

KANSAS PARISH NURSE MINISTRY FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING

Quarterly Newsletter Winter 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,
Greetings to you as you prepare for a busy time of the year. As we decorate our homes, remember the main theme is Jesus as a baby and how he came to us at just the right time. We can share the love of Jesus by sending greeting cards conveying the true meaning of Christmas.

Pastor and I plan to once again offer the *Blue Christmas* service this year—an intentional time of worship designed for those who find the holiday season heavy with grief, loneliness, or loss. While the world is filled with twinkling lights, festive reds and shimmering golds, not everyone experiences Christmas with joy. For some, the season serves as a poignant reminder of loved ones no longer present, health struggles, fractured relationships, or emotional burdens that make celebration feel out of reach.

The *Blue Christmas* service is a somber, reflective gathering that honors these realities. In the quiet sanctuary, we offer space for lament, for remembering, and for hope. Scripture readings, gentle music, candles, and prayers guide the service—acknowledging pain while also pointing toward the light of Christ that continues to shine in the darkness.

As parish nurses and church leaders, we recognize the importance of creating space for all emotional experiences during the holidays. Offering this service is part of our calling to minister to the whole person—body, mind, and spirit—especially when life feels overwhelming.

We invite all who are struggling this season, and those who walk alongside them, to join us for this sacred time. May the *Blue Christmas* service be a

reminder that God is near to the brokenhearted and that His presence brings comfort, even during sorrow.

*Blue Christmas Service at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Topeka KS., December 7th at 3PM.

Mary Hume, KS District Representative

Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you. Romans 15:7

Educational Trip to Ethiopia Advancing Parish Nursing Ministry

In a remarkable initiative to expand the global reach of parish nursing, Marcy Schnorr, a seasoned educational leader in the field, and 5 other parish nurses including myself have been invited to teach parish nursing to a group of nurses in Ethiopia. This opportunity marks another chapter in Marcy's ongoing commitment to international health ministry, having previously shared her expertise in countries such as Palestine.

Parish nursing, a specialized practice that integrates faith and health, plays a vital role in promoting holistic care within communities. Marcy Schnorr's leadership in this area has inspired the team to join her on this educational mission. Together, they will collaborate with Ethiopian nurses to introduce and develop parish nursing ministry practices tailored to local needs.

The trip is not only a teaching opportunity but also a cultural exchange, fostering mutual learning and understanding. The team aims to empower Ethiopian nurses with the knowledge and tools to integrate spiritual care into their professional practice, enhancing community health outcomes through compassionate, faith-based service. Each of the visitors will be carrying an extra suitcase with needed medical supplies, including blood pressure

cuffs, bandages, ointments and so much more. Items that are not readily available in Ethiopia.

This initiative reflects the growing global interest in parish nursing and highlights the importance of cross-cultural collaboration in healthcare education. The team's work in Ethiopia is expected to leave a lasting impact, strengthening the foundation for parish nursing ministry in the region and building bridges of support and solidarity across borders.

My Gym:

Fitness, Fun, and Confidence for Kids

My Gym is more than a place to exercise—it is a supportive environment where children build fitness, develop new skills, and grow in confidence. Through age-appropriate classes and activities, children explore movement in a safe, structured, and encouraging space. Each session is designed to strengthen coordination, balance, and flexibility while introducing teamwork and problem-solving.

The fun atmosphere keeps children motivated and engaged, turning exercise into play. Whether climbing, tumbling, or participating in group games, children experience joy in staying active while also learning discipline and perseverance. Instructors encourage each child to reach their personal best, celebrating progress both big and small.

Beyond physical fitness, **My Gym** nurtures emotional growth by boosting self-esteem and teaching respect for others. It is a place where children discover that fitness can be fun, and confidence is built one step, one skill, and one smile at a time.

Worship Service – Health and Healing

Char Ludwig from Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Olathe held their 3rd annual Service of Health and Healing. A service that was composed of scripture, prayers and hymns with confession and communion as part of the Service. It is broken up in 3 parts - prayers for healing in sickness, thanksgiving for healing, and hope in death. It is different than the service for recognizing those who had passed and those with grief. In putting this together it was unique for Pastor Joel Schultz as no templates existed in CPH or among his contacts. Our Vicars were impressed by the service and something new for them as well. The service can be viewed on YouTube, search for Beautiful Savior Olathe Healing and

Health Service. It is such a comforting and beautiful service that we want to share with others.

Dental Care as We Age

As we grow older, maintaining good oral health becomes increasingly important for overall well-being. Aging can bring changes to the mouth, including a higher risk of gum disease, tooth decay, dry mouth, and oral cancer. These issues not only affect the ability to eat and speak comfortably but can also impact nutrition, confidence, and quality of life.

Regular dental checkups are essential for early detection and treatment of problems. Professional cleanings help prevent plaque buildup, while screenings can identify concerns before they become serious. Brushing at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and flossing daily remain the foundation of oral hygiene, regardless of age.

Older adults should also be mindful of dry mouth, a common side effect of many medications, as it increases the risk of cavities. Drinking plenty of water, avoiding sugary snacks, and using saliva substitutes can help. Denture wearers must clean their dentures daily and have them checked for proper fit.

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Korea Study Tour - 2025

Lutheran Parish Nurse International

The Lutheran Parish Nurse International (LPNI) 2025 Study Tour was to South Korea. A group

of 13 participants learned about the history of the Lutheran church as well as their healthcare and Lutheran university system. The group was able to share Parish Nursing with the congregational members of International Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, in Seoul, South Korea. Pastor Carl Hanson, Pastor at ILC, and Matt Wasmund, LCMS Asia Educator Manager, were our contacts in South Korea. They helped coordinate our visits to Ajou University Hospital in Suwon and Luther Theological University in Yongin.

The group had time to visit historical sites and museums. These included Gyeongbokgung Palace, National Folk Museum of Korea, Bukchon Hanok Village, Gwangjang Market, N Seoul Tower on Mt. Namson, the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, and the War Memorial of Korea. Their palaces, sculptures, and temples were beautiful and informative. We were in awe of Korean traditional clothing called “Hanbok” and able to see the dresses of a wedding party at the Palace. Food was somewhat more challenging with some choices like “kimchi” being spicy hot.

Consider attending the next LPNI Study Tour to Panama City, Panama, September 16 to 23, 2026. (Submitted by Darlene Rueter, RN. St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Carroll, Iowa)

LPNI Study Tour 2026

The 2026 Study Tour, September 16-23 will be going to Panama, an interesting location and the plans for the trip are exciting. Complete information can be accessed on lutheranparishnurseint.org. Please prayerfully consider joining the tour.

Supporting Families in Making Informed Care Decisions

As our congregation members age, families increasingly seek guidance on how best to care for their loved ones. Most people wish to remain in their own homes, surrounded by familiar routines, people, and places. However, due to advancing health conditions, safety risks, or the need for constant support, home may no longer be a viable option. In these difficult moments, families often turn to parish nurses for insight and support.

As parish nurses, it is essential that we are prepared to help families ask the right questions and understand the key elements of long-term care planning—especially the financial aspects. A critical first step is understanding the facility’s base cost and what it includes. Typically, this rate covers housing, meals, housekeeping, and limited personal assistance. However, many necessary services come with additional fees.

Encourage families to request a detailed fee schedule that clarifies costs for:

- Medication management
- Personal care (bathing, dressing, toileting)
- Transportation to medical appointments
- Special diets or nutrition needs
- Memory care or behavioral support

Families should also determine whether costs are fixed or likely to increase as care needs change.

Some facilities use a tiered pricing model; others bill for services individually.

Additional important considerations include:

- What levels of care are available on-site (independent, assisted, skilled nursing)?
- Staff-to-resident ratios and staff training qualifications
- Protocols for fall prevention and emergency response

Parish nurses can serve as vital bridges between families and the complex world of elder care. We provide not only spiritual support, but also practical tools and trusted information to help families make thoughtful, informed choices. Through prayerful presence and knowledgeable guidance, we honor the dignity and well-being of those in life’s later chapters.

Ideas for Health Articles

Keeping your congregation up-to-date with health information is an important part of the parish nurse ministry. Whether through monthly newsletter articles, bulletin boards, or simple postings in restrooms or common areas, sharing relevant health topics can promote wellness, encourage prevention, and support spiritual and physical well-being. Health information should be current, accurate, and tailored to the needs of your faith community. One approach is to plan articles around national health observances such as Heart Health in February, Mental Health Awareness in May, or Flu Prevention

in the fall. These themes provide timely content and are often supported with educational resources. Reliable sources for trustworthy health content include [cdc.gov/health-topics](https://www.cdc.gov/health-topics), Mayo Clinic, and your local health department websites. Always cite sources and adjust the language so it's understandable for your audience.

Your goal is not only to inform but to uplift—reminding members that caring for our health is a way to honor God's gift of life. Through intentional, compassionate communication, parish nurses can help congregations become stronger in both body and spirit.

- o **December** – National Safe Toys and Gifts; (5-11) National Influenza Vaccination Week

A Very Blessed Christmas

- o **January** – National Blood Donor; National Glaucoma Awareness; Radon Awareness
- o **February** – American Heart; National Cancer Prevention; National Wear Red Day (6th)
- o **March** – National Colorectal Cancer Awareness; National Nutrition; Save Your Vision Month; National Drug and Alcohol Facts week

Parish Nursing Education

Concordia University Wisconsin has been offering educational programs in congregational health ministries since 1989. Our Faith Community Nursing Certificate is offered completely online for a flexible way to learn concepts and earn certification in faith community nursing. This program integrates a Christian caregiving framework to developing a holistic congregational health and parish nurse ministry. Contact Carol Lueders Bolwerk, at carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu for more information.

LCMS Parish Nurse Council offers a 17-module course for RNs wishing to become parish nurses. The schedule is flexible and encourages completion of the course within six months. The course was developed by clergy and parish nurses. Personalized mentoring is provided throughout the courses and periodic zoom meetings are provided to add the group discussion component.

For additional information, contact Dr. Marcy Schnorr (marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com) or at 815-562-2744 (mornings).

Parish Nurse Websites

Parish Nurse Website: Hope Knight, the Oklahoma District Parish Nurse Representative, has created [LCMSParishNursing.com](https://www.LCMSParishNursing.com) and [Lutheranparishnursing.org](https://www.Lutheranparishnursing.org).

Upcoming Events

January 4-18, 2026 – Mission trip to Ethiopia

May 13-14, 2026 – Annual District Rep Meeting and the 34th Annual Conference on the campus of Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon Wisconsin. The theme for the conference is "Living Well".

Worker's Together

"Worker's Together" is a monthly newsletter by the Kansas District LCMS ([kslcms.org](https://www.kslcms.org)), sharing the activities in and around the Kansas District. There is a monthly health article contributed by the Parish Nurse Ministry. President Panzer, District President of the Kansas District, writes an inspiring monthly devotion.

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 nursing 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.

For those receiving the newsletter by mail can receive it electronically by informing Mary Hume at maryhume29@cox.net.

Past issues of the *Kansas Parish Nurse Newsletter* are available on

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

Contact information:

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- ◇ 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.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit". Philippians 4:24 (NIV)