

KANSAS PARISH NURSE MINISTRY FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING

Quarterly Newsletter Summer 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,
Summer arrives as a gift of light, warmth, and growth. The season invites us to notice God's ongoing work in creation and in our lives. Longer days and flourishing landscapes remind us that God is faithful, bringing renewal after the quiet of winter and the arrival of spring. As Scripture teaches, "For everything there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1), and summer is a season rich with opportunity. Creation itself proclaims God's glory. Summer encourages us to slow down and take notice—of blooming gardens, ripe fields, and the rhythms of nature that sustain life. These signs point us to a Creator who provides daily bread and calls us to be good stewards of the earth and of our bodies. Caring for our physical health through rest, activity, and nourishment can be understood as honoring God's gift of life.

Summer is also a season for community service. Gatherings, vacations, and shared meals open doors for fellowship and hospitality. Luther emphasized that faith is lived out in loving service to our neighbors, and summer offers countless ways to do so by helping those in need, supporting community programs, intergenerational activities, or simply offering presence and compassion. Summer invites gratitude. As we enjoy its abundance, we are reminded that all good things come from God. In this season, we are called to rejoice, to serve, and to trust that the same God who brings growth in summer continues to nurture faith in every season of life.

Mary Hume, KS District Parish Nurse Representative
Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you. Romans 15:7

Master Builder Center

In Mark 16:15 (ESV) we read: Jesus said to the disciples, "Go into all the World and proclaim the gospel [the good news] to the whole creation." Rev. Tilahun Mendedo, a native of Ethiopia, graduated from the Fort Wayne, IN Seminary in 2003, was a professor at the Seminary in Selma Alabama until it closed in 2018. In 2008, he then established the Master Builder Center (MBC) alongside a dedicated group of God-loving and mission-minded individuals to address serious needs of the people of Ethiopia. MBC's initial outreach "Feeding His Lambs," a program to integrate children into their larger family groups. They have sponsored 263 children into foster homes and provides an education for them. It is estimated there are more than 4.5 million orphans in Ethiopia. Because of extreme poverty, many loving families have opened their homes to orphan children. Master Builder Center places orphan children with their extended family or friends and then provides financial assistance to help pay for food and clothing.

The additional ministries of which the Master Builder Center saw a need for and how they have supported them include:

- *Education Leaders* by supporting kindergarten through college age people with education to prepare the graduates to become self-sufficient, ready to lead in the church, the communities, and the country of Ethiopia.
- *Supporting His Shepherds*- 55 students were sponsored into pastoral training.
- *African Internet Radio Ministry* – transmits recorded programs and live podcasts addressing Biblical, theological and mission viewpoints all founded in Christ-centered faith.

- *Parish Nurse Programs* – 50 nurses and five medical doctors attended the Parish Nurse training program in January 2026

Vision: The children and families of MBC will become pillars of excellence and leaders in intellectual, spiritual, social-economic, and moral; growth firmly founded in Christ; the Master Builder.

Mission: The Northern Illinois District Parish Nurses collaborated with the Master Builder Center and committed to launch a Parish Nurse Ministry in Southern Ethiopia. This pilot initiative's aims were to expand nationwide over the next five years. In Ethiopia, healthcare access remains a significant challenge, particularly for the poor and those living in rural areas, where over 78% of the population resides. Although the government manages most hospitals and health centers, there is a shortage of medical professionals, with less than one doctor per 10,000 people, compared to the US with thirty doctors per 10,000 people. There are 353 public hospitals, 3,700 public health centers, and 17,561 health posts that the Parish Nurse Ministry will seek to empower the Churches to serve as a vital link between underserved communities and the healthcare services they urgently need. This will be accomplished through training nurses in the parish, providing medical supplies, medical mission trips, wellness, and physical education. Master Builder Center invites you to visit God's Mission in Ethiopia through information at MBCnow.org

Safety Training

The Health Ministry Committee at Beautiful Savior, Overland Park, with the Safety Committee offered their Third Annual Safety Training Class at BSLC this past Jan. The training was for what to do in the few minutes until EMS arrives. They covered medical emergencies of choking, cardiac arrest, bleeding, narcotic overdose, and seizures. The class got the chance to practice compressions on a manikin to see what that feels like. They also covered fire safety RACE and PASS, tornado sheltering, and general safety with evacuations and calling 911 with church address. They recently created an EOP (Emergency Operations Plan) that was available for review. Fifty people attended which was great and increased members' knowledge and where supplies and equipment was located on a tour. This may be

something other churches will want to provide. The class was brief, about 30-45 min.

Submitted by Char Ludwig, RN, Parish Nurse at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Overland Park, KS

4832Truth

A Caring APP for Connection

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement and increasing mental health struggles, the intersection of technology and caring for others has become a vital space for hope. An internet application dedicated to the profound promise of John 8:32 *And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free*—serves as a beacon for those navigating the complexities of grief, loneliness, and day-to-day life trials. This app is designed with a core vision: to assist those who are hurting, guiding them toward the comforting, liberating truth that Jesus offers, and providing a digital response in a broken world.

The foundational premise of the free download 4832 TRUTH app is that people feel alone, unloved, or defined by failures. In the digital age, these lies are amplified, leaving many searching for meaning and comfort. The app, therefore, acts as a guide, accessible tool for spiritual connection, using the promise that true freedom is found in knowing Jesus, who describes Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life". The short blogs, videos, scripture passages continue to proclaim the message of hope in Jesus.

The authors offer comfort and support through scriptural application and prayer. The vision of the app is not merely to provide information, but to offer personal comfort. It is designed for those experiencing the weight of life. Through the prayer, or connecting to a church within the community, the app serves as a conduit to connect individuals with the message of God's love and the promise of His presence in their hurt. The app is more than software; it is a digital ministry of comfort. It operates on the principle that the most loving action is to lead someone to the truth that sets them free.

By centering its purpose on Jesus, the app and those monitoring it provide a space that addresses the spiritual, emotional, and mental pain of the users, letting them know that they are seen, known, and loved. It is a tool for empowering users to be more connected and find eternal comfort in the Savior.

(Download the app from your app store).
Carmen Stephens, Risen Savior Lutheran Church,
Wichita, KS

Practicing Gratefulness

Stress and worry touch all of us, yet as Christians we are invited to see life through the lens of God's grace. Gratitude flows from recognizing that all good gifts come from God, not from our own efforts. Taking time each morning to pause and give thanks is a simple way to center your heart on God's faithfulness.

Consider beginning the day by thanking God in prayer for a person, a blessing, or even God's presence with you in difficult moments. You may choose to write these prayers in a journal or reflect on photos that remind you of God's gifts. When someone comes to mind who has been a blessing in your life, reach out with a call or message to share your thanks. In doing so, you live out your faith through love and thanksgiving, trusting that God continues to provide and sustain you each day.

District Representative Meeting and Annual Parish Nurse Conference

The 34th Annual Parish Nurse Conference was held May 13-14, 2026, on the campus of Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wisconsin. The 25

District Reps began the meeting with a worship/communion service led by Rev. Jonathan Bakker. Hands of the parish nurses were blessed by Rev. Dr. Robert Kasper assisted by Christie Hansard after which Sue Neff read a poem "The Hands of Jesus" sharing what the hands of nurses do. The remainder of the day was spent discussing leadership and prayer led by Rev. Dr. Robert Kasper and Janet Hitzeman, Parish Nurse from LCMS-Indiana District.

The first day of the conference brought eighty-seven parish nurses together. After a welcome by the President of the Concordia University Mequon and the Dean of the Nursing Department, there was a chapel service for us and the other university faculty, staff and students. Our keynote speakers included Liz Deck talking about MASH/nonalcoholic liver disease and the diabetic. Dr. Philip Zimmermann spoke on the Theology of Health in Christian Wellness. Steve Montreal, professor at CUW, spoke

on artificial intelligence in the religious health ministries.

The second day, we were offered many breakout sessions. Jamie Spikes (Manhattan) and I talked about "Getting Tired of Compassion Fatigue?."

This was another wonderful conference, getting reacquainted with friends, making new friends, and sharing our passion as Parish Nurses.

We recognized and mourned the loss due to death of ones that were no longer with us, especially Rev. Dr. Dan Paavola, who had been a strong supporter of the Parish Nurse program at CUW.

Great News

Kansas is so blest to welcome three new Parish Nurses to the district. President Panzer spoke of the Parish Nurse Ministry at the LWML convention in April and 3 ladies approached the display table wanting more information. Marlene Bender (Faith, Ottawa) is midway through the course work, Melanie Algim (Trinity of Garden City) is considering the course and attended the Parish Nurse Conference and Marsha Smith of Christ Lutheran in Topeka is prayerfully considering how she might serve the church with her skills and education.

LPNI Study Tour 2026

The **Lutheran Parish Nurses 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. 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 is understandable for your audience.

Your goal is not only to inform but to uplift—reminding members that caring for 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.

- **June** – National Safety; Men’s Health; Cataract Awareness; National Employee Wellness
- **July** – Juvenile Arthritis Awareness; UV Safety
- **August** – Children’s Eye Health and Safety; Psoriasis Action; National Immunization Aware

The Scope and Standards of Practice

The *Scope and Standards for Faith Community Nursing /Parish Nursing* state that the person is to be a Registered Nurse and have an active nursing license in the state in which they are practicing, and it is suggested that he/she take a course to learn the theology to provide spiritual care.

Parish Nursing Education

Concordia University Wisconsin Offers an on-line course taught by Schools of Nursing and Theology. Courses are offered twice a year. Contact Carol Lueders Bolwerk for more information at carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu.

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. Clergy and parish

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

Upcoming Events

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

Plans are in process for the 2027 Study Tour which will be in Australia.

Worker’s Together

“Worker’s Together” is a monthly newsletter by the Kansas District LCMS (kslcms.org/communication), 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 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 changes, email address changes, 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 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.