



## New Parish/Faith Community Nurses

The sixteen participants attended the recent Parish/Faith Community Nurse Basic Preparation course at Trinity Episcopal Church, Lebanon, from all over the state of Missouri and serve several different denominations. This year's event was fully funded by a grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health in St. Louis, Missouri. Thanks to the grant funds participants were able not only to attend the event, but were provided health equipment.

Participants included: (first row) Winnona Terry, Amy Hall, Mary Jane Aufdengarten, Darles Vernon, Regina Bohannon, Alvyne Rethemeyer (second row) Elaine Briggs, DeArta Stirling, Judy Woodward, Gail Baldwin, Joyce Heidecke, Barbara Smith, Melita

VanWinkle (third row) Darlene Stinson, Mary Brown, Darla Maxwell, and Dennise Ridinger.



Right: Alvyne Rethemeyer (primary facilitator) during the Service of Affirmation.

## Self Care During the Holidays

By Lynne Jerichow

You are remarkably resilient to stress. The mind/body balance is stable, but it can be pushed over the edge. When that happens, your health can become compromised. You automatically react instead of respond.

It is those automatic reactions that determine how much stress you endure. During the Holidays stress comes more frequently than at any other time of the year. The results include physical and mental exhaustion and depression. Stress has even been linked to heart attacks and cancer. The healthy solution is to stop reacting to stress and start responding.

Take a few minutes to think: Are you running 100 miles an hour doing what you feel you "must," "should" or "have to," instead of allowing time to do the things you want?

It's important to have a balance between the "shoulds" and "wants" since there are only so many hours in a week.

Making time to care and nurture yourself for at least 20 minutes each day is important to your overall health. Praying and meditating as you walk or just sitting in silence and breathing.

Whenever a stressor comes, learn to step back mentally and take a few breaths to calm your spirit before you address it. You'll be better able to think clearly and handle the stressor if you're calm.

*"Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better and the evil spirit would leave him." 1 Samuel 16:22-23*

A few conscious breaths to several minutes of sitting in silence are very useful in dealing with the hassles of your day. Mini-relaxations can be refreshing and powerful. Commit that you will take a healthy approach to dealing with stress by caring and nurturing yourself every 2-3 hours during your waking hours. Take a deep breath and hold it for several seconds. As you slowly exhale, let all of your breath out, repeating silently a focus word like peace, love, Jesus, thanks, etc. Another relaxor technique: Breathe in through your nose and then breathe out through your mouth. Do this ten times. Notice how cool the air feels as you inhale in contrast to how warm it feels as you exhale.

*"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him" Psalm 62:5*

*"This is my resting place for ever and ever; here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it." Psalm 132:14*

May many blessings be yours this Holy season of our Lords birth,

Parish Nurse **Lynne Jerichow**, R.N., Mexico United Methodist Church (Mexico, MO) and Missouri School of Religion Board of Trustees.

## A Prayer for Those with the Flu

Lord of all creation, grant comfort and strength to those who are suffering from viruses we do not yet fully understand. May their time of recovery be a time of strengthening and hope, of rest and renewal.

Healing and teaching God, may you grant each person who is afflicted both wisdom and support to do all within their power to defeat this infirmity. We pray that you would also guide them to know when to ask for help.

Guard, especially oh Lord, those who are weak and compromised, that they may make it through this valley.

And we ask a special blessing upon the parish nurses, clergy and others who are providing care and comfort to those who are ill, that you would keep them safe from harm, now and always. Amen.

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## Best Practices for H1N1 Virus

From the National Council of Churches

In response to the growing swine flu epidemic (or H1N1 virus), the National Council of Churches Health Task Force is encouraging pastors and congregational leaders to play a key role in education staff on hygiene practices.

Members of congregations are urged to use hand sanitizers, clean door knobs and hand rails, and fill candy dishes with individually wrapped candies. But during the flu season, they are also encouraged to stop shaking hands and hugging one another during the traditional "passing of the peace." Instead, the guidelines suggest substituting "a simple nod of acknowledgement."

Congregations who use disposable plastic cups for communion are well situated for evading the H1N1 and other influenza viruses. Other congregations are urged to suspend use of the common cup and the practice of "intinction" -- dipping the bread into the wine -- because of their germ-carrying potential.

Of course, pastors and parishioners should wash their hands before anointing persons with oil or before the "laying on of hands ritual."

Churches are also urged to post a church plan for cancelling worship services, nursery schools, daycare centers and senior centers during a flu outbreak.

The NCC's check list, "H1N1 (Swine Flu) and Seasonal Flu Best Practices for Congregations," is posted on the Council's Health Task Force Web page (<http://www.health-ministries.org/>)

Citing 3 John 1:2a, "*Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health,*" the guidelines note that "pastors and congregational leaders can play an important role as we move more fully into the flu season. Health officials advise extra precautions with the prospect of both seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu virus (swine flu) upon us."



*Merry Christmas from the staff of  
Missouri School of Religion.*