



# THE PULSE

InterChurch Health Ministries, 44 Metcalfe Street, Aurora, ON L4G 1E6  
 (Phone) 905-841-7619 / 1-888-433-9422; (Fax) 905-841-4051; (Email) info@ichm.ca; (Website) www.ichm.ca

## The Art and Ministry of Parish Nursing Tom Doherty, Executive Director

Some of you may not receive *Parish Nurse Perspectives*, a publication of the International Parish Nurse Resource Center (IPNRC). If not, you may want to consider subscribing – it’s full of great information. In the Spring 2009 issue, a publication by Rev. Dr. Granger Westberg is referenced - *Nurse, Pastor, and Patient: A Hospital Chaplain Talks with Nurses* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Press, 1956). The publication is out of print, but a few used copies are available through the IPNRC. Written during the days of his chaplaincy at the University of Chicago in 1956, his thoughts pre-date his conception of parish nursing. Yet, his words in this book point to the seed of parish nursing ministry that was already germinating.

Three paragraphs highlight this and suggest themes to ponder for parish nurses in the practice of ministry.

“When a patient asks a serious question from out of the depths within him it is to be hoped that the mature nurse will be able to help him find expression. He is not asking for “yes” or “no” answers. He knows that no other human can predict what is in store for him during the years ahead, and he is not asking that they should attempt to do so. All he is asking is that someone go down into the valley with him for a few minutes and try to understand what he is going through. Above all this is a lonely experience, and he pleads for friendship and understanding. He senses that this will strengthen him for any ordeal he has to face.” (p. 19)

Parish nursing practice is intimately tied to the word “compassion”. Compassion suggests, in relating to

those in our care, that we try as we might to walk in the shoes of this other. The art of listening is critical in this regard. The people we serve do not always need answers and seldom our advice. More important is the presence of the parish nurse, and the gift of touch and tears. Parish nurses know that this aspect of the ministry to which they are called goes a long way in enabling the gift of wholeness in the one they serve.

Again, Westberg: “This puts the healing arts squarely where they belong, for the work of the healing arts is tightly interwoven with religion. To attempt to practice medicine and nursing as if they were pure sciences is impossible. They are also arts and as such are intimately connected with the faith both of the healer and the healed.” (p. 35)

The gift of parish nursing is that it brings together the worlds of medical science and theology (or religion, or spirituality). In this regard, parish nursing ministry does not treat the person as having several parts but as a whole – body, mind and spirit intricately and wonderfully woven together into the person. Sometimes, we may feel that the work of being pastorally present is not “scientific” and this is probably true. In this ministry, we enter the arena of intuition and feelings. However, there is also the “art” of medical science that does not have all the answers either. The gift of the parish nurse for another is to gently hold both of these worlds together in the care of the other. Now, that truly is an art.

Westberg: “Every nurse is in a sense a minister. Therefore she will include in her nursing care the

care of the whole [person]. She will be as sensitive walk away from spiritual suffering, because she knows that there are ways she can help to relieve it and assist in turning suffering into a growth experience.” (p. 36)

Parish nursing is hard work. It asks of the parish nurse to enter into the place of suffering. This work is exhausting, important, and potentially enlivening.

to spiritual pain as to organic pain. She will not However, it can also be the cause of burnout. When one gives and gives and gives, the tank soon runs on empty, and the joy of service can quickly be a burden. So, even as this ministry sees the parish nurse entering into the suffering of another with the hope that the suffering will turn into joy, the parish nurse needs to live a balanced life so that there is always enough energy that is required in the giving.

### **Advance Clinical Practice Fellowship (ACPF) Proposal Accepted**

**May Tao, Parish Nurse Candidate at Bayview Glen Church, Thornhill**



May recently received news from the RNAO that her Advanced Clinical Practice Fellowship (ACPF) Proposal has been accepted. There were over thirty proposals, the largest number of applications submitted to RNAO this year. She is one of the nineteen chosen Fellows in Ontario. The essence of ACPF is a mentoring experience for a nurse to develop and promote nursing knowledge and expertise. The goal of May's Fellowship is to improve and enrich client care for the youth population of Toronto. From October 2009 to February 2010, May will be working with the Healthy Adolescent Best Practice Team at Toronto Public Health (TPH) to undertake a literature review and to gain experience by managing a component of our Project. At the end of her Fellowship, she will make several recommendations from her experiences and analyses to enhance TPH youth programming.

**Congratulations May!**

### **Waterloo-Wellington Local Health Integration Network Happenings**

We are well into the second of three years of funding in the Waterloo Wellington LHIN region through the Ontario government's 'Aging At Home Strategy'. We have welcomed Cheryl Walsh (St. Peter's Evg. Lutheran Church, Kitchener) in Year 1. Year 2 has seen three additional partners and parish nurses come on board – Nancy Dunbar at First United Church, Waterloo, Joyce Lewchuk at Trinity Village Lutheran Homes, Kitchener, and Lori Ryan Gray at Holy Cross Community Parish, Guelph.

Now, we are happy to announce the identity of our six new partner congregations who will receive funding beginning April 2010. Congratulations to the pastors and people of:

- Calvary Baptist Church, Guelph**
- Calvary Memorial United Church, Kitchener**
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kitchener**
- St. Michael's Roman Catholic Parish, Waterloo**
- Trillium United Church, Cambridge**
- Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, Waterloo**

This fall, these congregations will work to identify their parish nurse candidates for enrollment in our Education Program at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, beginning on January 29/30. As well, they continue the education process for their congregations in order to enable a deepening of the health and healing ministry in that place.

**Again, congratulations.  
Welcome aboard!!**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS UNVEILS FIVE YEAR STRATEGY PLAN

On September 12<sup>th</sup>, ICHM's Board of Directors enjoyed a day-long meeting. New members were brought up to speed, and a significant amount of time was spent on planning for the future, with approval given to a new five-year strategic plan.

Watch for some significant happenings:

- The **ICHM Website** is about to be expanded with a renewed focus on the link between faith and health;
- **Ambassadors** will be trained to present on behalf of ICHM and enable regional support team development;
- **Regional Support Teams** will be established to enable Community Labyrinth Walks, Concerts and Community Health Conferences/Fairs as a way to renew connection with partners;
- More intentional **Communication** with church denominations.

ICHM BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*Back:* Ken Mott-Chair, Pat Waskalik, Jean Jackson, Tom Doherty-Executive Director, Karen Marks-Parish Nurse Coordinator, Garth Wittich, Ruth Ann Fraser

*Front:* Carolyn Stapley, Gail Brimbecom-National Education Director, Carol Rose-Kudelka

*Absent:* Heather Thompson-Treasurer, Vreny Mathis, Joachim Bestvater



The newly elected Board of Directors held their initial meeting on September 12, 2009.

## ICHM STATISTICS

**2008 Monthly/Annual Progress Reports** were requested from all Parish Nurses and Parish Nurse Candidates in ICHM partner congregations. Thirty active parish nurses (including candidates) reported out of a possible 53 reflecting 57% of possible respondents.

Parish Nurses reported:

- 10,676 client contacts plus
- 11,682 attendants at 476 Health Promotion Events and Small Group Gatherings, totaling
- 22,358 client contacts among 30 parish nurses in ICHM partnership congregations.

These 30 parish nurses spent:

- 14,459 hours working an average of 10.2 months per year
- 234 referrals were made to outside agencies and congregational supports
- 13 parish nurses were paid and 17 were unpaid.

**The Parish Nurse Activity Record** and **Monthly/Annual Progress Report** have been updated and will be put into use beginning January 2010. In order to educate parish nurses on how to use these forms, each of the seven Parish Nurse Support Groups has been requested to send a representative to attend the Documentation Module at Emmanuel College as a way to 'train the trainer.' These parish nurses will then teach the other members of the group how to use the forms. Parish Nurses will be expected to use the new Parish Nurse Activity Record and Monthly/Annual Progress Report beginning January 2010.

## ICHM EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### **The Emmanuel College Annual ICHM Basic Parish Nursing Education Program**

will be held from October 17 to November 21, 2009.

- Level 1 begins on October 17 and
- Level 3 begins on October 31.
- Level 2 will not be held this year.



Please see the ICHM website: [www.ichm.ca](http://www.ichm.ca) for brochures and registration forms. ICHM has responded to feedback regarding registration fees. **Please note our policy change:** For all partner congregations, one free non-RN registration fee will be given per year for each partner who has at least one paid non-RN registered participant attending the Education Program. This does not apply to the Continuing Education Modules.

As **Continuing Education**, we invite our graduates to register and repeat some of the basic modules or attend one of our two full-day (10 am to noon; 1:00 to 3:00 pm) continuing education modules.

- On October 17, 2009, **Leadership Transitions in Congregations** addresses leadership transitions for both the clergy and parish nurse while focusing primarily on issues that affect parish nursing ministry. Successful transitions involve open communication, strategic planning, prayer and trust that God is leading the way. Transitions are opportunities for congregations to focus on strengths, the ability to adapt to change and to contemplate possibilities for the future. This module, presented by Dr. Gail Brimbecom, will interest anyone who anticipates being involved in leadership transitions in their congregation.
- On October 24, 2009, **End of Life Transitions** provides information on spiritual care at the end of life and describes the role of the parish nurse to assist the pastor and congregation to cope with end of life issues. The parish nurse as communicator, facilitator, and referral agent are examined. This module presented by Rev. Dr. Anne Simmonds, builds on the basic parish nurse education program and is recommended for graduates but may appeal to others who are involved in ministry, pastoral care, hospice or palliative care as well as parish nurse candidates and health committee members.

### **The first Waterloo Lutheran Seminary (WLS) Education Program**

was very successfully held during February, March and April 2009. During the winter of 2010,

- Level 1 and 2 of the WLS Education Program will take place on January 29 & 30, February 19 & 20, March 5 & 6 and 26 & 27.

Students register for one education program site or the other but can make up modules in a Level at the other program site immediately following without any fee. This will make it easier for students to complete the program on time if they choose.



## “MUSIC FOR LIFE’S JOURNEY”

**Music and Well Being** – combines music, teaching, learning and is suitable for all ages with a special interest to all Parish Nurses, church people, volunteers, pastoral care teams, official boards/church councils, caregivers, palliative care workers, chaplains, hospice workers and all with an interest in end of life care. For more information contact Parish Nurse Minister Bev Holmes: 613-473-0435 or Info [www.room217.ca](http://www.room217.ca).

**Madoc Trinity United Church, 76 St. Lawrence St. E., Madoc** – features a dinner concert, worship and workshop with musician Bev Foster of Room 217, Ministry of Music. The financial support of the Davey Family Endowment Fund of the United Church of Canada is prayerfully and gratefully acknowledged.



**Saturday, October 17 – 5:30 pm** – Dinner; **7:00 pm** – Concert with musician Bev Foster – Admission \$20.00; Concert only \$10.00 – Advance tickets preferred.

**Sunday, October 18 – 11:00 am** – Worship service with musician Bev Foster, Parish Nurse Minister Bev Holmes and Rev. Jean Brown, followed by a free lunch and at **2:00-4:00 pm** – an afternoon workshop (Admission \$10.00) in the sanctuary.

### Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry (CAPNM)

**Annual Conference, May 21 – 25, 2009**

**Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**



The theme was “Bridging Spirituality and Health” and ninety-five Parish Nurses, interested individuals and clergy met at the Park Town Hotel on the South Saskatchewan River in downtown Saskatoon. Opportunities for visiting and fellowship were welcomed by all. Worship was deep and moving. Parish Nurse Stories were told. Activities included Poster Presentations, Tea for Two and identifying graduation pictures of the parish nurses – not an easy task!

Plenary sessions were led by Father Michael Brehl, the provincial leader of Edmonton Toronto Redemptorists Community. He spoke on the theme and healthy spirituality, the kind that is nurtured by a God of love rather than fear. A remembered quote was, “God loves us so much he can’t take his eyes off us”. Then Jeff Christianson spoke. He is Executive Director of Regina Palliative Care Inc. Healing and social change in the midst of complexity was his focus and he challenged his listeners to recall that Jesus was about healing people, society and the world and that our acts reshape human history, no matter how small. Finally, Don and Pat Peace reminded everyone that parish nurses are a *pastoral bridge* who bring the wounded presence of Jesus - the presence of God - to people; a *priestly bridge* in listening to the stories of people, declaring them forgiven, and inviting people to find spiritual healing through prayer and /or the sacraments; a *prophetic bridge*, calling people to hear and accept the truth about God and themselves.

CAPNM’s first “**Parish Nurse Walk**” invited participants to the lovely landscaped trails by the Saskatchewan River, raising more than \$6000 to support Parish Nursing in Saskatchewan and The Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry.

Finally, the Sunday morning prayers, gathered from everyone during the conference, were raised to God simultaneously – a faint reminder of Pentecost and the beginnings of the church. This year’s CAPNM Conference certainly provided the impetus to return to our places of ministry, renewed for our various ministries.



**BOOK REVIEW**  
**Nancy Dunbar, Parish Nurse Candidate,**  
**First United Church, Waterloo ON**

**“Spirituality & Health, Health & Spirituality, A New Journey of Spirit, Mind and Body”**

by the Reverend Bruce G. Epperly, Twenty-third Publications, 1997.

The person that first shared this book with me said “I don’t loan out my own copy...I refer to it all the time and would be afraid to lose it. I bought a second copy just to loan to people.” Despite being out of print, I took on the challenge of finding my own copy and now wish I too had bought a second copy to loan to others.

At 122 pages, this book is easily tucked into a purse or binder and carried with you. Each of the five chapters is an in-depth essay on a separate topic. I found it necessary to highlight and reread each chapter to ensure I had absorbed the many ideas and overarching message. This is not to say it is a challenging or difficult book to read. The language and style are uncomplicated and I genuinely wanted to return to ensure I had gained the wisdoms shared.

Using theological and biblical reflection, Epperly tackles the topics of unanswered prayer, the power of prayer, whether miracles still happen, fundamentalism, diet, health, healing, technology, aging,

dying and the caring of ourselves, others and the environment. He challenges us to wonder why we see the miracle of God’s creation in the stars and not in the mitochondria of our cells. He reassures us when he writes “the path to physical and spiritual health is not meant to be one more task necessary for our salvation. We...stand in God’s circle of love whether or not we are ...healthy. God’s grace is not based on our own achievements in righteousness, stress reduction or weight loss.”

Epperly provides a balanced Christian vision of health and wellness. He explains how spirituality and health, health and spirituality hinge on each other, in balance. It is too bad that it is out of print because he provides questions at the end of each chapter that could be used for group study and discussion.

There are many books on spirituality and health. You will be well rewarded if you seek out this gem and add it to your library collection.



**Prayer at the Conclusion of an Information Forum**  
provided by Bev Templar, PN, Grace United Church, Peterborough  
*(prayed while joining hands)*

Gracious and loving God, we thank You for bringing us together this morning ... to learn more about You and your call for us in health and healing ministry.

Help us to continue to learn and grow; to be your hands and feet within our congregations using the gifts you have blessed us with.

The hand in yours belongs to a person whose heart is sometimes tender, whose skin is sometimes thin, whose eyes sometimes fill with tears, whose laughter is a beautiful sound.

The hand you hold belongs to a person who is seeking wholeness, and knows you are doing the same. As we leave this place ... may your hearts remain open ... may your voices stay strong ... and may your hands remain outstretched.

You are holding the hand of God. Go in peace, love and care for one another ... remembering God’s call to follow. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

## INSPIRATION AT APPLEWOOD

By Nancy Bryce

On Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, Tom Doherty visited Applewood United Church in Mississauga. Invited to preach, Tom encouraged the congregation to consider a health and healing ministry, a parish nursing ministry. In the greeting line on the way out of worship, Nancy, a member of Applewood United told Tom that the sermon had inspired her. Here is part of the conversation that followed.

T: ***So what did inspire you about the sermon?***

N: Well, first of all, I thoroughly enjoyed your singing and playing. It was beautiful.

T: ***Thank you. What else was there?***

N: Well, I have been glued to the television since the inauguration of Barack Obama, listening to him with a fresh sense of optimism and hope for the world. If he can inspire people to adopt and strive for his hopes and vision for his country, and for all the peoples of the world, what a beautiful place it would be. Anyway, I was lying in bed early this morning thinking, "What can I do to make the world a better place?" Then I went to church and you talked about 'parish nursing' and how it is God's ministry working towards the health of our bodies, minds, spirits, relationships and community."

T: ***Was there something particular about the sermon that inspired you?***

N: You shared a new perspective on salvation, which we are all seeking. You said that salvation is so much more than forgiveness and hope for something beyond death, that it is wholeness, healing, life, hopefulness, freedom from despair and an intense sense of thanksgiving and feeling of grace now. Parish nursing sounds like a ministry of salvation for the congregation as well as the broader community.

T: ***Do you think that parish nursing ministry is something for Applewood United Church to consider?***

N: I think it would be wonderful for any church. You told us that a parish nursing ministry is Spirit-led, and I found that exciting. Twenty-five years ago I belonged to a charismatic group in my former church, and although I've since rethought a lot of what I used to believe, I miss the excitement and enthusiasm and spirit that I used to feel. Every day we telephoned or met and prayed and shared how God was actively and personally working in our lives and leading us. Every coincidence we interpreted as a God-incidence! You twigged the memory of those days for me.

T: ***So you think the introduction of parish nursing ministry to your congregation might be such a "God-incidence"?***

N: No, not in the way I was talking about, but hopefully it is God-inspired. I don't think it was in any way a coincidence. People have been working toward it for quite a long time.

T: ***Do you see how a parish nursing ministry can reinforce a sense of helping to care for the community of the church and the communities in which we live?***

N: Absolutely. As I hear you today, a parish nurse is an initiator and a coordinator, so I believe a Spirit-led parish nursing ministry can encourage and guide us. If we are open to God's calling and follow faithfully, we can be present for each other and those around us. A sense of community is needed more than ever in these troubled times when everything seems to be falling apart around us; a lot of people are hurting and we have to help the less fortunate.

T: ***Thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts with me.***

N: Thank you for your presentation and your inspiration.





***ICHM Diary Notes – Jayne Tan***  
**“Nurse, Please Don’t Pray for Healing”**

*(Permission granted by family – names anonymous)*

He was a stately looking man, even when walking with his cane. As he approached, he asked me, what was the best brand of nutritional supplement he could get for an easy meal due to a ‘bloated stomach’. A quick assessment showed definite abdominal distention, and just like any nurse, I urged him to see his doctor right away.

The 85-yr-old gentleman kindly smiled and told me that he had just visited the doctor’s office before he came to the Senior Fellowship meeting. The next day, he was admitted in the hospital before he could purchase any supplement, and he was readily diagnosed with cancer that metastasized throughout his abdominal cavity.

Oom [word of respect to address an older gentleman] Sam was in high spirits when the Pastor, several members of

the congregation and I visited him in the hospital to hold a communion service with him. Two of his four children were there with us, singing and praying with him, concluding the visit with his favorite Hymn, “What a Friend we have in Jesus.”

Two days later, Oom Sam was moved to ICU where he had IV’s running, oxygen via nasal cannula and his breathing was definitely labored. His conversation with me indicated that he had not been informed about his diagnosis, or how grievous his condition had become. However, he had noticed a drastic change in his strength and his optimism began to wane. At that point, Oom Sam firmly grasped my hand and fervently prayed with me asking God for His comfort and healing.

Soon after, his children informed me that the family has decided to “spare him the agony” of not knowing what the physician had told them regarding Oom Sam’s fatal prognosis. After hearing the family’s decision, I immediately called

the hospital. Surprisingly, Oom Sam answered the phone himself instead of one of his children who were constantly at his bedside.

I was startled and sobered all at once when he said in a raspy voice but with an almost joyful tone, “Please nurse don’t pray for my healing because I am ready to go home. Pray that I will be well prepared to meet Jesus, my Savior and my God.”

Humbled by that request, I quietly said that I would pray as he requested and hung up the phone, tears flowing freely in reverence to a life lived for God. That very evening, Oom Sam met his Savior and his Lord.

These precious souls were a living testimony to the truth of God’s word in Isaiah 26:3, “Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusted in Thee.” Mrs. S and Oom Sam showed me, not that the parish nurse made a difference, but rather what Parish Nursing is all about.



**FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

**InterChurch Health Ministries appreciates ALL gifts which support the work of Parish Nursing within congregations. As a non-profit organization we continue to require financial assistance. Please consider making a donation to ICHM. A monthly donation by means of the Pre-authorized Remittances (PAR) through your banking institution is another way to assist us on a regular basis. Charitable receipts will be issued for all gifts received – Charitable No. 89026 1175 RR0001. Or call 1-888-433-9422.**