

# PARISH NURSING NOTES



Vol. 4 Issue 3

Theme: PRAYER

SPRING 2023

## LEARNING FROM LUTHER

Prayer is in many ways beyond our comprehension and, at the same time, is simple in that we can talk to God as we would with a friend. As I gain years here on earth, so has my appreciation and awe for the mystery and power of prayer.

In a book I have recently read exposed me to some forms of prayer that have strengthened my prayer life - *They Need Not Go Away – Recapturing Lutheran Spirituality*, by Timothy Rippstein. Dr. Rippstein shares spiritual practices based on Luther's own devotional habits and teachings. He encourages his readers that the significance is found in doing the practices, not in "getting it right". He continues his guidance by writing that the Holy Spirit wants to engage and guide us in these prayer practices. "The prescription is to get started." To help the reader "get started", learn what Luther used during his time in prayer and devotion:

**Meditative/Centering Prayer** - A simple meditative prayer can clear your mind as you prepare for private devotion or for worship. Get in a comfortable position. Slowly take in a breath and then slowly release it. Do this breathing activity three to four times, getting more settled each time. With a selected verse, use this to slowly breathe in and out (page 22).

The author provided three samples of verses to use. One of these is provided here and taken from Isaiah 30:15 (NIV): ***In repentance and rest is your salvation, (breathing in) in quietness and trust is your strength. (breathing out).*** It is helpful if you memorize the verse you select for your own use. I have found that when I'm distracted or stressed, meditative prayer has brought my focus back to where it should be, on my Heavenly Father. Several verses have become a favorite for centering my thoughts, including Psalm 143:8-10.

**ITCP** - An additional practice the author shares in his book is the ITCP method – Instruction, Thanksgiving, Confession, Prayer (page 25). For this, you can use the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Dr. Rippstein suggests these steps: Quiet your mind with a centering practice. Next, slowly read a brief section out loud. For example, read the First Commandment. Each time you read it, reflect on how it can be instruction, how it can be thanksgiving, how does it lead you to confession, and as you read the verse for the last time, see what additional prayers come to mind.

The book shares more than prayer practices. Some other topics the book covers include: Luther's spiritual theology, his mentors, and devotional practices for families and confirmands.

***Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*** Romans 12:12 (ESV) The encouragement to each of us is to pray. We don't need a prescribed plan. Our relational Heavenly Father wants time with us. Keep learning about prayer. Join with others in prayer. Keep a journal of your prayers to see and be reminded of how God is answering your prayers. Enjoy and savor this gift of prayer.

***For everything by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.*** 1 Timothy 4:4-5 (ESV)

Citation: Rippstein, T. A. They Need Not Go Away – Recapturing Lutheran Spirituality, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2020.

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## **Childhood Prayers**

***Come Lord Jesus, be our guest and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen***

***Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake. I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen***

These two childhood prayers are ones that many children learn to pray before meals and at bedtime. Memorizing simple prayers as children, can establish a daily, life-long practice that a child-loving God loves to hear.

## **Different Communication Resources Serve Different Purposes**

Most parish nurses are used to the traditional settings where nurses are found—hospitals, clinics, academia, military, and other group settings. In these settings the nurse is rarely in a solo practice. Office mates, lunchroom buddies, departmental meetings, daily shift report and parking lot gossip provide opportunities to share the news, ask questions, share ideas, and develop relationships.

Most parish nurses are surrounded by people, but not other parish nurses. This makes it difficult to ask questions, share ideas, and be informed about the bigger picture of parish nursing. Peer support is missing.

LCMS parish nurses have several communication resources to provide similar purposes as those experienced in the more traditional on-site conversations. Of course, this can also result in feeling inundated with emails. A few simple guidelines may help. Respond to emails when you desire further clarification, or you have something to share. Do not feel obliged to respond to each email. Some may be merely “food for thought”. The various communication resources speak to different audiences or needs. Some parish nurses opt to be part of all the groups; others opt to not be a part of any of the groups. I do think it is wise to take advantage of the group(s) that best meet your needs. So, what is the difference between the various options?

**LCMSParishNurses@google.net** is an optional discussion group. It began as a discussion group for individuals enrolled in a distance learning course through LCMS Health Ministry that were the first parish nurses in their geographic area. It provided the benefit of some experienced parish nurses who offered their expertise and support. In time it also became valuable to some “old timers” who were looking for new ideas. If you are receiving these and wish to discontinue, you can unsubscribe. If you are not receiving this and would like to request to be added, contact [marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com)

**lpni@googlegroups.net** is an optional discussion group associated with Lutheran Parish Nurses International. The advantage of this group is that there are participants from several countries. It is interesting to compare parish nursing among the nationalities. Although the specific practices may vary, the desire to serve the Lord with our nursing gifts and skills remain the same. I would like to get more parish nurses from other than the USA to contribute on a regular basis.

**lcmsparishnursing.com** is the website of the LCMS Parish Nurse Council. It has the most up to date information about educational opportunities, conferences, and resources.

**LPNI.org** is the website for Lutheran Parish Nurses International. This website includes information useful for parish nurses even if not interested in international study tours or conferences. Each month there is a different Health Topic and a Devotion. These can be used by any parish nurse (please cite the source). Back topics are archived. Each summer, Rev. Dr. Daniel Paavola writes a three-part Bible Study that the parish nurse can use for personal or small group settings. These are provided as a service to the parish nurse and may be used as a resource (please credit the author).

**Parish Nursing Notes** is a quarterly newsletter provided by the LCMS Parish Nurse Council. Each issue is approximately 4 pages long and has a specific theme. In addition to the featured articles, information is included about coming events, educational opportunities, and useful resources.

**NOTE:** Some districts also have an on-line communication tool which focuses on information and events specific to the district.

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### **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. 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>
- 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](http://www.cancercompanions.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)

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

**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](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com)) or at 1-815-562-2744 (mornings).

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 care giving 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.**

**31st Annual Parish Nurse and Congregational Health Ministries Conference** May 17-18, 2023. This year's theme is *Compassionate Service* hosted by Concordia University Wisconsin School of Nursing. For conference information and registration contact: Dr. Carol A. Lueders Bolwerk at [Carol.luedersbolwerk@cuw.edu](mailto:Carol.luedersbolwerk@cuw.edu) or call 262-243-4233.

## **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.**

**The Annual Parish Nurse Pilgrimage to Bethlehem and the Holy Land registration is closed for this year.** If anyone is interested in a similar trip in 2024, contact Marcy Schnorr [marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com](mailto:marcyschnorr2009@gmail.com) or Debra Boyle [dlboyle2013@yahoo.com](mailto:dlboyle2013@yahoo.com) for more information (No specific dates have been determined, but it will probably be spring.)

**Lutheran Parish Nurse International Study Tour to Bucharest/Brasov, Romania is scheduled for 8-15 September 2023.** Bucharest is the capital and largest city in Romania with a population of nearly 1.8 million. Sometimes called “Little Paris”, Bucharest is the center of Romanian media, culture and art. In recent years, the city has been experiencing an economical and cultural boom. Since 2000, the city has been continuously modernizing. Historical landmarks abound with the Palace of the Parliament, built in 1980, being the largest Parliament building in the world. While housing the Romanian Parliament and Senate, it also houses the National Museum of Contemporary Art. The Romanian Athenaeum building is a European Heritage site and hosts festivals throughout the city in September (odd years only). Bucharest is the seat of the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The city is the center for other Christian organizations and churches as well as a synagogue and Mosque. **Watch for more information about registration coming soon.**

**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 [www.lpni.org](http://www.lpni.org)

## 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 **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**. Upcoming issues will have the following themes and deadlines:

**Summer 2023: *Kindness***. Deadline for article submission: **May 1, 2023**

**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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