



THE PULSE

*Fostering Healthy Communities Through
Christ's Healing Ministry*

The Newsletter of InterChurch
Health Ministries
Oshawa, Ontario

Editor: Henry Fischer
Assistant Editor: Marie Blair

April 2003

A Word From the Chair - Norman Lambert

On Feb 22, ICHM held its annual benefit concert at St. George's Anglican Church in Oshawa. This was the third concert I have attended and had the pleasure of working alongside the many volunteers and performers who gave of their time to ensure the success of this event. This year's performance was incredible, filling the Church with song and celebration. Our thanks and appreciation go out to all those who every year provide their time and effort in support of this event.

The Board has been very busy with many issues related to the growth ICHM has experienced as a result of the continued interest in the ministry. One of our priorities continues to be initiating the process of regionalization and ensuring a structure is in place to support a new organizational structure. These changes represent a time of change and transition for all of us and should be seen as a time of opportunity. We now have a new name, "Interchurch Health Ministries." This removes the reference to Durham Region, and recognizes ICHM's growth from a regional to a national organization, serving partnerships throughout Ontario and Canada. This in itself, along with the eventual retirement of our Executive Director, Henry Fischer, requires the Board to look at the current structure of ICHM, future staffing requirements and the need to ensure any re-organization continues to support the visions and mission of ICHM.

Since last November the Executive Committee has been meeting to discuss the impacts of regionalization on the existing organizational structure, current staffing issues and the need to establish a national office and a separate regional group. This change will allow the ICHM office to dedicate its time to broader scope issues faced by staff from the impacts of regionalization. We can be very thankful that Henry, Gail and Esther have been so dedicated and committed to the ICHM vision and continue to support both regional and national needs.

As we all work through this transitional time we will remain focussed on the mission and vision of ICHM.

Our mission:

"to foster healthy communities through Christ's healing ministry."

Our vision:

"rooted in Christ's healing ministry, theologically based, congregationally driven, and ministry and mission focussed." May 28th has been set as the date for the Annual General Meeting, which will be held at St Joseph's Parish in Oshawa. We hope to see you there.

God Bless.

The Fork In The Road - Henry Fischer

My Epiphany journey took me across familiar terrain and territory through the thoughts and experiences Dietrich Bonhoeffer shares in his book: "Life Together." He wrote and developed this work for his students at the illegal seminary of the Confessing Church in Finkenwalde in Eastern Pommerania during the last years of the Second World War. Few of his students survived the war, having been called up to serve in the army on the Eastern front. They found themselves serving the Nazi regime, which they abhorred because of their Christian convictions, and that is the situation that Bonhoeffer addressed. When all else fails, remember there is always the church!!!

He remarks: "It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. God's people must dwell in far countries among the unbelievers, we have no other choice. So between the birth of Christ and the Last Day, it is only by a gracious anticipation of the last things, that Christians are privileged to live in visible fellowship with other Christians. It is by the grace of God that a congregation is permitted to gather visibly in this world to share God's Word and the sacraments.

The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer. The believer feels no shame, when yearning for the physical presence of other Christians.

The prisoner, the sick person, the Christian exile sees in the companionship of a fellow Christian a physical sign of the gracious presence of the Triune God.

Let us thank God on our knees and declare: 'It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brothers and sisters.'"

That reminder was an Epiphany moment for me. May it also be one for you in the congregation with which God has gifted you.

From the Desk of the Parish Nurse Coordinator - Gail Brimbecom

There is certainly never a dull moment in the work I do at ICHM. As requests come to us to share our vision and model for Parish Nursing Ministry across our country, we at ICHM continue to find ourselves swept up in a plan much bigger than any one of us.

Once again, a highlight of that work this past fall was our education program for Parish Nursing Ministry, unique in Canada and delivered in partnership with the International Parish Nurse Resource Center, Emmanuel College and Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto. Completing the three-level program were 13 Parish Nurses and 7 parishioners, bringing our total number of graduates to 75 of which 56 are Parish Nurses and 19 are parishioners and clergy.

Regional Parish Nurse Support Groups provide ongoing support and resources for 70 Parish Nurses, Parish Nurse Candidates, congregations and agencies in 7 regions across Ontario. And what a resource they are! As Parish Nurses share their ministry ideas and contacts at monthly support group meetings, we all learn more about how to minister in this dynamic, new way.

This fall, our education program for Parish Nursing Ministry will be offered once again. The increasing number of participants in this program has necessitated larger classrooms, which are available to us through the Continuing Education department of Emmanuel College, Victoria University at the University of Toronto. We are grateful for the continuing encouragement and support we receive from our partners in ministry.

Meanwhile, ICHM provides oversight and support to our regional affiliate in Saskatoon. By the time you receive this newsletter, ICHM-SK will have completed the presentation of the Education Program - Level 1 to Parish Nurse Candidates, parishioners and clergy at the University of Saskatchewan. Henry Fischer, Maureen MacLeod and I will have been there to teach in the program, and a whole new phase of development will be underway. More about this will be in the next newsletter!

The Pulse Goes Quarterly...

After our first year of circulating The Pulse in its present format, we are already expanding it into a quarterly publication. Your positive comments and helpful suggestions have been instrumental in making this decision, as well as the financial contributions some of our readers have made. We recognize only too well how important it is to tell our stories. Your financial support, regardless of the amount, will enable us to continue to do so. Receipts will be issued for your charitable donation to The Pulse.

Contributions may be sent to:

InterChurch Health Ministries

676 Simcoe Street, N.

Oshawa, ON L1G 4V7

Some Reflections/Insights On Last Fall's Education Program

At the conclusion of our fall educational program at the Toronto School of Theology, we asked some of the participants to share their reflections and insights on the significance of that experience for them. A Parish Nurse candidate, one of the clergy and two members of Health Cabinets were approached.

Karen Wiebe, Port Rowan Mennonite Brethren Church, Port Rowan, ON

I knew I was stepping into something (Level I) that was about to challenge my spiritual life as well as my career as a nurse. My desire to be a Parish Nurse and to set up this ministry in my church turned into a PASSION after a few classes. I feel totally inspired to work on this calling within the context of my church and am so thankful that God led me to ICHM. There was so much involved in the classes - just to highlight a few: (1) The Role of the Congregation, (2) The Philosophy, History, Theology and the many aspects of the functions of the Parish Nurse. I found these were key ingredients in setting up this ministry in my church and preparing me for this role. When we presented this ministry to our church body... it was passed with an overwhelming majority. I thank ICHM for helping me feel prepared and inspired to do the work of the Lord. I also thank God for His blessing. I look forward to Level II in 2003 and also to meeting with the support group in my area.

Blessings.

Rev. Paul Massel, St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church, Peterborough, ON

I recall about a year ago, hearing Henry Fischer speak at a Parish Nursing symposium in Peterborough. He made a great impression on everyone, including the eight people from my parish of St. Alphonsus who attended. In only a few months, we were all registered for the Level I program. In those weeks, Henry came to our parish and spoke at all weekend Masses.

The scriptures spoke beautifully to us when Henry was with us: "Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her and is found by those who seek her"... Over the weeks, wisdom began to speak and we came home understanding a gospel that was first and foremost about healing... a healing that made no distinction between body, mind and spirit. In our time a tremendous "specialization," Jesus challenges us to speak again to the whole person. Understanding the person through an incarnational faith means never separating body and soul. In imitation of Christ, finally and definitively, the gospel is heard for the message it brings and this through the Parish Nurse! that we all are empowered by the gospel to heal.

I believe, without exaggeration, that in saying 'yes' to this ministry, we rediscover the whole message of the gospel. And when people understand church to be about the whole person again, churches will become relevant again to those who can't seem to connect. Our parish council will gather next month with the councils of our two elementary schools... Our hope is to reach out to the entire community and our nurse candidate will be a big part of this. When people are cared for all through the week in every way, they will want to gather on Sunday to celebrate the church they experienced the other six days. I hope we will go to the foundation of what community must be and put ourselves back on track- doing well now but honing the gospel message closer to what Jesus intended.

Trudy Couvier, Faith United Church, Courtice, ON

I am on the Health Cabinet at Faith United Church, Courtice and by taking the Parish Nursing Course I believe I am a more valuable member of that team. If knowledge is power, then I am armed. The speakers we heard imparted the most valuable information to empower us to create an atmosphere of learning in our congregations and community. On a personal note, I am now seeking further education in the medical field to update my nursing status. One word that best describes the course - inspiring!

Thank you to all the facilitators who provided this safe place to grow.

Darlene Carr, Executive Director, Community Services, The Salvation Army, Peterborough, ON

As I reflect upon the Level I course, I immediately think of a very comfortable and spiritually charged time of learning and sharing. My staff responsibility for ministry and program development had included a number of years of research and development in the planning for a Parish Nurse program, and I came into the course as an extension of those activities. I expected to participate in a classroom setting where I would learn some of the operational and professional aspects of Parish Nursing, and would provide support for our Parish Nurse candidate.

While accomplishing those goals, I found myself in the midst of a wonderful group of compassionate, committed Christians who shared openly and created such a comfortable atmosphere. The learning and experience went far beyond my expectations and provided a very personal, spiritual time to reflect upon the week past and the week ahead.

I have felt personally guided to see Parish Nurse ministry become a reality for our congregation and our community outreach. It is easy to become discouraged with the many obstacles that arise and it was good to discover that many have encountered the same challenges. This course provided a counter-balance of refreshed zeal to continue to move forward so that many may experience the love and healing power of Christ.

On Reaching Another Milestone On A Continuing Journey

Teena Morrow, Health Cabinet, Westminster United Church, Whitby, ON

Three years of Saturday classes sounded like a lot and originally my intention was to participate only in the first year's classes, as my role is with Health Cabinet... However, the classes were interesting, and as I learned and understood more every Saturday, I kept going back. Suddenly it was the last day and both Donna and Eileen, my driving companions, were interested in staying for the Service of Blessing and Recognition. What a feeling to have completed the course and be in a room with about 100 others and sing the hymn "Here I am Lord, is it I Lord?" I could feel the tears welling up in my eyes at this powerful question. Then we were called to the front and we made our commitments and asked God to be our helper.

I returned home, feeling as if I had been baptized into Parish Nursing Ministry, and understanding that I had made a commitment to always support Parish Nursing and to be an advocate for it. Our bodies may not always be whole, but if the Spirit within us is, our sense of balance and strength is restored and we are able to reach out to help others find that same sense of peace. Thank you for giving me this gift.

Elaine Bucholtz, Parish Nurse Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sudbury, ON

The Service of Blessing and Recognition on November 23rd will be for me a date that is as memorable as my wedding day and the birth of my children. I wrote in my journal "A very beautiful ceremony, and emotional for me. Finally, after three years God has brought me to this place and time!" I was humbled by the knowledge of what the ceremony really meant in God's eyes, and so uncertain of my ability to really be what a Parish Nurse is. Sharing this momentous occasion with the nurses and cabinet members that I had come to know in three years was also so very special, as well as the words, and the hugs, of Henry, Gail and Karen. The setting in that beautiful chapel with the stained glass windows, the music and standing in front of all those people who came just for us contributed to a day that I'm sure none of us will ever forget! Finally, receiving that lovely white stole and hearing the words of installation from Henry was for me truly an awesome moment. I am very thankful to all those who with their time and talents made that day possible. And of course, the glory belongs to God, who is the source of this blessing.

Gratitude Journals

Mary Lynn Hull, Parish Nurse, St. John's United, Oakville, ON

As the Parish Nursing Ministry began to unfold here, it became apparent that there was a need for people to know that this was a caring and loving ministry. We also felt, and this was pivotal in making our decision, that it is very therapeutic to write one's thoughts down. It is a way for people to count their blessings, and share their joy with others.

One of the ways we chose to do this was to place "Gratitude Journals" in our Narthex and in Lusk Hall, our main event room... Each journal is marked with the words "Gratitude Journal" and "Give Thanks in Writing" on the front cover. Inside, we have placed sample phrases for people who may not know exactly what they want to say. Some of these are: "I am grateful for ..."; "Great news ..."; "I am thankful for..."; "I wish to share ..."; "We celebrate ..."; "Thanks for ..."; "I am delighted to ...".

The remarks in the journals are anonymous. Each week, a volunteer chooses an excerpt from one of the journals and we place this in the Bulletin for our readers. We feel this has led others to write in the journals and use this method of giving thanks. A few of the remarks entered are:

"During advent this year, I felt the angels from the Angel Christmas Tree were keeping us safe during troublesome times. I miss them."

"What a wonderful way to live in faith and wholeness with God."

Our congregation is encouraged on a regular basis to use the Gratitude Journals, and indeed they do. We recommend using this method of giving and sharing thanks to all parishes.

"To the world you might be one person, but to one person you just might be the world."

It's Music To Our Ears

Joan Sanderson, Oshawa, ON

Once upon a time there was a deserving group with a great fund-raising idea. We all know there are lots of them around, but there are not an overabundance that can take the idea, run with it, and get great results.

In just a few short years ICHM has managed to gather together fine performers who have donated their time and their talent. We have listened to astounding music of all kinds from choirs with mature voices to young voices, instrumentalists from flautists to oboists to cellists to saxophonists, organists, pianists and other instrumental groupings. We have heard fine soloists both vocal and instrumental, handbell musicians, and storytelling. The list goes on and on and provides this region with fine entertainment while at the same time supporting a worthy cause.

ICHM is to be commended for gathering the performers, the performers are to be commended for giving an eclectic evening and the supporters for providing a warm audience. Having attended every concert, sold tickets, and performed myself I say a huge thank you to ICHM. Yes, we are grateful for your Ministry and for your commitment to excellence.

May "A Musical Celebration of Hope" live happily ever after.

Lay Pastoral Care Ministry

Bev Templar, Parish Nurse, Grace United Church, Peterborough, ON

This past fall, approximately 35 men and women traveled together down a path of growth and learning - and what a journey it was!

We attended the Lay Pastoral Ministry Course - Level I at Emmanuel College with the Reverends Henry Fischer and Tom Doherty capably leading the way!

Our five week course was based on Kenneth C. Haugk's book entitled "Christian Caregiving - A Way of Life," a highly recommended read! Some of the topics we explored were: God as Caregiver; Prayer;

Sharing of Blessings; God's Gift of Forgiveness; Servanthood vs. Servitude; Ministering to the Whole Person and Hope-full Caregiving. The learning format consisted of brainstorming, group discussion and several opportunities for role-playing. We were presented with many "real-life" care-giving/care-receiving situations, with the opportunity to assume the unique character roles and attempt to provide "care" to those in need. Not an easy task! However, through our verbal communication, body language and observation skills, we gained much to enhance our relationships with others.

Many powerful insights were realized through our interactions as well as poignant reminders reinforced. We can care for others, but only God can produce the growth, healing and cure in people's lives. As human beings, we have made, and will continue to make mistakes, but God forgives us time and time again! Wow!

I know I speak for the group when I say our lives have been richly blessed... We shared our personal and professional experiences, gaining growth from one another. We shared in new friendships -in laughter -in love -in prayer. May we be encouraged to move forward to serve others as we are commanded to do, surrounded by God's love and presence every step of the journey!

The Cup Of Our Life

2003 Parish Nurse Retreat

What better way to share the RETREAT than to have some of the participants tell their own story in their own unique way:

1. Wendy McEwen
2. Dorothy Thomson
3. Marilyn Wilson

We extend our appreciation and thanks to the leader and planners of the Retreat with our best wishes:

Betty Behm
Linda Dougherty
Margaret Douglas
Karen Good
Sytske Haigh
Barbara Lemm
Francine Zander

Next year's Retreat is being planned by the Halton-Peel Support Group. Bev Harvey is the coordinator. If you have any ideas or suggestions or would like to assist in the planning, contact her at: (905) 820-0025.

Wendy McEwen, Parish Nurse Candidate, Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Owen Sound, ON
Anyone who knows me knows that I enjoy a good cup of tea. When I heard that the theme of the Parish Nurse Retreat was to be The Cup of Our Life: A Guide for Spiritual Growth, I was intrigued. There were over 30 different teacups and mugs from which we could choose; that was the easy part. The realization that our lives are like these cups; stained, chipped, full, empty, thirsty, satisfied; that was the hard part. The retreat was a wonderful time away from the responsibilities of everyday life to reflect on my own relationship with God, and to gain fresh ideas and insights of the Parish Nursing ministry across Ontario. Who can forget the sheer determination we exhibited as we hammered our way through a stack of paper in making the writing journals. Another highlight was team (or should I say) system involvement in a night of Holy Hilarity. We laughed and laughed. Why, some even enacted peristalsis, and our fearless leader showed us the ease of pregnancy and delivery. Holy Hilarity was certainly a night of laughs for us all. The retreat closed with the celebration of an agape or love meal. As we shared small pieces of bread and words of blessing with each other, our hearts were encouraged and reconsecrated for the year ahead. Yes, our lives are cups. As vessels accepted and loved by God, may we be filled to overflowing as we share God's love with others.

Dorothy Thomson, Parish Nurse, Glenbrook Presbyterian Church, Mississauga, ON

During the last weekend of February I attended the retreat at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Center in Mississauga. The following are some of my thoughts on that wonderful weekend.

I approached the weekend with a heavy heart due to the state of the world plus a deep health concern for one of my congregation, but I left with Peace and Joy!

The Lord spoke these words to me "Come all ye who are heavy laden and I will give you rest!" I realized that Jesus loves me and accepts me as I am, cracked, broken, empty or full. His promises are never broken by leaning on them, and that weekend I leaned heavily on them. I found fellowship, love, laughter and a wonderful prayer partner. I found time to read, pray meditate and nap. I even found myself doing crafts and enjoying them! Well maybe that is a bit of an exaggeration! But I did love the encouragement I got as I fumbled my way through it!

This is the third parish nurse retreat I have attended and each one has been better than the last. If you have not attended a retreat I would highly recommend that you consider it for next year.

As a well known chorus states "Loose yourself in Me and you will find yourself."

Marilyn Wilson, Parish Nurse, Pickering Village United, Ajax

Have you been to the well? With the stress and strain of daily life, my mother would sometimes ask me if I had been to the well lately. It was her gentle reminder that I was doing 120 in the 100 km zone of Life and my soul needed to be replenished.

Last weekend, with over 30 parish nurses who generally do more than 150 km per hour, I journeyed to Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre for our annual retreat. The view from our dining and conference rooms was an evergreen and ever-white postcard. The view from my own room was a burnished gold cross in the sky, human-made, above a crystal cathedral of giant icicles, ever changing with the sun. The pace and activities were chosen BY each one of us. The theme, "The Cup of Our Life," based on the book by Joyce Rupp, was chosen FOR us. I needed that "Cup" to drink from the well and will always cherish the learning and sharing of this weekend. To the "Group of Seven" who planned, prepared and shared of themselves, my heartfelt appreciation.

Lastly, two communions have been outstanding in my life. As a teen in the 60's, a Coke and potato chip ceremony with its setting and words, was most meaningful to me, strange as that may seem. Last Sunday's breaking of bread (which Henry Fischer had had specially made for us) and the sharing of each other's gifts as we ate of that bread of Christ, was also an unforgettable time that I treasure. "And yes, Mom, if you're listening from heaven, I have been to the well!"

Multiplying the Ministers

Last fall, we field-tested a course that was developed to equip and prepare congregational members to serve in LAY PASTORAL CARE MINISTRIES in their congregations. On the basis of that experience we are offering to provide the course in various regions of the province subject to the availability of our resources. The first regional "extension course" is being offered in Owen Sound, hosted by the Health Cabinet of the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, on the weekends of March 21 - 22 and March 28 - 29 for a total of 20 class hours. At last count there were 47 registrants.

The course could be offered in your area with a minimum of 15 participants from your own and other partnership congregations. The cost will be limited to the textbook and travel for the facilitator. If registrants are not members of partnership congregations they will pay an appropriate fee that will be determined by the host congregation. For more information, please contact our Oshawa office at (905) 436-1572.

From Health Promotion To Healing Ministries - Joint Health Cabinet Forum Cobourg, February 5th 2003

(Excerpts from a Report By Diane Froncz, Parish Nurse Candidate, St. Peter's Anglican, Cobourg)
In his opening remarks to the 36 Health Cabinet members present, the Executive Director of ICHM commented, "We could have held our first meeting dealing with Parish Nursing ministry in a telephone booth." The participants that evening representing congregations and parishes in Peterborough, Whitby, Brooklin, Eldad, Hampton, Bowmanville and Cobourg would have had great difficulty in doing so. Added to the mix was the denominational flavour we brought to the event: Anglican, Roman Catholic, United, Presbyterian and Christian Reformed.

The basic premise of his presentation was that health is a gift from God and we are called to be good stewards of that gift, which means taking responsibility of our own health, which in turn, takes us to health promotion. But health promotion needs to become a vehicle for initiating healing ministries. In the life and experience of InterChurch Health Ministries and its partnerships with congregations, parishes and agencies, we have learned that healing takes place in "safe places." Places where people can give expression to their needs, their fears, and at times even desperation. On any given Sunday, approximately 20% of those attending worship are experiencing some symptom of illness. Because of our lack of awareness of the pain felt by others, these fellow members stifle their pain and even make it worse. Pain has no voice and no listener.

People only disclose inner worlds of pain, anxiety, fear, guilt and addiction to the extent they feel safe. Creating a sanctuary of safety is the starting point for healing ministries. And that must be integral to the work and ministry of the Health Cabinet. First and foremost that means listening, empowering instead of helping people, and finding and providing the resources people need. These are the essential clues and learnings he shared with us which need to find a place on our agendas.

Following the presentation, there were six lively group discussions on topics that had been submitted by the various Health Cabinets:

1. How to increase awareness of the Parish Nurse Ministry
2. The role of the Health Cabinet
3. Programs and events
4. Outreach, coordination and cooperation

The groups reported back to the meeting the suggestions which had been offered. These will be compiled and mailed out to the participating Health Cabinets.

The evening was voted a success! It was agreed to hold a similar meeting next year, to be hosted by Grace United Church in Peterborough.

Treasurer's Report - David Frey

Our financial position at the end of 2002 was improved over the previous year. We received financial support of \$90,960.79 for the year, and incurred expenses of \$86,967.88. The additional funds were used to reduce the 2001 deficit from \$10,693.42 to \$6,700.51.

Unfortunately, the individual and memorial donations continue to decline. Without your donations in the previous years ICHM would not have survived. The ICHM Board is reviewing the 2003 budget which, due to our continuing growth, is projected to be \$12,500.00 higher than 2002. It will take all of us working together to reach these financial goals in 2003, a goal we are capable of achieving.

During this year, I ask you to prayerfully consider your financial donation to ICHM in support of this continuing, ever-growing ministry of service.

Partnerships 2003

The following congregations, agencies and parishes have renewed their partnership for 2003 as of mid-March:

Augsburg Lutheran, Brampton
 Bathurst/Bloor St. United, Toronto
 Bayview Glen Alliance, Toronto
 Brooklin United, Whitby
 Central United, Unionville
 Church of St. Peter (Anglican), Cobourg
 Cornerstone Community Association, Oshawa
 Eldad-Hampton United, Hampton
 Glenbrook Presbyterian, Mississauga
 Grace Anglican, Markham
 Grace United, Peterborough
 Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic, Toronto
 Islington Evangel Centre, Toronto
 Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Owen Sound
 Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic, Toronto
 Peace Lutheran, Pickering
 Pickering Village United, Ajax
 Rehoboth Christian Reformed, Bowmanville
 Saint John's Anglican, Cambridge
 St. George's Anglican, Owen Sound
 St. John Anglican, Bowmanville
 St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic, Guelph
 St. John United, Oakville
 St. Joseph the Worker Roman Catholic, Oshawa
 St. Paul United, Bowmanville
 Trinity Lutheran, Sudbury
 Walton Memorial United, Oakville
 Westminster United, Whitby
 Woodbine Heights Baptist, Toronto

New partners in 2003, up to the date of publication include:

Augustana Lutheran, Saskatoon
 Resurrection Lutheran, Saskatoon
 Saskatoon Lutheran Native Ministry, Saskatoon
 St. Peter's Lutheran, Kitchener
 St. Philip Nerie Roman Catholic, Saskatoon
 Trinity Lutheran, Saskatoon

Keeping In Touch...

We are happy to report that Jean Hoover, one of our Parish Nurse candidates, has filled the vacancy at Grace Anglican in Markham that was advertised in the last issue of The Pulse.

June Taylor Belle, a Parish Nurse candidate from Pickering Village United Church in Ajax, is in the final phase of her treatment. We pray for her ongoing healing and recovery.

Maureen Dingman has resigned from her position at Cornerstone Community Association in Oshawa. The agency is currently seeking a Parish Nurse to fill her position at the shelter and the transitional housing component of this ministry to homeless men. Maureen will continue to serve as a volunteer until such time as her replacement has been found and "sent." We commend her for her pioneering work in this field and for bringing the witness of the church to these valuable and often forgotten individuals. Is there a call in this for you?

Clarence MacPherson, one of the newest members of our board, is recovering from a health challenge that occurred over Christmas, and we pray for his full recovery.

Rose Shkordoff, the Parish Nurse at St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church has gone on to new challenges in the health care field. We wish her the Lord's blessing in her new endeavours.

Catherine Lofsky's Street Health Services and her ministry among the poor and homeless in downtown Oshawa was highlighted in an article in the Toronto Star. Funding has still not been secured to keep it open, but Catherine carries on as a volunteer. Continue to pray that funds be made available to support this vital ministry.

Sandra Ackles, Parish Nurse at Central United in Unionville, announced her retirement from her "other job" at the Parish Nurse Retreat and hopes to explore her Parish Nurse Ministry with renewed strength and energy.

Shirley Guppy is providing a practicum placement at Simcoe Street United Church in Oshawa to assist in the establishment of a Parish Nursing ministry there.

Information Forums - Helping You Get Started

Once you get the idea, how do you make it happen? That is the dilemma a lot of people face after parish nursing ministry "happens" to them. The real test is what you do with it and where you go to find support, resources and direction. This is where InterChurch Health Ministries steps in.

One of the ways we do this is by offering Information Forums, to which congregations and individuals who are prepared for or are considering the next steps in getting started are invited. These Information Forums are held in various geographical regions where interest is being shown and there is a congregation or group of congregations willing to act as the host for the event. We require approximately three hours for the event. A Saturday morning is usually the best option, but we are always ready to consider others.

There is no cost involved to either the participants or the host, except some basic hospitality and refreshment costs. If you would like to be on the leading edge in introducing or expanding this health ministry into your area, contact our offices at (905) 436-1572 to make arrangements to host an event. Currently there are two Forums planned. See "Coming Events" below.

Coming Events...

April 12, 2003

Information Forum

Knox United Church

Market Street

Sutton, ON

Registration: 8.30 a.m.

Registration & Information Contact:

Carole Lockie: (905) 476-4445

May 10, 2003

Information Forum

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

202 Erie St.

Stratford, ON

Registration: 8.30 a.m.

Registration & Information Contact:

Church Office: (519) 271-8527

May 28, 2003, 5.30 p.m.

ICHM Board of Directors Meeting

St. Joseph the Worker Parish Centre

Oshawa, ON
7.00 p.m.
Annual General Meeting of ICHM
May 30 to June 1, 2003
"Hope For The Future"
University of Moncton
Moncton, N.B.
Canadian Association For Parish Nursing Ministry
Education Day and Annual Meeting
Registration & Information Contact:
Claudia McCloskey
Email: claudiamccloskey@hotmail.com
June 21, 2003
Parish Nurse Education Day
"The Support and Nurture of Caregivers for Alzheimer Patients"
"Elder Abuse and the Church"
Westminster United Church, Whitby
[More information to follow]
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