

KANSAS PARISH NURSE MINISTRY FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING

Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2021

"Bring joy to your servant, Lord, for I put my trust in you." Psalm 86:4

From the Desk of your District Representative

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

Dear Servants of our Lord,
I pray that all have made it through the holidays without incidents and remain well. Although many traveled to family, I remained at home. I have been well although a few in our congregation have developed the virus.

The following was in the *Portals of Prayer* on Monday, December 28, and I feel it is the mantra of a Parish Nurse. "We can comfort others in their brokenness as well. God may allow us to use our gifts and talents to bring healing and comfort to others. In doing so, we may be the hands and feet of Jesus to someone in need." I pray that I can be the hands and feet of Jesus especially in this difficult time.

We are sad to say "good-bye" to Sylvia Carson, Risen Savior, Wichita. She served the congregation for 30 years. Matt Cox will be assuming her position. Welcome Matt, we are here for you.

Many reported their experiences on "Lessons Learned Through the Pandemic Experience," and Marcy Schnorr has published a summary of the findings on the [LPNI.org/additional readings](http://LPNI.org/additional_readings). She and Carol Zimmerman will present a complete report at the annual conference in Mequon in May.

The articles that are written in the newsletter are available for you to use and share with others. The information is taken from various sources. If the article is from one major source or quoted, it will be noted. Use the information to share with your members.

Blessings as you minister to others,
Mary Hume, Parish Nurse

Pets Impact Health and Wellness

Daily life across the country has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and in times of isolation, relationships – human and animal – are more important than ever before.

According to a survey conducted by the Waltham Pet Care Science Institute, 85% of people said interaction with a companion animal helped reduce loneliness, and 76% agreed human-animal interactions can help address social isolation. As people are connecting virtually with friends and family, they are also turning to their pets for comfort and companionship.

As part of its Better Cities for Pets program, Mars Petcare collaborates with cities to create more welcoming environments for people and their pets so that more people can enjoy the positive impact pets can have on mental health and wellness at home and on the go. Consider these benefits provided and learn more at BetterCitiesForPets.com.

Pets provide stress relief. Stress management is a key factor to living a happy and healthy life, and these days some people are experiencing more daily stressors. Research has shown that owning a pet can decrease blood pressure and may help manage both anxiety and depression. No matter what life might throw at us, a pet can be by our side, on our lap, at our feet right next to us to help us through it.

Pets provide comfort. Pets can help soothe frazzled nerves of people during times of trial, especially as it relates to one's health. In 2020, Mars Petcare and Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt Univ. teamed up to bring a full-time facility dog to the hospital to provide comfort and support for patients, their families and hospital staff experiencing the impact of intense medical situations. The comfort dog helped to provide insight on how pets just like him can improve the lives of patients and families.

Pets can help with healing. Pet ownership can have positive healing benefits at all stages of an owner's life. Increasing research has been done to show the power of pet companionship in providing health and healing benefits. One study showed veterans with PTSD symptoms experienced improved levels of physiological stress indicators and lower levels of perceived PTSD symptoms after walking with shelter dogs.

Pets combat loneliness. While the pandemic has made it difficult to spend quality time with loved ones, pets can help combat the sense of isolation their owners may feel. In a study by HABRI (Human Animal Bond Research Institute) in collaboration with Mars Petcare, 80% of pet owners said their pets make them feel less lonely, and 89% of people who got a pet for loneliness felt the pet has helped them feel less lonely.

Topeka has been recognized as a pet-friendly city because of the 60 miles of pet-friendly trails, a dog park that features both large dog and small dog areas, and a variety of programs for pets and pet owners to enjoy.

Topeka also is the home of Carolyn Buono and Sherri Jones who have comfort dog ministries. They have taken their dogs into schools, libraries and courtrooms to comfort children in stressful situations.

Addiction

A Result of the Pandemic

An addiction is a chronic dysfunction of the brain system that involves reward, motivation, and memory. It is about the way a body craves a substance or behavior, especially if it causes a compulsive or obsessive pursuit of "reward" and the lack of concern over consequences. Many addictive problems have developed during the COVID-19 pandemic that might not have surfaced otherwise. For instance, the sale of alcohol has more than doubled in the past 6 months. The top addictions besides nicotine, drugs and alcohol are coffee (or caffeine), gambling, anger as a coping method, food, technology, sex and work. There are many articles written about addiction, but touching on a few important facts, the cause of addiction is the "high" that is physically or psychosocially felt. One develops a need to engage in behaviors longer to achieve the same high again. Over time, the addiction becomes difficult to stop.

As parish nurses and health care providers, we can have information on resources available and listen to

them. Also information about support groups is important. A strong positive social support system is important during recovery. Encouraging the individual to let their family and friends know of treatment plans and how to avoid triggers is paramount. It is a long journey, lasting even for the remainder of the individual's lifetime. The devil has been working to turn many from God at this crisis time in our lives. God is only a prayer away to defeat the devil and the tricks he tries to play on us.

A Healthy Laugh

The November 2020 Health Topic on LPNI.org

A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones (Proverbs 17:22 NIV). It goes without saying, but I will say it anyway: this year has been less fun and funny than usual. You may have heard the saying, "Laughter is the best medicine." While it may not be the best cure for all that ails us, and it is not going to make COVID-19 go away, it has been seen to be beneficial for our health and general well-being. It should be noted that laughter is an adjunct and not a replacement for acceptable therapies, but it does lift spirits.

While there have been a variety of medical benefits supported by research, the major thought seems to be one of caution which is mainly an intervention, although many questions remain. Some feel that the research has been insufficient to support the claims of the benefit. Virtually all well researched studies do show positive effects of laughter. Studies that have been reported have covered just about all areas of medicine. These and other reports show no negative side effects or undesirable results of laughter. After all, use of laughter as an intervention is free, fun, and can be used anywhere. Not to mention, it's non-allergenic and is fat-, salt- and gluten-free, and doesn't require batteries or an internet connection! Here are some of the noted benefits of laughter. Laughter and humor can sooth stress and improve the immune system. It is felt that our physical well-being can be reduced by as much as 20% due to the increase of stress. Laughter shuts down the release of stress hormones such as cortisol and increases the "feel good" neurochemicals like dopamine. Negative thoughts trigger a chemical reaction, releasing the cortisol, which increases stress and subsequently reduces the immune system. It is hard to have negative thoughts while we are laughing.

Laughter stimulates our internal organs and increases endorphins. While laughing, the chest expands, boosting the intake of O₂-rich air. It electrifies the nervous system and clears the brain by enhancing its endorphin production, which in turn triggers positive and good feelings. Endorphins are the body's natural pain killers, so laughter can also help mitigate pain. Although I don't know how many, I did read that laughing burns calories by the expansion and contraction of the abdominal wall. There is even a practice called *Laughter Yoga*. Just as laughter can lessen stress, it can also lessen depression and anxiety. Laughter makes it easier to cope with difficult situations. Laughter helps us connect with others which offers comfort and support.

The relationship between laughter and health is a complex one. Research may not be ready and able to measure and understand the complexities of that relationship, but benefits have been observed and noted. Until scientists work out all the details, getting in all the laughter one can is beneficial. It is said that we need 17 laughs a day. It is also noted that our brain cannot tell the difference between a fake smile and a real one, so we can start with a smile to exercise the face muscles and then work up to aerobic workout of laughter. Laugh for the joy of laughing. You will be surprised how infectious it can be.

Then our mouths were filled with laughter, and our tongues with songs of joy. Psalms 126:2 (NIV)
Carol Wehland, RN Parish Nurse, Peace Lutheran Church
Beaver Dam, WI 53916 USA

The LPNI October Health Topic discusses "Health Ramifications of Loneliness and Isolation," written by Hope Knight, Oklahoma Parish Nurse District Representative. Rev. Robert Weisbusch (Australia) shares thoughts on "A Cardboard Church," the Cathedral in Christ Church, New Zealand, which had been destroyed by three major earthquakes. A brief summary of "Lessons Learned Through the Pandemic Experience" is also on LPNI.org.

Special Topic Videos

Parish Nurse Lecture Series is available for viewing, a series of 21 videos covering a many topics including "Our Way Home: A Journey through the Lord's Prayers," "Reaching Out and Caring for the Veterans," and "Heart Health." You can access the videos at LCMS.org/health and scroll to the bottom of the page; click on "view video series." Use the videos as individual information or in small discussion.

Lutheran Parish Nurses International Study Tour and More

It is not too late to sign up for the LPNI Study Tour to tour Washington D.C. and the Williamsburg, VA area. The dates of the tour will be September 15-21, 2021. The itinerary is on the LPNI.org website. It will be very interesting, and the fellowship with others is unmeasurable. The tour is also open to the spouses and friends of the traveling parish nurse.

LPNI Study Tours offer parish nurses and others from around the world the opportunity to learn, network, and support one another, share experiences and models of practice, meet with pastors, deaconess, parish nurses and other health care providers, and enjoy fellowship with like-minded people.

Prayerfully consider a great adventure with wonderful, fun-loving, Christian people.

The Lutheran Parish Nurses International (LPNI.org) site has health topics, devotions and a Bible study which are published monthly. The site is available for us to learn from other parish nurses throughout the world and to grow spiritually.

Ideas for Health Articles

Health topics vary each month. You can educate your congregational members through a newsletter article, bulletin insert, or for a bulletin board display. Internet searches for information is a good way to start. Also, reading reliable sources for accurate information.

- * **March** – Colorectal Cancer Awareness; Save the Vision; Problem Gambling Awareness
- * **April** - Cervical Health Awareness; National Glaucoma Awareness; Alcohol Awareness
- * **May** – American Heart Month; Children's Dental Health; National Women's Health
- * **June** – Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness; Men's Health

Basic Parish Nurse Education Opportunities

Both of the following courses provide a Certificate of Completion and will entitle participants to be listed in the LCMS Parish Nurse Directory upon completion.

- Concordia University Wisconsin offers a comprehensive 4-day Intensive Course on May 24-27, 2021 onsite at the campus in Mequon, WI. For more information about this course, please contact Carol Lueders-Bolwerk at carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu
- Introduction to Parish Nursing Distance Education

is offered as a distance learning course through the collaboration of LCMS Parish Nurse Council and Lutheran Nurses Association of Australia. Recipients must be serving a Lutheran congregation. For more information and an application, contact Dr. Marcy Schnorr at (marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com)

Continuing Education Credits

As we search for opportunities to earn Continuing Education hours for relicensure, online courses are our options today. I will pass information along to you as I received notifications of offerings. Also, if you are aware of any educational offerings, let me know and I can pass them along. Check www.ceinternational.com www.inrseminars.com and for the CE courses available.

Annual Conference

“Courage to Be, Courage to Serve”

The 29th Annual Parish Nurse and Congregational Health Ministries Conference will be held May 19-20. Location will be on the campus of Concordia University Wisconsin. The program will be very interesting, with pertinent sessions designed for educational enrichment in a COVID-19 sensitive environment.

Mary Hume, KS LCMS District Representative
Parish Nurse Ministry
2633B SW Arrowhead Rd
Topeka, KS 66614

LCMS Kansas District Parish Nurse Representative

As your representative, I am available to assist you with information as the newsletter, printed materials about the ministry and much more. Please keep me informed of changes in your life, such as address change, email address change, status of the ministry in your congregation, etc.

*If you know of others who would like the newsletter and other information, please let me know. If you prefer to receive the newsletter electronically, that can be arranged. Kansas District information is available at www.kslcms.org. Click on *Caring Ministry* and then *Parish Nurse*. The history of Parish Nursing in Kansas and past newsletters are available.*

- ◇ Mary Hume - 2633B SW Arrowhead Rd - Topeka, KS 66614 - maryhume29@cox.net - (Cell) 785-580-6650
- ◇ Dr. Jamie Spikes - Member of the LCMS Parish Nurse Council and Parish Nurse at St. Luke's, Manhattan, KS – jamiEspikes@gmail.com. (Cell) 785-313-1587

“But as for me, it is good to be near God, I made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.” Psalm 73:28

