A Summer Blessing

May you walk with God
This summer
In whatever you do
Wherever you go

Walking with God means . . .
Walking with honesty
And with courage,
Walking with love
And respect
And concern for others

May you talk to God
This summer
And every day and
In every situation

Talking with God means . . .
Praying words of praise
For the beauty of creation
Saying prayers of thanks
For friends and good times,
Asking God’s help
In all your decisions
Expressing sorrow
When you have failed

May you talk with God
Every day. Amen.

Author unknown
https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/summer-prayers
The **Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program** offered its first-ever **Virtual Book Journal Club** in April and May 2022. This new learning opportunity was intended to encourage spiritual growth in group participants through using a book for daily prayer and meditation. This book was titled “**The Cup of Our Life: A Guide to Spiritual Growth**” by well-known author and spiritual director **Joyce Rupp**. For six (6) sessions, participants gathered virtually for a time of self-reflection, learning, fellowship, and spiritual reading with a communal focus on spiritual health. Guided Imagery and Visio Divina were a few of the approaches used to enhance our centering with prayer, contemplation, and spiritual listening. There were seven individuals who met regularly for this faith-sharing time which encouraged new friendships and peer bonding.

We are grateful to those individuals who participated and spread their wings with different forms of prayer. For many, this was their first time to experience a book journal club especially in a virtual format. We encourage faith community nurses and health ministers to be open to “stretching” their spiritual practices and learn new ways of connecting with Creator. Many of us left our final session with a commitment for a deeper prayer life and an appreciation for the importance of spiritual growth in our lives. May we all take time this summer for some spiritual health and self-care which includes nature walks, walking a labyrinth, discovering Centering Prayer, engaging in spiritual &/or gratitude journaling, practicing mindful coloring, meeting regularly with a spiritual director or companion, and reading Scripture &/or spiritual works from mentors. Putting aside 10 minutes a day for some spiritual health will help in dealing with daily life challenges. We suggest scheduling this time as an appointment on the calendar with an anticipation in feeling refreshed and renewed.

**To learn more about spiritual companionship, deep spiritual listening, and different prayer forms, visit this link at** [https://www.sdicompanions.org/](https://www.sdicompanions.org/)

**Also, to learn about Joyce Rupp’s Whoosh Prayer, visit this link at** [https://www.sdicompanions.org/the-whoosh-prayer/](https://www.sdicompanions.org/the-whoosh-prayer/)
Faith-Based Community Preparedness

Faith-based communities and neighborhood partnerships cannot be “too prepared” for emergency situations that arise. Faith community nurses, clergy, health ministers and volunteers need to know de-escalation techniques and what to do in a time of disaster and an emergency. Faith community nurses can use a team of volunteers to assist with educational offerings through in-person workshops, bulletin and newsletter articles, poster boards, brief video clips, and one-page informational handouts at special events. The summer and the fall seasons are good times of the year to inventory and restock First Aid Kits and AEDs (i.e. batteries and pads). Also, refresh people’s minds on how to: use AED equipment, do Basic Life Support, administer First Aid Techniques, and coordinate fire and natural disaster drills. So take the time to plan now and keep the faith community safe... you will be glad that you did!

For a detailed listing of emergencies and preparedness resources, visit this link at https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/individuals-communities/faith

You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.
Psalm 32:7-8 NIV

Stop the Bleed Program ... Plan Now for Your Faith Community to Learn this Summer and Fall.

Even though the month of May was “Stop the Bleed Month” it is never too late to learn about this program and offer it to faith communities. Learn skills to quickly stop blood loss and potentially save a life during a crisis or traumatic event. There has been over 1.5 million people who have been trained so far, and the need is ever so great for more to learn. You are never too old to learn what you can do to help someone in need.

We encourage faith community nurses and health ministers to consider this internationally known program as an educational workshop for congregants either this summer or fall season. Trained experts can deliver the message in an informative way with hands-on mannequins and first-aid equipment. It can be offered to a variety of faith community groups for example, pastors and church staff members, older adults, adolescents, women’s association, church school staff and parents of young families, etc.
To learn more, take a course, or become an instructor, visit https://www.stopthebleed.org/
At the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry, we spend quite a bit of time in phone, virtual and email consultation with faith community nurses, clergy, health ministers, and faith community volunteers. Many of them share stories of their concerns about the following: their faith communities are not growing, their congregants are not returning back to in-person worship services due to the COVID Pandemic, particular ministries are less active, and community outreach projects are at a minimum. Over the past few years, spiritual leaders in places of worship have been driven to make tough decisions about eliminating paid staff positions (including pastors and priests), reducing employee hours and other staff, refraining from capital campaign fundraising, and refocusing long-term strategic plans due to decreased pledges and offerings from congregants. Many churches of the same denomination have merged together due to huge church buildings being vacant, limited supply of pastors/priests, and low stewardship offerings.

In light of these recent changes in our society, faith community nurses and health ministers are asked “to do more with less” as well as “step-up” and lead in a time of liminality (i.e. disorientation that occurs during transition p. ix). It has been known that when a church is without a pastor, many congregants rely on the faith community nurse for spiritual care, prayer, personal health counseling and teaching. Faith community nurses offer hope and prayer in a time of uncertainty and family difficulties. They role-model trust and faith in their Creator when all else seems to be unraveling at the seams.

In the book “How to lead when you don’t know where you’re going” the author Rev. Susan Belmont writes from her heart as a pastor, consultant, coach, and spiritual director. She puts life in perspective for tired and weary spiritual leaders who don’t need to see their ministry as a “failure or loss” but as one with “fresh energy, creativity, and hope.” She and her team spent five (5) years of “prayer, thinking, and teaching around this topical shift.” It has been a work in progress and invites the reader to be resilient, stand strong in spite of this confusing time in our history, learn from mistakes, and keep leading where we can and are able. We need to remember that God’s Spirit empowers us to continue our service to those in need of compassionate care.

Some of the chapter titles are intriguing such as “Leading with Presence,” Tending the Soul of the Institution,” “Deepening Group Discernment,” and “Shaping Institutional Memory.” Also, spiritual leaders are encouraged to ask congregants the tough questions which includes “Who are we as a church body?” and “Who are we here to serve and what do we stand for?” In following Deut. 31:6, as faith community nurses and health ministers may we help our congregants stand firm in the liminal space, and reassure all that the Divine is with us to...

“BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS”
July is **Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month.**  
**Kids Get Arthritis too.**

Children like adults can get arthritis which leads to debilitation over time. Slowing down the progression of this disease is essential as children grow and learn to live with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) which is an autoimmune disorder. It causes pain, swelling, stiffness and difficulty with motion. These symptoms may interfere with a child’s schooling, activity in sports or dance, and may result in daily loss of motion and function. Activities of daily living (ADLs) can be affected which may cause a child not to bathe, shampoo hair, brush teeth, dress with certain clothes and shoes (those requiring buttons, snaps, and ties), and other grooming needs. A child may feel embarrassed to speak up and ask his/her parent for help in the initial phase of symptoms. Also, medication management may be tedious until the right medication and dosing are effective in managing symptoms. Sometimes, a child with JIA may lose friendships since play and physical activity are challenging. Mental health counseling may be needed to assist the child as he/she learns to deal with this disorder in different developmental stages. A faith community nurse may be the first person to detect symptoms that JIA is arising. The faith community nurse may need to step into a health advocacy role and/or health educator role with a child and parent/family caregiver.

To learn more details or for free educational materials, visit these 2 links:  
[https://www.niams.nih.gov/community-outreach-initiative/health-observances#July](https://www.niams.nih.gov/community-outreach-initiative/health-observances#July) and  
[https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/arthritis](https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/arthritis)
Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program offers

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 wholistic care approach (whole-person health) as we commit to health advocacy and education of others.

Our 2022 Meeting Dates (Third Tuesdays): September 20, October 18, and November 15. There is no cost and no preparation for 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, case study, or brief video segment. 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 sessions. Each participant is welcome to contact the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Team for a private follow-up mentoring session either by phone or Zoom invitation.

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

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 specific meeting date. For questions or registration, please send email to ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org or call 412-442-1951.

Welcome Back to School

For Favor and Blessing Over the Upcoming School Year

Dear God, we pray for your blessing and favor today over our teachers, our kids, and our schools. Please allow your face to shine on them today, be gracious to them Lord. Fill them with your Spirit and light; and give them peace in every circumstance. We know that every gift and blessing come straight from your hand.

We will not take it for granted. Remind us today of your great love and care over all those we love. We thank you Lord that you work powerfully on our behalf, and we commit our ways to you. May each purpose and plan you have for our teachers, succeed, flourish, and prosper in every way. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

by Debbie McDaniel
Do you need a sacred space and time set-aside for peace and quiet reflection? 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 2022 Virtual Candle Meditations which are brief prayer gatherings. 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 prayerful reflection regarding 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. In addition, participants can also lift up other people or concerns to our Creator.

These virtual offerings are at no cost. It is intended for faith community nurses, health ministers, faith community 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 offerings are the following three (3) dates which correspond to the change in seasons:

1) Fall Foliage— September 13, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. ET
2) Winter Solstice— December 13, Tuesday, 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 the date of session. To register send email to ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org or call 412.442.1951 and leave a clear and detailed message with the following information:

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

Jesus, thank you for Summer. Thank you for light and warmth. Thank you for the sun. Thank you for the gifts of nature and for the annual cycles and seasons. Today, give us that grace again, to see you as the Creator, the One who lifts us up to be with you forever, even now. Amen.

Source Unknown; Adapted by Bill Huebsch
Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program

Faith Community Nurse & Health Minister Preparation Course 2022

Foundations of Faith Community Nursing Curriculum

Westberg Institute for Faith Community Nursing

Five Dates: September 23 & 24, October 1, 21 & 22 (Fridays & Saturdays)

Taking Applications Now!

- Hybrid course: virtual group format via all-day Zoom meetings as well as individualized self-directed online modules.
- Class size is limited to 20 participants.
- Open to registered nurses and anyone interested in whole-person health... balancing body, mind & spirit.
- Early registration discount is available with course application postmarked on or before August 26th.
- Varity of course instructors and positive adult learning activities.

⇒ Limited, partial scholarships available upon request with application.
⇒ Course registration must be received no later that September 15th in the Parish Nurse & Health Ministry office. For course application and details, visit this link at https://bit.ly/36f6bfo

Feedback from our 2021 Virtual Course Participants

- “This knowledge gained at this course will provide me with a strong foundation as I begin my health ministry.”
- “Learning activities and resources are very helpful!”
- “Good presentations from knowledgeable speakers with a wealth of information and superb ability to answer a wide variety of questions.”
- “I have a better understanding of how I can serve as an FCN in practical and useful ways to provide whole health.”
- “As a faith community nurse, I can help create an environment of compassion for those with behavioral or mental health issues. Through education, I can help remove the stigma surrounding mental illness.”
- “I learned how spiritual care can align with quality health care practice. This was a wonderful experience!”
- “Program was well done. It included the tools we will need as an FCN. Each person provided a fresh new spiritual focus. Beautiful and touching commissioning service!”

Course Cohort 2021

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 ministry activity and we will include it in our section “News from You!”

If you should no longer wish to receive communications from the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program, please unsubscribe by contacting us at 412.442.1951 or email us at ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org Thank you.
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 Videos of the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse Documentation System at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNKGJx1Fex8

See this brief YouTube link at on our website at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1u5WzlXWmM

Contact us! ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org 412-412-1951

See our website for our Demo link at https://bit.ly/2JMKmbu

Email us, if interested in our upgrade Version 8.0.
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.

- National Fireworks Safety Month  
  https://bit.ly/3et3kQ1
- Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month  
- UV Safety Month  
  https://bit.ly/3k2Pl1n
- World Hepatitis Day, July 28  
  https://bit.ly/3Ma5dRo

September
- Healthy Aging Month  
- National Concussion Awareness Day  
  September 16  https://bit.ly/3jyq6jA
- National Food Safety Education Month  
- National Suicide Prevention Month  

The next edition of “The Faith Connection” will be for September/October. If you have news to share, please email it by August 10th to ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org

WELCOME OCTOBER

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
  https://bit.ly/3nQhikG
- Down Syndrome Awareness Month  
- Health Literacy Month  
  https://bit.ly/3PgCoUH
- National Bullying Prevention Month  
  https://stopbullying.gov
- National School Bus Safety Week  
- National Substance Abuse Prevention Month  
  https://bit.ly/3IqXtttn