



Family Medicine Moments

October 10, 2024

Introduction: Last Friday evening we had a memorial for our colleague, friend, and mentor, Jim Ledwith. It was a moving service thanks to speakers like Liam Burke, Beth Mazyck, Eric Rosenthal, Phil Fournier, and Abigail Gyamfi. The entire night was made possible due to the hard work of Karen Rayla (and her friend Jackie), Pam Tero, Linda Hollis, Heather Garron, and Linda Cragin - thank you.

One of the moving moments of the night was the reading of Jim Ledwith's letter of acceptance when he took over as the Medical Director of the Epworth Free Clinic in 2011. Below we share with you what Jim wrote all those years ago - the words speak volumes to who he was. Also, one of the rooms at the Epworth Free Clinic was dedicated in his name. We have included a photo of the plaque that now hangs in the room.

We miss you, Jim. You were the best of us.

One more tribute to Jim - in his own words

By James Ledwith

February 9, 2011

Board of Directors
Worcester Evening Free Medical Services
Epworth United Methodist Church
64 Salisbury St.
Worcester, MA 01609

Dear Board Members:

It is a great pleasure and honor to formally accept your invitation to assume the role of Medical Director for the Epworth free clinic. I greatly appreciate the confidence that you express in me and I consider it an honor to work with the many selfless volunteers who serve the community in this important work.

I regret the delay in this letter, but I felt that it was very important to secure the full support of my department leadership. Last week, Dr. Dan Lasser, Chair of Family Medicine and Community Health gave his approval. He only requests that I provide an annual update on the work of the clinic. My work in the free clinic is an extension of the service work that our department and medical school provide in many corners of Worcester. I am especially pleased to take part in engaging medical students in volunteer service at the start of their training. I am proud that my colleagues in the department are such a visible part of Epworth's volunteer team.

While I may provide my primary clinic work at the Fitchburg Community Health Center, the service in the free clinic is a tremendously satisfying part of my professional life. Perhaps, if I don't err in my paraphrase of Jen McDonald, I like to work with people who see that there is work to be done, and just do it.

I am thankful to have been guided by the Christian Medical and Dental Society's 4% Solution Project aiming to commit 4% of my work to uncompensated care for the poor. Before coming to UMass in 2005, I was fortunate to be able to work with a group of volunteers at Tappahannock Memorial United Methodist Church in Tappahannock, VA who responded to a need and helped me organize the Tappahannock Free Clinic. I stay in contact with that clinic, and still provide its office space. Giving back to the community, especially in service to the underserved poor is an important part of my professional life. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to work with you in this effort.

I commit my most sincere efforts to guiding the clinic's policies, to serving its clients, and to assisting each of you in your work. I look forward to a very special journey with you.

Your servant, in Christ,

James J Ledwith, Jr MD FAFP

