



# Parish Nurse Newsletter

## Spring 2012

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## Mission Statement

The Parish Nurse Newsletter serves to:

- create a bond between parish nurses and the staff of LCMS Health Ministries
- report creative programs developed in the field
- inform parish nurses of resources available from various sources and encourage them in their vocation.



**Give Now**

## A message from Marcy

By Marcia Schnorr, RN, EdD  
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The spring issue of our *Parish Nurse Newsletter* is focusing on *hope*. Spring often brings hope as we observe the rebirth of grass, flowers and leaves. We observe the birth of animals and birds. We observe Easter.

In society we often hear people speaking of *hope* when *wishful thinking* would be more accurate. Parish nurses can, and do, bring a real and lasting hope to their congregants and others. We bring a faith-filled hope in Jesus that is evident in what we say and do. This issue offers hopeful outreaches through pink fire trucks, gardens, senior ministry and care for the grieving. It contains information on opportunities for you, the parish nurse, to renew your hope through Christ-centered parish nursing conferences, tours and servant events.

The remaining issues for this year will focus on *health* and *humor*. If you have ideas you would like to share, please contact me. I'd like to hear about them — and perhaps include them to share with others.

## Community gardening provides seeds of hope

By Julie Neff, RN  
District Parish Nursing Representative, Ohio District  
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A community garden offers many benefits to those who work in it and to the community around it. This is something I didn't realize when we started our community garden project a couple of years ago. It started as a passing conversation with a member of our congregation one morning after Sunday service. I could see where the parish nurse could weave a healthy note with fresh vegetables and decided to put an article in the church newsletter. The response was enough to get the tiller in working order and begin an adventure that has truly been a blessing and has offered many seeds of hope.



Parish nurse Julie Neff's great nephew is a big help in the community garden!

Gardens of any size bring people together, provide healthy food and teach our children a little more about growing up strong. Eating fresh is smart, offers a complete

nutritional package and tastes great. Sharing with neighbors and food pantries is a wonderful outreach of mercy, is an amazing feeling and you really can't beat the great exercise.

From the beginning we had interest generated throughout the congregation. Initially, one member brought in an article about Community Garden Grants that we applied for and received. This offset our initial start-up costs and enabled us to get rain barrels, a compost bin, enriched soil, new garden hoses and mulch for our playground. Before the grant money, we had nothing but land, and lots of it. The pieces started to fall together relatively easily once we did some research and decided on the best plan for our church.

The initial preparation of the land was hard work, but much-needed as our church was built on clay. We used a sod cutter, brought in new topsoil and tilled 10 initial plots. Our Sunday school kids got in the act with some veggie education and planted their own plot. That same Sunday we all stood in the garden after church and Pastor offered blessings as well as a lovely devotion. Then we celebrated with coffee and cake.

Since then, one of our families dedicated a garden bench from a memorial of a loved one, several pounds of produce were donated to the food pantry we serve and baskets of harvest were offered to everyone who entered our church. Our children helped weed and harvest and enjoyed fresh food. Multiple conversations were generated that have been a constant resource of education to us all. Neighbors stopped to chat when we were outside working. The playground mulch made the children's area safer, and our church looks much more community-friendly with a garden and new flower beds.

We are very hopeful that our community garden will continue. We have already offered a plot for this season to a group that meets at our church and will start making more contacts in the community for additional plots. Our future plans will incorporate the Boy Scouts by offering an Eagle project of building raised beds for additional space. This year will feature a pumpkin patch for a children's pumpkin ministry and, of course, watermelons for our church picnic.

All of this began with someone starting a conversation and planting a little seed of hope. Accomplishing this project will be an ongoing effort. It is truly a blessing for our church and one that I hope you consider for your congregation and community as well.



*Top to bottom: Robin and Julie accepting the grant money from the mayor of Columbus; Leslie and Robin working the garden; the mulch team.*

## The 'tsunami' is coming!

*By Catherine Lick, MSN, RN  
District Parish Nursing Representative, Michigan District  
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The "tsunami" is coming — formerly identified as the "Baby Boomers."

Have you noticed in your area an increase in the number of assisted living and rehabilitation facilities? These businesses have done their homework. They know the market will be there for their services in the coming years as the tsunami of baby boomers approaches its seventh decade.

Dave Gehm, president and CEO of Lutheran Homes of Michigan, recently did a presentation for the parish nurses and chaplains of the Michigan District. He showed the demographics of the last 60 years. In the '60s and '70s, the baby boomers were school age. Our churches responded by providing excellent educational resources for them and our churches prospered. Now, as this same group approaches their 70s, our churches need to respond by providing services and programs that will meet their needs. The other group emerging during this shift is an increase in the number of caregivers. To complicate matters many of the caregivers live great distances away from the seniors. In coming years most people will either be a senior or a caregiver. Dave asserted that the congregations that serve these two groups will be the churches that are vibrant and growing.

As parish nurses we have all experienced calls from a relative or friend . . . Mom fell last night, broke her hip, we need to find a rehab facility and don't know if she can return to her home. The level of one's education has no impact on how you cope with this situation. People who have no experience with healthcare resources often have no idea what questions to ask or what resources are available.

This is a great opportunity for our churches to have an impact on the lives of seniors and caregivers. We need to be places that provide love, care and hope for the future as we are being Christ's hands and feet in this world. Many of our churches are closing schools because of fewer children residing in their areas. Have they considered hiring a parish nurse to minister to the increased number of seniors?

Here are some ideas for services parish nurses and the church can provide for seniors and caregivers:

- **Education:** Classes on home safety, personal assistance devices, end-of-life preparation, assessment on when to move to an assisted living facility.
- **Advocacy:** Help seniors and caregivers ask questions of their healthcare providers regarding care or end of life decisions.
- **Referrals:** Provide referrals to trusted community and hospital resources for in-home assistance, homecare nursing, support groups.
- **Support Groups:** Provide referrals for, or having a caregiver support group to help prevent the "burn-out" which affects so many caregivers.
- **Volunteers:** Provide volunteers to help senior and caregivers with errands, home repairs, meals, transportation, respite.

We recently had a gentleman, Mike, whose wife, Linda, had Alzheimer's disease. They were long-time members of our church. Mike shared with me that he had never pictured himself as able to be a caregiver, but as Linda became more debilitated it was a role in which he found himself. In the beginning he refused help or offers to attend a support group, but as the task became more difficult he began attending a caregiver support group. He found understanding people who knew what he was experiencing, along with advice on how to handle various situations with Linda. Through the support group he was encouraged to contact the Alzheimer's Association, where he met with a counselor. She provided him invaluable assistance in using community resources and making difficult decisions as Linda's condition deteriorated. Members of the church also helped. Some came and sat with Linda so Mike could get out and take care of errands; some brought meals. His fishing and hunting buddies called weekly to check on him. Finally the decision was made for hospice care and Mike and Linda benefitted from the great support they provided. On a recent visit Mike told me he could never have fulfilled his marriage vow, of being faithful unto death, to Linda without the help and support he received. Linda went to be with her Lord and Mike sees his

## How to Support LCMS World Relief and Human Care

You can make a gift three ways:

1. **By mail** (gifts by check):  
LCMS World Relief and  
Human Care  
P.O. Box 66861  
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

*(Please make your check to LCMS World Relief and Human Care. If you want to designate a specific ministry, please mark that on the check notation line.)*

2. **By telephone** (credit card gifts):  
toll-free 1-888-930-4438

3. **Online** (credit card gifts):  
[www.lcms.org/givenow](http://www.lcms.org/givenow)

You can support the general work of WR-HC (by designating your gift for "where needed most") or you can designate a specific WR-HC project, category or ministry. Here are some examples of how your gift may be designated:

- **Where needed most:** These gifts can be used in any area that supports WR-HC ministry, including support for unexpected needs and opportunities to share Christ's mercy.
- **WR-HC projects include:** 1001 Orphans, Project 24, Building Homes and Hope in Haiti and Mercy Medical Teams.
- **General need categories include:** hunger, children, medical, water, education.
- **WR-HC ministries include:** Parish Nursing, Health Ministries, Life Ministries, Veterans of the Cross (impoverished church work retirees), Prison Ministry, Chaplaincy, Disaster Response, etc.



purpose as sharing his story and encouraging caregivers to seek the care and support available from the church and community.

I pray that our churches will be places that provide care and support to seniors and their caregivers. As we do this our communities will say "see how they love one another"!

## Christ-centered hope and cancer awareness

By Lani Walter, R.N, Parish Nurse  
Email: margieskidz@aol.com

As is typical of each October there are an abundance of cancer awareness events. Each one seems to use the same format: services offered by the local hospitals and diagnostic centers, a brief program, a give away and maybe a chance to enjoy a cup of coffee.

On Oct. 29, 2011, a different type of Cancer Awareness Event was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Belvidere, Ill. The Parish Nurse team at Immanuel sponsored this event, and while it did include the standard format, this community-wide opportunity included the hope that comes from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sharing stories of faith and inspiration, the members of the Survivor Panel focused on what it was like for them and their families as they faced the uncertainty of a cancer journey. The panel members represented those newly diagnosed and survivors of over 30 years. While supportive stories were offered on how to deal with the ravages of chemotherapy, there were testimonies shared on how their faith in Jesus persevered throughout. To further promote selected Bible verses, a PowerPoint presentation included the faces of survivors and those currently receiving treatment, concluding with John 3:16 in memory of those whose battle with cancer had ended.

At the conclusion of the event the Northern Illinois Guardian of the Pink Ribbon Fire Truck was present. It provided an opportunity for those in attendance to write an inspirational message on the truck: *When you have The Big "C" of Christ, everything else is a little "c."*

Pastor Allan Buss, senior pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Regional Vice President of the West District/NID, is also the chaplain for the Belvidere Fire Department. The attendance of the pink fire truck was a coordinated effort of the BFD and Immanuel Lutheran Church.

The 2012 event will be held on Oct. 27. For more information, contact:  
Lani Walter, R.N, Parish Nurse  
815-544-8058  
Immanuel Lutheran Church  
1225 E. Second St.  
Belvidere, IL 61008



Pastor Allan Buss is pictured fourth from the left with members of the BFD.

## A pastor's perspective: Why a parish nurse ministry in our congregation?

By Rev. Dan Teller  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Prospect Heights, Ill.  
Email: teller4ds@aol.com

Hymns and songs have come and gone throughout the history of the church. The Word of God contains some songs that are timeless in the context of life. The "Song of Moses" is recorded by the Holy Spirit in the book of Deuteronomy as being sung in the ears of the people of Israel. The song speaks of God being the only Rock, the only true God in the face of other gods.

One of the verses echoes in my ears, as a reminder of my first personal experience, of being cared for by the healing presence of God through a parish nurse in my congregation.

“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand” (Deut. 32:39 ESV).

It was the winter of 1997, and my beloved wife, Sharon, had recently visited various doctors and had undergone various tests concerning abnormalities in her breasts. We had been waiting in prayer and fear for news concerning the latest biopsies. A phone call came from Sharon’s doctor asking her to come to the office so they could discuss the findings of the biopsy. Sharon was at work, and I was at the NID office with Alan Klaas, meeting with LCMS evangelism executives concerning a grant request for the Great Lakes Great Commission Initiative, a five district outreach mentoring program.

Sharon called to let me know that the doctor had called. I told her I would leave the meeting and join her at the doctor’s office. Her response of faith was, “No, you stay in the meeting to get funds for GLGCI. I know that Jesus is my Savior, and that He will be with me no matter what news the doctor shares. You are trying to get funds to teach congregations how to reach those who do not know Jesus.”

At times as a husband, you face the challenge of wondering how to respond to a statement made by your wife. This was one of those times. What could I do?

I called the church and spoke with Sallyann, my administrative assistant and a retired nurse. I asked her to meet Sharon at the doctor’s office, to be with her, until the meeting was over and I was able to be there.

Sallyann’s presence was a great comfort to Sharon. Sallyann sat with her as the doctor explained that the biopsy disclosed bilateral stage four breast cancer, and that surgery, chemotherapy and radiation would be part of the treatment. Sallyann was able to listen and later explain to me what the doctor had said. She sat with Sharon until I arrived, comforting her, praying with her and listening to Sharon’s concerns and questions. Sallyann was God’s presence, holding Sharon in His hand during a difficult time. Sharon battled the cancer with God by her side, and I still have my beloved today!

In the years since, Sallyann and Fran have officially become parish nurses. They have expanded their ministry at our congregation, being the ones to hold people close to God in a ministry of compassion to our members and members of the community. Their roles as parish nurses, who work under the office of the pastor, as part of the priesthood of believers, has been filled with countless stories of how God has used them in ways that make use of their gifts and abilities.

Does your congregation have a parish nurse ministry? Contact me to discuss the possibility!

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and there is no god beside me; I  
kill and I make alive; I wound  
and I heal; and there is none that  
can deliver out of my hand.”  
(Deut. 32:39 ESV)*

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## Why should parish nurses care about the HHS Anti-Conscience Mandate?

By Maggie Karner  
Director, LCMS Life and Health Ministries  
Email: [maggie.karner@lcms.org](mailto:maggie.karner@lcms.org)

As you are aware, current events in healthcare reform are centering around the latest U.S. Health and Human Care Department (HHS) mandate for all religious employers and insurance plans to provide free birth control products (even those that can cause early abortions) to women. The LCMS is deeply concerned about this and is very active in advocacy against this mandate. We feel that this requirement is not only against our Biblical values that honor the sanctity of all human life from conception, but also an affront to our 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment right to religious freedom.

At stake is the left’s insistence that this is strictly a women’s health issue and is about gender equity, rather than our view that this is about religious freedom and an over-reaching government mandate to force religious insurance plans and employers to pay for things that go against our beliefs. If you haven’t already done so, please check out our informative web page here: [www.lcms.org/hhsmandate](http://www.lcms.org/hhsmandate). You can find LCMS President Rev. Matthew Harrison’s testimony before U.S. Congress on this important development in our nation’s history, in addition to an op-ed article I wrote for the publica-

tion *Christianity Today*. You can also watch my testimony on a women's panel at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C.

The LCMS is working arm-in-arm with other organizations on Capitol Hill and other religious denominations to take the same message to the public on this topic. Our immediate goal is to try to defer the red herring argument (all over the media) that this is only a women's issue and that women are being excluded from the debate on this topic in Washington. Instead, we must communicate to the public that this is a religious liberty issue and our ability to provide mercy as a church — according to our beliefs — is being threatened.

Despite the media's insistence that there was some sort of "accommodation" from the administration toward churches, this is simply not the case.

The mandate rule has not been changed and it is now final in the books. Religious institutions will still be required to furnish all forms of birth control (even those that can cause early abortions) to their employees. The only thing the "accommodation" did was provide a few extra months for churches to determine how they were going to follow the rule — essentially forcing churches to violate their conscience or pay a large penalty fine.

Along with the whole Christian church on earth, the LCMS believes in our responsibility to bring care and healing to a hurting society, to both body and soul. There is a theological name for that from the ancient Greek. It is called *diakonia*, which simply means "service." It is not charity; it is mercy. As you so well know, mercy is intrinsic to every Christian. It's not what we do. It's who we are. It is our identity. It is the mark of our church.

For religious people, mercy is not confined to our houses of worship. It is not about caring for ourselves. It is about caring for others, those outside the walls of the sanctuary and in the most needful areas of our society. The problem with this mandate is that it narrowly defines a church as including only the work that goes on inside the sanctuary and with services only administered to its members. This definition excludes all religious educational institutions and centers of religious mercy such as soup kitchens, religious social welfare centers and the like.

Faith-based organizations, no matter what denomination or creed, have a long history of serving their neighbors in need. Just as an example, there are thousands of faith-based non-profit hospitals across our nation that grew out of this legacy — caring people of faith living out Christ's call to care for the suffering among us. This is the foundation upon which our compassionate, modern American health-care delivery system has been built.

Faith-based organizations today have a vested interest in our society, and we have much to contribute for our future. We can be a valuable asset to the government as we help to address the many needs in our society. But we can only do so if we are



Photo © 2012 Chas Geer

*Maggie Karner takes part in a Feb. 27 panel discussion in Washington, D.C., sponsored by The Heritage Foundation and the National Review Institute. Karner was one of five women to address the controversial health-care mandate issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

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## Support LCMS Health Ministries

LCMS Health Ministries is an outreach of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. All programs of LCMS Health Ministries are funded strictly by donations from caring people like you. No dollars come from the Missouri Synod's unrestricted budget.

Your generous gift to the international and domestic work of LCMS Health Ministries will help to uphold the message of Christ's mercy to all in body and soul. [Click here to help.](#)

## News Welcomed!

We want to know what you're up to, what issues you are facing, and what programs are working in your congregation or agency! We welcome story suggestions, questions, short articles or photographs that highlight achievements in parish nursing.

If you have news you'd like to share, contact Dr. Marcia Schnorr at [marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com) or 815-562-6823.

*Please note: Editorial staff reserve the right to edit or decline articles.*

given the freedom to work within the framework of our beliefs. The HHS mandate does not allow that. It does not allow for the free exercise of our First Amendment religious rights.

Remember, this debate is not about contraception. Nobody is advocating for denial of access. Nobody is threatening women's health. Nobody is outlawing anything for the general population. Rather, this debate is about being forced to pay for products and services contrary to our religious beliefs. We cannot be expected to check our faith at the door.

In addition, the HHS mandate says much about the trajectory of movement on future issues of religious freedom and our ability to express our faith within society. We fear that this current mandate is just the tip of the iceberg, leading the way to more government intrusion in the expression of our religious beliefs.

Much work is being done currently on Capitol Hill as we work alongside our partners in this fight. There will be a number of congressional hearings from different congressional committees and we hope to see a number of bills proposed in both branches of congress that all legislators — from both sides of the aisle — will be able to support and pass.

In the meantime, please make yourselves aware of this important legislative battle and check in periodically for news at [www.lcms.org/hhsmandate](http://www.lcms.org/hhsmandate). You can also download a free informative bulletin insert for your congregation on this page. And please consider calling or writing your congress members to inform them of your opinions on this matter. If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call or write me.

## In the news

**The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Concordia Conference for Parish Nurse and Congregational Health Ministries** will be held May 30–June 2 at Concordia University Wisconsin (Mequon, Wis.) on the beautiful shore of Lake Michigan. The pre-conference (May 30) offers a presentation by Deaconess Leslie Haines, Major in Army Reserves and Director of Lutheran Military Veterans and Family's Ministries at Fort Wayne.



The Thursday morning keynote is by Dr. Marcia Schnorr (coordinator, LCMS Parish Nursing) and will compare the practice of parish nursing with the gift of singing. The afternoon keynote, "How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord?" is by the Rev. Dr. Daniel Paavola (Theology Professor at CUW). Several break-out sessions are available as well as an ice cream social sponsored by LCMS Health Ministries will complete the day.

The post-conference on Friday will be presented by Drs. Frank and Jamie Spikes on the theme, "Parish Nurse: Adult Teacher—Adult Learner." For more information or to register, contact Dr. Carol Lueders Bolwerk ([carol.luedersbolwerk@cuw.edu](mailto:carol.luedersbolwerk@cuw.edu)).



**The Annual Parish Nurse Ministry Team Outreach** to Bethlehem is scheduled for Nov. 23 to Dec. 1, 2012. This will be the seventh trip with a team of parish nurses (and others) to support the parish nurse and her ministry in Bethlehem and other villages in the West Bank (Palestine). LCMS parish nurses have provided in-service presentations, health education, health screenings, individual visits and the ministry of presence. The exact agenda for each trip is determined by the gifts of the participants and the needs in Bethlehem. Space is limited, so don't delay if interested. For more information, contact [marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com)

**Lutheran Parish Nurses International, NFP** is planning a study tour in Finland (Sept. 4–10). The theme will be "Health Promotion: A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body." Additional information and a registration form are available at [www.lpni.org](http://www.lpni.org). Contact [marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com) if you plan to participate and would like to travel with the participants from the United States.

**Scope and Standards of Practice Faith Community Nursing** (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (2012) is now available from [www.nursesbooks.org](http://www.nursesbooks.org) (the publishing program of American Nurses Association). All parish nurse offices (or parish nurses) should have a copy of this resource. There are minimal changes since the previous edition.

One area that often seems to confuse some of our parish nurses is the verbiage. *Faith Community Nursing* is the official name of the specialty because parish nurses serve various religious entities — some of which are uncomfortable with the word *parish*.

*Scope and Standards* does allow denominations and other entities to use alternate terms like *parish nurse*, *congregational nurse*, *health ministry nurse*, and others. The LCMS, the International Parish Nurse Resource Center and others continue to use the term *parish nurse* because of its history and the familiarity it offers to our members. The individual parish nurse, when citing credentials, would be more correct to use FCN rather than PN (Nancy Nurse, RN, FCN). The use of PNN is often used to signify *Parish Nurse Network* or *Parish Nurse Newsletter* and can continue to do so as a matter of personal preference with a particular group.

## Save the date/tell others — LCMS Life Conference

On Saturday, Jan. 26, 2013, LCMS Life Ministries will host a day-long pro-life conference in Washington, D.C., the day after the national March for Life on January 25. 2013 is a significant year that marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. The goal for the event is to encourage and equip pro-life Lutherans to get involved in the public square as advocates for life. The conference will feature prominent Lutheran speakers, such as LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, and other Lutherans working on Capitol Hill who are involved in pro-life outreach in the kingdom on the left and our government. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend this unprecedented LCMS conference for life. For more information, visit [www.lcmslife-conference.org](http://www.lcmslife-conference.org)



Mercy forever.

## LCMS World Relief and Human Care Health Ministries

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