

# **The Faith Connection**

~ News and Ideas for Your Health Ministry ~

**January 12, 2010**

The Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, 1515 Locust Street, Suite 705 ~ Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
412-232-5815, [ParishNurse@mercy.pmhs.org](mailto:ParishNurse@mercy.pmhs.org)

## **Upcoming Events**

### ◆ **Parish Nurse Basic Preparation Course 2010**

#### **Winter Session**

✓ January 22 & 23

✓ February 26 & 27

**Class size is limited and registration is filling fast!**

**Contact [dmayernik@mercy.pmhs.org](mailto:dmayernik@mercy.pmhs.org) or 412-232-5815 ASAP if you are interested.**

*Planning ahead: Summer Session will be offered  
Monday, June 7 – Thursday, June 10, 2010*

***Cost for either course is \$395. RNs will earn 30 CEs\* and be commissioned as Parish Nurses.***

As an educational partner of the International Parish Nurse Resource Center (IPNRC), we are among the first to offer the newly revised curriculum. The four-day course consists of 16 modules taught by parish nurse educators who have completed IPNRC's faculty prep course and by others who have expertise in the content area.

The course is open to other health professionals and lay persons who are interested in promoting health and wellness in their churches. Those who are not RNs will be commissioned as Health Ministers.

We will be holding this educational event at Beulah Presbyterian Church in Penn Hills, located just off the Churchill exit of the Parkway East (Route I-376).

Limited scholarship funds are available. Contact [dmayernik@mercy.pmhs.org](mailto:dmayernik@mercy.pmhs.org) or 412-232-7151.

*\* UPMC Mercy designates this continuing education activity for 30 clock hours. UPMC Mercy is approved as a provider of continuing education in nursing by the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association, which is accredited as an approver of continuing education in nursing by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. UPMC Mercy, ANCC COAC and PSNA do not endorse any commercial products as a result of the CE activity.*

# Parish Nurses Making a Difference

*Esther Gass, RN, staff member of the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, writes about the impact prayer shawls have had at her church, Beulah Presbyterian in Churchill. The prayer shawl ministry was started in May of 2009 and over 40 shawls have been made, with 30 of them given to people in need of comfort and encouragement.*

At a Grief Support Group in the fall of 2009, all nine participants received a prayer shawl during the Service of Remembrance. Many recipients have commented to me how they feel the comfort of the Lord through the prayer shawl, as well as the love and prayers of the Prayer Shawl Ministry. One of men in the group says that he wraps it tight around his shoulders when he is especially missing his wife and that he wears it during his daily quiet time with the Lord.

In December the Health Ministry sponsored a Blue Christmas service. After the worship, two women sat quietly weeping after most of the others had left the sanctuary. I stood silently and prayed for them to know God's comfort. They asked for prayer and anointing for one of the women who, through great sobs, told me of her 36-year-old son's death from a heart attack. After a time of prayer, as the woman wrapped her arms around herself, I felt she'd appreciate a prayer shawl. Asking her to sit and wait for me a couple minutes, I retrieved a lovely blue shawl...later finding out it is a favorite color. She pulled it tight and wrapped it around her shoulders. And to complete the story, without realizing it these two women sat at the dinner table of the parish nurse who had knitted the prayer shawl. Not only was the shawl a blessing to the grieving woman, but to the knitter who heard the story and was able to minister to the woman as they shared a meal."

Prayer shawls go back to Biblical times with our Jewish ancestors wearing shawls with fringe to wrap around themselves to help shut out the concerns of this world and become closer to God. As the centuries passed they began to take on the meaning of wrapping oneself in God's unconditional love, giving comfort, solace, shelter, and beauty. In the past 10 years Prayer Shawl Ministries have developed in many congregations. The benefit is not just for the receiver, but also the one who prays while creating. Some crafters meet to work and pray as a group, while others work and pray in their homes. In some cases the prayers are for someone who is not yet known. Several sources for free patterns [www.shawlministry.com](http://www.shawlministry.com) and <http://www.lionbrand.com/prayerShawlCards>

*For a free brochure that can be modified and used to get your Prayer Shawl Ministry started, e-mail Joyce Schumm at [JSchumm@mercy.pmhs.org](mailto:JSchumm@mercy.pmhs.org).*

## Your Feedback is Important to Us

*Please let us know about the health ministry activities you are carrying out in your church. We are interested in knowing how our efforts as a regional resource center are helping you to contribute to the health and well-being of the members of your congregation. Thank You!*

Send an e-mail with the following information to [ParishNurse@mercy.pmhs.org](mailto:ParishNurse@mercy.pmhs.org)

**Your name and contact information:**

**Church/congregation:**

**Brief description of the activity:**

**Number of people attending/benefiting:**

## Focus on Health and Wellness

Several weeks ago the Pittsburgh area had a surprise ice storm on Sunday morning. Many went out for their morning papers and saw no problems. By 7:30 a.m. the roads were covered with ice causing many accidents. Already in December we have seen more than usual bad weather. This might be a good time to put in place a system of checking on households that may be vulnerable. Offering some winter driving safety and cold weather tips as a handout in your bulletin might save a life and would certainly be a good review for all ages of drivers. The U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers an excellent guide by going to [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/winter). This booklet stresses the need to be prepared in your home and on the road. It gives lists and ideas to survive extremely cold weather. Road safety is another issue that is good to review at this time of the year. The following reminders might save your life or that of another.



## Winter Driving Safety Tips

*from the CAR-MAN*

As we enter one of the most hazardous times of the year for driving, be prepared and take extra caution. According to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Highway Safety and Traffic Engineering, the three months in 2008 with the highest number of motor vehicle crashes were December, January, and February. Two big reasons for the increased danger are weather and darkness. Adverse weather and road surface conditions negatively affect vehicle handling and driver sight.

Here are a few suggestions to help you arrive safely:

### Driving safely on icy roads

1. Carry a cell phone.
2. Allow yourself plenty of time to reach your destination.
3. Remove snow and ice from the hood and roof of the vehicle.
4. Keep the gas tank at least half full.
5. Decrease your speed and leave yourself plenty of room to stop. You should allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.
6. Brake gently to avoid skidding. If the wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
7. Turn on the lights to increase your visibility. Use low beams in heavy or blowing snow.
8. Clean the lights, windshield, and mirrors as often as necessary.
9. Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills. Do not use cruise control.
10. Beware of Black Ice: roads that may look wet but are actually frozen.
11. Be especially careful on bridges, overpasses, and infrequently traveled roads, which will freeze first. Even at temperatures above freezing, if the conditions are wet, you might encounter ice in shady areas or on exposed roadways like bridges.
12. Don't pass snow plows and sanding trucks. The drivers have limited visibility, and you're likely to find the road in front of them worse than the road behind.
13. Don't assume any vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles encounter trouble on winter roads. They don't stop any quicker than other vehicles.

### If the rear wheels skid...

1. Take your foot off the accelerator.
2. Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go. If the rear wheels are sliding left, steer left. If they're sliding right, steer right.
3. If the rear wheels start sliding the other way as you recover, ease the steering wheel toward that side. You might have to steer left and right a few times to get the vehicle completely under control.
4. If you have standard brakes, pump them gently.
5. If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS), do not pump the brakes. Apply steady pressure to the brakes. You will feel the brakes pulse — this is normal.

### If your front wheels skid...

1. Take your foot off the gas and shift to neutral, but don't try to steer immediately.
2. As the wheels skid sideways, they will slow the vehicle and traction will return. As it does, steer in the direction you want to go. Then put the transmission in "drive" or release the clutch, and accelerate gently.

### If you get stuck...

1. Do not spin the wheels. This will only dig you in deeper.
2. Turn the wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way.
3. Use a light touch on the gas, to ease your car out.
4. Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car.
5. Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel or salt in the path of the wheels, to help get traction.
6. Try rocking the vehicle. (Check the owner's manual first — it can damage the transmission on some vehicles.) Shift from forward to reverse, and back again. Each time you're in gear, give a light touch on the gas until the vehicle gets going.

For those interested in going further with road safety, a program can be purchased for \$5 from AAA (American Automobile Association) for \$5 that used with a computer to test driving ability. It is designed not to get people off of the road, but to help them be better drivers by stressing their strengths and improving their weaknesses. Go to [www.roadwisereview.com](http://www.roadwisereview.com) for more information.

# Bulletin or Newsletter Articles for February

*A Health Note Dedicated to All Women on Women's Day*  
**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8**

## GO RED FOR WOMEN

**GO RED FOR WOMEN** is the new American Heart Association initiative to create awareness for women and heart disease. It's a call to action ... educating women about what they can do to live stronger, longer lives.

Since **February is National Heart Month**, we would like you to renew your commitment of taking better care of yourself so that you may nurture and care for others. *For we are chosen to be caring and loving as the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ.* Besides, since we will soon begin our Lenten journey, we can use this time to reflect upon our hearts ... physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

In looking at the physical challenge of taking care of our hearts, [Go Red For Women](#) educates women on the risk factors for heart disease and stroke:

**Obesity - High Cholesterol - Smoking**  
**High Blood Pressure - Physical Inactivity - Diabetes**

**Go Red for Women** provides easy tips to help women reduce their risk and live longer, healthier lives:

- Exercise for 30 minutes on most days.
- Don't smoke – if you smoke, stop. If you don't smoke, don't start.
- Eat an overall balanced diet emphasizing, fruits, vegetables, cereal and grain products, fat free and low-fat dairy product, legumes, nuts, fish, poultry, and lean meats.
- Maintain a total cholesterol level less than 200mg/dL and HDL level 40 mg/dL or higher. Control your blood pressure – try to maintain your blood pressure below 120/80 mm Hg.



Meanwhile, having love and harmony in our relationships helps to care for our emotional hearts. Likewise, we can care for our spiritual hearts by setting aside a regular time in our schedules for worship, Bible study, devotions, and prayer.

We hope this heart health education will help empower you to take care of your heart health.

### Prayer

**Lord, We plead this day for Your pardoning grace to cleanse our hearts and souls.  
In Jesus' Name, Amen.**

*(Adapted from "Health Notes from the Hill" available at  
Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program – 412-232-5815)*

# International Parish Nurse Resource Center (IPNRC)

24<sup>th</sup> Annual Westberg Parish Nurse Symposium\*

## Thriving in a Changing World

September 17-19, 2010

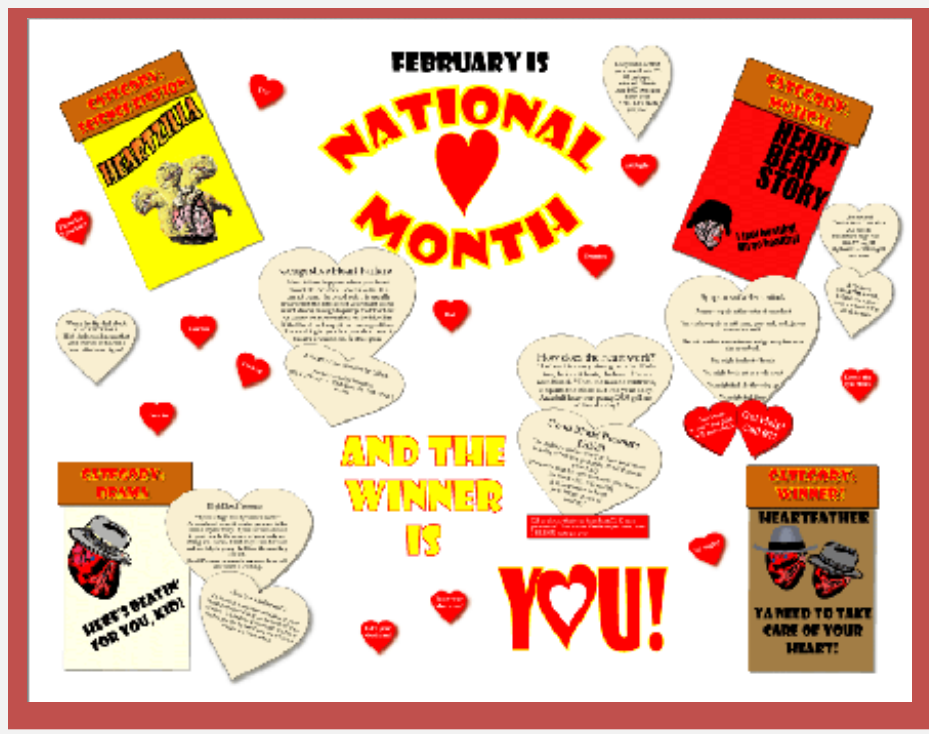
Embassy Suites & St. Charles Convention Center  
Saint Charles, Missouri

For more information: [www.parishnurses.org](http://www.parishnurses.org) and click on 'Events'

\*The Symposium is named in honor of Rev. Granger Westberg, Founder of the Parish Nurse movement

## Parish Nurse Resources

**February is Heart Month.** A good way to highlight this is by using the bulletin board below, which is offered at [www.gha.org/pha/bulletinboards](http://www.gha.org/pha/bulletinboards). Don't forget to print off some handouts or some bookmarks to go with this educational board.



For more information go to: [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) Why not pick a Sunday to ask all of the women to wear red or sponsor a Red Hat luncheon?

**Just a reminder – Ash Wednesday is February 17.** This is a great time to start a program such as “Get My People Going” or “Walk to Jerusalem by Easter”. For more information on these programs either call Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program or Google these titles.

**February is also Child Dental Health Month.** Lesson plans to help you teach good dental health to all ages are available at [www.kidshealth.org/classroom](http://www.kidshealth.org/classroom)

**February 5: Give Kids A Smile Day** sponsored by the American Dental Association. Call them at 800-621-8099 or go to their website at [www.givekidsasmile.ada.org](http://www.givekidsasmile.ada.org) for more information and available materials.

## **Parish Nurse Online Store**

Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program offers products that are designed to help you in your health ministry and parish nurse program. Visit our website for more details about other products – [www.pmhs.org](http://www.pmhs.org) and click on “Parish Nurse” and go to “Parish Nurse Store”.



***Thank you for reading The Faith Connection!  
We pray for God’s blessings on your ministry.***