



# LFCNA Connections

Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association (LFCNA) is a membership organization for Parish/Faith Community Nurses who are Lutheran and/or provide ministry in a Lutheran congregation.

Volume 3 Issue 6 November/December 2023

## Our Vision

To promote a culture of health, healing and wholeness in Lutheran agencies and communities.

Visit us at <https://lutheranfcna.org> and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/lutheranfcna>



Connections Editor: Phyllis Bruce

## Message from our President, Lu Kimpel

As they say in Texas, "Happy Fall Y'all"! In fall and winter, we have many holidays where families can gather. That includes our own family of Lutheran Faith Community Nurses. I hope to see you all at our Annual Membership Meeting on November 15<sup>th</sup>. It will kick off with a presentation by Carmen Stephens, DNP, MS, BSN, RN, *Grateful and Blessed*, followed by our business meeting.

My focus at this time of year is on the beginning of the spring semester in January. We will welcome 30 future nurses into our program. Before they start their clinical rotations, we do a ceremony to bless their hands. I offer you this poem/blessing by Mark Darby, RN from his book, *Reflections on the Hands of a Nurse* as a blessing of your own hands.

Let us take a moment to remember our hands.  
For these are no ordinary hands.

These are the hands that help us do our work.

These are the hands that carry out the skills that make nursing possible.

Let us remember our hands and be grateful for what they do

For the eyes may see, the mouth may speak but it is the hands that hold, the hands that heal, the hands that give the caring touch.

These are the hands that feel the first breath of a newborn child,  
These are the hands that feel the last breath of a dying one.

### LFCNA Board Members:

Lucina (Lu) Kimpel, President  
Marie Wiegert, Vice-President  
Vicki J. Carlson, Secretary  
Renee Compo, Treasurer  
Anita Huntley, Director Region 1  
Deborah Frusciano, Director Region 2  
Janet Mortinsen, Director Region 2  
Phyllis Bruce, Director Region 3  
Marie Wiegert, Director Region 3  
Ellen Ellickson, Director Region 3  
Carolyn Crowe, Director Region 4  
Barb Keil, Director Region 4  
Michelle Knapp, Director Region 5  
Norah Bertschy, Director Region 6  
Mary Ann Mette, Director Region 6  
Enid Rank, Director Region 7  
Marilee Tollefson, Director Region 8  
Ruth Manchester, Director Region 8  
Nancy Roberts, Director Region 9

### Executive Director:

Carol DeSchepper, Region 5

LFCNA Connections

Volume 3 Issue 6 November/December 2023

## Message from our President Continued

These are the hands that hold a family, who has just lost a loved one. These are the hands that clap for joy at the healing of a disease. These are the hands that insert tubes that bring healing to the body.

These are the hands that touch a forehead and tell, within a degree, normal or febrile. These are the hands that feel a pulse and know fast or slow, weak or strong, effective or for naught.

These are the hands that restrain the angry from self-harm.  
These are the hands that compress the sternum to bring life.

These are the hands that clean unspeakable places on another person's body but do so with dignity and respect which allow that person to feel like a human being. These are also the hands of different people not just black or white, brown or yellow but all. These are not the hands of male or female but both.

Other hands may build buildings or write books. Some hands may even pull the trigger or plunge the knife but these are the hands of life.

These are the hands that take up the task passed down from so long ago—to bring healing to the sick, comfort to the afflicted, hope to the hopeless.

But these are not the hands of timid maidens who look for direction outside themselves. These are also the hands that can be clenched because sometimes something has got to change. These are the hands that have the privilege of being at the bedside. For these are the hands of a nurse, the hands of a person that does a job that not everyone can do.

These are the hands of a nurse, the hands of strength, compassion, and love.  
These are the hands of a nurse.

These are my hands!

May you continue to be blessed by God throughout this holiday season and into the new year!

## Membership Update

We currently have 140 members. This includes a total of 25 new members. The new members who have joined since September are:

Nancy Reese—Region 5  
Ann Clabots—Region 5  
Linda Six—Region 5  
Rebecca Rabb—Region 8  
Vicki Mickelsen Region 3  
Jon Moe—Region 3  
Judy Crane—Region 3

**WELCOME!!**

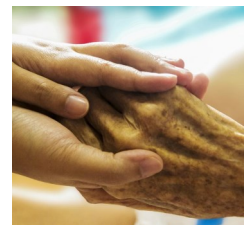
We extend a warm welcome with hopes that you avail yourselves to the many opportunities to connect with other FCNs across the organization. The Regional Peer Sharing groups are a great way to meet other FCNs in your Region.

We are also gearing up for our membership renewal drive in December. You will receive reminders if your membership is due for renewal in 2024, so you don't have to anything until then. We will be offering an incentive of a free LFCNA educational offering for those who renew before January 31. The names will go into a drawing and we will draw 2-4 names, exact number to be determined.

[Click here to renew or join](#)

***"So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith."***

*Galatians 6:9-10 The Message Translation*



## Member Poll – We are Grateful for Your Feedback

As you know, the Membership Committee sent a poll to all members in early October to assess how LFCNA is meeting your needs and where we can improve. We were so pleased that 43 or 30.7% of our members responded. We promised to give feedback to the members, so here are some highlights.

### Respondents by Region are as follows:

Region 8	9	Region 5	5
Region 3	8	Region 6	3
Region 4	6	Region 7	3
Region 2	5	Region 9	3
		Region 1	1

- ♦ **When responding to the question of what member benefits are the most valuable, the following are the most highly rated (the respondent could check all the apply)**
  - LFCNA sponsored education events
  - The LFCNA Connections Newsletter
  - Networking
  - The LFCNA Website overall content
  - Regional Peer Group Sharing
  - Website - Member's Only Tools for Ministry
- ♦ **The top reasons for being unable to attend Peer Gatherings and/or educational events are:**
  - Something conflicts at home
  - Inconvenient time, or
  - Something comes up at work
- ♦ We had 15 respondents say that they are willing to mentor a new FCN who joins LFCNA. Another twelve people would be willing to do it with guidance.

(continued on the next page ... )

## Member Poll – We are Grateful for Your Feedback Continued

- ♦ Thirty-seven (37) respondents said that their needs are *always* being met by the organization. Six (6) others responded to that question as *sometimes*.
- ♦ When asked what needs members had which LFCNA might assist with there were the following responses: Internships, Visitation, Data Collection, Healthy Aging, Fall Prevention, and Staying Active in Body, Mind, and Spirit.

The membership committee will continue to evaluate the responses and determine where and how we can more effectively serve you, our members. Quite apart from the poll, the LFCNA Board and Committees are always eager to receive your feedback and suggestions. You can bring them up at Peer Gatherings, contact your Regional Director(s), or send your thoughts to [lutheranfcna@gmail.com](mailto:lutheranfcna@gmail.com)

The winner of the Gift Card drawing for responding to the poll is Cindy Bernards from Region 3. Thank you to all who responded.

### ***Why do I belong to LFCNA?***

*“Being up here in Alaska, it is an amazing opportunity to network. The contacts I have made are welcoming and enthused to share ideas and resources. The continuing education events that are offered are timely and great quality”.* Tara Orley—Region 1

*“The comradery of the LFCNA organization is inspiring. We all have a common vision and mission and support each other in sharing these with our congregation members and others. The educational presentations and the peer group meetings are beneficial to our work as Faith Community Nurses. I love seeing our organization grow in numbers and programs”.*  
Linda Graffius—Region 8

## Funding Our Future LFCNA YEAR END APPEAL

Why are you a part of LFCNA? Are you a supporter because a nurse in your congregation cared for you? Was a loved one a member of LFCNA and now you are continuing that legacy? Are you a nurse who needs what LFCNA offers? Are you someone who has participated in the educational offerings?



All these questions are a resounding “YES” for why people choose to support LFCNA. These are the supporters and participants of LFCNA. They make up our family and are part of why we continue to move this organization forward. LFCNA needs your support to continue its mission and to serve the congregations and faith communities still in need.

LFCNA has a budget of nearly \$22,000 projected for 2024. This will be partially funded by dues, educational events, and contributions from others. Approximately 30% of our budget relies on donations from members, friends of the organization, or other fiscal partners. With extra gifts beyond our budget, we could expand our reach to include more congregational grants (you didn’t know we did that? Yes, we support FCN’s that are just starting out), we could send more members to synod events to gain additional support and understanding of our work, we could enhance our website, we could expand our marketing, and the list of ideas and possibilities grows.

If you could send just “an additional \$5” imagine what that could grow into if everyone did that. What about \$50? As those contributions grow, so does our ministry to others.

Please take time to consider what you can give. The smallest to the largest gift will be most appreciated and be used to the betterment of the whole. Each expenditure is considered for its work for the greater good. Each dollar spent is first considered for its work in our community. Your contribution will be put to good use!!

Thank you for considering LFCNA in your year-end giving. Gifts may be given in honor or in memory of a loved one and will be so noted. If you are able to support the organization with a financial gift, please click on the donate link below.

[\*\*DONATE\*\*](#)

## 2023 LFCNA Election – Serving in 2024-2025

For the 2023 election there are currently only three candidates. All officers and directors serve for 2-year terms and all current Directors, the President, and the Secretary were elected or reelected in 2022.

Running for office this year:

**Marie Wiegert (Region 3) will be running to reelection as Vice President.**

I received my Master's Degree in Transcultural and Community Health Nursing from Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN. For my master's project, I developed a nursing model using Jean Watson's Nursing Theory on Caring. This included the various aspects of the theory and parish nurse functions. I was able to find stories from the members using all parts of the theory, and parish nurse functions. Marie served on the Region 3 board when it was in existence and has served on the LFCNA Board since 2018.

**Renee Compo (Region 3) will be running for reelection as Treasurer.**

Renee Compo took her FCN training in one of the first classes offered in the early 90's. Since then, she has been a volunteer parish nurse at her church. She believes congregants are more willing to talk to her about medical concerns as a result. Currently she is working with the senior group as well as other volunteer activities for Spirit of Christ.

Renee served on the Region 3 board of directors and as treasurer. She has been the LFCNA Treasurer since early 2021.

**Rose Sutkins will be running for a Director seat on the Board from Region 7.**

When I first heard about Parish Nursing, I wondered, what it was? What an amazing idea! How perfect to join my love of nursing & faith into one box! I searched out & completed the Parish Nursing Fundamentals Course at Sacred Heart Hospital in Allentown, PA in 2008.

My goal is to educate, support, encourage & facilitate Faith Community Nursing consciousness while additionally assisting in the development of tangible programs in Faith Communities.

**Full bios will be available with the ballot. The ballot will be discussed at the annual meeting with an opportunity to place names in nomination at that time. Write in candidates are also an option during the election process. If you are interested in serving as Vice President, Treasurer, or as a Director from your Region, please let us know of your interest and your name will be added to the ballot.**

**You are highly encouraged to frequently check the events pages on our website. LFCNA events, events sponsored by other FCN Networks, and preparation courses are added and updated regularly! <https://lutheranfcna.org/events>**



## Holidays and Empty Chairs

by John Pavlovitz

Submitted by Janet Mortinsen, Region 2

The holidays are a time for recognizing our profound *fullness*, of purposefully dwelling on the abundant overflow we find ourselves in and being grateful for it.

Our houses and our bellies bulge to capacity, and we gleefully overindulge in food and friends and laughter. We fill ourselves to bursting with all the things and the people and the stuff that make life glorious and make the difficulties bearable.

This is a season where we inventory our lives and readily acknowledge all that is good and sweet and right. It is about celebrating presence.

But not for you.

Not right now.

Though you may indeed have so many reasons to feel fortunate and to give thanks, what this season is now marked by more than anything else—is absence. Surrounded by noise and activity and life, your eyes and your heart can't help but drift to that quiet space that now remains unoccupied: the cruel vacancy of the empty chair.

You're not alone, friend. In fact, though they're supposed to nurture gratitude and deposit peace within us, the holidays have a way of magnifying loss; of in the middle of all the celebration and thanksgiving, reminding us of our incompleteness, our lack, our mourning.

The empty chair is different for everyone, though it is equally intrusive.

For some it is a place of a vigil; the persistent hope of a prodigal returning, of a severed tie to soon be repaired, of a long overdue reunion to come. It is a place of painful but patient waiting for what is unlikely, yet still possible.

For some the chair is a memorial; the stark reminder of what was and no longer is, of that which never will be again. It is a household headstone where we eulogize and grieve and remember; a face we squint to see, a hand we stretch to hold, a voice we strain to hear.

For some it is a fresh wound; the painful fallout of a brutal battle that we chose or had thrust upon us, one whose aftermath has yielded silence. It is a place of sometimes necessary but still excruciating separation.

Continued on next page....



## Holidays and Empty Chairs Continued

This may be the first time the chair has been empty for you, or you may have grown quite accustomed to the subtraction. Either way it hurts like hell, and I wanted you to know that someone sees you and understands. This would usually be the time when a writer might offer some silver lining goodness to tie everything up in pretty little bow; some closing reminders about how the empty chair is still a blessing because it reminds us that we had something worth grieving over to begin with. It's the place where he or she would offer some concluding encouragement regarding the lessons the empty chair teaches us, about living in the moment and being thankful for what we have and about growing through suffering.

I'm not going to do that. You'll learn those lessons and acquire that wisdom and find that healing in your way and in your time—or you won't. Life is unpredictable and messy that way.

Right now, I just want you to know that I see your waiting, your grief, and your pain, and that I wait and grieve and suffer too. In that way we all sit together in this, gathered around this same incomplete table. Maybe that is all we can offer one another: our compassionate presence in this face of this terrible absence.

In this season each of us learns to have fellowship with sadness, to celebrate accompanied by sorrow. This is the paradox of loving and being wounded simultaneously.

May we each make peace with the holidays and the empty chairs.





## Ghosted: Ministering to Estranged Parents

**Presented By: Fe Anam Avis, Author and  
Entrepreneurial Humanitarian**

### Program Description

Family estrangement in general and parental estrangement in particular is being recognized as an emerging public health problem in our society. Roughly 70 million persons over the age of 18 indicate they are estranged from a family member, and one in eight parent-adult child relationships is estranged. In this SPEAK Awareness Training for Faith Communities, participants will learn practical skills for making a life-changing difference for estranged parents and grandparents in their congregations and communities.

**Date/Time: Thursday, January 18, 2024**

**3-5 pm AKT, 4-6 pm PT, 5-7 pm MT, 6-8 pm CT, 7-9 pm ET**

**Registration Fee: \$30 for LFCNA members/ \$50 for non-members**

**Contact hours provided: 2.0**

### Presenter

Fe Anam Avis was a researcher in the field of satellite reconnaissance, and former pastor for over twenty years. He now describes himself as an entrepreneurial humanitarian who has founded a home for HIV children in Honduras, led a Central American relief effort in the wake of Hurricane Mitch, developed a domestic violence intervention training titled *Breaking the Silence*, and began a suicide prevention movement called *Soul Shop*. In 2019, he founded PEAK: Parents of Estranged Adult Kids. He is the author of six books and multiple videos about parental estrangement, and has now worked with hundreds of estranged parents.

**Registration materials will be available in December. Watch your inbox!**

## IN MEMORIAM

### Kathryn J. Conrad, Faith Community Nurse



Kathy Conrad, Parish Nurse at Zion Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, PA and member of LFCNA, Region 8 died on September 3, 2023, following a brief battle with cancer. Kathy earned her undergraduate degree in Nursing from Indiana University and her Master's Degree in Nursing from the University of Pittsburgh. She was well respected throughout her career as an oncology nurse spanning over decades at several facilities. She took her devotion to care and knowledge to various countries worldwide to teach others the most up-to-date techniques and advancements in the field of Oncology. In her spare time, she loved reading and quilting. This talent was a blessing to the prayer shawl ministry at her church, Zion Lutheran, where she also participated in many activities including the altar guild, food pantry, and her work as the parish nurse.

Kathy was a wonderful contributor to the dialogue of the Regions 7 and 8 Peer Gatherings and as recently as June, Kathy represented her congregation and LFCNA at the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod Meeting.

As colleagues in faith community nursing, we were blessed by Kathy's gifts and presence among us. We commend her to our Maker where she lives in eternal glory.

*Kathy is remembered by the difference she made by stepping into people's lives and showing them the power and depth of God's grace and love.*



LUTHERAN FAITH COMMUNITY  
NURSE ASSOCIATION

# LFCNA Connections



## Focus on Research

By Jean Bokinskie, PhD, RN (Region 3)

This is a summary of Jean's full reviews of the following articles. LFCNA members can find Jean's full articles with descriptions and implications for FCN practice by going to our website, <https://lutheranfcna.org>, signing in and clicking on the Members Only tab.

Dear Faith Community Nurses,

The leaves are falling! The leaves are falling! The trees are awash in a multitude of colors. There is so much I love about this time of year – cool crisp air, smells of harvest and freshly turned soil, and the start of church youth activities! In my part of the country, fall also heralds the coming of winter freeze and snow, and visions of barren fields. Scripture reminds us of God's love and presence in all (good and painful) seasons of life, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1 KJV. Stay close to God in word and prayer as He is our guide and comforter.

The following reviews address topics of prayer, worship, "why me?", and a social media resource. Enjoy!

Ironside, G., & Ahmad, S. (2023). Frequency of private prayer predicts survival over 6 years in a nationwide U.S. sample of individuals with a chronic illness. *Journal of Religion and Health*  
**Implications for Practice:** Offering prayer as a nursing intervention is one of the key parts of the FNCs practice. This study (although no causality established) reinforces the importance of providing spiritual care and encouraging others to stay constant in their prayer life.

Klitzman, R. (2023). "Why me?": Qualitative research on why patients ask, what they mean, how they answer and what factors and processes are involved. *Social Sciences & Medicine – Mental Health*.  
**Implications for Practice:** This study provides insights into the frequently asked question "why me?". The research study supports what many FCNs do in their practice – listen, ask questions, probe for deeper discussions, and encourage parishioners to find their own answers.

Shiba, et al (2022). Associations on online religious participation during COVID-19 lockdown with subsequent health and well-being among UK adults. *Psychological Medicine*.  
**Implications for Practice:** This study highlights the importance of returning to in-person worship attendance for many parishioners and the impact of physical support (appropriate hugs and touching) on the health of individuals.

*Selfies, Social, & Screen: Navigating Virtual Spaces for Youth: 2023 Outreach Toolkit* (2023). Mental Health America.

**Implications for Practice:** The toolkit has many helpful links and information that could be adapted for a faith-based organization. There is a sample article that could be used in a newsletter, as well as images and posters for bulletin boards (electronic or standard).

## Annette Toft Langdon, RN, BSN, MA (Region 3)



### ***Gratefulness changes me***

I remember writing this phrase on my desk blotter when I was working as a Faith Community Nurse: *Gratefulness changes me*. Whenever I read it, it offered me space to pause, to re-set my thoughts and sometimes my perspective. Its truth continues to bless me.

This phrase also reminds me of a dear friend who was going through some deep grief after losing his daughter. He shared that he found gratefulness to be the path of healing in his journey with grief. This rang true for me. I remember the many months of heavy sadness after my dad died... and then the shift gratefulness brought to my heart once I could give thanks for the

gift of my dad, his love and presence in my life.

Gratefulness often comes naturally. It can also be cultivated and practiced during any day or even in times of struggle. Inviting gratefulness offers me the opportunity to look again, to open to a possible gift or insight right there in the midst of difficulty. I've recently discovered Grateful Living, a website that offers ways to gratitude and opportunities to practice grateful living. If you are interested, check it out at [www.grateful.org](http://www.grateful.org)

During these holiday months, there is much that feeds our anxiety and there are many around us (or even ourselves) who are actively grieving. May we experience gratefulness and find ourselves changed and in wonder of a God who meets us with infinite love and deep grace.

Annette Langdon

***Give thanks with a grateful heart***

***Give thanks to the Holy One***

***Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son***

Written by Henry Smith (1978)

**"The brave who focus on all things good and all things beautiful and all things true, even in the small, who give thanks for it and discover joy even in the here and now, they are the change agents who bring fullest light to all the world." ~ Ann Voskamp**



## Advent—A Season of Anticipation and Hope

*Even the wilderness will rejoice in those days. The desert will blossom with flowers. Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy. The deserts will become as great as the mountains of Lebanon, as lovely as Mount Carmel's pastures, and the plain of Sharon ... And the main road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness. Evil-hearted people will never travel on it. It will be only for those who walk in God's ways. Those who have been ransomed by the Lord will return to Jerusalem singing songs of everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear and they will be overcome with joy and gladness. Isaiah 35:1, 2a, 8, 10*

I thoroughly enjoy being out in nature. I can hardly get enough of being outdoors, listening to the trees rustle in the wind, looking at the flowers, smelling the fragrances of the earth, watching wildlife, seeing the night sky, watching new life emerge from the earth, being surprised by the frogs jumping out in front of me as I walk through the yard, watching buds unfold, and more. It's a little harder to see these miracles this time of the year in the upper midwest, but now, new and different miracles will appear!

The scripture above is Isaiah's description of the final Kingdom in which God will establish his justice and destroy evil. I encourage you to go back and read the entire 35<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah. It is a magnificent writing that overflows with hope and beauty.



No matter how much beauty and life we experience here and now, we are still in a time of waiting. We continue to wait through this 2023 Advent season in the church year and we will continue to walk the Highway of Holiness. It's a marvelous image to hold in our minds and hearts. It's a constant reminder that the Messiah, the Christ child will come to set us free from the bondage of this life – whatever that bondage might be for you. God will not forsake you and He is always beside you on the journey home.

Have hope. Wait. Be observant of the ways that God is preparing your heart to receive him. In the words of the lyrics of *Canticle of the Sun* 'The heavens are telling the glory of God, and all creation is shouting for joy. Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field, and sing, sing to the glory of the Lord.'

Carol DeSchepper

## Mark Your Calendars!

Month	Date	Time	Meeting/Event	Location
Nov	10	3 pm ET	Region 9 Peer Gathering	Zoom
Nov	15	12:30 pm AK Time, 1: 30 pm PT; 2:30 pm MT; 3:30 pm CT; 4:30 pm ET	LFCNA Annual Membership Meeting and Education Offering: Grateful and Blessed	Zoom: Please register on Wild Apricot
Dec	6	12 noon CT/1 pm ET	Regions 4, 5, and 6 Peer Gathering	Zoom
Dec	7	5 PM ET	Regions 7 and 8 Peer Gathering	Zoom
Dec	14	2:30 pm CT	Region 3 Peer Gathering	Zoom
Jan	3	12 noon CT/1 pm ET	Regions 4, 5, and 6 Peer Gathering	Zoom
Jan	4	5 PM ET	Regions 7 and 8 Peer Gathering	Zoom
Jan	18	3 pm AK time; 4 pm PT; 5 pm MT; 6 pm CT; 7 pm ET	Ghosted: Ministering to Estranged Parents with Fe Anam Avis	Zoom Watch for Registration materials in your inbox in December
Jan	24	12:30 pm AK Time, 1: 30 pm PT; 2:30 pm MT; 3:30 pm CT; 4:30 pm ET	LFCNA Board of Directors Meeting—contact Carol DeSchepper if you want to attend so the Zoom link can be sent.	Zoom