The Miracle of Christmas

The wonderment
in a small child’s eyes,
The ageless awe
in the Christmas skies,
The nameless joy
that fills the air,
The throngs that kneel
in praise and prayer...
These are the things
that make us know
That men may come
and men may go,
But none will
ever find a way
To banish Christ
from Christmas Day...
For with each child
there’s born again
A Mystery that baffles men.

Helen Steiner Rice

And the greatest of these is Love: Poems and Promises
The old saying “Time flies when you are having FUN” has been true for the past 30 years at the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program. We have been blessed by God in so many ways as a ministry... and we are grateful.

Here is a list of some of our great successes over the past 30 years:

♥ Established health ministries across the USA through our commissioned faith community nurses and health ministers
♥ Created and designed our Mercy Parish Nurse Documentation System (a special “thanks” to our database designers & consultants Nancy C. Marshall and Dorothy Mayernik)
♥ Created and designed our E-Newsletter The Faith Connection which has 1,692 subscribers
♥ Offered a variety of educational workshops & symposiums in both in-person and virtual learning
♥ Coordinated several “Foundations of Faith Community Nursing” Courses as a faculty partner with Westberg Institute
♥ Facilitated spiritual retreats for care of self as well as for communion with Creator and others
♥ Coordinated consultations to clergy, faith community nurses, lay ministers, spiritual leaders, and leaders in faith-based organizations
♥ Provided written materials (i.e. bulletin announcements, health teaching sheets, etc.) for health ministry teams to use and distribute at health fairs and other events.

Yes, our Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team has changed faces over the past 30 years, but our mission has never changed. We serve, teach and support faith communities as each one strives to be a healing presence to those in need. Each Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team member offers their gifts, talents, skills, time and helping hands to faith communities. Our no-cost consultations are not “cookie cutter” recommendations, but are designed to meet the unique needs of each particular faith community. We strive to work collaboratively with faith community nurses, clergy, and health ministers to meet the needs of their parishioners and local community residents.

So please CELEBRATE with the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team as we continue serving in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. May our Lord bless us with wisdom, compassion, and loving kindness as we serve in the next 30 years as the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team.

If interested in learning more about our Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program, please contact us at 412.232.5815 or email ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org
Also visit our website at https://bit.ly/3CEu63a

Our health ministry specialists Amy Armanious (L) and Kathy Conrad (R) would enjoy hearing from you.

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. James 3: 17-18 NIV
The Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program is excited to announce that we have 13 new faith community nurses and health ministers that were commissioned on Saturday, October 23, 2021. This special group of women shared their ideas and suggestions about health ministry with each other, the course facilitators Amy Armanious and Kathy Conrad, and the instructors over a five-day virtual course. They addressed the spiritual needs of their congregations in the realm of a holistic care approach (whole-person health) as well as being mindful of “thinking outside the box” as adult learners. They learned from each other and became better equipped to lead their faith communities through the ministry of healing. In addition, these women represent six (6) states: Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. They come from a variety of denominations from the Christian faith tradition.

We bless them with a chosen Scripture reading from Galatians 6:9 NIV “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Dear Lord, bless these women to continue their call in service to You... help them tend to Your flock and carry Your sheep close to their hearts as they offer the gift of faith, health & healing. Amen.

**COURSE COHORT 2021**

Linda Burkett  
Mandy Burkett  
Mary Christine Carlin  
Elizabeth Ferencak  
Wendy McKernan  
Kathleen Metz  
Ada Milliner  
Margo Murphy  
Stephanie Oakes  
Jane Sistek  
Amy Smith  
Paulette Tarabrella  
Deborah Teyssier

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24 NIV
Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program Offering

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

(3rd Tuesday evening of every month, 7:00-8:00 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 Ministers, Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Clergy/Laity, and anyone interested in learning about **whole-person health** as we commit to health advocacy and education of others.

**Our last 2021 Meeting:** November 16th topic is “Self-Care over the Holiday Rush.” There is no cost and no preparation is needed by participants. We focus on the intentional care of the spirit, the promotion of whole-person health, creative ministry programming, and current challenges in ministry. Our Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team will present a brief learning activity such as a PowerPoint presentation. There will be time for Q&A by using peer discussion and brainstorming. Each participant will be asked to complete an evaluation within 10 days after the session. Participants can suggest topics of interest for future virtual 2022 sessions. Each participant is welcome to contact the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team for a follow-up virtual mentoring session.

**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, passcode, 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.

For questions or registration, please send email to ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org or call 412.232.5815.

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**Hanukkah**... begins at sundown November 28, 2021.

Many Jewish communities in the US 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. To learn more, visit https://bit.ly/3k283we

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**November is National Family Caregivers Month (NFCM)**

NFCM is celebrated every November as time set aside to recognize and honor family caregivers in the USA. It gives everybody awareness of caregiver concerns, educational opportunities, and ways to support caregivers. It is essential that faith community nurses and health ministers know who are the family caregivers in their congregations. Families are the primary source of support for older adults and people with disabilities in the U.S.

Many family caregivers work outside the home as well as provide care for elderly loved ones. Remember, caregiving takes a tremendous amount of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energy. There is also financial strain in some families as they manage intergenerational responsibilities. To learn more, visit at https://bit.ly/3w7rMzr
Do you need a sacred space and time set-aside for peace and quiet reflection during this busy time of the year? 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 last 2021 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. Our last offering titled “Winter Frost” will be held Tuesday, December 14th, at 7:00 p.m. ET.

Registration is required in order for each participant to receive the Zoom link, meeting ID, passcode, and agenda. Dial-in option is available. Registration deadline is by 3:00 p.m. ET on December 14th. 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.

In Loving Memory of Jean Carolyn Kennedy

With sorrowful hearts, the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program announces the passing of Jean Carolyn Kennedy our beloved friend, former colleague, FCN Course instructor and symposium guest speaker. We are grateful for the years of service (1999-2016) that Jean shared her gifts of nursing, ministry, singing, presenting, and storytelling. Jean will always be remembered for her calming voice and inspiring words of grace. Please join us as we hold Jean’s family in our thoughts and prayers during their time of loss.
Virtual Health Ministry Prayer Gathering 2021

Spirituality and COVID-19 . . . Life Lessons

Guest Speaker: Edwina Gateley

Saturday, November 13, 2021
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. ET

Sponsored by Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program
A part of Pittsburgh Mercy & Trinity Health, serving in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy

Overview

The Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program is hosting a Health Ministry Prayer Gathering. This event will be offered in a virtual format and provides continuing education, resources, and fellowship opportunities to individuals who are interested in spiritual care and health ministry. Attendees learn from our Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team, guest speaker, and each other as they enhance their knowledge of caring for people in need in their faith communities as well as the community at large.

Many in the caregiving and ministerial professions may feel stretched and drained physically, mentally and spiritually as we go through the COVID-19 Delta variant. We also need time to refresh and renew our spiritual health and self-compassion. We long to understand and/or strengthen our relationships with self, our Creator and others.

This prayer gathering will be a time to reflect on where we are within our spiritual life. Are we spending quiet time with God every day? How is God speaking to us? Are there any positive aspects of COVID-19? What might we learn about ourselves and COVID? Is God telling us that we need to view COVID-19 differently? Does our ministry need to change? By participating in this gathering, we are also setting aside time for self-compassion and self-care.

Guest Speaker: Edwina Gateley, Author, Poet, National and International Speaker

Edwina Gateley earned a teacher’s degree in England and a masters degree in theology from the Catholic Theological Institute in Chicago. From 1981 to 1982, Edwina lived for nine months in prayer and solitude in a hermitage in Illinois. In 1983, she spent over a year on the streets of Chicago, walking with the homeless and women involved in prostitution. Within these two experiences were the seeds of her ministry that would be realized in 1983 when she founded a house of hospitality and nurturing for women involved in prostitution.

Gateley is the author of at least fifteen books on spirituality. Well-known as a speaker and retreat leader, frequent topics include her own faith journey, discipleship and spirituality. She is also the recipient of sixteen national and international awards.

Note: The speaker has no relevant financial or nonfinancial relationships to disclose to Pittsburgh Mercy and the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program.

Target Audience: Faith community nurses and parish nurses; registered nurses; licensed practical nurses; certified nurse practitioners; clergy; health ministers; pastoral and social ministers; physicians; health and social service professionals, licensed professional counselors; health care educators; nursing students; seminarians; and others interested in promoting whole-person health (balancing body, mind, and spirit). See page 7 for additional information.
The truth is that holidays especially those involving extended family members can bring on mixed feelings of belonging, grief and loss, and tension with certain relationships. The stress and weight of the holiday season can cause unneeded sense of emptiness and confusion of life priorities. In most cases, this is normal living in a today’s world of upheaval with the COVID Pandemic.

In our “Read of the Month” the author Nancy Guthrie outlines that God does not see “emptiness” in our lives as we do. In fact, it’s an opportunity to satisfy, and feel completely loved by our Creator. Guthrie bases this foundational truth with Scripture and thought-provoking answers. She encourages her readers to embrace that God really does do His best work with “empty” vessels, because He fills us up with Himself. In being human, we crave for more things, deal with daily disappointments and loneliness, strive for more security and comfort, and struggle with unfulfilled dreams. May we learn to embrace God’s work of grace and hope as He transforms us into the people that we need to be... all for His glory. Please consider this book as a Christmas gift to a friend who needs hope.

Read of the Month

God does his best work with empty
By Nancy Guthrie
ISBN: 978-1-4964-3969-7

Virtual Health Ministry Prayer Gathering 2021 . . . Part 2

Three (3) Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this program, participants will be able to:

- Define spirituality and how it relates to the intentional care of the spirit.
- Identify two life lessons in the past year for personal spiritual growth and self-care.
- Describe one recent situation that integrates faith and health in providing spiritual care to those in need (i.e. family, faith community, workplace, and/or local community).

Continuing Education Contact Hours:

There will be 1.75 continuing education (CE) credits provided to registered nurses who attend. The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Commission on Accreditation (ANCC). Registered nurses who attend the entire session and complete an evaluation form within 8 business days of this event (by November 24th) will be awarded a certificate and 1.75 continuing education credits. UPMC and ANCC do not endorse any commercial products as a result of this CE activity.

Cost:

The cost is $35 for registered nurses who wish to receive continuing education credits; $20 for those who do not wish to receive continuing education credits; and $15 for undergraduate nursing students, seminarians, religious, and clergy. Cost includes: Zoom invitation and handouts. Limited, partial scholarships available upon request.

Registration is accepted by U.S. mail. Registration must be postmarked by Thursday, November 11, 2021. For more information, contact the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program at 412.232.5815 or email ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org

See page 12 in this E-Newsletter for the Registration form.
**FCN Knowledge Sharing Platform!**

How do Faith Community Nurses stay connected after they are commissioned and begin their journey in health ministry? Many of us have connected via the online community, the Westberg Institute Knowledge Sharing Platform. This platform is free and community member emails are not shared or sold outside of the platform. Currently there are over 1600 members and 97 groups participating via this vital resource at [https://community.westberginstitute.org/](https://community.westberginstitute.org/)

Instructions from the Westberg Institute to join the platform are as follows:
1. Visit [https://community.westberginstitute.org/](https://community.westberginstitute.org/)
2. Click on "request an invitation"
3. Respond to the invitation email and complete your profile.
4. Join in the conversation and select from the many groups available to you.

**The Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program wishes all a blessed Advent season (Nov 28—Dec 24) and a joyous Merry Christmas (Dec 25).**

To learn more about Advent and the meaning of the Advent wreath, visit at [https://bit.ly/3wmWkmZ](https://bit.ly/3wmWkmZ)

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**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.
Nurses have been a trusted source of medical advice for years. Now more than ever before it is crucial to keep up-to-date with scientific and medical research findings versus misinformation that is being disseminated from a wide variety of sources. The recent month has brought us information regarding COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths. On a positive note, the Pfizer Vaccine was the first FDA approved COVID-19 vaccine for children age 5-11 in the U.S. Children have already started to receive their first vaccine shot. It is anticipated that vaccines for younger children will be approved in early 2022. Go to the following links to learn more and explore available educational resources.

- Monoclonal Antibody COVID-19 Infusion  [https://go.cms.gov/3jLuZ2C](https://go.cms.gov/3jLuZ2C)  10/22/21
This site features a variety of Communication Resources for Healthcare Professionals and Staff including but not limited to How to Address COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation; How to Talk with Parents about COVID-19 Vaccination; How to Talk with Patients Who Are Immunocompromised; and Talking to Patients with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities about COVID-19 Vaccination.
- 9 Things You Need to Know About the New COVID-19 Pill (molnupiravir) [https://bit.ly/3q9VGSx](https://bit.ly/3q9VGSx)

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**Religious Observances**

Nativity Fast – (Orthodox Christians) November 15 - December 24  
Advent – November 28 – December 24  
Hanukkah – November 15 – December 6  
Christmas Eve – December 24  
Christmas – December 25  
Feast of the Nativity – (Orthodox Christians) Dec. 25 – Jan. 7, 2022

**Secular Observances**

Daylight Savings Day – November 7 (turn clocks back one hour)  
Thanksgiving Day – November 25  
Kwanza – December 26  
New Year’s Eve – December 31
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.

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 *wholistic 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)
Health Observances
To encourage others in whole-person health... balancing body, mind, and spirit.
Note: This is not an inclusive list of all health observances.

- November
  - International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day (Nov. 20) https://bit.ly/3CjvVm1
  - Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month (Nov. 23-29) https://bit.ly/3BChQiQ
  - National COPD Awareness Month https://bit.ly/2ZHYYxG
  - National Family Caregivers Month https://bit.ly/38sgaMm

- December

- January
  - Birth Defect Prevention Month https://bit.ly/3w5mWCl
  - Cervical Cancer Awareness Month https://bit.ly/3bxOe3h
  - Glaucoma Awareness Month https://bit.ly/3CPhqQ8

The next edition of “The Faith Connection” is January 2022. If you have news to share, please email us by Dec 10th for the section “News From You!”
REGISTRATION FORM: Virtual Health Ministry Prayer Gathering 2021

Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program
Spirituality and Covid-19... Life Lessons
Saturday, November 13, 2021    10:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.

Please send completed registration form along with a check* made payable to the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program and postmarked by November 11, 2021. Mail to: Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program, Mercy Health Center, 1515 Locust Street, Suite 705, Pittsburgh, PA 15219-5154. For more information, call 412.232.5815 or email ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org Visit our website at www.pittsburghmercy.org

Name______________________________________________________________

First Name ___________________________ Middle Initial ___________ Last Name ___________________________

Address__________________________________________________________

City __________________________________________ State _______ ZIP ________________

Telephone_________________________ Email Address____________________

Name of Church or Organization ______________________________________

Address____________________________________________________________________________________

City _____________________________________________________ State _______ ZIP ________________

Denomination_______________________________________________________

Your role within your church/organization (please check all that apply):
__ Clergy __ Social minister
__ Member/attendee __ Social worker
__ Health ministry coordinator RN __ Nursing student
__ Coordinator health minister __ Volunteer
__ Faith community nurse (volunteer) __ Pittsburgh Mercy employee
__ Faith community nurse (salaried) __ Seminarian
__ Health Minister __ Registered nurse
__ Other ___________________________ __ Other________________________

☐ I permit my name & organization to be published on this event participant listing.

☐ I would like to receive information about continuing education opportunities from Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program and Pittsburgh Mercy i.e. our free E-Newsletter, The Faith Connection.

Registration Fees

$35 for registered nurses who wish to receive 1.75 continuing education credit
$20 for those who do not wish continuing education credit
$15 for undergraduate nursing students, seminarians, religious, and clergy.

NOTE: The Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program and Pittsburgh Mercy do not sell or otherwise share information with third-party vendors. You reserve the right to revoke your permission at any time.