

# PARISH NURSING NOTES



Vol. 2 Issue 4

Theme: COMPASSION

Spring 2022

## Compassion

We like to think as nurses that we show *compassion* in the workplace, to our families and friends, our church family, and neighbors. But what if we are on the receiving end of compassion by a stranger?

Twenty-three plus years ago on Thanksgiving weekend, my teenage son and I were taking the back roads home from spending a long weekend with family. My husband and other son had left the day before and were already home. My son had driven about an hour when he got too close to the blacktop edge and lost control. Our Suburban rolled several times in the ditch, hit a culvert, and flew up landing on its top. All of the windows broke out with glass everywhere. Our suitcases had ended up across the road in the other ditch. We had our seatbelts on which saved our lives. The vehicle was somewhat tilted to my side, and I was positioned upside down in a ball. My son was able to crawl out. He denied any injuries and wanted to run to a farm close-by. I was insistent that he stay as I didn't know how hurt he could be. This was before we had cell phones so we had no way to call for help.

Within several minutes, a car came by and stopped. The young man was not from the area and was on his way home about 2 hours away. He was a First Responder from his community and had a mobile phone with him. He took a few seconds to question my son and then came to me. I was pinned in but told him I was able to move my hands and feet "with no numbness or tingling" and suffered no loss of consciousness. He wanted to know if I was a nurse, and I told him I was an ER nurse. He called EMS and told them I need Jaws of Life to cut me out of the vehicle. Two ambulances and the fire department were dispatched.

We never found out this young man's name but he was our Good Samaritan. The compassion and medical expertise he showed was unforgettable. My son was anxious and this First Responder was able to reassure and calm him. I was also given reassurance that my son was told to rest and not move around. When the ambulances arrived, my son was put into a neck brace and put on a cart. I could hear him yelling repeatedly "I'm not going to leave my Mom!" This young man told me that 2 paramedics were taking care of my son, and he was in "good hands". The Jaws of Life was able to cut off the passenger door and a fireman crawled in to move me onto a stretcher. Again compassionate care was given to keep me safe. Paramedics put me into a neck collar, too.

Multiple x-rays were done. I had herniated disks in my neck and several lacerations needing sutures. Both my son and I had multiple bruises. The ER nurses were compassionate in moving my son and I together into one room which was reassuring to both of us.

We never know when we will receive God's compassion. The weather that day was warmer than usual (in the 60s) and there was no snow on the ground. When we hit the culvert it dented the driver's side of the roof which would have killed my son instantly according to the highway patrolman if my son hadn't leaned over toward me in the seat. God sent someone with medical knowledge and a phone to get us prompt medical care. Our vehicle was totaled but neither of us had serious medical injuries.

*Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow!* His compassion comes to us in many ways through many people!

Darlene Rueter, RN  
LCMS Iowa District West Parish Nurse Representative

## Compassionate Service

### ***Compassionate Service: A Focused Survey on Service by Parish Nurses for In-reach and Outreach Ministries in Churches and Communities***

Christ's earthly ministry from Baptism to his Ascension included service to others with compassion. He commands us to "Love thy Neighbor as Yourself." Christ has given us many examples in his ministries that showed compassion and empathy for many who were hurting, in pain and marginalized. ***He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*** (Luke 9:2 NKJV). Additionally, in John 13: 14-15 NKJV he says, ***If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.*** Compassionate service is a service from sincere love for each other. Compassionate service is a true mark of Christian character.

As parish nurses we see those in need of attention, encouragement, support, comfort, and kindness. Nurses are the Lord's hands and feet in their service in congregational health ministries. In Colossians 3:12-14 NKJV we read, ***Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which the bond of perfection.***

The 2021 Concordia Parish Nurse Conference theme was "Courage to Be, Courage to Serve." Approximately 40 people from 15 states attended a seminar entitled "Challenges and Victories: Courageous Community Service" as a breakout session led by nurse practitioner and parish nurse, Elizabeth Deck. Using a convenience sample of the 40 attendees, Deck asked two structured questions about service: How does your church and parish nurse ministry do outreach to your community? And how does your church and parish nurse ministry do in-reach ministry to the congregation? With permission from Deck, I compiled answers and coded themes to the survey giving not only a summary of the data collected, but also ideas for parish nurses in their congregational health ministries for their "compassionate service".

Interesting parish nurse responses captured many activities that have been used for outreach and in-reach ministries by churches and communities. Many activities dealt with food. Of the 186 responses from 40 people, 54 responses (25+%) dealt with food and meals. The tradition of serving "Jell-O and Casseroles" at Lutheran gatherings and community events continues and is used as outreach service. As Christians, we feed the poor and help people in need. Parish nurses reported that they used food pantries serving homeless and low-income populations. At least 5 churches grew community gardens including the one named Garden of Hope. Creative feeding projects were used including "10 Backpacks" filled with meals for a family for the weekend. Churches also partnered with other churches, including a local Salvation Army Center, to help feed the needy. Food also served as fundraisers including annual Christmas Cookie Sales supporting schools, a chop suey dinner to raise funds, a community corn roast in the summer, all celebrating community gardens in the fall with a pork roast and a chili cook-off in winter.

As we feed needs of the body, parish nurses educate and counsel on good nutrition to vulnerable populations including the homeless, veterans, school and college students and community citizens. Parish nurses used local nursing students who taught nutrition classes with food raised in community gardens. Food was also used to show gratefulness to police and firefighters in “Cookies for Cops” and “Cookies for Firefighters”. Another creative idea was to offer an annual polka service with bratwursts. Food was a real way to show compassionate service in body, mind and spirit.

After coding data, another theme included activities establishing compassionate ministries over the lifespan from cradle to grave. Beginning with the unborn, parish nurses have served pregnant moms by giving baby showers. Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) Lutherans for Life chapters give new mothers diapers, baby clothes, and bottles from a “baby shower” drive. One parish nurse contacts pregnant mothers in their final pregnancy month and helps ready them for their first several months of motherhood. This includes devotional books, baby blankets, Christening blankets and information about baptism, and materials with information about post-partum depression and answers to questions about breastfeeding, normal baby development and the like.

Once babies are born, outreach activities include providing layettes to newborns. Support groups have been developed for single moms in churches and communities. One compassionate activity that a parish nurse identified included “Single Mom Saturday” whereby community volunteers offered a car wash and an oil change.

The next age group served were school-aged children. Parish nurses and others reached out in compassionate service to this group in witnessing for Christ in community Vacation Bible Schools. Some churches used their setting as host sites for scouting groups. Another outreach ministry included prison ministries whereby churches arranged for inmates to have books on tape and tapes and books were given to their children.

Other compassionate ministries were for older adults and included blood pressure screenings, grief support groups, and visitation programs. During COVID, the elderly suffered greatly with more depression and sadness noted with shutdowns and mandates. Parish nurses established card ministries and telephone contacts to share the love of Christ with elderly members. Holidays can be challenging for many. Churches have responded with special programs to reduce the loneliness, social isolation, and grief by having a Blue Christmas Healing Service. Valentine’s Day, a church offered a dance for church members and community. Other churches have music concerts. Several churches have a community Easter Egg Hunt. Older adults served as volunteers to help spread the Gospel during this time. Another recognition for church and community was to have prayer meetings on the National Day of Prayer in May.

Although an informal survey, it captured creative compassionate ministries that met the needs of church members and those in their communities. Activities were diverse for different age groups and vulnerable populations serving the needs of many underscoring the mission of the Christian church. Community members were invited to join Christ-centered activities. Compassion is kindness and sympathy. Outreach and in-reach ministries show the compassion of our heavenly Father who sent his only Son to suffer for us. In turn, we live and act compassionately knowing the sufferings, loneliness, and sadness of others. Remember the following words from Psalms 116:5 NKJV ***Gracious is the Lord and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful.*** In turn, we must follow God’s footsteps showing the compassion of our heavenly Father in all that we do.

Carol A. Lueders Bolwerk, PhD, RN,  
Director of Parish Nurse Ministries, Concordia University WI  
Parish Nurse Representative, South WI LCMS District

## Compassionate Care Resources

- **Cancer Companions:** [www.cancercompanion.org](http://www.cancercompanion.org)
- **Lutherans For Life:** [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)
- **Stephen Ministry:** [stephenministries.org](http://stephenministries.org)
- **Lutheran Church Charities:** [lutheranchurchcharities.org](http://lutheranchurchcharities.org); LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry; Hearts of Mercy and Compassion
- **Hope-ful Living:** [hopefulliving.org](http://hopefulliving.org)
- **Caring-Ministry:** [kslcms.org/caring-ministry/older-adult-ministry](http://kslcms.org/caring-ministry/older-adult-ministry)

## The Lutheran Parish Nurses International (LPNI) Corner

### Let Us Pray for:

**The continuing conflict and strife in Belarus, Ukraine, and Eastern Europe**

**The Kentucky January tornado devastation and the U.S. Eastern seacoast snowstorms**

**Family and Community Strife over COVID issues**

**Incivility and unrest, civil disobedience, food insecurity and climate change**

### *Dear Heavenly Father,*

*Our world seems to be spinning out of control. We grieve over what we see and hear in the news. Please help us come to you for refuge and guidance during times of disaster and uncertainty. You are mighty, powerful, righteous, and true. We come to you in prayer asking for your mercy, love, protection and provisions of needs in body, mind and spirit for all those affected by the situations unfolding in our world today and for those who are lending aid as a result of these events. We ask these things knowing your will be done, and we give you all the praise and glory in Jesus name, Amen.*

- **A Handy Helper** for your bulletin inserts and newsletters. Please see the **Health Topic** and **Devotion** written each month for your use. Also available is an annual bible study contributed by **Rev. Dan Paalova**. All of these can be found at <http://www.lpni.org>
- **2022 LPNI Study Tour** September 22-28, 2022 in Alice Springs, Australia. For more information contact Rev. Bob Wiebusch at: [robert.wiebusch@lca.org.au](mailto:robert.wiebusch@lca.org.au)

## Devotional Resources

- For a brief, yet inspiring Daily Devotion to come to your phone each morning, you can subscribe to Lutheran Church Charities at <https://www.lutheranchurchcharities.org/devotions.html> Additional ministries information is also available at that site. LCC is located in northern IL and is very supportive of parish nursing.
- For a 1 minute online daily devotion by Rev. Dr. Paul Devantier go to: <https://www.bythewaytoday.org>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Parish Nurse U.S. District Representative Resignations

- CA/NV/HI: Lois Peacock resigned 2/2022
  - Eastern: Bonnie Fleissner resigned 2021
  - Mid-South: Jo Wise resigned 2/2022
  - Rocky Mountain: Norma Lucas resigned 2021
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- A small subcommittee of the Parish Nurse Council has recently written a grant to the LCMS to help support Parish Nurse District Representatives to attend the Annual District Parish Nurse Representative meeting and to stay over and attend the Concordia Conference. Both events are sequential in Mequon, WI. They hope to hear before the meeting and conference this May.
  - In 1987, Pastor Joe Cottam graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, IN. During his 25 years in full-time ministry he has worked with migrant workers and their families and mentored and tutored elementary children. Once retired, Pastor Joe and his wife, Nancy, returned to Genesee County, MI, and he joined the staff of Faith Lutheran Church as Visitation Pastor. "What a joy and a privilege it has been sharing God's Word and Sacrament with so many brothers and sisters in Christ," says Pastor Joe. Nancy and Pastor also work together to help lead the Young at Heart group at Faith. We welcome him as a member to the Parish Nurse Council.



# Parish Nurse Education Opportunities

## CERTIFICATE COURSES FOR PARISH NURSING

### RECOMMENDED BY LCMS PARISH NURSE COUNCIL

There are many ecumenical/interfaith parish nurse (faith community nursing) courses available, but at present there are only three that are specifically recommended by the LCMS Parish Nurse Council (Leadership Team). These are recommended because of their specifically Lutheran framework and are consistent with the culture of the LCMS practice and teachings. Upon completion of any of the courses a Certificate of Completion is awarded, and the parish nurse is eligible to be included in the LCMS Directory of Parish Nurses.

**Concordia University Wisconsin** offers two options for earning a certificate. They are:

**4-Day Intensive Course:** Taught by the Schools of Nursing and Theology, this course is offered annually in May at CUW. This course introduces Christian caregiving and parish nursing within a congregational setting. Most of the participants are registered nurses, but it is also open to other health care professionals and others interested in a congregational health ministry. Students from CUW may also take the course as an undergraduate elective for three undergraduate credits.

**Faith Community/Parish Nursing:** This 8-week course is taught by the Schools of Nursing and Theology and is similar in content to the 4-Day Intensive On-Site Course. This course is offered to registered nurses by distance learning.

**For more information about either of these courses contact Dr. Carol Lueders Bolwerk ([carol.luedersbolwerk@cuw.edu](mailto:carol.luedersbolwerk@cuw.edu)) or at 1-262-243-4233.**

**LCMS Parish Nurse Council** offers a 17-module course in collaboration with the Lutheran Nurses Association of Australia. The schedule is flexible and encouraged to be completed within six months. Many complete the course in less than six months. The course was developed by practicing clergy and parish nurses and reviewed by LCMS clergy and practicing parish nurses. Module 17 is specific to the organization and resources available for parish nurses within the LCMS. The course is designed for the RN as an introduction to parish nursing, but it can be adapted to others within the health professions wishing to serve as congregational health advocates. Personalized mentoring is provided throughout the courses and periodic optional zoom meetings are provided to add the group discussion component.

For more information contact Dr. Marcy Schnorr ([marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com)) or at 1-815-562-2744 (mornings)

## Submission Guidelines

All articles or announcements for submission to the newsletter are to be in Times New Roman 11 font as a Word document. Pictures submitted for inclusion in articles should be in a JPEG format and attached to the email. Bible verses quoted in articles should include the version of the Bible. Please email all articles submissions to Jamie Spikes at: [jamiespikes@gmail.com](mailto:jamiespikes@gmail.com). All articles will be reviewed by the Education Team of the LCMS Parish Nurse Council prior to publication.

**A CALL FOR AUTHORS!** Please prayerfully consider being a contributor. If you are interested in writing an article for the upcoming newsletters or needing **Editorial Guidelines** please contact Jamie Spikes at [jamiespikes@gmail.com](mailto:jamiespikes@gmail.com). Upcoming issues will have the following themes and deadlines:

**Summer 2022: *Grace* articles deadline May 1, 2022**

**Fall 2022: *Prayer* articles deadline August 1, 2022**

**Winter 2022: *Kindness* articles deadline November 1, 2022**

**Disclaimer:** The information contained within this newsletter is selected for the insights and understanding of parish nursing within a confessional Lutheran setting. However, the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Please read with discretion and discuss any questions you may have with an LCMS pastor.

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