

Education Requirements

Registered nurses who wish to become parish nurses are encouraged to participate in a parish nurse preparation program that includes the LCMS theological component.

On and off-site parish nursing preparation programs:

Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis.

1-888-628-9472

www.cuw.edu/Programs/parishnursing



“Parish nursing is part of the Great Commission. We, as parish nurses, can witness to the Gospel message. In the Lutheran faith, we know that it is only in Christ and His Word that we can find healing and wholeness from the brokenness we all feel.”

Carol A. Lueders Bolwerk, R.N., Ph.D.

Director of Parish Nurse Ministries

Concordia University Wisconsin

A Parish Nursing Leader

In 1988, the LCMS became the first church body to name a national parish nurse coordinator: Dr. Marcia Schnorr. Today, the Synod is recognized as a trailblazing leader in this caring ministry.

The vocation of parish nursing in the LCMS is coordinated and promoted under the ministry of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Under this leadership, a Parish Nurse Council serves as a resource for the Parish Nurse District Representatives and is a catalyst for coordinating the national and international opportunities for LCMS parish nurses.



To learn more about parish nursing, contact:

Maggie Karner

Director, Life and Health Ministries

LCMS World Relief and Human Care

800-248-1930, ext. 1371

Maggie.Karner@lcms.org

The mission of the church through LCMS World Relief and Human Care is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by and in the clear name of Christ and His Gospel and according to the beautiful Lutheran confession of the faith.

To learn more about LCMS World Relief and Human Care, visit www.lcms.org/worldrelief or call 800-248-1930, ext. 1380.

Parish Nursing

*Caring
for body and soul*



What Is a Parish Nurse?

Following the example of Christ, the church has always sought to care for people, body and soul. As in the ministry of Jesus, so also in the church's life, the proclamation of the Gospel and care for earthly needs of those who are hurting go hand in hand.

"By this we know love, that Christ laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."

1 John 3:16f

The New Testament gives ample witness to the church's corporate life of mercy (Acts 6; 2 Cor. 8-9). The parish nurse is a vital, contemporary expression of this mercy and compassion.

The roots of parish nursing are ancient. Modern expressions in Lutheran churches in the United States date to the early 1800s. The parish nursing movement has grown tremendously in recent years. Parish nurses in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod enjoy

a vocation that allows them to provide professional health care in the context of faith in Christ and His church.

By sharing in Christ's healing love to persons of all ages, parish nurses promote a stewardship of health. Concern for the whole person makes parish nursing a wonderful complement to good, pastoral care and assists the body of Christ in outreach to their communities.

How Do Parish Nurses Serve?

Parish nurses tailor their duties to fit the needs of their congregations and communities. Their responsibilities may include:

1. Health Education
 - Offering health screenings and services (blood pressure checks, flu shots).
 - Providing classes on health and safety issues (CPR, infant/child safety, caring for the caregiver).
 - Facilitating support groups.
 - Coordinating health fairs.
2. Personal Health Counseling
 - Meeting patients one-on-one to discuss health concerns and assess emotional and spiritual needs.
 - Encouraging stewardship of body, mind and spirit.
3. Liaison to Community Health Resources
 - Making referrals, when needed, to health care providers and social services.
 - Initiating a congregation response to a community crisis.
4. Coordinator of Volunteers
 - Arranging transportation assistance, visits to shut-ins, meals for families during difficult times.
 - Serving as the liaison to a congregation's human care or social ministry committee.
5. Integrator of Faith and Healing
 - Providing Christ-centered care throughout the many health advocate roles of a parish nurse.
 - Encourage and assist the congregation as they share the Gospel in both Word and deed.
 - Assist pastoral staff with parishioner visitations as needed and in appropriate support for other family caregivers.
 - Resource for information and education on healthcare decision-making within a Lutheran Christian context.
 - Mentors church staff members in establishing and maintaining good health habits in the face of job stress and increased time demands.

President Harrison on the Role of the Parish Nurse

"The parish nurse is an invaluable asset to the pastoral staff. The parish nurse provides Christian-to-Christian care and spiritual concern while addressing medical and often psychological needs. Parish nurses can provide care for Christian women that is not possible for a pastor to provide. Providing professional care, the parish nurse takes many issues off the plate of the pastoral staff, making sure hurting people don't 'fall through the cracks.' The parish nurse is also a wonderful extension of the eyes and ears of the congregation's shepherd, making sure the pastor knows when a member of the flock is in special need of pastoral attention. Of all the many tasks we have at LCMS World Relief and Human Care, providing resources for parish nursing is one of the most vital."

Rev. Matthew Harrison
President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Parish Nurse Compensation

Hours and compensation vary among congregations. Some parish nurses are salaried; some are volunteer. Some compensation for expenses is encouraged. Regardless of the compensation, the parish nurse should be considered part of the church staff.