

Parish Nursing

Ever wondered what it means to have a Parish Nurse (Faith Community Nurse) in your congregation? Talk with clergy or a parish nurse and you might find many benefits which you may want to consider.

A mission statement was first developed by over 600 parish nurses at the 14th annual Westberg Symposium in 2000. Our mission statement is as follows: “Parish nursing is the intentional integration of the practice of faith with the practice of nursing so that people can achieve wholeness in, with, and through the community of faith in which parish nurses serve. Parish nurses educate, advocate, and activate people to take positive actions regarding wellness, prevention, appropriate treatment of illness, and social and spiritual connections with God, members of the congregations, and their wider community.”

I need to first explain what a Parish nurse is not before we go any further. We are not:

A physician, and will not diagnose or treat illness

A home health nurse to provide treatments

A therapist to do physical therapy, occupational therapy, or psychotherapy

A clergyperson

Parish nurses do:

Come with a deep spiritual commitment

Integrate faith and health in a holistic way of living that embraces life in it’s fullness, including the pursuit of a healthy spiritual life and connection with God and God’s people.

Parish nurses are:

Registered Nurses

Health educators to provide health education opportunities to learn about health issues, individually and in groups.

Health counselors in helping parishioners understand their diagnoses, options for treatment, and also their medications.

Referral advisors to provide referrals to healthcare and social services within the community.

Health advocates in speaking out to help obtain needed healthcare and services.

Developers of support groups and facilitator for those groups in the faith community.

Coordinators of volunteers for transportation, medical appointments, and food for convalescence

Parish nurse’s specific assignments within a congregation are decided in consultation with other church leaders. They may also have a neighborhood outreach ministry or one with other denomination.

How does a congregation benefit from a Parish Nurse?

Much of the ministry of our churches are health-related. Parish nurses can support the pastor as they work daily for the health and wholeness of their congregations. Patients seem to be discharged earlier all of the time and the Parish nurse can assist, triage and address needs that should be met.

Volunteers are not as available as they were in the past. The Parish nurse can share in visitation with the clergy and identify, train, and support the volunteers who are available.

A Parish nurse understands both medical and the faith world and can be a bridge for our parishioners.

Jesus called us to preach, teach and heal. Pastors and Parish nurses can do great things in Jesus name.

Many pastors and parishioners have improved health due to parish nurses. The programs of healthier diets, increased exercise, and health screenings can all be a part of the ministry.

Does a Parish Nurse make a difference? I would say a big.....YES! Want to know more about the program and how your church can be involved? Please feel free to contact me at mumsielea@cox.net and I will share with you how to get a program started at your church!