

PARISH NURSING NOTES



Vol. 5 Issue 3

Theme: LESSONS FROM SUFFERING

SPRING 2024

Helping or Not Helping?

The dictionary defines suffering as the physical and mental pain that a person is feeling. Today I am especially thinking of ways that we can approach people who are hurting in a big way as my friend has serious medical issues and is suffering. I want to be kind in my words and actions so I reviewed the book, *Don't Sing Songs To A Heavy Heart* by Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D, a resource for parish nurses.

Romans 12:12 (NIV) says, *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.* Romans 12:15 (NIV) states, *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.* Note that Paul doesn't say, "rejoice with those who rejoice, and also rejoice with those who mourn because it will get them to feel better." And what happens when one is suffering so much that it is hard to be patient? Experiencing grief or suffering with a heavy heart does not happen to people only when there is a death of a loved one or when they have a serious health issue. It also happens when there is physical disability, loss of a job, caregiver burnout, infertility, birth of a special-needs child, miscarriage, divorce, natural disaster, trouble with the law, hospitalization, parenting struggles, spiritual crisis, unwanted pregnancy, depression and other things.

As a parish nurse we meet people right in the midst of their struggle, but do we meet them alone? No! 1 John 4:12 (NIV) says, *if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.* The love that we bring to a suffering individual is more than a mere reflection of God's love. It IS God's love. It is Jesus who makes it possible for us to be worthy and to be kind in this type of situation. We have our feelings, our fears about talking with someone who is deeply hurting and our own wounds, our own hurts. The key to caring for that individual is to remember to keep all of these in focus so that the person receives the best that God has to offer through us.

Caring includes being silent and opening both ears instead of the mouth. After listening to the person, we are able to validate their feelings as it lets them know that they are heard and believed. Their tears are cleansing and healing. Share their suffering with a simple touch and sincere eye contact. Simple acts such as these display God's love through us. The book also reminded me that one thing to avoid is "pink thinking". It glosses over the hurting person's pain by trying to banish any dark and gloomy thought. Pink thinkers believe that their role is to prod the suffering individual out of the despair and propel them into hopefulness. The phrase, "Look on the bright side!" is what a pink thinker might say.

Even though a part of us wants to encourage them in this way, in my experience, this is not helpful to someone with a heavy heart.

Parish nurses seek out resources such as this book to learn (and review) best practices for kindness and care of parishioners and community members. What a blessing when God places us next to someone who is suffering, who has a heavy heart. Take a deep breath, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your words and actions as you reach out in kindness.

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Certificate Courses for Parish Nurses
Recommended by the LCMS Parish Nurse Council

Certificate of Attendance
PARISH/FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING

Since 1989, Concordia has offered educational programs in parish nursing and congregational health ministries. Our Parish/Faith Community Nursing course is offered completely online for a flexible way to learn about congregational health ministries. The course consists of eight one-week units that approach nursing in the faith community from all angles. You will study Jesus' example of care giving and service to others, learn how to use healthcare as a ministry of the Gospel, and how to start and run a health ministry in your own church. This program integrates a Christian care giving framework to developing a holistic congregational health and parish nurse ministry in serving your congregation in mind, body and spirit.

We offer two sections yearly: one starts January 1, and second section starts July 1. Contact Director of Parish Nursing and Congregational Health Ministries:
Carol at carol.lueders.bolwerk@cuw.edu for questions.

SAVE THE DATE!

The 32nd Annual Parish Nurse and Congregational Health Ministries National Conference will be held **May 15-16, 2024** at Concordia University, WI.

The theme of the conference is: *Caring Alongside: the Essence of Parish Nursing and Congregational Health Ministries*. The theme verse is Galatians 6:2 (NIV), ***Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.*** The breakout sessions for this conference will include information on the following: diabetes, loneliness, nutrition, caring for people with dementia, end-of-life, and the impact of Florence Nightingale on nurses perception of caring.

LCMS Parish Nurse Council: offers a 17-module course for RNs wishing to become Parish Nurses 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) or at 1-815-562-2744 (mornings).

PARISH NURSE WEBSITE: [LCMS Parish Nursing-Oklahoma City Oklahoma](#) created by Hope Knight, Oklahoma Parish Nurse District Representative

The Lutheran Parish Nurses International (LPNI) Corner

LPNI study tours offer Parish Nurses and others from around the world the opportunity to learn network and support one another, share experiences and models of practice, meet with pastors, deaconesses, and others to enjoy fellowship with like-minded people.

Upcoming Study Tours

2024: Alaska: September 10-18, 2024

The 2024 LPNI Alaska Study Tour arrangements are now complete! The previous trip coordinators have had health issues and could no longer continue with trip preparations. LPNI is working with a new travel agency because of cost constraints. We are excited that this study tour will help participants learn more about the Indigenous People of Alaska as well as health services in Anchorage and remote areas. Our trip will be several days less but we have reached out to several organizations in Alaska that are eager to share with our group their Christ-Centered mission work to those in need.

Registration forms show a cost of \$2,605 per person (double) and \$3,255 (single room) but LPNI is honoring the previous costs of \$2,500 and \$3,000 respectively. These costs do not include airfare. LPNI will pick up the extra cost, but some registrants indicated that they will be willing to make up the difference. Contact Darlene Rueter, RN at drrueter@gmail.com or cell number 712-210-0135 for more information and registration forms.

2025: South Korea: October 10-16, 2025: Planning for this tour is in progress. More information to come when available.

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 Paavola. All of these can be found at www.lpni.org.

Bible Studies and Inspirational Devotions

For an 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.

For a 1 minute online daily devotion by Rev. Dr. Paul Devantier go to:

<https://www.bythewaytoday.org>

Bible studies from CPH—not specific to parish nursing, but definitely useful for parish nurses.

Waiting: A Bible Study on Patience, Hope, and Trust by Sharla Fritz (CPH 2017), *The God of all Comfort* by Donna Pyle (CPH 2012)

Compassionate Care Resources

Cancer Companions: www.cancercompanions.org

Lutherans For Life: lutheransforlife.org

Stephen Ministry: stephenministries.org

Lutheran Church Charities: lutheranchurchcharities.org; LCC K-9 Comfort Dog Ministry;

Hearts of Mercy and Compassion

Hope-full Living: hopefulliving.org

Caring-Ministry: kslcms.org/caring-ministry/older-adult-ministry

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 used**.

Please email all articles submissions to Jamie Spikes 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. It is our preference that we have at least two articles per theme. If you are interested in writing an article for the upcoming newsletters or needing **Editorial Guidelines** please contact Jamie Spikes at jamiespikes@gmail.com. Upcoming issues will have the following themes and deadlines:

Summer Issue 2024: Happiness-Darlene Rueter Deadline: May 1

Fall Issue2024: Fellowship-Author needed Deadline: August 1

Winter Issue 2024: Service -Author needed Deadline: November 1

Spring Issue 2025: Praise-Author needed Deadline: February 1

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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