

# LCA Parish Nurse News

No 132 September 2018



## One size does not fit all

When it comes to Pastoral Care/Parish Nursing, it's clear that one size does **not** fit all. The LCA's *Introduction to Pastoral Care Nursing* course makes it clear that the role is flexible, and is determined by the needs of the church or facility the nurses serve, the skills and experience of the nurses, and the time they have available to serve.



The illustration above indicates the wide diversity of roles Pastoral Care Nurses can and do play. In promoting next year's study tour to Singapore, I have contacted a wide range of Parish Nurses, particularly in the United States.

It is evident that the basic roles of Parish Nursing originally envisaged by Dr Granger Westberg underlie most Parish Nurse ministries. These are: health educator; health counsellor and advocate; liaison person, referring people to other health professionals; coordinator and trainer of care-giving volunteers; and pastoral carer. How these roles are implemented varies from place to place, and in some instances there are additional roles.



Some Parish Nurses have an office at the church, where they can meet with clients, and some congregations have a team of two or more Parish Nurses, with others as part of a team to assist with home visiting. Many help by distributing the Communion elements to house-bound parishioners after services.

In virtually every case, congregation-based Parish Nurses regularly offer free Blood Pressure checks, either after service on designated Sundays or at specified times during the week. This also provides an opportunity for parishioners to discuss other health issues they may have.

Quite a number of US Parish Nurses organise drives for blood donors, with their church as a collection centre.

Many Parish Nurses regularly organise either aerobic or 'gentle' exercise sessions at their church hall each week to help people keep fit.

In some congregations, Parish Nurses coordinate a *BeFrienders* ministry, helping equip members to provide care to people in difficult and transitional situations, such as illness, loneliness, loss of a loved one. They embody the caring presence of God and of the congregation. *BeFrienders* complete a 20-hour training program and a two-month internship.



Many congregations have a ‘Prayer Shawl’ ministry coordinated by the Parish Nurse. The shawls are knitted or crocheted by volunteers, to be given by the Parish Nurse to anyone dealing with health or bereavement issues. One Parish Nurse wrote: ‘Shawls are symbolic of an inclusive, unconditionally loving God. They wrap, enfold, comfort, cover, give solace, mother, hug, shelter, and beautify. Those who have received these shawls have been uplifted and affirmed’. In other congregations volunteers knit booties for the Parish Nurse to give to mothers of newborn infants, or bake cookies for the Parish Nurse to distribute.

Providing support to grieving members is a high priority for many Parish Nurses, and many regularly coordinate grief support groups that offer informal discussion and support for those who have suffered the death of spouse, child or friend.



## What’s happening

### Madang, PNG



In August, the Pastoral Care Nurses at the Memorial Lutheran church in Madang, Papua New Guinea (PNG) – with encouragement from their pastor – resumed regular after-church blood pressure clinics, after a gap of some weeks. Those involved in this ministry completed an *Introduction to Pastoral Care Nursing*, presented at the Lutheran Guest House in Goroka in the PNG Highlands by Pastor Robert and Mrs Lynette Wiebusch, in 2014.



### Albury, NSW

Lutheran Aged Care Albury (LACA), NSW, is still seeking a successor to Pastor Ernie Kiss who retired as chaplain in 2017. Retired Pastor Garry Kenny of nearby Culcairn had been helping out on a part-time basis, but relinquished this position at Easter.

LACA is now inviting applications for the position of Pastoral Care Support Worker.

Meanwhile, Pastoral Care Nurse Angela Uhrhane has been carrying additional responsibilities. This month she will take some time out to participate in the LPNI study tour to Canada.



## LPNI study tours

Itineraries and registration forms are available for the 2019 Lutheran Parish Nurse International study tour to Singapore, 3-9 October. The program includes a tour of the island, a night safari at the island’s world-famous zoo, and a seminar at the Redeemer Lutheran church. Local pastors will be invited to the afternoon session of the seminar to learn about the Pastoral Care Nurse ministry.

The 2020 study tour will be to Alice Springs. Details are still being planned, but it will include a visit to the Royal Flying Doctor base, to the Lutheran Mission site at Hermannsburg, and to tourist attractions such as Standley Chasm and Uluru.

For a registration form, or more information about either of these study tours, contact:

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