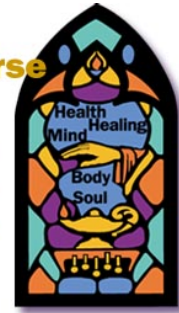




*International
Parish Nurse
Resource Center*

*Your primary
resource for
parish nursing*



Empowering Ministries of Health: Connecting Around the World

Tools for Empowerment and Working
with Clergy – Part One

Presenters

- Rev. Dr. Deborah L. Patterson
Executive Director, Deaconess Parish Nurse
Ministries/ International Parish Nurse
Resource Center, St. Louis, Missouri
- Sharon Hinton, RN, MSN, EMT-PL
GBGM-UMC Parish Nurse Consultant
Executive Director, Rural Nurse Resource, Inc.
Floydada, Texas

Overview

- Clergy and parish nurses (or other health professionals) can work together to offer dynamic health ministry through a faith community. This workshop seeks to help parish nurses and other health professionals find points of connection to offer their expertise to congregations and communities in partnership with clergy.

Objectives

- Describe the divergent educational preparation and practice patterns of clergy and parish nurses.
- Discuss the points of connection between clergy and parish nurses seeking to promote health and healing in and through faith communities.
- Identify strategies for developing strong partnerships in congregations and communities, involving clergy, parish nurses and laity.

What is a Parish Nurse – NOT!

- A parish nurse is not a physician. He or she will not provide a medical diagnosis or medical treatment.
- A parish nurse is not a home healthcare nurse. A parish nurse will not dispense medications or provide treatments prescribed by a physician.
- A parish nurse is not a therapist. She or he will not do physical therapy, occupational therapy, or psychotherapy.

AND...

- A parish nurse is not a clergy person. A parish nurse usually does not hold a degree in theology, although may have some further education in theology or clinical pastoral education. All parish nurses come to this specialized professional practice and ministry with a deep spiritual commitment, and some are, in fact, ordained.

Seven Roles of a Parish Nurse

- **H** – Health advisor (1)
- **E** – Educator on health issues (2)
- **A** – Advocate (3)
- **L** – Liaison to faith and community resources (4)
- **T** – Teacher of volunteers (5) and developer of support groups (6)
- **H** – Healer of body, mind, spirit, and community (7)
 - Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry (2005)

Why Are They in the Church?

- Church is called to preach, teach, *and* heal
- Church is called to promote wholeness of body, mind, spirit, society and creation
- Church is called to work for justice
- Church is called to be inclusive of all
- We are the Body of Christ – when one part suffers, we all suffer
- One body, many gifts – priesthood of all believers

History of Parish Nursing

- Diakonal ministers of the early church (Acts)
- Religious orders for men and women (Primarily Catholic)
- Protestant religious movements of 18th and 19th centuries had strong health components – e.g., John Wesley; Mennonites; Quakers; Deaconess movement in the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church

History of Parish Nursing – Continued

- The Church and medicine/nursing strongly diverged in the first decades of the 20th century.
- Starting in the late 20th century, a holistic movement in nursing and medicine emerged, fusing healthcare with spirituality/religion
- Parish nursing – Began in mid-1980's in Chicago at Lutheran General Hospital – Rev. Dr. Granger Westberg – now more that 10,000

What Does a Clergy Person Do?



What Does a Clergyperson Do?

1. Preaches at worship services
2. Prays with and for people
3. Writes liturgy, creates worship services
4. Officiates at weddings and funerals
5. Counsels people
6. Visits the sick in hospitals and nursing homes
7. Visits the homebound
8. Attends committee meetings for church ministries
9. Represents the church in the community, etc.

Educational Preparation for Clergy

- Most clergy are college graduates – variety of majors.
- Most clergy are Seminary graduates – focus on theology.
- Most clergy devote a significant amount of time on an on-going basis on the study of the Bible and theology, as well as trying to stay current on local and world news, and some literature and non-fiction material, as a support to their preaching.

Educational Preparation for Parish Nursing

- All parish nurses must be RNs – Registered Nurses, with current nursing licenses.
- Many parish nurses have associate degrees, but growing numbers have at least a BSN, and many have Master's degrees in Nursing.
- A requirement for keeping one's license current in many states is a certain number of continuing education units (varies by state).

Points of Connection Between Clergy and Parish Nurses

- Both have the same goals in mind – the health and welfare of the whole person – body, mind and spirit.
- Both work in the same arena – the faith community and the wider community.
- Both network widely to get services for their parishioners and neighbors in need.
- Both feel called to their ministries as a vocation out of a strong faith commitment.

Points of Difference Between Clergy and Parish Nurses

- Clergy are called or placed in their position through processes set in place by denominational polity. Parish nurses come to serve congregations through a wide variety of avenues.
- Clergy are ultimately responsible for the welfare of their congregation and many are the sole professional leaders of a congregation, while a parish nurse is always part of a ministry leadership team.

A Viewpoint of a Clergyman

- “When Christ sent the disciples out, he didn’t just say, “Go out and preach and preach.” He said, “Go preach and heal.” Go preach the Kingdom of God and heal the sick. His own ministry was so integrated. He never dealt with a body apart from the person’s spirit. But he also never dealt with the spirit apart from the body. He was always dealing with whole people....” (Granger Westberg Verbatim, p. 40)

A Viewpoint of a Nurse

- “Scarcely a day passes but books, by the orthodox and the unorthodox, by men and by women, are advertised, with titles as follows (I take these at random): ‘Passing Thoughts on Religion,’ ‘Musings on Manifestations of God to the Soul of Man.’ As for the ‘[Impressions,’ the ‘Aspirations,’ their name is legion. Now, can we call this anything but *impertinence* to God?”

A Viewpoint of a Nurse, Continued

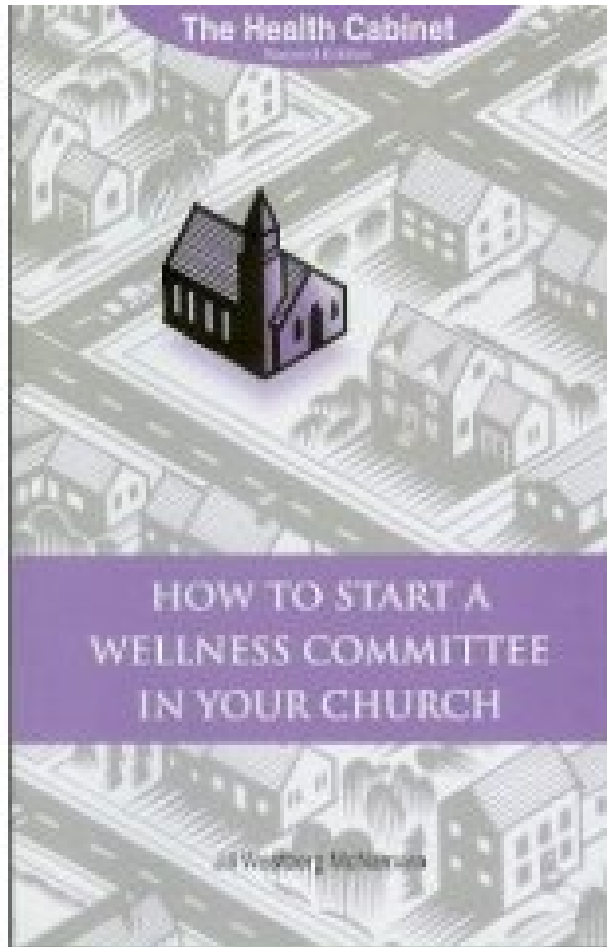
“What should we say if we saw advertised, ‘Passing thoughts’ on hydrostatics, ‘Musings’ on clinical surgery, ‘Impressions’ of life assurances? Everybody would laugh, and nobody would read the book. Is religion, confessedly the most important of all subjects, to be the only one on which anybody’s *passing* thoughts are good enough?”

Macrae, J, Nursing as a Spiritual Practice, pg. 8.

Ms. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) Rev. Dr. Granger Westberg (1911- 1999)



Health Ministry is a *Congregational Ministry*



Having a “Wellness Committee” or a “Health Cabinet” is an ideal way to work together. This is a ministry of a congregation, not of one or two individuals.

How the Health Cabinet Can Help

- 5-7 members, health professionals, educators, non-professionals
- Meet bi-monthly or quarterly to help direct the program.
- Can help with health needs assessments, program planning, implementation, and evaluation
- Can also help with fund development

The Health Cabinet is a Catalyst

- “While cabinet members provide considerable leadership in setting up certain programs or in bringing about change, their responsibility is not to carry off the entire health ministry, but to make that ministry possible. It does this by acting as a source of influence in the life of the church to ensure that the stewardship of health is expressed in worship [and] education...it can promote healthy behavior and ensure strong support to individuals who are not well.
 - Jill Westberg McNamara, The Health Cabinet: How to Start a Wellness Committee in Your Church, 8.

Support Levels in United Methodist Settings

