YULETIDE PRAYER

For a Christmas Gathering of Friends and Family

O Gracious God, unto us a Son You have given, unto us a Child has been born. We call Him Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace.

We gather throughout this season in fellowship in remembrance of this Your gift to us, knowing that it is only through our belief in Him that we can really experience joy in this world.

Bless now each of us. Heal our unbelief—strengthen our faith that we may experience the true meaning of Christmas.

Lord, bless this bounty of food that has been prepared. Make us ever-mindful of those less fortunate, and undergird us with Thy power that we may forget self enough to go out spreading good tidings to others. In the Name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

by Reverend Chestina Mitchell Archibald
Excerpt from “Say Amen”, Plume Printing, October, 1998

All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

‘Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel’,
which means, ‘God is with us.’

Matthew 1:22-23 NRSV
Advent (November 27 through December 24, 2016)

Make room in your heart and in your busy days throughout the month for a few minutes each day to do the following:

* read Scriptures
* reflect on a brief devotion
* pray and prepare for the Savior to come

For more suggestions, visit http://endhunger.org/advent/

Need a Unique Gift Idea?
Relax and Get Away after the Holidays
March 31 to April 1, 2017 Spiritual Retreat
Sponsored by Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry
at Kearns Spirituality Center
9000 Babcock Blvd.
Allison Park, Pennsylvania 15101
More exciting details coming soon... visit our website!

Craft Corner: Felt Holly Corsages

Is your health ministry team looking for a holiday craft idea that is quick and easy? Once you gather your supplies, it’s a snap to make multiple corsages in a single afternoon. Take them to the shut-ins to wear when you visit, along with some good Christmas cookies and holiday prayer blessings.

**MATERIALS:**
- Wool felt, 18 by 18 inches, in assorted colors
- Holly template
- Iron
- Hot-glue gun
- Ribbon, such as satin-backed velvet ribbons
- Assorted embellishments
- Barrettes or brooch pins

**STEPS:**
1. Print the template, and cut out. From a piece of felt, cut one 2 1/2-by-5-inch rectangle for each pair of leaves. Fold rectangle in half lengthwise. Crease with an iron set to "wool." With the rectangle still folded, trace the template and cut out the shape using scissors. Unfold. To make the 4-leaf design, cross 2 felt shapes; using a low-temperature glue gun, attach at the center. For the 2-leaf version, dab glue at the center of 1 felt shape; fold, angling the leaves.

2. Glue desired trimmings to the front and a bar pin or a barrette to the back.

3. To prepare as a gift: Cut a 4-by-5-inch piece of card stock. Punch 2 small holes, about 1 inch apart, into the center of the card. Attach the pin or barrette. Using a rubber stamp and a white ink pad, stamp a "tag." Write the recipient’s name and a special Christmas blessing or greeting.

http://www.marthastewart.com/911329/felt-holly-corsage
Faith Community Nurse & Health Minister Preparation Course
Westberg Institute for Faith Community Nursing Curriculum

- Class size is limited to 20 participants.
- Registration ends February 15, 2017.
- Cost: $395 for RNs which include CEs.
- Cost: $200 for non-RNs.
- $50 early registration discount with full payment and postmarked by January 24th.
- Pittsburgh Mercy employee discount.
- Hybrid course: online modules and classroom presentations.
- Limited, partial scholarships are available upon request.
- Location: UPMC Mercy, Uptown.
- Free parking and continental breakfast.
- Call our office and ask about our church group rate for 3 or more participants.

♦ RNs will be commissioned as Faith Community Nurses, and will receive a pin; and are awarded 38 CEs.

UPMC is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation.

♦ Other interested persons are most welcome, and will receive a pin and be commissioned as Health Ministers.

For Application, please visit https://www.pittsburghmercy.org/parishnurse-program/education-and-resources.aspx

Winter 2017 Session
February 24 & 25
March 18, 24, & 25

Health Ministry Workshops for Winter 2017
Br-r-r-r... Does your health ministry team need a “jumpstart” this Winter? Are you seeking fresh ideas and suggestions for church programming? Do you need help motivating your team to try something new? Are you tired of doing the same old programs? Contact us in the New Year 2017. We would be happy to work with you and your team. Ask the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program for a presentation or workshop at your church. We have a variety of topics to choose from, or we can tailor-make it to fit your church’s learning needs. Contact us at: 412.232.5815 or Parishnurse@pittsburghmercy.org
“Why Parish Nurses Need To Retreat”

Retreat!! According to Webster, the word retreat is both a noun: “an act of moving back or withdrawing” and a verb: “withdraw from enemy forces as a result of their superior power or after a defeat”. Let us take a few moments to think about what it means to retreat as a Parish Nurse in today's world.

The Presbyterian Women of the Church of the Covenant (PCUSA) in Washington, PA, where I attend and volunteer as the Parish Nurse, embark on spiritual renewal for a weekend each April to an old 19th century mansion called Sandscrest in nearby rural West Virginia. It is a beautiful setting surrounded by lush hills and valleys. We go there to “retreat”, “move back or withdraw”, seeking to refresh and renew our spiritual selves by embracing God's Word and His love for us. A facilitator usually provides guidance for our time together, but I believe even without a designated leader, God would envelop us with a time of peace, prayer and fellowship that we all desire.

To fully retreat, we need to spend time deep within ourselves, in God's presence, in the resting place of our souls. It is said that a baby is never truly at rest until it is in its mother's arms and so must we be: quieted, calmed and able to truly rest. We need to retreat or “withdraw from enemy forces,” the forces of restlessness, frustration or bereavement. One should take time to get away from whatever is causing us to be disquieted and separated from a closer relationship with God.

As a Faith Community Nurse or Health Minister, we spend much of our time individually and collectively serving God by ministering to others. We knit prayer shawls, deliver soup, visit the sick and frail, and donate our time and money in numerous ways to help the needy and marginalized among us. During retreat, we turn inward to reflect on caring for ourselves spiritually, emotionally and physically. By resting, praying, reading the Scriptures, breaking bread together, we return to our Father's arms. During a retreat, time is devoted to reflecting on what is important to us as human beings with frailties and faith, and as compassionate professionals in caring service.

To be an effective, challenged, relevant, and God-centered Parish Nurse in our fast-paced and ever-changing environment, an occasional retreat is essential for our personal and spiritual growth that is at the heart of health ministry. Move forward, my sisters and brothers in Christ, and retreat.

Linda Grimm, RN
Parish Nurse
Church of the Covenant, Washington, Pennsylvania

Blue Christmas

Would you like to know more about how to coordinate a “Blue Christmas Service”? We invite you to come and volunteer in a quiet and reflective candlelight service at the Church of the Covenant (Rusch Chapel; Washington, PA) on Sunday, December 11th, 6:00 p.m.

Small reception to follow. If interested, visit www.churchofthecov.org; or call 724.222.0190 at extension 113 for the parish nurse office.

God's gift of His Son holds promise for healing and peace this Christmas.
HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE IN TIE ONE ON FOR SAFETY?

Some of the most dangerous days of the year on our nation’s roadways are between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day. That is why every holiday season MADD asks you to display a MADD red ribbon in a visible location to remind others to always designate a non-drinking driver. Started in 1986, Tie One On For Safety® is MADD’s longest running and most visible public awareness project. The name comes from the phrase “tie one on,” which is slang for drinking alcohol. But at MADD the phrase is used to remind everyone that drinking and driving don’t mix. This holiday season, show your commitment to eliminating drunk driving by:

• Putting safety before the party and always designate a non-drinking driver BEFORE the celebration begins to ensure everyone arrives home safely.

• Display a MADD red ribbon in a visible location on your vehicles. Red ribbons, magnets and window decals are available through local MADD affiliates.

• Hosting parties responsibly by offering mocktails and other non-alcoholic beverages, and by providing alternate transportation or accommodations for guests who have been drinking. Get more safe party tips at madd.org/safeparty.

http://www.madd.org/drunk-driving/how-you-can-help/tie-one-on-for-safety.html

Winter Shelter Information
For Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, PA

Courtesy of the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program
Part of Pittsburgh Mercy and Trinity Health, Serving in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy

WINTER SHELTER TO OPEN EVERY NIGHT
FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS
Shelter to help even more people in need by opening
November 15, 2016 through March 15, 2017, 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., regardless of weather

PITTSBURGH (November 10, 2016) – Allegheny County Department of Human Services and Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net® are pleased to announce that for the first time, the Winter Shelter for individuals who are experiencing homelessness, formerly known as the Severe Weather Emergency Shelter, will open every night regardless of the weather. When the Winter Shelter opens at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, November 15, 2016, it will remain open from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. every night through March 15, 2017. In previous years, the shelter opened only on nights that were 25°F or below, when the windchill factor was below 15°F, or when there was a 50 percent or greater chance of freezing precipitation.

The men’s Winter Shelter will again be located at the Smithfield United Church of Christ at 620 Smithfield Street, Downtown. The women’s Winter Shelter will be in a different location in Uptown Pittsburgh this year. The location of the women’s shelter is made known only to persons served and health and human service providers. For more information for the women’s Winter Shelter call Pittsburgh Mercy Care Center at 1-877-637-2924. (continued on page 6)
“Between November 15, 2015 and March 15, 2016, the Winter Shelter opened 46 nights, 27 fewer nights than the winter of 2014-2015, the second coldest winter on record for Southwestern Pennsylvania,” stated Brian Matous, Winter Shelter team leader for Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net, an innovative, award-winning Pittsburgh Mercy outreach program to people who are experiencing homelessness. “Last winter, we assisted 499 individuals at the shelter – 424 men and 75 women.”

Matous said organizers changed the name from Severe Weather Emergency Shelter to Winter Shelter because the program now operates not only during periods of severe winter weather, but also the entire winter season.

Individuals who present to the Winter Shelter are usually those who are often in the most need of services, according to Matous. “Many of the individuals we serve at the shelter have multiple, complex needs.” Matous said shelter participants receive overnight accommodations, a hot meal coordinated by Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank member agencies, a shower, winter clothing, access to health and human services, as well as assistance with applications to housing and other vital benefit programs.

“By opening every night, we believe the Winter Shelter will allow us and other providers with whom we partner to offer improved continuity of care to an even greater number of individuals rather than fragmented, episodic care around an ever-changing weather forecast,” stated Sharon Sumansky, homeless services director, Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net. “We’ll be able to spend more time empowering individuals and working alongside them to develop care plans that focus on housing and other essential supports.”

Additionally, representatives from the Allegheny Link, a free service of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, will be available at the shelter several nights each week to offer information, referrals, counseling, application assistance, service coordination, and follow-up services to offer Allegheny County residents who have a disability, are over the age of 60 years (with or without a disability), or are experiencing or at risk for homelessness.

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank is seeking member agencies to donate time, food, and/or resources to the Winter Shelter. Volunteers are needed to prepare hearty meals for up to 150 individuals. Meals must be hot and must consist of a starch, a vegetable, and a protein. Member agencies who volunteer to prepare meals for the Winter Shelter may order food from the Food Bank’s inventory at no cost. Member agencies who are interested in volunteering to prepare meals are asked to contact their agency network coordinator for additional details and to schedule dates that are convenient to their organization.

Organizations, corporations, and individuals who do not have the capacity to prepare meals are encouraged to consider donating money toward the cost – or to cover the cost – of purchasing a balanced, hot meal for 150 individuals. Monetary donations may be made via Pittsburgh Mercy’s website, www.pittsburghmercy.org; mailed to Pittsburgh Mercy, Development Office, 101 Bradford Rd., Wexford, PA 15090; or by contacting Connie Murray, director of Development at Pittsburgh Mercy, at CMurray@pittsburghmercy.org or 724-934-3537. Do not mail cash. Please designate the gift for the Winter Shelter.

In-kind donations of new hats, scarves, gloves, socks, boots, winter coats, toiletries, and hygiene items for distribution to participants at the Winter Shelter are also greatly appreciated. For logistical reasons, the Winter Shelter accepts donations only by appointment. To schedule an appointment, please email operationsafetynet@pittsburghmercy.org or call 412-232-5739. Please place “Winter Shelter In-Kind Donation” in the subject heading line. Messages are returned within 24-48 business hours.

Funding for the Winter Shelter is made possible by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net, an Allegheny County Economic Development Emergency Solutions Grant, the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Food and Shelter Program, and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Winter Shelter organizers also acknowledge the contributions of Smithfield United Church of Christ, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Catholic Men’s Fellowship, Shepherd’s Heart Fellowship, and countless volunteers, providers, funders, and donors without whose collaboration and support the shelter would not be possible.
‘Co-creators’

“Dear daughters of God, welcome to 2017! A new year stands before you. It is without shape, empty, and covered in deep darkness. But wait! You have been made in the image of a Master Creator. You bear His likeness. You, too, are a creator. So, you can make this year anything you want it to be! You are the one who will give your days shape, fill them with your presence, and illuminate them with your light. This may be the year you walk closer to God than ever before. And there is no need to be afraid. Because God is right by your side, hovering in your midst, moving in your life, drawing you deeper into a relationship with Him. And He has also gone before you, reaching out of the darkness of the unknown days ahead, ready to guard and keep you each moment. So rest in Him now in sweet communion as, together, you conspire to create this new year in your life.”

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

Genesis 1:1-2 NLT

This book of devotions features a Scripture with an inspirational reading that encourages the soul, along with a prayer for every day of 2017. A suggested reading for experiencing the spiritual journey of God’s steadfast love as you come to know Him more deeply.

The New Year’s Day Prayer

“Dear Lord, this year lies before me, a new beginning, another chance to do what You have created me to do. Walk closely by my side. Keep me in line with Your will. Fill me with Your love and light so that it pours out of me and drenches others. Thank You for this new year. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Excerpt taken from Sunday, January 1st, New Year’s Day

Our Email Address!

ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org

We enjoy hearing from our E-Newsletter readers about your church ministries. Send an email with a short description of your church event and we will include it in our section “News from You!” If you like, include a photo of you and your event.

If you should no longer wish to receive communications from the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, please unsubscribe by contacting us at 412.232.5815 or ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org or by phone at 412.232.5815. Thank you.

Pittsburgh Mercy invites you to “like” us on

Follow @PghMercy on #ParishNurses
Electronic Documentation System for Faith Community Nurses
from the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program

This user-friendly electronic program was designed by FCNs, rigorously tested by FCNs, and is now in use by FCNs nationally. This documentation system offers the following:

* **Documents client problems easily** by using a concise list built-in to the system with drop-down boxes (physical, mental, spiritual, social, financial and relational areas)

* **Rates the problem** initially and at follow-up assessments using a 1-5 scale

* **Demonstrates the outcomes** of your parish nurse interventions

* **Includes many more useful features**!

Read more from the linked article in IPNRC’s Perspectives

Contact us!

To receive a link to download the demo version or to set up an online meeting where we can personally demonstrate the system, email or call us.

ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org     412-232-5815

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**December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month**

1) Safety tips to keep in mind this holiday season

2) Toys can be recalled for safety reasons

3) Safe Toy Checklist

4) Toy-related eye injuries

5) Age-specific toys
Health Observances

http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/default.aspx
See monthly tool kits too!

The Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program wish all of our Jewish friends a

Happy Hanukkah!

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Click on Underlined Resources Below:
Health Topics
- Keep Your Heart Healthy
- Heart Health: Conversation starters
- Heart Healthy Foods: Shopping list
- Reduce Your Risk of Stroke
- Manage Stress

Healthy People Topic Area
- Heart Disease and Stroke

Personal Health Tools
- My Blood Pressure Wallet Card [PDF - 664 KB]
- Adult BMI Calculator
- Be Active Your Way Widget
- Daily Food and Activity Diary
- Heart Attack Risk Assessment Tool

Other Resources
- Heart Diseases

https://healthfinder.gov/NHO/FebruaryToolkit.aspx#links

The Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program wish all of our readers a

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year