



Parish Nurse Newsletter



Summer 2011

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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.



Mercy forever.



Message from Marcy

Evangelism is a word that makes many people nervous. It conjures up images of the door-to-door missionaries of some religious sects who we dread seeing come to our door. We may also think of the “Bible-thumping mad man” who stands on the urban street corner or we may envision the televangelist who offers cures in exchange for cash. While these may all be considered by some to be evangelism, they are not necessarily Christ-centered and they are not people sensitive.

Evangelism is sharing the Good News with others. It is being a witness. It is caring about the souls of others. It is impossible to not be a witness. The question is the focus of our witness. Parish nurses have the distinct opportunity to share Jesus as they reach out with mercy to hurting souls in the congregation, the community and the world. As we build healing relationships with others, we share the love of God and the reason for our acts of mercy. Some call this “side-door evangelism” or “caring evangelism.” Others just call it parish nursing.

Marcia Schnorr serves as coordinator of parish nursing with LCMS Health Ministries.

Thanks to Our Military Service Members

We recently observed Memorial Day and while the focus is on military servicemen and women who have given their lives, we also remember the many people who served so we may enjoy our freedom. Last year I asked if there were any parish nurses who had served in the military and received the names of several; there are probably others. Thanks to each of you who served in any branch of our military at any time. Thanks also to those who stayed at home and kept the “home fires burning” while a loved one was serving.



Renewing, Reviewing, Reflecting, Responding: Annual 'Parish Nurse Week' at Concordia University Wisconsin

By Marcia Schnorr

For many years, parish nurses from across the United States have returned to Concordia University Wisconsin over Memorial Day weekend for annual meetings. This year was no different.

On May 31–June 1, parish nurse district representatives met with LCMS Parish Nurse Ministry Coordinator Marcia Schnorr and Life and Health Ministries Director Maggie Karner to examine the theme, *Commitment to Serve*. LCMS Health Ministries continued its commitment to value and endorse parish nursing as a vocation. District representatives committed to promote, support and encourage educational opportunities as they represent LCMS parish nursing in the congregation, community and the world.

Raida Mansour, parish nurse at Christmas Lutheran Church and Dyar Consortium in Bethlehem, Palestine, attended as a fellow parish nurse committed to serving the Lord and His people in Bethlehem and other villages in the West Bank. Parish nursing in Bethlehem is celebrating five years of blessings this year. It has been my privilege and pleasure to play a role in initiating, educating and developing parish nursing in Bethlehem and beyond. At the same time, it has been a joy to share this experience with many LCMS parish nurses and others. The ice cream social on June 2, hosted by LCMS Health Ministries, was used to celebrate and give thanks to God, and to recognize Mansour for her exemplary service and dedication.

Shortly after the conclusion of the conference, the quarterly meeting of the Board for Management of Lutheran Parish Nurses International (LPNI) met with on-site and online participants from the United States, Palestine and Finland. LPNI is a network of Lutheran parish nurses and others interested in parish nursing in the United States, Australia, Finland, Palestine, Canada and others. For more information, visit www.lpni.org.



Parish nurses from across the United States met June 1-3 under the theme, "Trust in the Lord." The conference included devotions, keynote speakers, break-out sessions, exhibits and networking opportunities. Participants were provided with practical theology for parish nursing, an overview of unique congregational and community services, as well as an update from Bethlehem.

Pastor's Perspective: 'Many Parts, One Body'

By Thomas Eggold

In 1 Cor. 12:12 (NIV) the Apostle Paul writes, "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body."

I serve as the senior pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, a large urban congregation in Fort Wayne, Ind. For more than 10 years this truth about the body of Christ has been made abundantly clear to me through the ministry of our parish nurse, Lana Hille.

A longtime member of Emmanuel, Lana joined the church staff in the late 1990s after a successful career as a registered nurse and administrator. Because of her exceptional and unique gifts, Lana's role at Emmanuel has grown over the years to include many facets of the day-to-day operational needs of the church including congregational administration, and yet the focus of her work is still grounded in providing wholistic care for the people of God.

Lana coordinates our pastoral visitation, often using her medical background to provide our staff with guidance on our visits to the sick and dying. She works with members who are experiencing a crisis in their lives. She serves as a first responder to the

many hurting people who walk through our door on a daily basis, and her expertise in health and human care paves the way for the spiritual care that Christ has called the church to provide.

In addition to her frontline role in caring for people in times of crisis, Lana oversees our Stephen Ministry program. Under her leadership, this ministry has helped to create a culture of Christian care giving that has permeated the congregation and given our people an understanding of Christ's calling to love one another by bearing each other's burdens. The Stephen Ministry program at Emmanuel is a model for the other components of our ministry plan.

One of the other ways the Lord has built up our body through Lana is the presence of a competent and professional female staff member. She has given our congregation a marvelous example of the important ways the Lord ministers to and through women of the church. Lana is a spiritual leader and role model for the women of our congregation. Her perspective provides our pastoral staff with invaluable insights that assist our work.

Most importantly, Lana's ministry enables the church to make a clear proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At Emmanuel we often say that we are a caring family sharing God's love and forgiveness and, in so many ways, Lana embodies the care we are called to provide as members of Christ's body in this place. Her ministry of mercy opens ears to hear the life-saving, live-giving Gospel of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus.

John writes, "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us" (1 John 4:10-12). Lana is the face of love of at Emmanuel. Her faithful example and tireless service have encouraged and equipped the rest of the body to joyfully serve in the way God has called them. I can't imagine life in the ministry without Lana and I thank God for the gift that she is to the body of Jesus Christ at Emmanuel.

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Community Outreach from a Parish Nurse Office

By Cynthia Rutan

For me, this year has been one of re-learning how to be a child of God in action! A breast cancer diagnosis in September 2010 brought every aspect of my life to a screeching halt. Nine months later, I am looking back at ways that the Lord held me, used me and opened so many doors.

It is so easy to become so involved in the established daily routine that sometimes it takes a jolt to open eyes and ears to how the Lord wants us to serve our community outside the parish as well as our church family.

I was networking with the hospital chaplain intern at our local non-faith-based community hospital in September, brainstorming ways that parish nurses in the community could be part of the pastoral care services offered there. A short time later my diagnosis brought the meetings to a halt. In January, I had two calls in one week from nurses in the local community and another call from a hospice nurse at the hospital — all wanting to talk about parish nursing! We met and two are taking a parish nurse certification class this month at Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Wash. All three found me through the chaplain intern!

A homeless teen mother came to an event at a church in my community and was referred to me by another teen mom who had attended our church through confirmation and had not been attending. The two of them came to see me and we enjoyed babies and parenting stories. The homeless mom (couch surfing) had visited a local establishment that provided emergency shelter for teens and returned there that night. A few days later I had a visit from the owner of the coffee shop/shelter, and from that visit our church is now part of a group of community churches that serve an evening meal once a month to about 25 teens at the Coffee Oasis. I noticed that the library shelves were pretty dismal there, and our church library is house cleaning before moving to a new area, so the librarian and several parents from our school have provided children's books, teen reading and some lap quilts for snuggling in with a book at the Oasis.

We are in touch with many military families in our community and through the casual conversations with one of our members who works at the naval regional hospital here, I heard about an ingathering of things to help families who are dealing with deployment or return from deployment readjustment. I play piano for a senior center singing group and one of them rallied a group of grandmas and grandpas to sponsor and accompany outings for these moms and children when dad is deployed. They have a basket each Monday at practice, and collect items that are on the list at the hospital. So many doors of awareness have been opened!

What does this have to do with parish nursing, you ask? The obvious result is two more parish nurses in our community. The two teen moms are sharing child care so they can study and finish their high school education. They are the core of a new support group at the local Catholic parish around the corner from my church and school thanks to one of our school parents, and are working with a school nurse weekly to help other teen moms. Plus, they are hoping to help with the older elementary children at our VBS. The homeless teen has found a home through our resources, and is attending church at her faith community. Our congregation meal service has led to informal sessions on healthy eating when we deliver the meal, networking a teen to the local health department for diabetes care, hygiene talks and a blood pressure screening where we discovered a hypertension issue in a 19-year-old caused by a thyroid disorder.

Walking in faith, listening to our neighbors, offering to share of our self and our possessions — all have created a much greater awareness of the gifts we have and the ways we can share. Our community is full of opportunities, and one small act can open so many doors.

Oh, almost forgot — the radiation oncology nurse has set me up to talk about parish nursing at the next nurses meeting and the chaplains have been invited to attend as well as the social workers!

Body, mind and spirit working together can move mountains! I pray each of you will look for the unscheduled moment, the “out of box” opportunity and are moved into paths of humble service for His sake. Reach out!

I rejoice that God has filled my struggling moments with blessings and my body with new strengths.

Cynthia Rutan serves as the LCMS Northwest District Parish Nurse Representative.

From Neighborhood Newspapers to the Associated Press: Student Nurses with Parish Nurses in the Community

By Jamie Spikes

It started rather humbly when I was working in a dual-role appointment between a major university school of nursing and a large Lutheran church in St. Louis. I was a professor two days of the week and a parish nurse/program director for three or more days a week since our chapter groups met on weekends. While doing this I sent several articles to local neighborhood newspapers about activities that registered nurse students and I were doing with pregnant and parenting teens and their families. Parish nursing was not well recognized in the area at the time, and programs for our adolescent population were not well known either. It was not easy to get information published, but we often had attractive photos of the students and our teens to include with the informative articles so we did get some articles published; few though they were.

Parish Nurse Educator Jamie Spikes submitted photos like this to local newspapers to gain exposure of parish nursing. Pictured here are an R.N., B.S.N. student, project director, a volunteer with a baby and a nontraditional B.S.N. student.



Then I started giving community presentations on parish nursing, expanding the awareness of health ministries, parish nurse ministries, congregational nursing, whole person wellness and what is more recently being called faith community nursing. Again, because of the novelty of the concept, I continued to submit articles and photos about parish nursing and activities where registered nurse students participated. Again, some of these were printed in neighborhood newspapers and we expanded our submissions to religiously-based local and regional publications.

At the university, I became more involved in community health and family nursing. This prompted my search for textbooks on the topics that included parish nursing and churches as providers and institutions for health education. None were found. As time progressed the textbooks began to print a paragraph or so on parish nursing. Today, I am happy to report that in most of the current community health nursing textbooks there are several pages dedicated to faith community nursing. Further, because churches are seen as community health settings and parish nurses as providers of care for community health nursing, churches and parish nurses are considered legitimate sites and preceptors for student experiences.

Currently, as a community and transcultural nursing professor in Kansas, I place baccalaureate and registered nurse student nurses with four parish nurses and health ministers. I review with the parish nurses the objectives of the course, and I try to place the student nurses in churches of their own denominations. The students have provided excellent feedback that this is an eye-opening and enjoyable clinical experience. After the experience, some students have volunteered to further help with all-congregational health fairs, youth fairs and blood pressure screenings.

In Salina, Kan., a local news reporter asked one of the parish nurses if she would be willing to have her parish nursing story told and to be followed for a day for some firsthand experiences. This happened to be a day that the parish nurse was a preceptor for a student nurse. I did not know of this before the experience, but when asked, the student said it was fine with her to be with the nurse on the designated day for reporting and photographing. That week, the student shared in clinical conference about her day. She had a wonderful time with the parish nurse, a woman parishioner, the reporter and the photographer. In a week or so when the article was published, the lead photo was of the student nurse taking blood pressure of the homebound congregation member. Then the real fun began. The photo and an abstracted story were picked up by the Associated Press, and the photo of the student nurse "went national." I received telephone calls and newspaper clippings from friends in several other states. While I was not mentioned in the article, personal and professional friends knew that I was the professor of nursing teaching the course at the university mentioned in the article. The student received phone calls and newspaper clippings from family and friends in several states, too. What a wonderful experience.

This story adds to the body of evidence that parish nursing is a legitimate specialty in community health nursing, and that parish nurses are bonafide preceptors for student nurses. This is one of the few settings where students witness the articulate delivery of genuine spiritual nursing care. Parish nurses are open and comfortable with the role of spiritual caregiver, and thus provide for student nurses a rare glimpse into the value of spiritual care for congregation members. Be it humble or grandiose, may all of us continue to seek out or create opportunities presented in our communities by print media as well as televised and electronic medium to promote and highlight parish nursing/faith community nursing as the extension of Christ's healing ministry.



A B.S.N. student from Kansas gains experience and credit while on assisting a parish nurse during a home visit. "It was quite a thrill to know that this [photo] was in USA Today," said Jamie Spikes, who oversees the student program.

Support Groups Reach Out to the Community

By Catherine Lick

In my 19 years of parish nursing, I have found support groups to be a wonderful way to let the love and care of Christ reach out to our community. Over the years we have offered many different support groups: addiction, caregiver support, co-dependency, weight loss, grief and divorce. At the present time, we are offering GriefShare and DivorceCare. Time and resources have impacted the ability to offer other groups, but if a church wants to offer support groups, I would recommend grief and divorce since they are the two areas that affect most peoples' lives.

There are many wonderful stories about how the ministry of these groups impacts lives. A staff member shared that when her parents divorced, she encouraged her dad to attend DivorceCare at our church. Through this group, he came to know Jesus as his Savior. He is now an active member of our church. A Lutheran teacher from another congregation attended the group when going through a divorce because he was looking for anonymity, which he would not have at his church. The search for confidentiality also affects GriefShare, as most of the people attending come from the community.

These support groups also create ministry opportunities for our members. When a person experiences a difficult loss through death or divorce, the last task is finding meaning or purpose in the suffering they endured. Many of our facilitators have come through divorce or the loss of loved ones. They have found that helping others helped them heal.

Both GriefShare and DivorceCare have websites where people can find a group near their home. Last year an older gentleman came to the group after his daughter, who lived in Virginia, found our group on the website.

Having support groups provides an opportunity for our members to invite co-workers, friends or family who may not attend worship, but when they find themselves in a crisis are open to the help a support group can offer. Support groups are an opportunity to minister to hurting people, showing the love and care of Christ through our ministry to them.

Catherine Lick, M.S.N., R.N., is a parish nurse at Faith Lutheran Church in Troy, Mich., and serves as district representative for the LCMS Michigan District.

The Implications of Gluten Intolerance and Celiac Disease on Ministry

By Trish Schmidt

Recently, I answered a question on the parish nurse district rep listserv about communion wafers for individuals with gluten intolerance. We have several members at Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Avon, Ind., who have gluten intolerance as well as several with celiac disease. I was able to provide information on obtaining gluten-free wafers.

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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 or 815-562-6823.

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

When I graduated from my original nursing program, celiac disease was known as a childhood disease, and rare at that. Current research shows that gluten intolerance and celiac disease are much more common than suspected, and affect adults as well as children. A multi-center study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine found celiac disease in one in every 133 persons. The results in those people with a parent, sibling, or child with known celiac disease raised the results to one in 22 people in the study. Also interesting to note: if a person has type-1 diabetes, the risk of celiac disease increases to one in 10.

A couple of definitions are necessary before discussing the effect on ministry, fellowship and communion. A person may be intolerant of gluten in their diet and not have celiac disease (also known as celiac sprue, gluten-sensitive enteropathy and nontropical sprue). Gluten intolerance is not a food allergy as there is no histamine reaction. Gluten intolerance does not usually cause damage, unless you have celiac disease. In celiac disease, the villi in the small intestine become damaged due to an immune response to gluten, which causes nutrients to pass through without proper absorption.

Adjusting to a gluten-free diet can be frustrating, as with any major change in diet. Many people will not understand why or how someone can be intolerant of gluten in their diet. It's important for people who must follow a gluten-free diet to not go it alone. A gluten-free diet requires eliminating many types of grain products such as breakfast cereals, breads and pastas that are normally consumed without thinking. It's not only avoiding wheat and all its forms, but also rye, barley, triticale, bran and farina. Suddenly, you must read every label when shopping to look for hidden gluten in items such as salad dressings, cold cuts, egg substitutes, flavored potato chips and even some herbal teas. This can be very frustrating!

Gluten-free diets for people with celiac disease also extend to the Lord's Supper as the majority of communion wafers are made of flour with gluten. The potlucks, fellowship meals, even the Sunday donuts become a challenge. Before services at Our Shepherd when the Lord's Supper will be shared, those needing gluten-free wafers let the elder know that they are in attendance. The wafers are kept fresh in the freezer in the church kitchen and obtained as needed. Many times the potlucks, fellowship times and meals are solved when the person with gluten intolerance or celiac disease brings their own meal(s). This can make some people feel isolated, especially a child or teen who just wants to fit in and eat what their friends are eating. Bake sales are also a challenge for a person with gluten-intolerance. One way we have learned to help in these situations is by having a member who is gluten intolerant bake and bring items into these events. Then we label them as gluten-free and place them on the tables with the other foods.

It can be a challenge of both diet and spirit to be gluten-free, but it can be done with prayer and support.

I will present a breakout session at the 2012 Parish Nurse and Congregational Health Ministries Conference at Concordia University Mequon, Wis., on gluten intolerance and celiac disease. I will have additional information as well as resources on the subject. If anyone needs to obtain gluten-free communion wafers, contact CM Almy, Three American Lane, Greenwich, CT 06836. To place an order, call toll-free 800-225-2569 or visit online at www.almy.com.

Trish Schmidt, R.N., B.S.N., C.L.M., N.C.S.N., serves as parish nurse at Our Shepherd Lutheran Church and School in Avon, Ind.

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.

Resources

St. Luke's Day

Start planning to recognize St. Luke's Day, Oct. 18. This date is a good time to rededicate the parish nurse ministry in your congregation. For information on St. Luke's Day, a list of ideas is available in the parish nurse directory.

New Book Written for Clergy Health

Book Review by Maggie Karner

A new, free, resource published by LCMS World Relief and Human Care has been warmly welcomed by pastors in the LCMS because it provides practical and theological insight on both the physical and spiritual health issues unique to clergy. *Man of God: Take Heed unto Yourself* was co-written by Rev. Bryan Salminen, Ph.D., and Rev. David Maier. The authors use their considerable pastoral experience as a former semi-

nary professor, licensed therapist and LCMS district president to guide each reader through an exercise of honest self-examination and devotional study. The chapters exhort pastors to spend time and attention caring for their own physical and emotional health, in order to be witnesses to their congregations of godly health — both spiritual and physical. I recommend that all parish nurses order a copy of this new book and personally hand it to their pastor with the loving suggestion to take it to heart. As a pastor's wife, I am only too aware of the many demands upon our clergy that drive them to put everyone else's needs first and end up neglecting their own spiritual and physical health. This free booklet is available at www.lcms.org/store/manofgod or by calling 800-248-1930, ext. 1380.

Conferences/Events

Christian Caregiving: The Concept and Practice of Parish Nursing and Congregational Health, a professional development conference for registered nurses, clergy and others interested in parish nursing and congregational health, will be offered at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW) in Mequon throughout the year: Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27; and Oct. 4, 11. Attendees will learn the history of parish nursing and the varied roles parish nurses play today. (Off-site courses also are available.) For more information, contact Carol A. Lueders-Bolwerk, CUW Parish Nursing Ministries program director, at 262-243-4233 or carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu.

The second Lutheran Parish Nurses International NFP study tour will be in Adelaide, Australia, Sept. 6-13. The theme, "*His Story Downunder*," reflects the focus of the visits, seminar and general sharing. U.S. participants may travel on their own or as part of a group leaving Sept. 4 from Chicago or Los Angeles. For more information email Lynette Wiebusch at lynette.wiebusch@lca.org.au. Act fast, the registration deadline is Aug. 1.

The 25th Annual Westberg Parish Nurse Symposium, Sept. 16-18, will feature "Celebrating Our Past, Present, and Future" at the Millennium Hotel in St. Louis, Mo. For more information visit www.parishnurses.org/WestbergSymposium2011_286.aspx or call 800-664-3848.

The annual LSA Conference will examine the theme "Called to Shape the Future" April 16-19, 2012, at the Sheraton Square Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa. For more information, visit www.lutherservices.org/annual_conference or call Mary Slutz at 314-920-9941.



Mercy forever.

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