



# Parish Nurse Ministry Program

## Frequently Asked Questions about Faith Community Nursing

### Who is a faith community nurse?

**Faith community nursing is a specialty practice of nursing and a professional model of health ministry:**

- The title “faith community nurse” is a universal term and addresses practice within a broad range of faith communities. Other titles used include “parish nurse” or “congregational nurse”.
- The historic roots of health and healing come from the Judeo-Christian tradition.
- The faith community nurse uses their knowledge to promote wellness of body, mind, and spirit.
- **The roles include:**
  - Assisting individuals to integrate their faith and health
  - Providing health education and health-related counseling
  - Helping individuals find support groups and services within communities
  - Serving as an advocate for health

### Who can serve as a faith community nurse?

A faith community nurse must be a currently licensed RN and have completed a recognized foundations faith community nursing preparation course. Other individuals, such as LPN/ LVNs, retired RNs, therapists, health educators, may volunteer to assist with the health ministry, but the activities of the team would be under the supervision of the faith community nurse.

### What are examples of faith community nursing activities?

- Offers comfort and prayer during times of crisis and celebration
- Refers parishioners to various support services including older adult programs or grief support
- Offers tips related to maintaining a healthy lifestyle in the parish newsletter/website
- Coordinates seminars on stress management or infant massage
- Provides screening for hypertension

The faith community nurse’s focus is on the intentional care of the spirit. The nurse does not provide “hands-on” nursing care. Their work is not a substitute for pastoral care, medical assistance, community health nursing or social services. Faith community nurses work in partnership with others to advocate for the health and wellbeing of the congregation.

### What is the congregation’s role?

The faith community nurse required the ongoing support from the congregation, health cabinet wellness committee and clergy. **Keys to success include:**

- Well-prepared nurses educated in the specialty practice of faith community nursing and committed to wholistic health
- Clergy and lay professionals eager to work on a team
- An active health cabinet / wellness council
- A congregation / faith community willing to become involved in the care and support of others
- Financial, spiritual, and emotional support

For additional information about faith community / parish nursing and available foundations of faith community nursing preparation courses, contact Dr. Jean Bokinskie, Director of the Parish Nurse Ministry Program, Concordia College.

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