



Brian Ray/The Cedar Rapids Gazette

# Parish Nurse Newsletter

## Fall 2010

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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.



## MESSAGE FROM MARCY

# Whatever Happened to Commitment?

*Marcia Schnorr, RN, EdD, CLM, FCN*

For the past few years our society has seen a decline in commitment. The rate of cohabitation has increased and society no longer even tries to pretend otherwise.

- ▶ Cohabitation is no longer just for the young; seniors also live together rather than marry. There is no “need” to commit to one another.
- ▶ Cohabitation has increased by 88% between 1990 and 2007.
- ▶ One-third of all first time marriages end in divorce.
- ▶ The drop-out rate in many of our school districts is alarmingly high. Over 1.2 million people drop out of school each year. It is reported that children and their parents are not committed to the importance of a good education.
- ▶ Workers fear making a commitment to the job because they fear failing.
- ▶ It can no longer be assumed that the youth in the church will be confirmed. If the schedule or format requires a decision between confirmation class and a sporting event, the sporting event often wins.
- ▶ Finding willing volunteers is a concern in the church and in secular organizations.
- ▶ We can no longer assume that athletes commit to training and fair play when steroid use is so common.

There are numerous other examples, but you get the idea. Commitment to anything but the self is fading away.

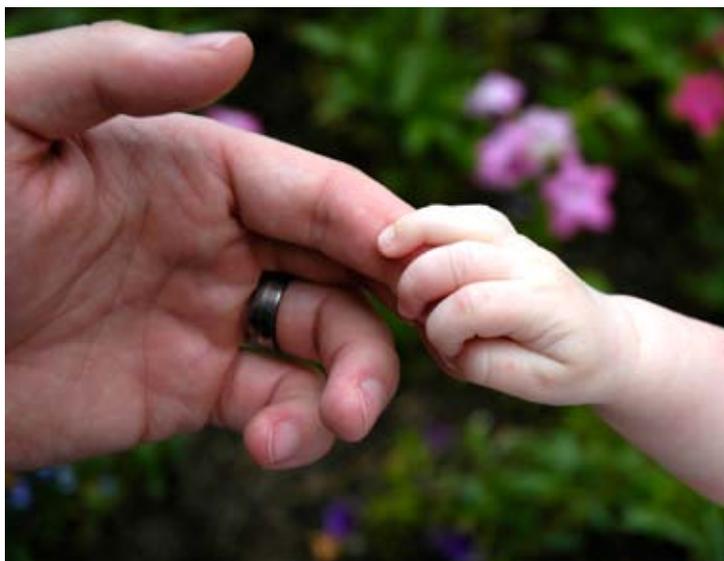
## Commitment Phobia

The decline of commitment has become so rampant that it has actually been given the “diagnostic label” — commitment phobia. A dictionary review defines *commitment* as to entrust, something pledged, a promise, a responsibility, loyalty (all positive traits) but also to be institutionalized (a negative experience). In spite of the many positive things that can be said for commitment, it often evokes “dis-ease”. A phobia is an irrational fear. But what are people afraid of?

Although commitment phobia is most commonly related to a fear of getting married, it can also be seen in any relationship between people. A closer look at commitment phobia suggests that people are afraid to commit for four main reasons.

- ▶ The individual may have a *fear* of being let down, being hurt, being taken for granted, or being trapped. This person has not learned to trust and is unwilling to give up control. There is a fear that personal needs will not be met.

- ▶ The individual may be *greedy* and want to use his/her time, money, and abilities however he/she wants. It is reasoned that hard work earned the money. It is reasoned that the hard work has earned the right to use time for personal interests. It is reasoned that if one is not paid for work it is not valued ... and everyone wants to be valued.
- ▶ The individual may be *angry*. The anger may or may not be justified. The anger is often displaced. Anger at a previous spouse may prevent commitment to a new spouse. Anger at a teacher may result in lack of commitment to studies. Anger at someone in the church may prevent the person from committing to the church. Not being adequately thanked for a previous task or donation may be the reason for not committing to give again.
- ▶ The individual may have a *fear of failure* so avoids making a commitment to a job (paid or unpaid). It is not understood that failure to act is also a failure.



*The individual who has not learned to trust people has also not learned to trust God.*

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## Commitment and Faith Development

Faith development begins in infancy. The development theory described by Erik Erikson takes the person from infancy to old age. Each stage builds on the previous one. According to Erikson the developmental task in infancy is “trust v. mistrust”. If the infant does not learn to trust the parent that is seen, it is difficult — if not impossible — to trust in God who is not seen.

James Fowler (well known for his work in faith development) describes the stages of faith development that take the individual from doing as they are told (right v. wrong) to making the commitment because of an internalized faith. Many never make it beyond the early stages. Commitment requires a personal desire — not just a fear of punishment or negative consequences for doing wrong.

The individual who has not learned to trust people has also not learned to trust God. Perhaps this is why trusting (commitment) in the church seems to be so difficult.

## Scriptural Review

Scripture includes much about commitment in the commandments and through teachings about living lives committed to Christ:

- ▶ “Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act” (Psalm 37:5, ESV).
- ▶ “Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Proverbs 16:3).
- ▶ “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

## Book Review

I just completed reading *The Christian Atheist* by Craig Groeschel. Although the book had nothing to say about parish nursing per se, it had much to say to us as individuals — including individual parish nurses. The final chapter, *When You Believe in God but Not in His Church*, has much to say about commitment, both to the church and to our vocation to serve.

- ▶ Some people say that pouring time, energy, and money into that weekly commitment [attending worship] is just a ritual that needlessly complicates our lives even more. (It makes sense when non-Christians say this, but even many “Christians” are asking the “why bother...” question.)
- ▶ Many Christian atheists commit only in part. Partial commitment is just another way of describing lack of commitment. Nurses know that one cannot be partly pregnant and one is not “borderline (partly) diabetic”. You either are or you are not.

## Implications for the Parish Nurse

Parish nurses have committed themselves to complete an educational program that lasts anywhere from a few days to a graduate degree — all after completing a basic nursing education (2-4 years). Some parish nurses have committed themselves to additional education (e.g. lay ministry, deaconess, Stephen Ministry, grief counseling, etc.).

- ▶ LCMS parish nurses have been asked to proclaim their commitment to serve the Lord and His church in a manner consistent with LCMS theology and practices.
- ▶ LCMS parish nurses (in congregations) have been asked to commit to serving in a team ministry with the pastor and to work with him to provide pastoral care to the congregants — and beyond.
- ▶ LCMS parish nurses have been asked to commit to providing leadership to others in their walk with the Lord.
- ▶ LCMS parish nurses have been asked to commit to a regular review of the parish nurse ministry for the purposes of improving the ministry and personal and professional growth.
- ▶ LCMS parish nurses have been asked to commit to continuing education to remain current and enhance their ministry.
- ▶ LCMS parish nurses are asked to commit to fostering their personal spiritual growth and development.
- ▶ LCMS parish nurses have publically stated their commitment at the time of their dedication (in a contract position) or at their commissioning (if they have also completed a lay ministry or deaconess program and have a call). Many parish nurses reaffirm this dedication during a St. Luke Day observation.
- ▶ LCMS parish nurses may be paid or unpaid staff, but their commitment is not contingent upon salary. It is based on their desire to serve others with Christ's love and mercy.
- ▶ Many LCMS parish nurses also have commitments to traditional nursing positions and family responsibilities, but this does not dilute their commitment to serve the Lord.
- ▶ Many LCMS parish nurses have committed to multiple roles within their congregation.



*Commitment has a negative connotation. And yet passion, enthusiasm and investment are all positive. What is the difference?*

I am not naïve enough to think that all LCMS parish nurses embrace all of these commitments, but it has been my observation that most are very committed to serving the Lord with their time, talents and treasures.

One of our parish nurses shared this thought: “Commitment has a negative connotation. And yet passion, enthusiasm and investment are all positive. What is the difference? Maybe that is what is wrong with us today: we don’t commit to anything and yet wonder why our passion and enthusiasm is lost. Food for thought!”

## Conclusion

LCMS parish nursing has entered its third decade (we are 21 years old). We have seen changes and will experience more. Either because of — or in spite of — the changes, LCMS parish nursing is moving forward. We have district representatives who are committed to support each other as they serve their unique districts. We have a parish nurse council that is committed to working together to provide a national working “think tank” while continuing to develop parish nursing and each parish nurse. We have quality parish nurse education available through Concordia University Wisconsin and its commitment to provide Christ-centered education in affordable and convenient modalities. We have a strong LCMS parish nurse presence on the new Lutheran Parish Nurses International organization, that is committed to sharing the healing Christ with Lutheran parish nurses in the global community.

We have experienced struggles in the past and we will experience more. Nevertheless, we move forward with courage and commitment. More specifically, I am committed:

- ▶ to serve and support LCMS parish nursing in its various opportunities and move us into the future. I consider it a pleasure and a privilege to represent LCMS parish nurses and to work together with our “sisterhood” of parish nurses both here in the U.S. and around the globe;
- ▶ to share God’s love through parish nursing with people in the local, national and international communities;
- ▶ to serve as certified lay minister-parish nurse in my home congregation (St. Paul Lutheran, Rochelle, Ill.), and;
- ▶ most of all, I am committed to be His disciple, to worship, study, and serve in whatever way the Lord leads.

I do not *have* to serve. I *get* to serve. I *want* to serve because I love the Lord ... and He first loved me. This is my commitment. I encourage you to make it yours as well.

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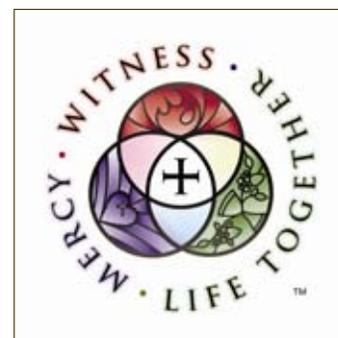
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## MESSAGE FROM MAGGIE

# Parish Nursing and Restructuring: What’s up?

By Maggie Karner

Director, LCMS Life and Health Ministries



As most of you know by now, delegates to the Synod’s 64<sup>th</sup> Regular Convention held this July in Houston approved many changes. In the midst of those monumental changes, I was thrilled that a delegation of our volunteer parish nurses were on-site in Houston at the LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WR-HC) exhibit booth to do stroke assessments, blood pressure checks and discuss the vocation of parish nursing with many who stopped by. But just as importantly, our gals were sharing the joy of caring physically and spiritually for others in Christ’s name! Each of them represented the very best of what parish nursing is all about, and I was so proud to say that I get to work alongside some pretty amazing women!

That said, I know the changes decided upon at the convention have left many unanswered questions about how our Synod (and specifically Parish Nursing) will proceed. But please know that one important aspect of our church remains strong: our LCMS mercy work.

To be more specific about the changes, delegates approved the realignment of LCMS programs under two mission boards, one each for domestic and international ministries. Since WR-HC includes both domestic and international mercy work, some programs ultimately may move under one of these two boards. This might get confusing in some areas such as Disaster Response and

Life Ministries which manage projects both here in the United States and overseas. (While we most often would characterize Parish Nursing as a domestic human care effort, it is interesting that the new Lutheran Parish Nurses International organization that has formed has also allowed us to look at how Parish Nursing can influence other missions and Lutheran church possibilities abroad.)

Our new Synod president and former WR-HC executive director Rev. Matthew Harrison, has stated that any future change will happen over time and not immediately: “Restructuring brings many challenges and questions for our Synod, which we will tackle with hard work and prayer. And I pray that as we work together, we also can equip our church to grow even stronger in what Lutherans are called to do — proclaim the Gospel and share acts of mercy that touch hurting people, today and for eternity.” It is with great joy that I reflect that President Harrison's statement is specifically what the vocation of parish nursing so deeply embodies — touching hurting people, both physically and spiritually, with the compassion and mercy of Christ!

As we strive to implement the restructuring mandated at the convention, the many generous donors, supporters and partners of WR-HC can rest assured that the **Synod's mercy work will continue and even expand**. In fact, according to President Harrison, the ministry of mercy will saturate and affect virtually all of the Synod's life. This is certainly an exciting time to be involved in the diakonic work of the church!

Certainly, we all have questions as a result of the convention actions. Huge changes in the church's structure were passed, and President Harrison and his transition team are now responsible for working through and implementing changes voted on in Houston. Because of these changes, the LCMS president is also responsible for the direction and implementation of all the work of the church's national office. It's a big job, and President Harrison can't do it alone. He will need a great deal of help in these monumental tasks. And that is where I ask for your assistance.

First of all, please **pray**. Pray for President Harrison and our Synod leaders as they face these monumental changes and strive to honor God in their decisions, even when things get hard. Pray that they will continue to focus completely on the cross and the sacrifice that Christ made there for us, enabling us through the forgiveness of sins to sacrifice ourselves for others.

Second, please **tell**. Tell others that LCMS World Relief and Human Care and the mercy work of the church is alive and kicking! In fact, you can assure them that we are undergoing a virtual “renaissance” of the proper role of mercy in the church. And parish nursing is at the forefront of this movement of mercy!

But here's something else I want you all to know: At heart, President Harrison is a pastor. Pastors listen and slowly, prayerfully make decisions. I've known our new Synod president for years, and I know that his standard, patient operating procedure is to take a long, deep breath, and then do his best to tackle the problems in front of him. I know he and his team will wrestle with the restructuring mandate, but I am completely confident that our Synod will continue to move forward in mercy and mission. In fact, one of Pastor Harrison's favorite sayings that he so often exclaims with that big, boisterous voice is, “It's a GREAT time to be Lutheran!” What he means, of course, is that God's guidance is most certainly upon our journey as a church body, and we are thankful that so many doors for mission and mercy have opened!

While there are some real questions about what parish nursing will look like or where it will land within the restructuring process, I can say with confidence that our Synod will continue to do what we Lutherans are called to do — reach out in **mercy and in mission** to body and soul needs.

People throughout the world still need physical assistance and spiritual care when their lives are turned upside down due to ill health, crisis or need.

The Board for Human Care Ministries (WR-HC's supervising program board) was eliminated at the convention in July, but it's important to understand that WR-HC's

## 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):

<http://givenowlcms.org>

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.

mercy work will continue to touch lives every day. The World Relief and Human Care name and “brand” (Mercy Forever) will continue to represent and stand for the mercy work of the Synod. The WR-HC staff continues to work hard to support you as we share Christ’s mercy with people in need alongside you in your individual vocation as a parish nurse.

You can also help us let people know that any gift previously designated to specific WR-HC ministries or projects will be used for that specific purpose. Likewise, any undesignated gift that someone gave to WR-HC (perhaps for “where needed most”) will be used for LCMS mercy work. And let’s not forget that any gifts in the future that are designated for a specific purpose, such as for Parish Nursing or Health Ministries, will be honored for that purpose. If you designated your gift for WR-HC, rest assured that it will support WR-HC mercy work. A WR-HC core value continues to be **integrity**. Amid the changes mandated at the LCMS convention, our church body’s national office will work with integrity to reach out in mission and mercy — ensuring honor and accountability to all our donors and partners.

So on behalf of all the people whose lives you have personally touched and for those you have helped WR-HC assist, I thank you. We at WR-HC consider you “on the front lines” of our mercy movement! With your prayers and ongoing support, our church’s work of **witness, mercy and life together** will grow! I am overjoyed at the possibilities ahead for the mercy work of the church and thrilled about how Parish Nursing can support and help fill that role of compassionate care more than ever! I pray for blessings and peace for each of you in the name of the Great Physician.

## COMMITMENT TO SERVING

# Are You Okay? Helping Church Families Prepare for Emergencies and Disaster

By Dottie Simon

*“Then I will cry, and the Lord will answer; I will cry for help, and He will say: “Here I AM” (Is. 58:9).*

Emergencies and disasters can strike anytime and in various ways, but the need and the advantage to being prepared is universal to all of these events. Living in Houston, Texas, we’ve seen firsthand the devastating effects of some of these disasters, especially floods and hurricanes, leading us out of love and concern for our church family to initiate some steps toward preparedness.

While discussing preparedness and evacuation plans with some of our members prior to recent hurricanes, the typical overwhelming response especially from our senior members was, “I will stay right here in my home.” According to the American Red Cross booklet, *Disaster Preparedness For Seniors By Seniors*, an important spiritual response to disaster is the need to be comforted by one’s spiritual leaders. The questions then became, how would we, pastor, parish nurses and others be able to meet this need? How would we know where and how to reach our people with God’s comfort and other help they might need when communication and other systems are compromised?

To help answer these questions, we developed the Emergency/Disaster Information Form to be completed, returned and kept on file at our church. We targeted those living alone, seniors and anyone with special needs or disabilities to provide the following information:

- ▶ Member’s name, address, phone, alternate phone;
- ▶ Emergency contact, relationship, phone, alternate phone;
- ▶ Other family contacts;
- ▶ Health information/special needs;
- ▶ Allergies;
- ▶ Medications;
- ▶ Pharmacy, phone;
- ▶ Primary physician, phone;
- ▶ Hospital of choice;
- ▶ Disaster plan (so follow-up might be made easier).

The American Red Cross, FEMA, and other agencies provide websites, booklets,

### LCMS Disaster Resources

LCMS Disaster Response, a ministry of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, offers free or low-cost disaster preparedness resources on its online store: [www.lcms.org/wrhcstore](http://www.lcms.org/wrhcstore). Find a training manual, t-shirts, bags for emergency kits, decals for flood buckets and more.

To learn more about LCMS Disaster Response, call 800-248-1930, ext. 1380 or visit [www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/dnews](http://www.lcms.org/ca/worldrelief/dnews).

and other resources to help all individuals and families prepare for emergencies and disasters.

The three steps to preparedness are:

- ▶ get (or make) a kit
- ▶ make a plan
- ▶ be informed.

In order to aid all of our members in awareness and in taking these steps, a number of these resources were made available through a disaster preparedness display board and information table on Sunday mornings. Booklets and information sheets, targeted to specific groups, along with explanations for follow-through, were made available and distributed. We used the following materials:

FEMA and/or American Red Cross booklets

- ▶ *Preparing for Disaster*;
- ▶ *Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Special Needs*
- ▶ *Disaster Preparedness For Seniors By Seniors*

Single information sheets

- ▶ *Health Notes, Emergency Preparedness*, (November 2009), by Marla Lichtsinn RN, MPA, CIC, FCN, Parish Nurse
- ▶ *Family Fire Plan, Prepare your Home and Family*, American Red Cross
- ▶ *Emergency Contact Card* (information includes out of town contact to be reached by all family members who might not be able to reach one another, and family meeting place outside the neighborhood), American Red Cross

The overall response has been positive and the completed Emergency/Disaster Information forms are coming back. Our goal is to keep this program flexible and growing as we continue to help our church family and others to be informed, get a kit and make a plan, always aware of God's ever-present love and care for us all through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Dottie Simon R.N., F.C.N., serves as parish nurse at Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas.*

## COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

# 21 Years, 4,500 Participants: A Historical Look at Parish Nurse Education

*By Carol A. Lueders Bolwerk*

Since 1989, we at Concordia University Wisconsin have been blessed in developing programs for registered nurses called to serve in their churches as parish nurses.

After receiving a grant from the former Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance, our team consisting of Marcy Schnorr, Julie Zersen, Rev. Howard Mueller who served as director of LCMS Health Ministries, Jamie Spikes and others developed a four-part series on parish nursing for nurses who could not travel to Concordia University Wisconsin for our week-long course on parish nursing. Shortly after, we also staged our first parish nurse conference, held in Chicago.

Over the next two decades educational conferences and workshops were offered yearly. In partnership, Concordia University Wisconsin and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have developed Christ-centered programs to serve nurses and others interested in parish nursing and congregational health.

Our 19th annual parish nurse conference will be held in Mequon,



Wis., in June 2011. It will focus on the spiritual development over the life span, with Rev. Dr. John Oberdeck presenting in our pre-conference. Dr. Marcy Schnorr, parish nurse coordinator for our synod will present the post-conference about the elderly and how parish nurses can serve this population. Over the years, we have had as many as 160 nurses at the annual conference representing 25 states. We have also attracted nurses from Finland, Canada, Australia, Africa and Palestine. Although attendance has declined due to the economic constraints that we face, usually about 100 participants attend the conference. I invite you to join us this coming year, and even to consider being a presenter for the annual conference.

Each year, Concordia University and LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WR-HC) host the LCMS district parish nurse representatives prior to the conference. This networking opportunity has developed friendships between parish nurses from across the country, and focuses on the latest information from the LCMS. LCMS WR-HC has been an integral part of our conferences, supporting parish nurses in their endeavors for ministry.

We have developed a team approach to our educational offerings. The original week-long course has evolved into a four-day intensive that has been offered two to three times yearly. Additionally, we continue to offer distance learning using the content that has been offered during the four day intensive. Our team consists of: Rev. Randy Raasch of First Immanuel Lutheran Church in Cedarburg, Wis.; Rev. Dr. Dan Paavola, Concordia University Wisconsin; and parish nurses Marcy Schnorr; Linda Phelps Golembiewski of St. Marcus Lutheran Church, Milwaukee; Carolyn Eiden of St. Mark's Church, Sheboygan, Wis.; and me. Together, we have developed a Christ-centered foundation for nurses interested in serving as parish nurses. Tools in the form of workbooks have been given to participants to help them establish a parish nurse ministry. Content includes 31 contact hours.

Each team member shares their expertise in different facets of parish nursing, using the five major roles of parish nurses as an organizing thread during the four days. Marcy presents the parish nurse as personal health counselor. I focus on the history of nursing, and the use of the nursing process in the ministry: assessing the congregation, planning programs to implementation and evaluation are underscored in establishing parish nursing. Both Linda and Carolyn share their personal journeys in parish nursing. Linda further comments on the ethical and legal aspects of nursing, and how to create a health fair. Teaching is a major component of parish nursing, and several workbooks on teaching have been developed. Clergy discuss theology of health and healing, the meaning of suffering, the healing ministry of Christ, and strategies to serve our parishioners. Another focus of the course is the wholistic aspect of health and healing integrating the mind, body and soul.

We estimate that over 4,500 nurses have participated in our programs over the years. God-willing, we will continue to offer such programs. I invite you to attend our conferences to gain not only new information, but also to network with other parish nurses, share resources and refresh your enthusiasm for your ministry.

If you are interested in our programs, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Marcy Schnorr at 815-562-2744 or [marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com), or me at [carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu](mailto:carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu) or call at 262-243-4233.

*Carol A. Lueders Bolwerk, serves as director of Parish Nurse Ministries at Concordia University Wisconsin.*

## How to Subscribe

To subscribe to the *LCMS Parish Nurse Newsletter*, register online at [www.lcms.org/enews](http://www.lcms.org/enews). Select *LCMS Parish Nurse Newsletter* from among the "LCMS World Relief and Human Care" newsletters.

To receive this newsletter in printed form, please send your request along with your current address to:

*LCMS World Relief and Human Care*  
Attn: Parish Nurse Newsletter  
1333 S. Kirkwood Rd.  
St. Louis, MO 63122

## 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 make a tremendous difference and 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 big 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.*

## PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

## A Healing Community

By Rev. Dr. Richard Thompson

A Christian congregation serves as a powerful therapeutic community when it develops its various resources for reaching out to those in need. As the church goes about its work of providing the blessings of Word Sacrament, it will also ideally provide a sense of family or community. In this outreach, it will discover individuals who are blessed with various kinds of gifts, each to be used for "the common good." Among those gifts referred to by the apostle Paul is the gift of healing.

- ▶ "...to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit ..." (1 Cor. 12:9).
- ▶ "...and in the church God has appointed ... also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others ..." (1 Cor. 12:28).
- ▶ "...do all have the gift of healing?" (1 Cor. 12:30).

The very manner and presence of these persons, with these gifts, brings comfort to the depressed, the lonely, the fearful, the anxious and the frustrated. They represent the wholeness of God's redeemed community to the sick as they speak the words of reconciliation with which God has entrusted his people. Healing is a part of the total ministry of the church as it is carried out under the guidance of the pastor.

I was blessed by the assistance of a parish nurse in two congregations where I served as pastor of God's people. So many times when I was providing Word and Sacrament ministry to people, I had the sense that I was missing something in serving the physical needs of those to whom I was ministering. Having a person with the assessment skills of a professional nurse proved to be an invaluable assistance for understanding a person's physical and spiritual needs.

Such a healing ministry takes place as a congregation exercises its responsibility of intercession and makes use of the resources in the community in caring for the whole person. The prayers spoken for the sick in public worship provide an opportunity for members of the Body of Christ to share the burden of those who are in need. The whole congregation joins in public intercession as well as having the chance to take the names of those so burdened into their own private devotions.

In ways like this, the church shows itself to be a healing community, surrounding the sick and the hurting with the Word and with the prayers of many persons made righteous through Christ. Here we see the vocation of the Christian congregation as together we carry the burdens of men to the throne of God's grace and share the announcement of the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting in the name of Jesus.

In the tenth chapter of Luke's gospel it is recorded that our Lord sent out "seventy two others, and sent them out two by two ahead of him to every town he was about to enter." Among the many things they were instructed to do there was this, "Heal the sick and tell them, the Kingdom of God is near you." I have found working with parish nurses to be most helpful in accomplishing this task and releasing the love of Christ into the lives of those in need.

*Dr. Thompson of Billings, Mont., is a long-time supporter of parish nursing and served on the LCMS Board of Directors. He now serves as pastoral advisor for the LCMS Parish Nurse Council.*

## Introducing the LCMS Parish Nurse Council

As we enter the third decade of LCMS parish nursing, a council has been appointed to work with Dr. Marcia Schnorr, coordinator of Parish Nursing, to enhance and expand parish nursing as a mission of mercy within the congregation, community and world. The council will serve as an active "think tank" as well as an on-going opportunity to review, reflect and renew our commitment to serving the Lord and His people.

Members of the council are:

- ▶ Marcia Schnorr: Coordinator, Parish Nursing (LCMS World Relief and Human Care)
- ▶ Maggie Karner: Director, Life and Health Ministries (LCMS World Relief and Human Care)
- ▶ Sandy Burris: Assistant Asia and Life and Health Ministries (LCMS World Relief and Human Care)
- ▶ Carol Lueders Bolwerk: Director Parish Nurse Program (Concordia University Wisconsin)

- ▶ Patty Criscenzo: District Representative (New Jersey)
- ▶ Karen Hardecopf: District Representative (Northern Illinois)
- ▶ Hope Knight: District Representative (Oklahoma)
- ▶ Susan Neff: District Representative (English)
- ▶ Jamie Spikes: Parish Nurse Consultant (Kansas)
- ▶ Rev. Dr. Richard Thompson: Pastoral Advisor (Montana)

The members of the council bring a wide base of experience in LCMS Parish Nursing. The district representatives also represent a cross section of the United States. Dr. Spikes and Rev. Dr. Richard Thompson have served on previous think tanks and have been advocates for Christ-centered parish nursing consistent with LCMS theology throughout the entire history of LCMS parish nursing. Dr. Lueders Bolwerk served on the original advisory cabinet for parish nurse education at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) before accepting the position as the school's director of Parish Nurse Ministry. Dr. Schnorr has served as the coordinator of LCMS Parish Nursing throughout its entire history.

In addition to their district or national roles, each of the parish nurses on the council also serves in their home congregations. Several of the members of the council have participated in an international mission of mercy or have served on the board for Lutheran Parish Nurses International (LPNI).

Highlights from the most recent meeting all centered on commitment — as are reflected in the articles in this newsletter. Commitment to education is a priority — emphasizing the need for theological education that is consistent with LCMS beliefs and practices. A commitment was made to provide up-to-date resources that can be used to promote and support parish nursing. A commitment was made to provide information to parish nurses about opportunities for short-term service in international missions of mercy.

Plans were made for the 2011 meeting of the district representatives, the annual ice cream social at the Concordia Conference, and the opportunity to exhibit at the 2011 National Convention for LWML.

## Parish Nurses a Hit at LCMS Convention



Parish Nurses provided stroke screening to conventioners in July at the LCMS Convention in Houston. In addition to serving those who were screened, this simple screening tool demonstrated one of the many activities that parish nurses can perform in their own congregations.

“The health screenings done by Parish Nurse volunteers were among the biggest draws at our booth. They stayed really busy doing hundreds of screenings!” said Al Dowbnia, director of Communication Services for LCMS World Relief and Human Care, who oversaw the ministry's presence at convention.

*Two of the Parish Nurse volunteers take a well-deserved break at the LCMS World Relief and Human Care booth. They, along with other PN volunteers, completed hundreds of health screenings during exhibit hours at Synodical Convention in Houston last July.*

## Lutheran Parish Nurses International

The new organization, Lutheran Parish Nurses International, is a network of Lutheran parish nurses and others interested in promoting the vocation of Lutheran parish nursing within an international context. Although no Lutheran denomination holds a majority of members, the LCMS has the largest representation.

LPNI is a 501(c)3 organization and has begun the application process for consideration as a Recognized Service Organization within the LCMS.

For more information about LPNI visit the website [www.lpni.org](http://www.lpni.org) where you will find a new health topic and devotion featured each month. More extensive educational papers are included that could be useful for individual or small group study.

## Conferences/Events

The **19th Annual Parish Nurse Conference** will be held in Mequon, Wis., June 2011. It will focus on the spiritual development over the life span, with Rev. Dr. John Oberdeck presenting in our pre-conference. Dr. Marcy Schnorr, parish nurse coordinator for our synod, will present the post-conference about the elderly and how parish nurses can serve this population.

**Another opportunity to celebrate!** Raeda Mansour, parish nurse in Bethlehem, will be attending the Concordia Conference this year. At the annual LCMS sponsored ice cream social we will recognize Raeda and give thanks to God for five years of parish nursing in Bethlehem — and the blessings that many LCMS parish nurses have had as they have either participated in one of the teams to Bethlehem or heard her story at a previous Concordia Conference.

If you would like to help celebrate in Bethlehem, there are spaces available on the team traveling Nov. 25 – Dec. 2, 2011. Although this is a year away, the team needs to be finalized soon. If you are interested in being a part of the team, contact Marcy Schnorr at [marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com).

The **Lutheran Parish Nurses International (LPNI)** study trip to Australia (under the theme HisStory) will be Sept. 6-13. Participants may plan their own travel and leave earlier and stay later — or may be part of a group leaving Sept. 4 from Chicago. If you are interested, please contact Lynette Wiebusch at [lynette.wiebusch@lca.org.au](mailto:lynette.wiebusch@lca.org.au). Space is limited and registrations will be on a first come, first served basis.

**Meetings in Finland:** Marcia Schnorr, coordinator of LCMS Parish Nursing, has been invited to speak to a conference of diaconal nurses (parish nurses), teach a class of diaconal nurses and meet with representatives from the Lutheran Church Finland to share information about parish nursing in the United States — especially within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## Resources

Visit the **Lutheran Parish Nurses International website**, [www.lpni.org](http://www.lpni.org), for educational papers for personal study or group discussion, as well as a health topic and devotion that change at the beginning of each month.

**Worship for shut-ins** is televised and available by computer at [www.worshipforshutins.org](http://www.worshipforshutins.org). It is a resource that many homebound persons find as a source of comfort. Parish nurses may want to share the information with those whom they serve.

**Lutheran Parish Nurses International** may be selected as a recipient of *Thrivent Choice* program donations. If you qualify as a donor in this program, please consider making LPNI your choice. The non-profit is registered in Rochelle, Ill.

The **summer 2010 issue** of *Caring Connections*, the inter-Lutheran journal for practitioners and teachers of pastoral care and counseling, is dedicated to parish nursing and features a number of LCMS parish nurses. Find the issue at [www.caringconnections.org](http://www.caringconnections.org).



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