

KANSAS PARISH NURSE MINISTRY FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING

Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2026

"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,
Spring is coming, according to the calendar. We are anxious to see the crocuses and tulips peek through the ground. Spring also is a symbol of hope after hardship, renewal and fresh beginnings, healing after loss or weariness and life returning where things once seemed still and barren. Spring also points to the resurrection and new life. It echoes the promise of God that death does not have the final word and He brings life out of what appears lifeless (Isaiah 43:19). Spring is coming, a promise that change is underway, the days are getting longer and new life is on the horizon. It is not just a seasonal change but it is a reminder that God keeps His promises, bringing life out of death. Praise to God as we go through the Lenten season and into Easter, and His resurrection.

The Lutheran Women in Mission, Kansas District will have their convention April 17th-19th. The Kansas District Parish Nurses will have a display table. Stop by and say "Hi" and there will be information available. I want to meet you.

Mary Hume, KS District Representative

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

Parish Nursing, A Collaboration for Care in Ethiopia

When six Parish Nurses from the United States felt that God had called them to go to Ethiopia, on the medical mission trip, each of us tried – at least briefly – to talk ourselves out of going. We prayed, weighed the challenges, and wondered if we were truly meant to go. Yet, one by one, every obstacle was removed and every detail fell into place. It became clear: God was leading the way.

Because of your generous support, I was able to be a part of a three-day Parish Nurse training for 47 Ethiopian nurses and three physicians. The purpose was to expand their understanding of whole-person care—serving not only the body and mind, but also the spirit. Parish Nursing integrates faith and health, equipping caregivers to share Christ's compassion alongside clinical care.

The response was inspiring. Nearly all the trainees—most of them men—arrived with the enthusiastic backing of their church leaders. They embraced the vision of bringing spiritual care into their congregations and communities, where medical resources are scarce and nurses often serve as the primary caregivers. At the conclusion of the training, the 47 nurses and 3 doctors received certificates and parish nurse pins in a joyful celebration of their new roles.

Our teaching team was led by Dr. Marcy Schnorr, educational consultant and international liaison for the Parish Nurse Council, along with a dedicated faculty that included nurses, district representatives, and a Lutheran Church Charities liaison. Together, we shared practical models of parish nursing ministry and how those can be adapted to serve the Ethiopian communities. The parish nurses who presented what the ministry is was: Dr. Marcy Schnorr, Sylvia Baker and Jean Mau of the Northern Illinois District, Doyle Bosque, Eastern District Representative, Dianne Weber Representative of the Southern District, and Mary Hume, the Kansas District Representative. Deaconess Dianna Bonfield of the Lutheran Church Charities is the liaison with the Northern Illinois Parish Nurse Network.

Our journey began in Addis Ababa, where we were welcomed with warm hospitality and wonderful Ethiopian cuisine. We met with leaders from Master

Builder Center (MBC), founded in 2008 by Rev. Dr. Tilahun Menedo to address critical needs across Ethiopia. One of their key outreach efforts, “Feeding His Lambs,” helps integrate vulnerable children into supportive family structures.

Before the training began, we visited historic regions including Axum, Gondar, and Lalibela, walking among ancient churches carved from rock and sites related to the reign to the Queen of Sheba. Preparations were underway for Christmas celebrations based on the Ethiopian calendar, with thousands of pilgrims traveling long distances on foot join in worship.

We then traveled to Hosanna, the site of our training. The long, rugged bus ride revealed sweeping landscapes filled with livestock and wildlife—and gave us a glimpse into daily rural life. In Hosanna we met synod presidents from across southern Ethiopia—synods are similar to our church districts—representing 184 congregations and more than 400,000 members. In areas where there may be only one doctor for every 10,000 people, nurses carry enormous responsibility. The addition of parish nurse training strengthens their ability to care holistically and share the hope of Christ alongside their traditional medical treatment.

Each training day began with music—an essential and joyful part of Ethiopian culture. The parish nurses’ discussions included: introducing the concept of parish nursing, the basic models, roles of the parish nurse, spiritual care, grief care, managing chronic illnesses, care of the person with cancer, importance of oral care, responding to disasters, caring for women and children, and self-care and worker wellness. The students were so willing to learn the different components and had many questions and comments.

On Sunday, we attended a worship service which lasted more than two hours, filled with passionate singing from a choir of over 100 voices. Some church members walked for two hours just to attend, and still the church overflowed. We do not know what the message was (it was delivered in the Ethiopian language) but we know it was about Jesus. The little children were so cute, at the close of the service, they had cellphone cameras and were taking our pictures.

Following the training, we visited a local hospital and a prison clinic, where staff worked faithfully under extremely difficult conditions. The medical supplies in each facility were limited and so the medical supplies which we took will help provide care. They were distributed to the University Hospital in Hosanna, a prison clinic, and a rural clinic in the Dara region—one of which previously had only a blood pressure cuff, a stethoscope, and a few bandages. The gratitude we encountered was deeply moving. At the prison, we were observers and saw how Jesus works through their care receivers. There were 337 prisoners were seen for various reasons, 160 received counseling along with medical attention and prayers and of whom 12 person received Jesus as their Savior and they were referred to the prison Chaplin. We also visited several synods, where the presidents and pastors welcomed us with great kindness, meals, and meaningful gifts, including hand-crafted stoles unique to each synod. We saw creative ministry in action—such as a four-story building project designed to generate rental income to support church work. Everywhere we went, leaders expressed strong encouragement for the Parish Nurse Ministry.

A milestone moment was the appointment of Tadelech Loha—a nurse and deaconess—as the first Director of the MBC Ethiopia Parish Nurse Program. She will continue to train others and expand the ministry across Ethiopia.

Throughout the trip, we witnessed material poverty—but also extraordinary spiritual richness, joy, and resilience. Our gifts of medical supplies and prayers traveled thousands of miles and are now touching lives we may never meet this side of heaven—strengthening both physical and spiritual care.

As Sylvia Baker wrote in her summary of the mission trip: when it was asked in Isaiah 6:8, “Whom shall I send?” and You answered, “Send me!” by your donations and prayers which have made a difference to so many! May God continue to bless our efforts in the mission field! I will continue to accept medical supplies and take them to our national Parish Nurse Conference in May.

May God continue to bless this work and all who take part in it.

I have included some pictures of our experience while we traveled in the various regions of Ethiopia.

March is “Save your Vision” Month

Vision changes are common with aging. At first, you may only need glasses to see things up close, or you may have trouble telling the difference between certain colors, but eye problems can become more serious, impairing your ability to drive a car safely, keeping you from reading a book and increasing your risk of falling. Here are some things you need to know about eye disease in your senior years.

Age-related eye disease basics

Serious eye problems that often affect seniors include macular degeneration, glaucoma and cataracts. These eye diseases are among the leading causes of low vision and blindness in adults, and the risk of getting them goes up with age. Eye diseases often don't cause symptoms in the early stages. By the time vision loss is noticed, it often cannot be reversed. This is why getting regular checkups from an eye healthcare provider is a must. A comprehensive eye exam can detect eye disease in its early stages before vision loss occurs. This exam should include dilating your pupils (the black center of your eyes) so that the inside of your eyes can be checked for signs of disease. Your healthcare provider will tell you how often you need this eye exam, based on your age, health and risk of developing eye problems.

While the chance of eye disease increases with age, know that vision loss doesn't have to be a normal part of aging. Keeping up with eye exams can help your eye healthcare provider spot signs of eye disease in its early stages before your vision is affected.

Additional information:

https://nei.nih.gov/healthyeyes/aging_eye

LPNI Study Tour 2026

The **Lutheran Parish Nurse International Study Tour** for 2026 will take place **September 16–23** and will travel to **Panama**, a rich and engaging destination filled with opportunities for learning, fellowship, and faith-filled reflection. Plans for this tour are exciting and thoughtfully designed to deepen understanding of parish nursing ministry in a global context.

This study tour offers a unique opportunity to see how God is at work through health ministry and the Church in another part of the world, while traveling with fellow Christians who share common values and a commitment to service. Through study, conversation, and shared experiences, participants will be encouraged and strengthened in their own vocations.

Complete tour details, including itinerary and registration information, are available at lutheranparishnurseint.org. Please prayerfully consider joining this journey of learning, fellowship, and faith. It is a meaningful way to grow professionally, spiritually, and globally while giving thanks for the many ways God serves His people through caring ministries.

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 from trustworthy health content include 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, mind and spirit.

- o **March** – National Colorectal Cancer Awareness; National Nutrition; Save Your Vision month; National Drug and Alcohol Facts week
- o **April** – Alcohol Awareness; Autism Acceptance; National Donate Life
- o **May** – Arthritis Awareness; Healthy vision; Mental Health Awareness

Parish Nursing Education

Concordia University Wisconsin has been offering educational programs in congregational health ministries since 1989. Our Faith Community Nursing Certificate is offered 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 a parish nurse. The schedule is flexible and encourages completing 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 and Lutheranparishnursing.org.

Upcoming Events

April 17-19, 2026 – Lutheran Women in Mission Kansas District Convention, the convention will be held in Manhattan. For more information go to www.Kansaslwml.org.

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”. There

are several educational breakout sessions to choose from, including a session by Jamie Spikes and me on Compassion Fatigue and the Parish Nurse.

September 16-23, 2026 - LPNI Study Tour to Panama. Information available by contacting the parish nurse in charge of the study tour: Dianne Weber (Dweber4@comcast.net) or www.Lutheranparishnurseint.org/studytours

Worker's Together

“Worker’s Together” is a monthly newsletter by the Kansas District LCMS (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, it can be received 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:

- ◇ Mary Hume - 2633B SW Arrowhead Rd - Topeka, KS 66614 - 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 (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

Inside Christian Orthodox Church men dancing to the beat of the drum. Bible covered.



Ethiopian Parish Nurses Class of 2026.



Parish Nurses traveled to Ethiopia –
First Row: Marcy Schnorr, Doyle Bosque, Mary Hume; Second Row: Nick and Dianne Weber, Sylvia Baker, Jean Mau, Ed Holroyd, and Rev. Tilahun.





Program honoring Founders of Ethiopia Parish Nurse Program.



Tadelech Loha and Marcy Schnorr. Tadelach will be the leader of the Parish Nurse Program in Ethiopia.



Suitcases filled with medical supplies delivered to University Hospital in Hosanna Ethiopia.