

KANSAS PARISH NURSE MINISTRY FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING

Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2024

"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,
May 6 is Nurses Day. God bless the nurses who have committed to help members of their congregations and beyond.

Greetings to you as we look forward to the year ahead and a happy spring. Soon we will see the crocuses pop their heads out, and we will enjoy the early flowers. I was recently visiting with an individual and he amusingly reminisced that just a few years ago it was predicted that the world was ending. As Jesus told us even He does not know the time or date of His return, the end of the world. We plan for many things, we have several events on our calendar, will the events happen? We do not know, but we continue to plan for the future.

Do you have a song, a hymn, Bible verse(s) that provides comfort and uplifts you? I have several songs that provide me with support and love. One that really gives me encouragement is from The Best of the Best songbook: *"Make Me a Servant"*.

Make me a servant, humble and meek.
Lord, let me lift up those who are weak.
And may the prayer of my heart always be:
Make me a servant,
Make me a servant,
Make me a servant today.

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

Mary Hume, Parish Nurse at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Topeka, KS and Kansas District Representative
Heavenly Father, use me, my gifts, talents, treasures, words and my very life for the ministry you have called me to do.

Loving Kindness

By Janet Wertzberger

Many of you may be aware that I experienced my first case of COVID-19 being diagnosed the week preceding the Thanksgiving holiday. The case was rather serious with over 20 identifiable symptoms and complications. Though all of the frustration, depression, and anxiety, it became glaringly apparent to me that God had a plan. I believe that God was leading me to experience firsthand what it feels like to be depressed and anxious, and how it feels to need connection to others. I am forever grateful to family and friends who showed such loving care and kindness by calling and offering support and help, bringing in meals, and praying for recovery. It meant so much to me even when I didn't feel like receiving it. It has brought to mind how it must feel to be stricken with dementia, end-stage cancer, or loneliness from loss of a loved one.

One of the most helpful acts of kindness that I experienced was connection to others. It taught me the importance of not only the need to reach out to others, but also how important it is to allow others to do the same. The connection touches both lives positively. Realizing this, I found it very rewarding to return those gestures of care and kindness as the Friendship Circle shared Christmas cards and poinsettias to a growing list of folks who have experienced loss, grief, short or long-term illness. Each time a visit was made, the recipient was gracious and returned the love with a smile.

We often forget that our connection to people in strife is so important for their health and healing. It is very difficult to visit with a person who has dementia, but God will put words in your heart and lead the conversation with love and joy. Loving interaction with folks experiencing long-term illness or loss of a loved

one is critical to their existence and/or recovery. A prayer, a visit, a greeting card with a message of hope, a phone call, text, or email, or sharing a meal are some of the many ways that can be so meaningful to another person in need to let them know that as Christians we care about them. It is our privilege to share the loving grace of Jesus Christ with those in need and to remind them of the hope of heaven.

Not only has my experience re-opened my eyes but the recount of visits that I have witnessed and heard about from others in showing kindness has given me new perspectives in approaching difficult encounters. Jesus showed love to all people while on earth, and again through his death and resurrection. We can be brave to witness also to our neighbors and make those connections as his disciples. *"The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call on him in truth."* Psalm 145:18.

I pray that as we enter another new year each of us will make every effort to show loving care and connections to others through our thoughts, prayers and acts of kindness.

Janet Wertzerberger, Parish Nurse
St John's Lutheran Church
Alma, KS

Faith at Work

The LCMS Kansas District has invited each congregation to recognize the needs in the community to help our neighbor in the name of Jesus. As Parish Nurses, we are aware of needs of members and of others, to help in various ways.

As our neighbors and friends age, changes happen, often times slowly and subtly. Some of the signs that require help include:

Financial changes

Late payment notices, bills not paid; utilities turned off due to missed payments; excessive online shopping.

Physical safety and security

Signs of unsafe driving such as unexplained dents/scratches, frequent accidents or tickets; falls or burns; accidental overdose of medications; frequent hospitalizations or ER visits; victim of fraud or scams.

Physical condition of the house.

The home is unclean or cluttered more than usual; unpleasant odors; temperature in the home is inappropriate for the season; appliances are not in working order.

Hygiene

Poor personal hygiene; inappropriate clothing for the weather; difficulty completing normal tasks.

Eating habits

Minimal or no fresh/ healthy food in the refrigerator; weight loss; no energy to prepare food; spoiled food in the refrigerator.

Cognitive or Emotional changes

Doubt or confusion when performing familiar tasks; change in mood or personality; forgetfulness; difficulty locating familiar places when driving or at home; loss of interest in hobbies and activities.

What can a Parish Nurse do to help the individual?

Notify family members of what you have observed; safety in the home is a priority. Are there modifications that are needed for the home to prevent falls and injuries? Having medications and groceries delivered or use a meal delivery service. Encourage them not to drive, using church members or volunteers to provide transportation to appointments. If individuals are not able to keep their homes cleaned and in order, assist them in obtaining homemaking service that would be available. By making home visits, we can be aware of the needs of our homebound or ailing member.

Help Prevent Opioid Use

Disorder and Overdose

Millions of people in the United States are living with opioid use disorder (OUD); in 2020, an estimated 2.7 million people ages 12 or older reported having an OUD, a problematic pattern of opioid use that causes significant impairment or distress.

OUD is a treatable, chronic disease that can affect anyone – regardless of race, gender, income level, or social class. A diagnosis of OUD is based on specific criteria such as unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control opioid use or opioid use resulting in a failure to fulfill obligations at work, school, or home, among other criteria.

Overdoses are a leading injury-related cause of death in the United States and appear to have accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overdose deaths are preventable and preventing an opioid overdose death starts with being able to recognize the signs of an overdose. During an overdose, breathing can be dangerously slowed or stopped, causing brain damage or death.

Recognizing the signs of opioid overdose and acting fast can save a life. Here are some things to look for:

- Small, constricted “pinpoint pupils”
- Falling asleep or losing consciousness
- Slow, weak, or no breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Limp body
- Cold and/or clammy skin
- Discolored skin (especially in the lips and nails)

It may be hard to tell if a person is high on drugs or experiencing an overdose. If you are not sure, it is best to treat it like an overdose— you could save a life.

1. Call 911 immediately.
2. Administer naloxone, the kits are free of charge.
3. Try to keep the person awake and breathing.
4. Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.
5. Stay with the person until emergency workers arrive.

To order Naloxone kits: www.dcca.org; click on “Naloxone request; click on request Naloxone kit. Complete request form and submit.

Food for Thought

Did you know that sweet potatoes are high in fiber and are full of healthy nutrients? They contain high levels of beta-carotene which is converted into Vitamin A to support vision. Vitamin A also supports the immune system by fighting infections in the body. Sweet potatoes help with stress management as they contain significant amounts of magnesium which assist in reducing stress and anxiety.

Source: Healthline

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 in a monthly newsletter article, on bulletin boards and posting news in the bathrooms. Information can be obtained by searching the health topic or at cdc.gov/health-topics.

- ✓ **March** – National Colorectal Cancer Awareness; National Nutrition; Save a vision; (20-26) National Drug and Alcohol Facts week; (16) National Corndog Day
- ✓ **April** – Alcohol Awareness; National Donate a Life; Parkinson’s Awareness
- ✓ **May** – (6-12) National Nurses Week; Arthritis Awareness; Mental Health Awareness; National High Blood Pressure Education

- ✓ **June** – Men’s Health Month; PTSD Awareness; National Migraine and Headache Awareness

Annual Meetings

The Annual District Representative meeting will be held on the campus of Concordia University Wisconsin on May 14, 2024. Jamie Spikes and I are planning to attend.

The Parish Nurse conference will begin May 15, lasting for 2 days. The conference will begin with a chapel service. Several sessions are scheduled to be presented by parish nurses and health care workers throughout the United States and a Parish Nurse from Bethlehem (Palestine). Jamie and I will present a breakout session on the 16th entitled “A Special Blessing at the End of Life”. We get inspired and refreshed by attending the event.

I have brochures for the conference, let me know if you are able to attend and I can mail one to you.

Parish Nursing Education

Concordia University Wisconsin offers a Certificate of Completion for Parish Nursing/Faith Community Nursing. The course is offered online for a flexible way to learn congregational health ministries. The Christ centered course is taught by theology and nursing faculty with real-world experience. Contact Carol Lueders Bolwerk at carol.luedersbolwerk@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). The schedule is flexible. Module 17 is specific to the organization and resources available for parish nurses within the LCMS. For additional information, contact the LCMS Parish Nurse leader, Dr. Marcy Schnorr, at 815-562-2744 (mornings), marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com.

Lutheran Parish Nurses International (LPNI.org)

LPNI serves our Lord and His Kingdom through Christ centered nursing. The site invites you to read health topics, devotions and Bible Studies. The site also has pictures of previous LPNI study tours to various parts of the world, Romania, German, Finland, Singapore, Bethlehem and more. The 2024 Study tour to Alaska will be exciting, learning about the native people and sharing the love of Jesus with them.

There is also a link to a continuing education program “Joy in Serving Others During Challenging Times”.

Although it is lengthy, it is filled with valuable information.

Hybrid Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

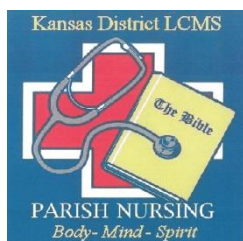
LCMS is announcing a 20-week CPE training. Church workers enrolled in the unit, which runs from July 8 to November 18, will have online education and 16 hours with a mentor in a clinical setting. More information is available at specializedcare@lcms.org.

LWML Convention

Kansas LWML Convention will be April 12-14, 2024 in Wichita. I will have a Parish Nurse table. If you are attending, stop by and say "hello". I will have Pocket Prayer Quilts for you.

A **pocket prayer quilt** is a small, portable **quilt**, crocheted, knitted or quilted, that contains an inspirational note, prayer, or meaningful item. It is a personal way to connect with others spirituality and provide a source of peace and encouragement. The **pocket prayer quilt** is small enough to keep in a purse, bag or pocket, allowing God's comforting words to always be nearby. These **pocket prayer quilts** make a perfect gift that you can give to members and loved ones.

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



Kansas District-LCMS Parish Nurse Representative

As your representative, I am available to assist you with information on Parish Nursing. Please keep me informed of changes in your life, such as address change, email address change, status of the ministry in your congregation and more.

If you know of others who would like the newsletter and other information, please let Mary Hume know at her contact information below. The newsletter is archived on the Kansas District website:

www.kslcms.org/caring-ministry/parish-nurse.

An additional helpful website is: LCMSParishNursing.com

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(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
(C) 785-313-1587.

Dear Jesus, shine in my heart and help me to be Your light to those around me. Amen.