church members—who have been directly affected by deployments because of the two ongoing wars. The emphasis for The Episcopal Church is to engage other faith communities to make the HoST outreach successful.

Seven Episcopal Church chaplains are now serving in Iraq. Their names are listed on the Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies prayer list, which may be found at [www.tec-chaplain.org](http://www.tec-chaplain.org).

Federal chaplains serve in three institutions: the U.S. military, Veterans

Affairs hospitals, and Federal Bureau of Prisons. Chaplains endorsed to serve in these three federal areas fall under the oversight of the Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies. By federal requirement they must be ordained clergy in good standing in their local diocese, meet the requirements of the respective federal agency *and* be screened by and receive endorsement from the Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies.

To learn more about the work of Episcopal federal chaplains or to find out how to establish a Home Support Team, visit [www.tec-chaplain.org](http://www.tec-chaplain.org)

There are many kinds of chaplains carrying out the work of the Church in areas other than the military. Diocesan chaplains serve under the oversight of the local bishop. They include persons designated as special assistants to bishops; those who work in schools, colleges and universities; chaplains in local hospitals and hospices; chaplains in municipal, county and state corrections facilities; fire and police department and EMT unit chaplains; and maritime port ministries. About 700 Episcopal Church clergy and laypersons serve in these programs.

To find out how you can help support the work of Episcopal Chaplains, contact the office of your bishop diocesan.

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*Just before the beginning of the Iraq conflict, the Rt. Rev. George E. Packard, Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies, wrote the following collect, which appears on the opening page of A Prayer Book for the Armed Services:*

God, visit and sustain the lives of our chaplains in their rounds, duties and deployments. Bless all our men, women and families of the Armed Services. Give them confident hearts in their service, and protect our nation and its people in these difficult days. Never, Lord, let us abandon the character of righteousness in everything we do. *Amen.*



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