The Very First Christmas Day
(Christmas Story Poem about the Savior’s Birth)
By Brenda Thompson Davis

His parents had no money, although He was a King—
An angel came to Joseph one night as he dreamed.
“Don’t be afraid to marry her, this child is God’s own Son.”
And with these words from God’s messenger, their journey had begun.

They traveled to the city, their taxes to be paid—
But when Christ was born they found no place for the baby to be laid.
So they wrapped Him up and used a lowly manager for His bed,
With nothing else but straw to place beneath the Christ–child’s head.

The shepherds came to worship Him, the wise men traveled too—
Led by a star up in the sky, they found the baby new.
They gave Him gifts so wondrous, their incense, myrrh, and gold,
Thus completes the greatest story of a birth ‘twas ever told.

He was just a tiny baby, born in a stable far away—
They had no reservations, and no where else to stay.
But His birth was so majestic, in a simple sort of way,
A baby born in Bethlehem on a very special day.

It was the Savior born in Bethlehem, on the very first Christmas Day.

http://christianity.about.com/od/christmasprayers/qt/firstchristmasday.htm
Our annual symposium held on Saturday, October 24, 2015 at UPMC Mercy was entitled, “A Spiritual Journey: Opening Mind and Heart.” It was a great success assisting participants to take a creative look at what spirituality means to them. They also learned practical tools to find useful for their journey, such as prayer, meditation, and gratitude. This interactive symposium let participants take part in fellowship, storytelling, prayer, meditation, music, and more.

There were a total of 38 participants who shared ideas and suggestions regarding their faith community nursing programs and health ministries. Addressing the spiritual needs of our congregations in the realm of a wholistic care approach continues to be a main focus for faith community nurses and health ministers.

Our guest speaker JoVeta Wescott, RN, MSHA, PCSG, executive director and founder of Kansas Parish Nurse Ministry Inc., brought her insight and expertise as she facilitated attendees to “think outside the box” in order to assist others in their own spiritual journeys. We were all inspired with her gift of storytelling. Thus, attendees left with new skills to reach out to their faith communities through the ministry of healing.
Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program conducts Visitation Ministry presentation at Saint Frances Cabrini Parish Aliquippa, Pennsylvania

Thirty one parishioners from Saint Frances Cabrini Parish in Aliquippa and St. Monica Parish in Beaver Falls attended the two-hour presentation on “Visitation Ministry: Care and Concern.” Attendees were provided an overview and some new insights about visitation ministry especially for reaching out to homebound persons in their parish. The presentation began by asking participants to list their individual gifts, talents, skills, and strengths. Then, they began reflecting on how God is working through them as individuals and as a team in helping homebound parishioners. Participants were taught how to expand their concept of visitation ministry to include the whole person... balancing body, mind, heart, and spirit. Visitation Ministry, prayer shawls, meals at holidays, prayer chains, and many more ministries are included under the comprehensive topic of wholistic health.

Also, Joyce Ott DNP, CNS, RN, who took the Mercy Parish Nurse Foundations Course through Pittsburgh Mercy Health System (PMHS), was commissioned as a Faith Community Nurse in 2014. She then immediately began serving at Saint Frances Cabrini Parish. She has been a parishioner of the parish for 20 years and serves as a Lector and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. In her role as a faith community nurse, Joyce serves as a integrator of faith and health to the parishioners and is an important link to pastoral and spiritual care.

The Visitation Ministry presentation was facilitated by Amy Armanious (Health Ministry Specialist at PMHS). Teaching others to reach out to those in their church families who are homebound, bereaved, coping with health conditions and experiencing other difficulties is an important aspect for church ministries. Visitation Ministry contributes to the mission of the church—to teach, preach, and heal—and is a way for individuals to live out the Great Commandment “Love one another.” If interested in this presentation, call our office at 412.232.5815 or email ParishNurse@pmhs.org

A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Proverbs 25:11 NIV
I wanted to tell you about a program that we held at our church in conjunction with All Saints Day. To acknowledge the loved ones that the church body lost this past year, we had a “Celebration of Life in the Experience of Loss” dinner program. Personal invitations were sent out to the loved ones of those who passed, and were asked to bring a covered dish. Several brought a dish that held special meaning for their loved one.

Twenty-four adults and eight children attended. The program featured a message of love, comfort and caring from our pastor. We read aloud the Scripture reading 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 NIV “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.” Also, my daughter sang two songs, ‘Call out to Jesus’ and ‘I Get on my Knees’. The evening was a time of comfort and healing for those who came. They were able to tell their story of loss to others who knew firsthand what they were experiencing. Not only did they minister to each other, but they were ministered by the twelve members of the parish health team who prepared, served and cleaned up after the dinner. I was told by many who came that they felt loved, cared for, and comforted. This was a true blessing to me and the others that served!

Electronic Documentation System for Faith Community Nurses

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@pmhs.org  412-232-5815

Pslam 23:1-4 NIV

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and staff, they comfort me.
Join Us!
April 14-16, 2016

Discovering the Enneagram for Spiritual Growth
An Experiential Retreat

Sponsored by
Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program
https://www.pmhs.org/parish-nurse-program/

The Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program is offering a three-day overnight retreat from Thursday, April 14 through Saturday, April 16, 2016 at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center, 148 Monastery Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15203 (South Side).

The opening session is Thursday at 4:00 p.m., and the retreat ends 4:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoon. This time of prayer, learning and fellowship will center on the book *The Essential Enneagram: The Definitive Personality Test and Self-Discovery Guide—Revised and Updated* by David Daniels, M.D. and Virginia Price, Ph.D. The Enneagram defines nine personality types and the interconnections between these personalities. The purpose of this retreat is to help participants discover their own personality type through self-tests, one's potential for spiritual growth, and how to assist one in using gifts/talents in ministering to others. (See details on page 6 Read of the Month)

The retreat will be facilitated by Fr. Bernie Tickerhoof, T.O.R. (Friar of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis). Fr. Bernie is an expert instructor of the Enneagram and author of two books: *Conversion and the Enneagram* and *Paradox: The Spiritual Path of Transformation*. He is a member of the Spiritual Directors International. He travels globally conducting retreats and workshops. We are thrilled to have Fr. Bernie facilitate this retreat for us.

Time for rest, refreshment and renewal will be available. Some retreatants will be sharing their gifts of music and singing.

Each retreatant will have a private room with a bed and sink. Handicap accessibility is available upon request. Bed linens and bath towels are provided by St. Paul's. Participants must bring their own supply of toilet articles. Each private room has a Bible. Parking is free at the retreat center.


“...give you a wise and discerning heart....”
1 Kings: 3:12
Hanukkah begins at sundown
December 6, 2015

Many Jewish communities in the United States observe the start of Hanukkah, also known as Chanukah or Festival of Lights. Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish observance that remembers the Jewish people’s struggle for religious freedom.

http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/ Chanukah

READ OF THE MONTH
The Essential Enneagram:
The Definitive Personality Test and Self-Discovery Guide
Revised and Updated Edition
By
David N. Daniels, M.D. and Virginia A. Price, Ph.D.

“A centuries-old psychological system with roots in sacred tradition, the Enneagram can be an invaluable guide in your spiritual journey. In this book, Stanford University Medical School clinical professor of psychiatry David Daniels and counseling psychologist Virginia Price offer the only scientifically developed Enneagram test based upon extensive research combined with a self-discovery and personal-development guide. “

This book offers self-tests to determine simply and accurately what your personality type is. The authors give step-by-step instructions for taking the inventory of how you think, what you feel, and what you experience. Then they guide you through discovering what your type means for your personal well-being and your relationships with others. The authors show you how to maximize your inherent strengths. This one-of-a-kind book equips you with all the tools you need to dramatically enhance your quality of life.

This book is a must-read for our Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program Retreat coming up this April 2016. Our retreat facilitator Fr. Bernie Tickerhoof will be basing our learning from this particular book’s contents. We suggest that our readers make it a goal to read this book for the New Year 2016... enjoy some winter reading!

Faith Community Nurse and Health Minister Preparation Course

Winter 2016 Session
February 12 & 13
and
March 5, 11 & 12

- Class size is limited to 20 participants.
- Registration ends Feb. 4, 2016.
- Cost: $395 for the five-day course for RNs and includes CEs.
- Cost: $200 for non-RNs without CEs.
- Hybrid course: online modules and classroom presentations.
- Limited scholarship funds are available.
- Location: UPMC Mercy, Uptown.
- Free parking.
- For Application, please visit...


- RNs will be commissioned as Faith Community Nurses, receive an IPNRC 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 be commissioned as health ministers.

Share Your Vision in the New Year 2016!

You can drop off your usable eyewear at Lions-sponsored collection boxes in your community. Typical locations include libraries, schools, community centers, places of worship, coffee shops, optometrist offices and other public locations where communities socialize and get together. For information specific to locations in your community, contact your local Lions club.

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

December

♦ Safe Toys and Gifts Month
♦ 1 World AIDS Day
♦ 7-13 National Influenza Vaccination Week

* Encourage people to get tested for HIV.
* Wear a red ribbon, the symbol of HIV awareness and support.
* Take action to support people living with HIV.

January

- Cervical Health Awareness Month
- National Glaucoma Awareness Month
- Thyroid Awareness Month
- National Winter Sports TBI Awareness Month

“Joy to the World, the Lord is come,
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.”

February

♥ AMD/Low Vision Awareness
♥ American Heart Association
♥ National Children’s Dental Health
♥ Feb 5: National Wear Red Day
♥ Feb 7: Give Kids a Smile Day
♥ Feb 14: National Donor Day
♥ Feb 23 - March 1: National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

A Blessed Christmas to everyone.
A Happy, Healthy, New Year to all of you from all of us at the

Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program

1515 Locust Street, Suite 705
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412.232.5815
E-mail: ParishNurse@pmhs.org

Happy New Year

Craft Corner

How does your church remember the homebound during the Christmas season? Most people love to receive homemade cards, crafts, and cookies (the 3 C’s) from children. One idea... have the Sunday School kids decorate a special table placemat for use during the holiday season. Have the child sign their name as a special touch of love and kindness.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
Isaiah 9:6 KJV

Pittsburgh Mercy Health System invites you to “follow” and “like” us!
Like Pittsburgh Mercy Health System on

Follow @PghMercy on #ParishNurses

We want to hear from you!

We love hearing from our E-Newsletter readers. Please email us with your health ministry happenings and exciting activities for this winter season. Send an email with a short description of your church event. 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 ParishNurse@pmhs.org or by phone at 412.232.5815. Thank you.