

John Clarke Retirement Center

The Baptist Home Board supports a variety of needs at the John Clarke Retirement Center, including an activities coordinator, chaplain, and handicap-accessible minibus. Though the past year has been a challenge, the John Clarke Retirement community has faced the changes with resiliency and innovative leadership.

Our new chaplain, Racquel Ray, was called to serve in April 2020. By listening to ABCORI leadership, John Clarke resident historians (Madeline Millin, Juanita Bedard, Clara Motter, and Rev. Dr. Cynthia Smothers), and the community, Chaplain Ray set a vision of restoring former John Clarke traditions of chapel services on Sunday afternoons, Bible study, and Chaplain's Cupboard. She also brings Chaplain's Fireside Chats, Book Club, Music & Memory, and partnerships with Elder Care Ministries and ABCORI congregations, as well as neighboring churches, board members, and residents. In addition, technology allowed the addition of Zoom, YouTube, and hallway church; virtual Bible study, chaplain's office hours, and pastoral care; and residents' ability to be guest readers at their home churches. Memorial services were offered in the chapel; in the dining room with residents' inviting families to join virtually; and in nursing residents' rooms for grieving families. As a veteran, Chaplain Ray also served JCRC veterans, providing military trauma informed pastoral care and special observances.

With group activities on pause during the Covid pandemic, Activities Coordinator Mia Delanoy was limited by safety protocols. However, partnering with Activities Director Robin Hannon and her staff in the Nursing Center, she supported activities such as the Mother's Day and Father's Day parades; outdoor concerts on the lawn; coffee and donut deliveries; men's group; Bingo and Bunco; and weekly grocery trips for and with residents. She also led ice cream sundae and float deliveries and crafts, as well as timely change of holiday décor, lunch orders, calendar deliveries, and personal interactions with residents.

The handicap-accessible minibus is an invaluable resource during the Covid pandemic. The minibus safely transported residents to weekly shopping, as well as scheduled medical appointments. In addition, our activities staff used it to facilitate socially distanced changes of scenery for isolated seniors, including contactless family and friends' driveway visits; scenery drives; and a stop for ice cream in the heat of summer. In December, the minibus was decked out in holiday splendor and transformed into a Holiday Express that Santa and elves used to drive residents individually to visit their family and friends, facilitating Covid-safe holiday cheer.