Meeting Notes – Feb. 18, 2025

The LaFayette Rotary Club met on Feb. 18, 2025 for its weekly meeting. Rotarians Chester and Brenda Carter invited as our guest speaker Rev. Michael Stiggers. Rev. Stiggers has been with Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church in LaFayette for 31 years and with Eastside Baptist Church in LaGrange for 10 years. He has been a chaplain with Chattahoochee Hospice since 2005. After graduating from Emory with a Master of Divinity degree, he was unsure of what to do with the degree. He stopped by East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika to inquire about jobs. The lady he needed to see was not there, but the lady who was there told him they were looking for a chaplain. The rest is history, and he absolutely loves his position as a chaplain.

Chattahoochee Hospice provides a variety of services and resources. They have available CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants) to help with personal needs; RNs (registered nurses) on call 24/7 and for scheduled visits; medical equipment at no cost; social workers to give emotional support and to help with wills, powers of attorney, and community resources; trained caregivers; chaplains for spiritual care; volunteers for companionship; respite care; grief counselors; and a bereavement coordinator. Hospice remains with the family for a year after the death of their loved one.

Rev. Stiggers talked of the different stages of grief. He defined grief as our body's reaction to loss. Grief is a reaction not only to death, but to other losses such as finances, physical strength, health, and relationships.

He shared with us some of the indicators that a person may be in need of or ready for hospice care. Those included: frequent visits to the hospital, recurring infections, unintentional weight loss, increased fatigue or weakness, no longer recognizing familiar people or getting lost in one's own neighborhood and no longer eating or becoming incontinent.

The goal of Chattahoochee Hospice is to provide the best quality of life possible for a person with a terminal illness. Chattahoochee Hospice has served East Alabama and West Georgia, including Chambers, Lee and Randolph counties in Alabama and Troup and Harris Counties in Georgia, since 1983. They also have a pediatric program to serve families with terminally ill infants and children. Rev. Stiggers spoke of their strong volunteer program. One of the activities of the volunteers is to make gift bags/packages and deliver them to the homes of their patients each month. Chattahoochee Hospice accepts Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance. They will also accept those who cannot pay. Chattahoochee Hospice is East Alabama's only not-for-profit hospice. In addition to going into homes, they also provide their services to all the nursing homes. He shared with us several of their brochures on topics such as coping with the holidays after the loss of a loved one or how to handle the first weeks after a funeral when the visits have stopped. They have received a five-star rating from Medicare Hospice Compare.

Diane Sherriff