A Thanksgiving Day Prayer

Lord, so often times, as any other day
When we sit down to our meal and pray

We hurry along and make fast the blessing
Thanks, amen. Now please pass the dressing

We're slaves to the olfactory overload
We must rush our prayer before the food gets cold

But Lord, I'd like to take a few minute more
To really give thanks to what I'm thankful for

For my family, my health, a nice soft bed
My friends, my freedom, a roof over my head

I'm thankful right now to be surrounded by those
Whose lives touch me more than they'll ever possibly know

Thankful Lord, that You've blessed me beyond measure
Thankful that in my heart lives life's greatest treasure

That You, dear Jesus, reside in that place
And I'm ever so grateful for Your unending grace

So please, heavenly Father, bless this food You've provided
And bless each and every person invited

Amen!

— Scott Wesemann

https://www.thoughtco.com/thanksgiving-prayers-701483

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
1 Thess. 5:18 NKJV
Kelly Rupp  
Ingomar United Methodist Church,  
Pittsburgh, PA

Teresa White  
River City Church,  
Pittsburgh, PA

Carla Coles  
East Liberty Presbyterian Church,  
Pittsburgh, PA

Mary Honey  
Our Lady Queen of Peace Roman Catholic Church,  Brodheadsville, PA

Michele Cohen  
Our Lady Queen of Peace Roman Catholic Church,  Brodheadsville, PA

Vernita Beasley  
Highmark,  
Pittsburgh, PA

Joanne Scanlon  
First Presbyterian Church,  
Clarion, PA

The cohort’s **shadow box** displays a poem by Max Ehrmann which represents the values that faith community nurses hold dear to their hearts. This poem is centered on a cross to show the cohort’s commitment to Christ. Each rock around the cross is decorated and is spiritually symbolic of Christ—such as infinity, gentleness, a cheerful heart, the birth of Christ, and His shining light, love, and power. The rocks signify the cohort as being grounded in God’s Word with the purple background representing the King’s royalty and spirituality.

**May God’s Blessings surround them as they minister to those in need.**
Our Annual Symposium held on Saturday, October 28, 2017 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was entitled “Celebrating Health Ministry—Our Past, Present, and Future.” It was a great success assisting participants to reflect more deeply on how we provide wholistic care (whole person care approach) to those we serve in our faith communities. This symposium celebrated our past in faith community nursing, magnified our present service to those in need, and moved us forward into the dynamic vision for the future of health ministry. We explored important health care trends of wholistic care, cultural competency, diversity appreciation, complex community needs, addiction, and behavioral health concerns.

Our wonderful guest speaker Marlene Feagan (President of Health Ministries Association, Inc. and holding our Steeler Terrible towel) encouraged all 52 attendees to address our own individual callings to health ministry and to look honestly at areas needing further discernment and prayer in our faith communities. Also, Marlene facilitated round table discussions to move us beyond our ecumenical boundaries, and intersect faith and health concerns across social avenues focusing on those who are identified with homelessness, addiction, behavioral health concerns, and spiritual challenges. Marlene engaged us with questions that may not always have answers when it comes to providing wholistic care in faith communities. The Spirit-filled room opened and closed with prayer and singing as we bonded together.

Participants had the opportunity to share ideas and suggestions about their ministries by looking at 11 table displays designed by local faith communities. Addressing the spiritual needs of our congregations through wholistic care was met with small group conversations during brunch. We are grateful to Marlene who helped us to “think outside the box” in the field of health ministry and for inspiring us with her gift of storytelling. We are also grateful to all participants for sharing their precious time and enthusiasm about health ministry. We learned from each other and became better equipped to lead our faith communities through the ministry of healing. As it says in Isaiah 40:11 NIV “He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart; He gently leads....” God’s blessings as we soon begin the new year 2018!
Since January 1991, Pittsburgh Mercy has sponsored southwestern Pennsylvania's only parish nurse program called the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program. It was and continues to be a mission-oriented, value-based community outreach program. It began as a collaborative effort targeting ten urban churches—seven Roman Catholic, two Lutheran, and one United Church of Christ, all located in medically underserved areas in Pittsburgh. Seven part-time nurses were hired to bring healing and wholeness to vulnerable population groups such as the frail elderly, women, and children.

The work of the original seven parish nurses honored the spirit of Catherine McAuley, the foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. McAuley is known for sending seven Sisters of Mercy (called the “Walking Sisters”) to Pittsburgh, who later established The Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh (currently UPMC Mercy) in 1847. As health educators, health advocates, and health counselors, these seven parish nurses became a visible expression of the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and the seven Walking Sisters.

On October 28th, at our 25th Annual Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Symposium, we honored 11 attendees who paved the way of our legacy as we see it today in 2017. There were four of the original seven parish nurses and our first Program Manager who joined us for this special celebration. We are grateful for each one, for their time and dedication to our Program and for their ministry to those in need. God’s blessings in their personal ministries as they continue to give support and inspiration to all they serve.

Front Row: Janice Holmes, Connie Hickey, and Verna Lober.

Second Row: Marlene Feagan (Symposium Speaker), Dorothy Mayernik, Joy Conti, Rebecca Rohland, Maria Boario, Esther Gass, Pat Bennett, and Sr. Judy Wuerl.
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!**

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

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 Ingomar Church (Pittsburgh, PA 15237) on Wednesday, November 29th with dinner at 6pm and service at 7pm.

Registration is requested by contacting Kelly Rupp, RN (Wellness Ministry Coordinator) at 412.364.3613 ext. 206 no later than Nov. 26. May God’s gift of His Son hold promise for healing and peace this Christmas.

SAVE THE DATE
April 14, 2018
9am—4pm

Spiritual Day Retreat:
Nurturing Body, Mind, and Spirit

Sponsored by Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry
at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center
148 Monastery Avenue
South Side, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15203

More exciting details coming soon on our website!

You’re my quiet retreat, I wait for Your Word to renew me... therefore I lovingly embrace everything You say. Psalm 119:114, 119 MSG

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This Advent (beginning December 3rd.) and Christmas season, do you desire to live and love with more wholeness? Do you wish to begin the New Year 2018 by taking time for yourself and for drawing near to God in a new, exciting, and refreshing way? Then this book may be the right medicine for your mind, body, and soul.

Your health and wellness belong to you... and you alone. Although it is true that physicians and health care delivery systems play a role in our care, we as individuals are primarily responsible for our own well-being.

The author, Dr. Scott Morris, founder of Church Health Center in Memphis, Tennessee, writes about how our physical health is affected by our spiritual well-being. Healing is both physical and spiritual in nature, and is a part of our faith journey. Dr. Morris shares his insight and real-life stories to draw us toward the love of God. To learn more about this book, visit https://store.churchhealth.org/products/health-care-you-can-live-with.

One comment about this book.

Dr. Morris guides us back to where “real health” begins and where we should have been heading all along—straight to God’s Word. It’s impossible to find abundant personal health or realize true national reform without the foundation of Biblical principles. Not a new discovery, but the only way to recovery. Thankfully, Dr. Morris knows how to get there.


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.
**Perk Up Your Church Coffee Hour**

The Christmas season and New Year Celebrations may be the right time to introduce healthier food options during church coffee hour. Leftover Christmas cookies and candy may need to be thrown out, and replaced with healthier cookies, fruit, and low-fat nut breads. Change takes time and patience as we help our faith communities live fuller and healthier lives... one Sunday at a time.

For more ideas and suggestions, visit this Church Health link [http://chreader.org/perk-church-coffee-hour/](http://chreader.org/perk-church-coffee-hour/)

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**News from YOU!**

One out of four people struggle with **mental illness** at some point in their lives. The statistics are not very different in churches. We can help bear one another’s burdens with compassion and show we care as we share our own hurts and pain. No one should have to whisper about mental health disorders. One of the roles of the church is to let people who have mental health conditions, including their caregivers, know that we, the Church, acknowledge their pain and brokenness. This is the first step in Mental Health Awareness.

**Linda Grimm, RN, and Parish Nurse** hosted an evening forum for people experiencing mental illness in any way (self, family, caregiver, friend, etc.) to share their stories and struggles, followed by prayer, a hug, and affirmation that the church cares and offers hope. As the church shares the burden, it is our desire that the stigma will be reduced and ultimately removed. This October 12th event at the Church of the Covenant (Washington, Pa.) was an opportunity for open dialogue and affirmation. All participants were given a **jagged rock** upon leaving as a symbol that our lives are not as “smooth” as we may think, that Jesus is our true “Rock”, and we are never alone with our struggles.


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**December... is Safe Toys and Gifts Month**

- **Safety tips to keep in mind this holiday season**

- **Safe Toy Checklist**  [https://www.preventblindness.org/ safe-toy-checklist](https://www.preventblindness.org/ safe-toy-checklist)
Our New Website!

*Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program*

https://www.pittsburghmercy.org/faith-communities/pittsburgh-mercy-parish-nurse-health-ministry-program/

We are excited to announce our new website at *Pittsburgh Mercy* is ready for our readers! The Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program is located under the tab “Faith Communities.” Also, see the archive of our past editions of “The Faith Connection” E-Newsletters. They are great resources for ministry programming and web links.

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**Health Ministry Workshops for Winter 2018**

Brrrr… 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 as the New Year 2018 approaches. 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 and/or organization. We have a variety of topics to choose from or we can tailor-make it to fit your learning needs.

Left to right: Amy Armanious, Sr. Rebecca Nolan, Marlene Feagan (President of Health Ministries Association, Inc.) and Linda Burkett.

Contact us at: 412.232.5815 or Parishnurse@pittsburghmercy.org

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

**HAPPY HANUKKAH**

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**Visitation Ministry**

Don’t forget our Homebound Parishioners!

A small Christmas gift such as a poinsettia, tree ornament, icon, fruit, or lap blanket can be a “pick-me-up” to those who are homebound and/or ill. Show your care and love this Christmas season through a visit, card, or phone call. May we be a blessing to others as Christ is to us.
Health Observances
http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/default.aspx
See monthly tool kits too!

December 1 is World AIDS Day
World AIDS Day is a global initiative to raise awareness in our faith communities, and improve education about HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Around the world, about 37 million people are living with HIV. In the United States, about 37,600 people get infected with HIV every year. The only way to know if you have HIV is to get tested. It's important that everyone ages 15 to 65 gets tested for HIV at least once. Some people may need to get tested more often. How can World AIDS Day make a difference? We can use this day to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS, encourage people to get tested, and take action to support people living with HIV.

For more information on this toolkit, visit https://healthfinder.gov/NHO/DecemberToolkit.aspx

Following Jesus in Nursing
Do you want to grow in your spiritual journey? Do you want to incorporate your faith in your daily nursing practice? Then visit this Journal of Christian Nursing site to download 12 free Bible studies at http://ncf-jcn.org/resources/whats-vital-following-jesus-nursing

December 1 is World AIDS Day

Safe Toys and Gifts Month
1 World AIDS Day
3 - 9 National Handwashing Awareness Week
4 - 11 National Influenza Vaccination Week

Come and see …
the Christ Child is waiting for YOU!

Luke 2:1-20 The Birth of Jesus

The Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program wishes all a Happy and Blessed Christmas!

January
* Cervical Health Awareness
* National Glaucoma Awareness
* National Radon Awareness
* National Stalking Awareness
* National Winter Sports TBI Awareness
* Thyroid Awareness