

# KANSAS PARISH NURSE MINISTRY FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING

## Quarterly Newsletter Winter 2023

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

### **From the Desk of your District Representative**

Dear Servants of our Lord,  
Greetings to you as you celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior and we anticipate 2024. Christmas is a favorite time of the year with family gatherings, special foods that we serve only during this time of the year and the greetings we send and receive from family members and friends.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Topeka, had their 14th annual Blue Christmas Worship Service. The sadness that is felt by some is heart breaking. We pray for each of them and give them hope in the Lord. Remember those whom you know who might be suffering (emotionally or spiritually) at this time of the year and throughout the coming year.

I recently read that we would benefit by having a "self-care ritual". What is a self-care ritual? It is about taking time away from your normal daily commitments and activities to care for yourself. Even if you already incorporate self-care into your daily routine, it's important to be mindful of when you're not feeling like yourself or feeling stressed so that you can add an extra dose of self-care. Some of the self-care I have identified includes improving my regularly walking time, being mindful of my nutritional intake, talking to God and not only reading the Bible but studying it (what is God telling me through His Word). So much of our time is spent caring for others, so perhaps now is the time to stop and "parent" ourselves. Shouldn't we treat ourselves like we treat others? The rewards can prove to be enormous.

May you feel the love of Jesus as you care for others.

Mary Hume, Parish Nurse

*"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant."  
Anna Bradstreet*

### **Study Tour to Romania**

Our theme verse was *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.* Romans 12:12 (NIV). Many of the group met at the Chicago airport and flew to Bucharest Romania where we met up with the others. There were 18 attending, 14 parish nurses and 4 spouses. This included 3 from Australia and 1 from Bethlehem West Bank.

The purpose of the study tour is to offer Parish Nurses the opportunity to learn with and from, network, and support one another. We share experiences and models of practice, meet with pastors, Parish Nurses and others, and enjoy fellowship with like-minded people.

We attended the worship service conducted by Rev. Andrew Fedder the pastor of the LCMS Lutheran Church in Bucharest. After the service, he shared his journey as a missionary to the Ukraine and reassignment to Romania.

Four of the Parish Nurses shared their ministry in their locate areas. The reports included Janet Hintzman, Indiana District Representative, talked about the LCMS Million Dollar Life Match Grant to prove safe outcomes for new mothers and infants. Raeda Mansour shared her role as a Parish Nurse in Bethlehem which includes Bible Studies, health screenings, and working with the elderly in the region. Belinda Peterson, Parish Nurse in Alice Springs, Australia works with the Aboriginal Peoples and how she is able to minister to them through health care. Pat Baum works with inner city children in Chicago providing them with emotional and spiritual support. On Monday, Pastor Fedder and his young daughter took the group on a walking tour of Bucharest. He discussed how the Romanian people had been oppressed by communism, the earthquake in 1977 when 1,600 people died, and since they are on a fault

line, another earthquake is likely which would kill more people.

Schools – The school were resuming for the fall. The younger children attend in the morning and the high school aged children attend the same school in the afternoon.

Transportation – there are many cars in the cities, our travel guide said they are very expensive even though the people want used cars. Public transportation is good and many use it.

We traveled by bus to Brasov to visit with Pastor Trifa at the Lutheran church. There are about 10,000 Ukrainians in Brasov. The church is providing care for some of the families including renovating a portion of the church building for families. They are reaching out to the people to provide for them.

Our side trips included a trip to the Bran Castle, built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Transylvania. It was considered a medieval fortress and royal castle that might have been the nocturnal residence of Dracula.

Romania has about 10 million gypsies. Many of the gypsies live in poverty. We did see some of the ladies selling fresh berries in cute, homemade baskets at the second castle we toured.

We toured the Black Church – blackened because of the Great Fire in 1689. The church has the largest organ in Romania, 4,000 pipes! In 1937, the pew backs were altered so people could face the altar during church services or face the organ during Saturday concerts.

During the 1989 revolution, the communist party was defeated, the leader was killed and by Christmas, 1990 the people started to have hope.

We enjoyed our farewell dinner at an open air restaurant, enjoyed some local dancing which also involved some from our group.

I hope this whets your appetite for upcoming Study Tours.

## **Seasonal Affect Disorder**

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that recurs at certain times of the year, usually beginning in late fall or winter and lasting into springtime. Some studies suggest that up to 20% of people in the United States may be affected by a mild to moderate form of the disorder.

The symptoms of SAD include depressed mood, loss of energy, increased sleep, anxiety, irritability and difficulty concentrating. Many also experience a change in appetite, particularly a craving for carbohydrates, which can lead to weight gain. Some

individuals report a heavy feeling in their arms and legs. There are various risk factors for the development of SAD. Females are up to four times more likely to be affected than males. Although SAD can affect children, it is reported mostly in people between the ages of 18 and 30, with incidences decreasing with age. Many have a family history of mental illness. Studies have shown that living farther away from the equator increases the occurrence of SAD. Those already experiencing clinical depression or bipolar disorder may see a worsening of their symptoms in the wintertime.

Treatments for SAD include traditional psychotherapy and antidepressant medications. In addition, light therapy, a daily 30-minute exposure to a light box that simulates high-intensity sunlight, has shown promise in treating SAD. Preventing SAD can be accomplished by spending some of the day out of doors, even if it is cloudy. One can open the blinds and sit by a sunny window. Eating a balanced diet, will help the energy level and exercise for 30 minutes each day will also be beneficial. Also, staying involved in social circles and regular activities as social support are very helpful. While these naturally occurring body depression in any form can be serious, anyone affected by significant symptoms of depression should consult a physician.

More information is available on [Mayoclinic.com](http://Mayoclinic.com) or [WebMD.com](http://WebMD.com).

## **Grief during the Christmas Season**

A report by [Diana Raab Ph.D.](#)

The holidays are often a time for celebration, but when grieving the loss of a loved one, those emotions can become intensified during this time. A recent survey of 2,000 people showed that 36 percent of the respondents did not want to celebrate the holidays due to feelings of grief or loss.

Grief is complicated and often unpredictable. It comes in waves and sometimes, like the ocean, it is calm. Other times, it is turbulent and violent. One could be in the middle of a holiday party or enjoying the company of friends one-on-one when suddenly one will break out in tears. Sometimes there might be triggers, such as conversations, photographs, or being in places that where one was with a loved one, that can cause the release of this emotion, while other times it could be a spontaneous eruption. Some of our feelings can be positive or negative ones.

## Allow Yourself Grieving Time

Remember that we all grieve differently, even those of us within the same family. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Be gentle with yourself and do what feels right for your needs. If your loss was recent, you need time to process it, during which you should allow time for grieving and reminiscing together: "Grief is visceral, not reasonable: the howling at the center of grief is raw and real. It's love in its most wild form."<sup>2</sup>

## Take Care of Yourself

Sometimes when we are grieving, we forget about our own needs, especially if we were deeply involved in our beloved's care and meeting their physical and psychological needs. In those situations, our loved ones' needs come first; thus, the adjustment to not having them in our lives becomes difficult. As much as possible, try to return to activities that bring you joy. It is important to step aside and consider what tools can help us cope with our loss. Moving our body gets the blood flowing, and it could be something as simple as taking a walk that helps us process our grief. When we are struggling emotionally, it is always important to get enough exercise. Other ideas include listening to podcasts, journaling, or enjoying entertainment such as a book or movie. Make sure to include a balanced diet and plenty of rest and recovery time. It can bring a great deal of comfort to be surrounded by others who are empathetic and talking with God about your struggles.

## Food for Thought

Certain foods can help with depression. For example, bananas can help enhance your mood because they help with the production of serotonin – a chemical needed for nerve cells and for the brain to function. Similarly, oatmeal, eggs, chicken, and peanuts can calm the brain and improve mood and sleep.

*Source: Healthline*

## Sneaky Snacks

You may want to avoid snacks that may seem harmless – they may even sound healthy – but instead may work against your best efforts to be well:

**Pretzels:** You may think twice about eating them if you pictured them as being made out of sugar. That's basically what you're eating with this refined-carb product that has no nutrients or health benefits.

**Veggie Chips and Straws:** Don't let the word "veggie" convince you they are healthy. You are still eating something fried in oil that causes you to consume saturated and trans fat. Plus, most veggie chips and

straws have the same amount of calories as regular potato chips.

**Dried Fruit:** Once dried, the fruit shrinks making the sugar more concentrated. That shrinkage also means you may eat more fruit than you typically would and increase the calorie count.

**Pre-made smoothies:** Even if they contain some fruit juice, most are packed with added sugar driving up the calorie count to equal that of a meal. Source: Prevention

## Ideas for Health Articles

Keeping your congregation up-to-date with health information is a task that is important to the parish nurse ministry. Information can be shared by a monthly newsletter article, bulletin boards and posting news in the bathrooms. Information can be obtained by searching the health topic you desire or at [cdc.gov/health-topics](http://cdc.gov/health-topics).

- **December** – National Safe Toys and Gifts; (5-11) National Influenza Vaccination Week
- **January** – National Blood Donor; National Glaucoma Awareness; Compliment Day (24)
- **February** – American Heart; National Cancer Prevention; National Wear Red Day (2); Make a Friend Day (11)
- **March** – National Colorectal Cancer Awareness; National Nutrition; Save a vision; (20-26) National Drug and Alcohol Facts week; National Corndog Day (16)

## Lutheran Parish Nurse International (LPNI.org)

The website offers information written by Parish Nurses throughout the world on various Health Topics. The December Health Topic was written by Jamie Spikes RN, PhD, Parish Nurse, St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Manhattan, KS, USA; "*Advent – Coming, Arrival, Visit*".

The Rt. Rev. George Samiec contributed a devotion entitled "*Ordinarily Religious or Religiously Ordinary?!*" He is the Chairman of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England.

Also on the site is a Bible Study written by Rev. Dan Paavola from Concordia University Wisconsin and a monthly Devotion written by various pastors. Take advantage of materials that are intended to support you and that you can share with others.

## Study Tour 2024

The 2024 Study Tour will be to Alaska, learning of the native cultures and working with their peoples. The date will be September 10-18. Cynthia Rutan, Parish Nurse District Representative for the Northwest District, is organizing the tour.

The tour is for parish nurses, their spouses and those interested in travel and learning about others.

## Parish Nurse Education

Concordia University Wisconsin offers a Certificate of Completion for Parish Nursing/Faith Community Nursing

**Distant learning:** A program overview -

<https://www.cuw.edu/academics/programs/faith-community-nursing-certificate/index.html#overview>.

For more information on the course, contact Carol Lueders Bolwerk at [carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu](mailto:carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu).

**LCMS Parish Nurse Council** in collaboration with the Lutheran Nurses Association of Australia offers a 17-module course. The course is an introduction for parish nursing ([LCMS.org/health](http://LCMS.org/health)). The schedule is flexible. Module 17 is specific to the organization and resources available for parish nurses within the LCMS. For additional information, contact Dr. Marcy Schnorr ([marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com)) or at 815-562- 2744 (mornings).

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## Kansas District-LCMS

### Parish Nurse Representative

As your representative, I am available to assist you with information such as the newsletter, printed materials about the parish nurse 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. Receiving the newsletter electronically is available [www.kslcms.org/caring-ministry/parish-nurse](http://www.kslcms.org/caring-ministry/parish-nurse).

An additional helpful website is:

[LCMSParishNursing.com](http://LCMSParishNursing.com)

- ◇ Mary Hume - 2633B SW Arrowhead Rd - Topeka, KS 66614 - [maryhume29@cox.net](mailto:maryhume29@cox.net) (Cell) 785-580-6650.
- ◇ Dr. Jamie Spikes is a member of the LCMS Parish Nurse Council and a Parish Nurse at St. Luke's Lutheran in Manhattan. Jamie's contact information is: [jamiespikes@gmail.com](mailto:jamiespikes@gmail.com) (C) 785-313-1587.

*May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:5-6*

