

Introduction:

In January 2011, the membership at Concordia Lutheran Church voted unanimously to reestablish a Parish Nurse and Health Cabinet Ministry. The purpose of this ministry is to foster physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual harmony leading to healthy and healing relationships with God, family and the faith community.

The parish nurse serves the congregation at Concordia by creating safe places for healing, and by advocating compassion, mercy, and dignity to each member; collaborating with the pastoral staff and members of the Health Cabinet; and establishing a partnership with other health resources within the community.

Two frequently cited "theme verses" by parish nurses are:

*"and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick."
(Luke 9:2)*

*"I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full." (John 10:10b)*

What is a Parish Nurse?

A parish nurse focuses on health and wellness issues with the faith of the client and the client's family in mind. This specialty is recognized by the American Nurses Association and follows the Scope and Standards of Parish Nursing Practice developed in 1998 by the Health Ministries Association. The following provides an overview of the activities parish nurses are involved with.

- 1) Integrator of Faith and Health---parish nurses focus on the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of a person's life to help produce a more balanced health state.
- 2) Health Educator---parish nurses teach health related classes; provide articles on health related subjects; and maintain a current literature section/bulletin board on various health topics.
- 3) Health Counselor---parish nurses provide parishioners with a better understanding of their health concerns. The parish nurse can help explain and clarify any confusion about recent doctor visits related to a specific diagnosis, treatment options, or medications. Healthier options can also be discussed to help improve one's quality of life.
- 4) Referral Advisor---parish nurses bridge the gap between parishioners and the community by helping investigate various health care services such as long term care facilities or home health options; they make parishioners aware of free or low cost health screenings, as well as counseling & support services in the area.
- 5) Health Advocate---parish nurses help identify those aspects of health care that may be lacking in the community and help locate resources to meet these needs.
- 6) Developer of Support Groups---parish nurses recognize the need for support groups and are familiar with the best programs and speakers in the area. A parish nurse can also facilitate the development of these groups.
- 7) Volunteer Coordinator---parish nurses help recruit and train volunteers to help with activities that assist those in need.

What a parish nurse is NOT:

A parish nurse is not a physician---he or she cannot provide a medical diagnosis or treatment.

A parish nurse is not a home health nurse---he or she cannot provide treatments or dispense medications as prescribed by a physician.

A parish nurse is not a therapist--he or she cannot provide physical therapy, occupational therapy or psychotherapy.

A parish nurse is not a clergyperson---a parish nurse does not usually hold a degree in theology. While all parish nurses have a deep spiritual commitment, this is only used as a basis for their practice.

Your Parish Nurse Linda Seeman RN, MSN

Linda grew up in Baltimore, MD, was baptized at Jerusalem Lutheran Church and confirmed at Holy Cross Lutheran Church. During her teenage years, she spent her summer vacations volunteering as a candy striper and a Pinkie at the Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore.

Linda received her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing at Towson State University in Baltimore and her Master of Science degree in Nursing Administration from George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. Her nursing career includes military service with the US Army Nurse Corps, followed by a variety of nursing positions at several hospitals in the Northern Virginia area. Linda's specialties include medical/surgical nursing with an emphasis in chronic health conditions, oncology, and geriatrics.

Parish Nursing at Concordia Lutheran Church



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