Happy New Year

A new year is about to unfold
With new opportunities to explore
Doors will open for new experiences,
New adventures with the Lord

Remember not the former things,
The things of this past year,
The Lord will do new things in us,
Much more than we are aware.

Author: M.S. Lowndes

When you put love out in the world it travels, and it can touch people and reach people in ways we never even expected.  —Laverne Cox

There is only one happiness in life, to love and be loved.  —George Sand

Everyone has inside her a piece of good news. The good news is that you don’t know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!  —Anne Frank
In Loving Memory of Janice Lynn Holmes

With sorrowful hearts, the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program announces the passing of Janice Lynn Holmes our beloved friend and former colleague on January 7, 2021. Janice served as a health ministry specialist for 2 years (2015-2017). We are grateful for the many gifts, talents, and time that Janice shared with us and many others as we visited churches in the local community. Janice will be long remembered for her love of nursing, teaching, writing, singing, crocheting, and storytelling. She loved cats and never hesitated to help a stray cat in need. Before retirement, Janice worked tirelessly pastoring at Olivet Presbyterian Church in West Elizabeth, PA especially with coordinating their food shelter. Janice will be remembered as a “woman of faith” and as a true example of being a Servant Leader to family, friends, colleagues, parishioners, and even strangers. Please join us as we hold Janice’s family close in our prayers during their time of loss.

Million Hearts 2022

This national initiative is to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes within 5 years. The goal is to improve cardiac health for all by implementing evidence-based priorities in daily life management such as eliminating tobacco use, better nutrition, and increasing physical activity. Faith community nurses are encouraged to use evidence-based practice as they provide credible information for Sunday service programs, articles in bulletins and newsletters, poster boards, and educational workshops. As they serve in the “personal health counselor” role, having the most current, updated information is key for a successful health ministry outcomes. To learn more about Million Hearts 2022, visit this link https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/

Health Ministry... so important now more than ever!
ZOOM Consultation for those locally & out of state

Every faith community has been impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. We are going through a challenging time but there is hope as people focus on physical distancing, wearing masks, receiving vaccinations when available, and limit large gatherings. Many faith communities are limiting the number of people who attend services at one time as well as scheduling committee meetings virtually. This requires that spiritual leaders be creative via social media opportunities. Meeting the needs of parishioners in all age groups requires time and energy, but it can be done as ministry teams work together.

Being open to innovative forms of ministry is important in the New Year 2021. We would be happy to work with you, your clergy, and/or faith community team. Contact us at the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program at 412.232.5815 or email us at ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org

We are only a phone call, email or ZOOM meeting away!
On Saturday mid-morning, November 21, 2020 the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program hosted their annual Autumn event titled “Ignite the Inner Spirit” via a virtual format (Zoom invitation only). It was a special time of learning and fellowship. The purpose was to help participants network together and enhance their knowledge about spiritual care of self and others in need.

There were a total of 26 participants who shared their ideas and suggestions about self-compassion, motivating others, safe space through connection, and spiritual health. Due to the Pandemic, there was much discussion about addressing the spiritual needs of our congregations as they isolate socially. Our guest speaker and facilitator, Anne Papinchak, brought her insight and words of wisdom about the topic of self-compassion by encouraging participants to be self-aware from both a professional and personal viewpoint. Anne divided participants into small break-out groups with specific topic discussion points. Participants were enlightened with learning new practices of self-love, self-kindness, connection, and mindfulness so to create space for healing and hope.

We are appreciative of those who chose to spend their Saturday morning with us so that we could encourage each other in our ministries and professional work. Participants left with encouragement and joy as they continue to serve their God, families, faith communities, neighbors, and friends. We learned from each other and became better equipped to lead our faith communities through the ministry of health and healing. God’s blessings to all in the new year 2021!

Mental Health and Coping with the COVID Pandemic!

Life has been quite different over the last 12 months with lifestyles changing drastically. Mental and emotion health and wellness is critical as we approach this new year 2021. Humans are social beings who need regular engagement opportunities. If social isolation occurs, then anxiety and panic may result. Being aware and mindful of the best ways to combat anxiety triggers is the first step in learning how to cope during this Pandemic. To learn more from the Centers of Disease Control & Prevention, visit at https://bit.ly/38Jnjc8
Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program Offering

Health Ministry Virtual Meetings...
Peer Support, Learning & Conversation

(3rd Tuesday evening of every month at 7:00 pm ET)

Goal: To emphasize the importance of networking, fellowship, learning and peer support for faith community nurses and health ministers as they assist their congregations and local community to better health and well-being.

Target Audience: Faith Community Nurses, Health Minsters, Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Clergy/Laity, and anyone interested in learning about wholistic care (whole-person health) approach as we commit to health advocacy and education of others.

2021 Dates: February 16, March 16, April 20, May 18, and June 15. A Saturday session on March 20th at 11:00 am ET will be offered (same presentation as March 16th; registration ends March 16th). Each session last one hour. These virtual offerings are at no cost. No preparation is needed by participants.

Content Discussion: Focusing on the intentional care of the spirit, the promotion of whole-person health, the prevention of disease, creative ministry programming, and current challenges in ministry, each monthly session will invite participants to a specific topic of interest. One of our Health Ministry Specialists from the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team will facilitator and will present a brief learning activity such as a PowerPoint presentation, a video clip, a short article, or a case study. There will be time for Q&A by using peer discussion and brainstorming. Depending upon the number of participants, the facilitator will use virtual break-out rooms for small group discussion to occur. Participant will also receive educational tools and resources to be added to our health ministry “toolbox” for future use with clients and healthcare consumers. Each participant will be asked to complete an evaluation within 10 days after the session. Participants can suggest topics of interest for future virtual sessions, or contact the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Ministry Team for a follow-up virtual mentoring session.

Tips about Our Time Together

♦ Allow time and space for expression of ideas, suggestions & concerns
♦ Questions are encouraged... there is no foolish question
♦ No need to be present at every session
♦ Doesn’t matter if you are a novice or expert
♦ Safe, non-threatening learning environment
♦ No cost for sessions or provided written materials

Registration must include:
1) First & last name
2) Date & time of desired session
3) Email address
4) Phone number
5) Role/title and name of faith community and/or organization

Registration is required in order for each participant to receive the Zoom link, meeting ID, password, and agenda. Dial-in option is available. Registration deadline is by 3:00 p.m. ET (Eastern Time in US and Canada) on the date of your choice. Space is limited, so early registration is suggested. For questions or to register send email to ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org or call 412.232.5815 and leave a clear and detailed message.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:4 NIV
SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, April 17, 2021

Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry

Spiritual Retreat 2021 in a virtual format

Retreat Facilitator & Spiritual Director:
Dr. Carolyn (Carrie) Nickerson

Look for details & registration on our website in February.

Visit at https://bit.ly/3oIG3xO

Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project

Compassion fatigue is a set of symptoms not a disease. It includes emotional, physical and spiritual distress in those individuals who provide care to another. Caregiver burden is on the rise in the USA due to the COVID Pandemic. Practicing self-care daily is essential for caregivers in order to lessen the disruptive issues associated with compassion fatigue.

Many family caregivers are elderly as they care for spouses, siblings, and grandchildren. Caring for a loved one during this Pandemic is known to add more stress especially for dementia caregivers. Recognizing the challenges and offering confidential support is a step in the right direction. Caregivers need to know they are not alone.

To learn more, visit the Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project at https://bit.ly/3qfYBpq

For dementia caregivers, sharing concerns and receiving sound advice is important. Experts through the Alzheimer’s Association can provide answers to difficult questions. They offer virtual support groups. Also, the Alzheimer’s Association has volunteers who can support the family in a variety of ways. They are specially trained and have a passion to work with individuals who have memory loss issues. To learn more about the Alzheimer’s Association, visit at https://www.alz.org/
As we begin a new year of joys and challenges, we are reminded of the importance of spiritual growth regardless of our age and in every season of life. Spiritual health and wellness are the hallmarks of practicing faith community nursing and health ministry. However, we all must admit to times in our lives when self-esteem was a bit poor, our energy level was low, and our lack of commitment to responsibilities waned. It can be comforting to know that the great Saints in the Bible and spiritual contemporaries of our day learned to deal with similar struggles. Henri J.M. Nouwen, a Roman Catholic priest, writer, teacher, and spiritual guide was no different.

In his book, “The Inner Voice of Love” Nouwen speaks from the heart and reveals his insights gained during his mental and spiritual crises over an eight-year period. He chose to write his book in a “secret journal” format displaying the pain he experienced through broken relationships and in suffering the loss of loved ones. His book is an easy-read with 1-2 page journal entries of rich insights and words of wisdom. Such topics include the following: “set boundaries to your love”, “trust the inner voice”, “stop being a pleaser”, “understand the limitations of others”, “be a real friend”, “keep trusting God’s call” and many more.

Before we embrace yet another holiday, Valentine’s Day, where we look forward to sharing our love and gratitude to those we most care about… first consider doing some personal soul searching. Gradually “let go” of destructive inner guards and open the heart more fully to others. Value friendships that are based on trust and unconditional love. Offer yourself grace and don’t hold back sharing mercy to others. Finally, give “thanks” to God for the blessings that are given every day, known and unknown. Let’s begin today.

American Heart Association

National Wear Red Day... Friday, February 5, 2021

We suggest having a Zoom get-together with family and friends with one condition of participation. Everyone must wear RED apparel. Offer a brief presentation on heart health, play a game and then toast with your favorite health beverage. Most of all… have fun!

For more ideas, visit this link at https://bit.ly/39xjiGS

Our Email Address:
ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org

We enjoy hearing from our E-Newsletter readers about your faith community ministries. Send an email with a short description of your recent church activity and we will include it in our section “News from You!” If you like, include a photo of yourself too.
If you should no longer wish to receive communications from the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program, please unsubscribe by contacting us at 412.232.5815 or email us at ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org Thank you.
Do you need a sacred space and time set-aside for peace and quiet reflection during this challenging time in our world? Do you desire to give to your family and others, but could use some extra encouragement and support? Do you want to learn more about self-compassion? Do you have a need to connect with others in prayer and contemplation? Do you want to experience spiritual awareness and spiritual care in a virtual setting?

Please attend our **Virtual Candle Meditation** which is a brief prayer gathering. It is a wonderful opportunity to experience spiritual awareness and group faith sharing through a virtual learning setting. We invite all to this quiet place and time as we allow ourselves to prayerfully reflect on our own whole-person health... balancing body, mind, and spirit. The emphasis is on the importance of self-care and connection with our Creator. In our busy lives, we sometimes feel overwhelmed to the point of neglecting our spiritual needs. We risk little to pour out and then burn out. We invite all to safe, better health and well-being.

These virtual offerings are at no cost. It is intended for faith community nurses, health ministers, church volunteers, clergy, registered nurses, health care professionals, licensed professional counselors, social workers, Pittsburgh Mercy employees, and anyone interested as we continue our commitment to advocating for and serving others in need.

Each offering begins at 7:00 p.m. ET. Below are the 2021 dates and topics:

1) *Preparing for Lent, February 11 Thursday*
2) *Spring into Action, March 11 Thursday*
3) *Summer Solstice, June 10 Thursday*

Registration is required in order for each participant to receive the Zoom link, meeting ID, password, and agenda. Dial-in option is available. Registration deadline is by 3:00 p.m. ET on the date of your choice. To register send email to ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org or call 412.232.5815 and leave a clear and detailed message with the following information:

1) First and last name
2) Date and time of desired session
3) Email address
4) Your phone number
5) Your role or title and the name of your faith community or organization.

**Special 2021 Dates**

**January 18, Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

**February 5 Chinese New Year** (Spring Festival) - This 15-day Chinese cultural celebration may include customs and practices of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. It is a time for family gatherings and the remembrance and/or worship of ancestors.

**February 17 Ash Wednesday** for Christians is the first of 40 days of Lent which is a time of reflection and preparation for Holy Week and Easter.

**February 15 – Presidents Day** To learn more, visit at [https://bit.ly/2LNwNtK](https://bit.ly/2LNwNtK)
The year of 2021 opened with the promising news of two approved vaccines being available and distributed in the United States. Just as scientific information about the cause, prevention and treatment of COVID-19 evolved over 2020, we should expect new (and sometimes changing) facts and recommendations related to vaccines and the distribution plan this year. It’s important to monitor reputable websites for up-to-date scientific and public health information so that we can correct misconceptions and educate our faith communities and others on new information and promote vaccination and prevention measures.

Available Resources:

COVID-19 Vaccines  

FAQs about COVID-19 Vaccination  
http://bit.ly/2KbKFgV

COVID-Vaccines and Allergic Reactions  

US Bishops further clarify Church’s position on COVID-19 vaccine  

Vaccine Distribution Information  
Your State and County Public Health Department websites

What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine (includes printable handout for vaccine recipients)  
http://bit.ly/3sp4Xoi

Who Gets Vaccinated First?  
Note this information may change quickly so check often.
**Faith Community Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice**

3rd Edition

Co-published by the American Nurses Association (ANA) and the Health Ministries Association (HMA)

The Scope and Standards of Practice for Faith Community Nursing provides a definitive resource for the Faith Community Nurse (FCN) to use in decision-making when validating, or analyzing professional practice. It guides the FCN in practice within:

- Preparation and educational programs
- Role description and performance evaluations
- Policies and procedures
- Quality improvement endeavors
- Competencies and compliances

With the nursing process to assess *holistic care* – balance of body, mind, and spirit — the FCN uses evidence-based practice for the intentional focus on spiritual well-being through education, counseling, prayer, presence, active listening, and advocacy. As health care delivery expands more into the community setting, multiple venues are available for FCNs to provide hope, healing, peace, purpose, trust and contentment – even when apart from cure.

With informed attention to ethics, cultural competence, care within life transitions, behavioral health, and addiction, the 3rd Edition of the Scope and Standards speaks to the demanding challenges of current practice. The six standards of practice and ten standards of professional performance are the criteria by which all FCNs are held accountable.

To learn more, click on this HMA link: [https://bit.ly/2BaiGXc](https://bit.ly/2BaiGXc)

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**Electronic Documentation System for Faith Community Nurses**

This user-friendly electronic program was designed by FCNs, rigorously tested by FCNs, and is currently used 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 FCN interventions

⇒ See YouTube Video of the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Documentation System at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNKGJx1Fex8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNKGJx1Fex8)

⇒ See our NEW COVID-19 SCREEN for easy documentation of temperature, added check-boxes for symptoms and pertinent information. Plus updated REPORTS to allow for sharing with others as needed. See this brief YouTube link at on our website at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1u5WzlXWmM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1u5WzlXWmM)

Contact us! ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org 412-232-5815


Email us, if interested in our upgrade Version 7.1 and our NEW COVID-19 SCREEN.
Health Observances
To encourage others in balancing body, mind, and spirit. Please note: This is not an inclusive list of all health observances.

JanuarY

- Cervical Cancer Awareness Month
  https://bit.ly/3kRjO72
- Glaucoma Awareness Month
  https://bit.ly/2TOnV84
- National Blood Donor Month
  https://rdcrss.org/3oO0E4g
- National Radon Action Month
  https://bit.ly/3oR7i9N
- Stalking Awareness Month
  https://bit.ly/36djVUo

March

- *National Poison Prevention Week (March 14-20)
  http://bit.ly/2K4HV1s
- *National Sleep Awareness Week (March 14-20)
  http://bit.ly/3nID0E6
- *National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- *National Endometriosis Month
- *National Kidney Month
- *National Multiple Sclerosis Education & Awareness Month
- *National Nutrition Month

February

- Wear Red Day for Women’s Heart Health (February 5)
  https://bit.ly/2TZe7Dg
- Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)/Low Vision Awareness Month
- American Heart Month
- Burn Awareness Week (Feb. 7-13)

April

- National Prescription Drug Take Back Day – April 15
  http://bit.ly/3qbh8mZ
- Alcohol Awareness Month
  https://bit.ly/3qmCTAo
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month
- National Autism Awareness Month
  http://bit.ly/3qfXzKI
- National Cancer Control Month
  http://bit.ly/2K4jRiA
- Parkinson’s Awareness Month
  https://bit.ly/3soUPfq
- Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month

The next edition of “The Faith Connection” is March/April 2021. If you have news to share, please email us by February 15th for the section “News From You!”