

KANSAS PARISH NURSE MINISTRY FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING

Quarterly Newsletter Summer 2025

"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,
Jamie Spikes and I recently returned from the annual Parish Nurse Conference, and what a rewarding experience it was! The event provided a valuable opportunity to connect with others in the field, exchange ideas, and deepen our understanding of the intersection between spiritual care and medical practice. We are living in a time of rapid and exciting change in the medical field. I've been reading about new developments in the diagnosis and treatment of chronic illnesses such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease. Researchers are identifying early warning signs and advancing new medications, some of which have already received FDA approval. These breakthroughs offer hope and potential for an improved quality of life. One highlight this month was observing a vision screening at our preschool, conducted by a representative from the Lion's Club. He used a special camera that, from about three feet away, could quickly assess a child's vision. After inputting the child's age, he pressed a button, and the screening was completed in seconds. Results were immediately printed and sent home to parents. It was fascinating to see this technology in action and to witness firsthand the progress being made in early childhood health screenings. As we serve others through our ministry, it is also important to reflect on the values we uphold. Strive to live with integrity, treating others with kindness, compassion, and grace. Communicate openly and honestly and take time to affirm those around you. Listen with an open mind, be accepting of differences, and approach conflict with mutual respect and a willingness to resolve issues peacefully. Let patience, joy, and forgiveness guide your actions—and extend grace to both yourself and others. May you continue to feel the presence and love of Jesus as you care for those in need.

Mary Hume, Parish Nurse

"My grace is all you need, for my power is the greatest when you are weak." 2 Corinthians 12:9

Caring Alongside: The Essence of Parish Nursing and Congregational Health Ministries.

33rd Annual Parish Nurse Conference Highlights

The 33rd Annual Parish Nurse Conference was held on the beautiful campus of Concordia University Wisconsin, welcoming 103 participants from 23 states. Kansas was represented by three attendees: Jamie Spikes, Janet Werzberger, and myself.

The conference featured four inspiring and informative keynote speakers, including Deaconess/Dr. Tiffany Manor from the Synodical Office and Rev. Dr. Dan Paavola of Concordia University Wisconsin. On Thursday, attendees continued their learning through a variety of breakout sessions.

A total of 12 breakout sessions were offered, providing participants with opportunities for deeper education in specialized areas of parish nursing. These sessions were led by experienced Parish Nurses. Jamie Spikes and I co-presented a session on **Advance Funeral Planning**, which introduced a document designed to help families gather and organize essential information for planning a funeral. This resource aims to provide clarity and support during what can be a difficult time for loved ones. We presented prelude info at the conference last year. And it was well received.

A key aspect of the conference was the opportunity for networking and mutual support. Attendees shared ideas and best practices, and first-time participants received valuable guidance on how to establish or strengthen a Parish Nurse Ministry within their own congregations. In the evenings, we enjoyed time for fellowship and personal connection, offering encouragement and support to one another in both our professional and spiritual lives.

District Representative Meeting

The week began with the District Representatives Meeting, which opened in the name of Jesus with a communion service and a **Service of Remembrance** to honor Cynthia Rutan, our annual organist and dedicated District Representative from the Northwest District who passed away last year. Cynthia was known for her faithful service and deep commitment to the well-being of her congregation. Her husband, David, joined us for the service and the rest of the conference. We were grateful for the opportunity to support him in his time of loss. The meeting continued with representatives sharing updates and highlights from their respective areas across the 35 LCMS districts. It was a meaningful time of connection, reflection, and encouragement. Tiffany Manor, Managing Director of the Office of National Mission for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, addressed the group and affirmed the Synod's appreciation for the Parish Nurse Ministry. She encouraged us to remain steadfast in our calling and shared helpful resources available through the Synod to support our ongoing work in congregational care.

Summertime is for fun, relaxation and family gatherings. I have included the following articles to share with your congregational members to have a safe summertime.

Dehydration

WebMD

Dehydration is when you lose more water than you take in. That makes it harder for your body to do some basic jobs, like keep your temperature steady and clear out waste. You lose water in your sweat, tears, and every time you go to the bathroom. Even breathing takes a little moisture out of you. Usually, you make it up with what you drink and eat. But hot weather, exercise, and sickness can knock you off balance.

How Lack of Water Affects You

More than half your body weight comes from water. So, if your levels are off, it can show up in a surprising number of ways. Mild dehydration can make you feel tired and give you a headache. Even your mental focus, mood, and memory can take a small hit. And when you push yourself hard at the gym, all that sweating lowers the volume of blood you have for a while. The same can be said with vigorous yard work.

Thirst is a sign of being dehydrated but by the time you get the urge to quench your thirst, you're already a little dehydrated. It can help to make a habit of drinking water, especially when it's hot or you're feeling sick.

Symptoms in Older Kids and Adults

You might be thirsty, and your mouth might feel dry or sticky. You won't urinate very often -- under 4 times a day. When you do go, there may not be much urine, and

it'll be dark or have a strong smell. You may feel dizzy or lightheaded, especially when you stand up, and you may pass out. As dehydration gets worse, your thirst increases. Your breathing and heart rate may be faster than normal. You can overheat, and you might become confused or cranky.

Should I Drink 8 Cups a Day?

This old rule has zero science behind it, but it's fine as a rough guide. The amount you need to drink depends on how active you are, where you live, and your overall health. So, "listen" to your thirst. If you're not sure you're drinking enough, check the color of your urine. Clear or pale-yellow means you're all set. Darker means you need to increase your fluid intake.

Tips for Staying Hydrated

If you just can't remember to drink enough water, look for ways to build it into your day. Make water your go-to drink. Tip a glass at and between each meal. Or set a reminder on your phone to have a glass every hour. Some people find that carrying a water bottle does the trick. Additionally, if you want a snack, have water instead. Sometimes, our bodies confuse thirst for hunger.

Care for Your Skin and Eyes

Skin cancer rates continue to rise across the United States, making sun safety more important than ever. Exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation can lead to a range of health concerns—including sunburn, premature skin aging, eye damage, and skin cancer which is the most common type of cancer in the country. According to the National Cancer Institute, the number of new skin cancer cases has increased significantly in recent years.

July, with its long sunny days, is an ideal time to raise awareness about the importance of protecting both skin and eyes from harmful UV rays.

Prevention starts with protection:

- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. Apply it generously 30 minutes before sun exposure. Use about 1 ounce (roughly a shot glass full) to cover your entire body, and about 1/4 to 1/3 of a teaspoon for your face.
- Wear sun-protective clothing, including long sleeves, wide-brimmed hats, and UV-blocking fabrics.
- Protect your eyes with sunglasses that block 100% of UVA and UVB rays. Even on cloudy or overcast days, UV radiation can still harm your eyes, so consistent use of UV-rated sunglasses is key.

Taking these simple steps can significantly reduce your risk of skin and eye damage. By making sun safety a daily habit, you help ensure long-term health and well-being.

Understanding and Managing Food Poisoning

Food poisoning is most often caused by consuming food contaminated with harmful bacteria. Common culprits include undercooked meats, eggs, unpasteurized dairy products, shellfish, and unwashed fruits and vegetables. In some cases, food poisoning may also result from ingesting toxic substances, such as those found in certain wild mushrooms.

Typical symptoms include abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, and fever. These can range from mild to severe and typically appear within a few hours after consuming the contaminated food.

Immediate Action:

If you suspect food poisoning, the first step is to discard any leftover food that may have caused the illness to prevent others from becoming sick.

Hydration and Recovery:

A key concern with food poisoning is dehydration, which can develop quickly and lead to serious health risks. Within a few hours of symptom onset, begin rehydrating by slowly sipping clear fluids. Suitable options include water, electrolyte solutions, broths, or non-caffeinated carbonated beverages, which may help calm the stomach.

As your body begins to tolerate fluids, gradually introduce bland, easy-to-digest foods that are low in fat and fiber. Recommended options include:

- Clear chicken broth (for hydration and protein)
- Saltine crackers
- Electrolyte drinks
- Chicken noodle soup

Be Prepared:

It's wise to keep a few "recovery staples" on hand in case food poisoning strikes. Preventative measures are also essential—proper food storage, thorough cooking, and good kitchen hygiene significantly reduce the risk of contamination.

When to Seek Medical Attention:

Most cases of food poisoning resolve within 12 to 48 hours. However, if symptoms persist or if you experience any of the following, seek medical help immediately:

- Blood in vomitus or stool
- High fever
- Signs of severe or prolonged dehydration (e.g., dry mouth, dizziness, decreased urination)

Practicing safe food handling and recognizing early signs of illness can make a significant difference in recovery and overall well-being.

Fireworks Safety

Fireworks are a time-honored tradition for celebrations such as New Year's Eve, Independence Day, and cultural

festivals around the world. While they bring color and excitement to the sky, fireworks can also pose serious risks to safety if not handled properly. Every year, thousands of people, many of them children, are injured by fireworks, and countless fires are started as a result of improper use. To enjoy fireworks safely and responsibly, it's essential to understand the risks and follow safety best practices.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), an estimated 10,000 fireworks-related injuries are treated in emergency rooms each year. The most common injuries affect the hands, face, and eyes. In addition to personal injuries, fireworks are responsible for more than 19,000 fires annually in the United States, many of which result in very expensive property damage and loss of life.

By following a few safety tips ensures a safe celebration. There should be adult supervision, only use outdoors, have water nearby to extinguish the fireworks, follow directions and protect yourself and others and dispose of the fireworks properly.

Fireworks should only be handled by sober, responsible adults. Children should never be allowed to light or play with fireworks, including sparklers, which can burn at over 1,200°F.

Fireworks are meant to enhance our celebrations—not to end them with injury or tragedy. By following safety guidelines, staying informed about local laws, and using common sense, you can enjoy fireworks responsibly while protecting yourself, your loved ones, and your community. Celebrate smart and safe.

Saints Alive After 55

The 35th Anniversary of "Saints Alive After 55" will be occur July 13-14, 2025, at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Salina. The theme will be "Be Generous". The Keynote speaker will be Lisa Hellyer, Senior Ministry Advancement Counselor for Lutheran Hour and the Bible Study Leader will be Rev. Quentin Nuttmann of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Hutchinson, Kansas. This is a learning time and a fellowship time. The registration form is on the Kansas District website. (KSLCMS.org). I will have a display table to share information about the Parish Nurse Ministry.

Ideas for Health Articles

As part of the parish nurse ministry, one important role is to keep your congregation informed about health and wellness. This can be done effectively through a variety of channels, including monthly newsletter articles, bulletin board displays, and informative notices placed in common areas such as restrooms. For accurate and trustworthy health information, refer to resources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.gov) or reputable health websites by searching specific topics.

Below are suggested health awareness topics to consider for the coming months:

June – Men's Health Month; PTSD Awareness; National Migraine and Headache Awareness

July – Fireworks safety; Ultraviolet Safety.

August – Medic Alert Awareness; National Immunization Awareness; Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

September – Healthy Aging Month; National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month; Prostate Cancer Awareness

Parish Nursing Education

There are 2 opportunities offered by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod for education in the parish nursing area.

****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 how to use healthcare as a ministry of the Gospel, how to serve people in crisis, and how to start and run a health ministry in your church. The Christ centered course is taught by theology and nursing faculty with real-world experience. Contact Dr. Carol Lueders Bolwerk, RN at carol.luedersbolwerk@cuw.edu or 262-243-4233.

**** LCMS Parish Nurse Council** 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.

Light the Way for Love

By Susan Frybort

They say beauty comes from a spirit that has weathered many hardships in life and somehow continues with resilience. Grace can be found in a soul who ages softly, even amid the tempest. I think the loveliest by far is the one whose gentle heart bears a hundred scars from caring yet still finds a way to pick up the lamp, one more time, to light the way for love.

Lutheran Parish Nurses International

(Lutheranparishnurseint.org)

LPNI serves our Lord and His Kingdom through Christ centered nursing. The site invites you to read health

topics, devotions and Bible Studies. There are pictures of the various study tours that a number of the parish nurses, their spouses and friends enjoyed. The 2025 Study tour to South Korea will be exciting, learning about the native people and sharing the love of Jesus with them.

Kansas District-LCMS

Parish Nurse Representative

As your Kansas District Representative, I am here to help you with information on Parish Nursing. Please keep me informed of changes in your life, such as a change of address, email address change, status of the ministry in your congregation and more.

If you know of others who would like to receive 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 added helpful website is: LCMS.org/health.

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"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