



Faith Community Nursing

Church
Leadership
Resource
Manual



Faith Community Nursing Church Leadership Resource Manual

(“Parish Nursing”)



Heart – Mind

Feeling and Thinking

Apple – Body

Physical Needs

Dove – Holy Spirit

Spiritual

*The Faith Community Nursing philosophy
is to treat the whole person—
mind, body, and spirit.*

 **Adventist
Health**

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Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce you to **Faith Community Nursing (FCN)** and health ministry. This manual was prepared to help you understand the scope of the FCN program and the aspects of health ministry. It is also meant to share ideas about how your local medical center might work cooperatively with you in this venture.

Although the church has been engaged in healing work from the very beginning, what might be new to you, is the concept of the nurse working amongst the leadership of a church. Faith Community Nursing is a program that reaches into the church and community to provide health education and care on a “wholistic” level. Nursing is something that we recognize as having surfaced from the early church. Phoebe, a deaconess, is often considered to be the first nurse (Romans 16:1,2).

Three aspects are necessary for a successful health ministry in your church:

- First, envision the scope/idea.
- Next, develop that idea into a viable program.
- Finally, sustain the program within your church.

In this resource manual, we hope to give you a picture of health ministry that also reveals how a Faith Community Nurse might be instrumental in growing and sustaining that ministry in your congregation.

Dedication

We at Adventist Health dedicate this work to all Faith Community workers. We encourage you to share the love of Christ in your health and healing ministry. May the Lord bless you and your staff as you continue to serve Him.

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The History of Faith Community Nursing

Within the past century, there has been a renewed interest in the role and responsibility of the church in healthcare.

With changing times and expanding needs, methods must remain adaptable. A ground swell is occurring in America in which churches are beginning to reclaim and herald wholeness (mental, physical, and spiritual well-being). One such evidence of this trend can be seen in the Faith Community Nursing program.

Faith Community Nursing (“Parish Nursing”) grew out of Granger Westberg's early experiments providing a pastoral/nurse/physician team in several Chicago suburb churches. Dr. Westberg discovered that having a nurse on the pastoral staff could serve much the same purpose at less cost. The concept proved to be sound. In the elder age group, hospitalizations were reduced 20 to 25 percent, with a similar reduction in costs. Dr. Westberg discovered that having a nurse on the pastoral staff can enhance the church health ministry at a reduced cost. He chose nursing over other disciplines because nurses are trained in both the scientific and behavioral worlds.

In the health ministry role, the nurse functions as a:

- integrator of faith and health
- health educator
- personal health counselor
- referral agent and liaison with community health organizations
- coordinator of volunteers in the congregation
- developer of support groups
- health advocate.

This non-invasive nursing role is not intended to include delegated medical functions. The Faith Community nurse is not to be seen as a primary “hands-on” caregiver, nor one who delivers clinical care, but one who facilitates the use of available resources in the church and community. This unique concept sets Faith Community Nursing apart from traditional acute care and home health care nursing.

Theological Basis

Health and healing ministries have been in existence since the start of the Christian church. In the Biblical Greek, salvation and health are the same word which gives them a unique connection to one another, and gives the church its basis for “wholistic” healing.

Traditionally, the church’s focus was on spiritual healing, which emphasized God as the Divine Physician. Only recently has the broader “wholistic” view of healing been introduced into churches as the responsibility of the congregation.

In today’s world, much of the physical healing in an individual’s life no longer takes place in the medical center, but in the community. Therefore, healthcare professionals have a medical and moral responsibility to collaborate with the community in caring for and providing preventative measures for the health needs of individuals. Concurrently, the church communities, building on biblical foundations of wholism in healing, are becoming essential collaborators with healthcare institutions.

Today’s environment calls for a collective merging of local medical facilities and the church. This merger is not only mandated by need – it is also asserting the church’s role in the healing ministry.

The Gospel charges the followers of Jesus to go out and preach the kingdom of God and heal others (Luke 9:2). By its very nature, the church is a healing community, and it is in this community that wholeness can be found. Within this “wholistic” community the individual:

- is nurtured
- becomes reconciled
- finds affirmation
- discovers dignity as a God-created gift.

The “wholistic” community allows for participation whether ill or well, whole or fragmented, loved or unloved. This community is a vehicle through which men and women find peace and wellness.

Why Start a Faith Community Nursing Program?

- Much of the clergy's ministry to individuals and families is health related.
- Most hospitals have roots in our churches. Faith Community Nursing represents a returning focus on the church as the original place for a true healing experience.
- Other sectors of society are looking to the church as health needs increase and resources dwindle.
- A Faith Community Nursing program brings an organized approach to meeting the health needs of the congregation.
- Programs of health and healing can be offered to the surrounding community for purposes of growth and outreach within the church.
- The church has a mandate to teach, preach and heal.

What if There are no Registered Nurses Available in Your Church Community?

Health ministry can exist in a congregation regardless of the presence of registered nurses who are dedicated to leading or participating. Skilled church members who are committed to health ministry, can also provide needed leadership. As your hospital partner, we will strive to provide you with any volunteer training and help provide you with necessary health professionals as needs arise.

Mission

The mission statement of the **Adventist Health Faith Community Nursing Outreach** is to share God's love by providing physical, mental, and spiritual healing through the faith community. Faith Community Nursing serves as a catalyst/facilitator in the community to restore personal and communal wholeness—body, mind, and spirit.

The mission of the health ministry and Faith Community Nursing is an extension of **the Adventist Health mission**, which is to share God's love by providing physical, mental, and spiritual healing. Our mission through this program is to become creative partners with and servants to the communities whose quality of life and health we wish to enhance.

Philosophy

The philosophy of Faith Community Nursing embraces the following concepts.

- We believe in the fundamental unity of human life in its physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual components.
- We believe in operating as a health ministry within the church.
- We believe in preventative medicine, health promotion, and early detection.
- We believe that the Faith Community Nursing program should have a formal and identifiable structure within the local community, with links to local healthcare providers.
- We believe that the Faith Community Nursing program witnesses to the integration of faith and healing within the community, the church, and the healthcare settings.
- We believe the church interacts with people throughout their lives and becomes especially important at times of change, transition, illness, and crisis.
- We believe the church is responsible for promotion, concern, and care for the health of its people.

Title Assignment

A variety of titles have been seen emerging from churches. Among them are:

- Minister of health
- Parish nurse
- Faith Community nurse
- Health ministry RN
- Congregational nurse
- Church nurse
- Health minister
- Crescent Nurse

The professional nursing community has defined Faith Community Nursing (“Parish Nursing”) as “the specialized practice of professional nursing that focuses on the intentional care of the spirit as part of the process of promoting wholistic health and preventing or minimizing illness in a faith community” (*Faith Community Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*). Regardless of the internal title, the specialty trained professional nurse works within the scope and standards of the Faith Community Nursing practice.

The nurse is not to be seen as a primary “hands-on” caregiver, nor one who delivers clinical care, but one who facilitates the use of available resources in the church and community.

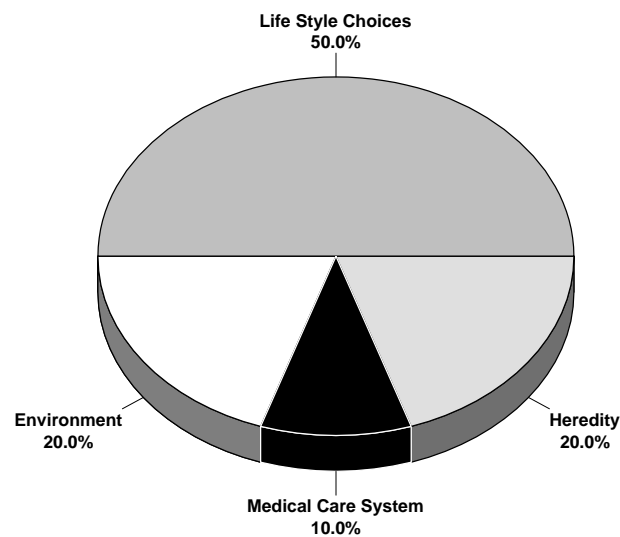
In addition to the Faith Community nurse, other individuals serving in health ministry should receive a title that is descriptive of their duties and communicates their function most clearly within the context of their faith tradition.

In summary, select a title that is reflective of your education and current licensure while considering the language with which your congregation is familiar.

Health Factors

America is experiencing a health crisis. The gathered assemblies of most churches in America have issued a call to action to help resolve this crisis. The crisis forces us to recognize several things:

- People often shift responsibility for their health from themselves to the medical care system, when in fact, 50 percent of their health status is a result of lifestyle choices.



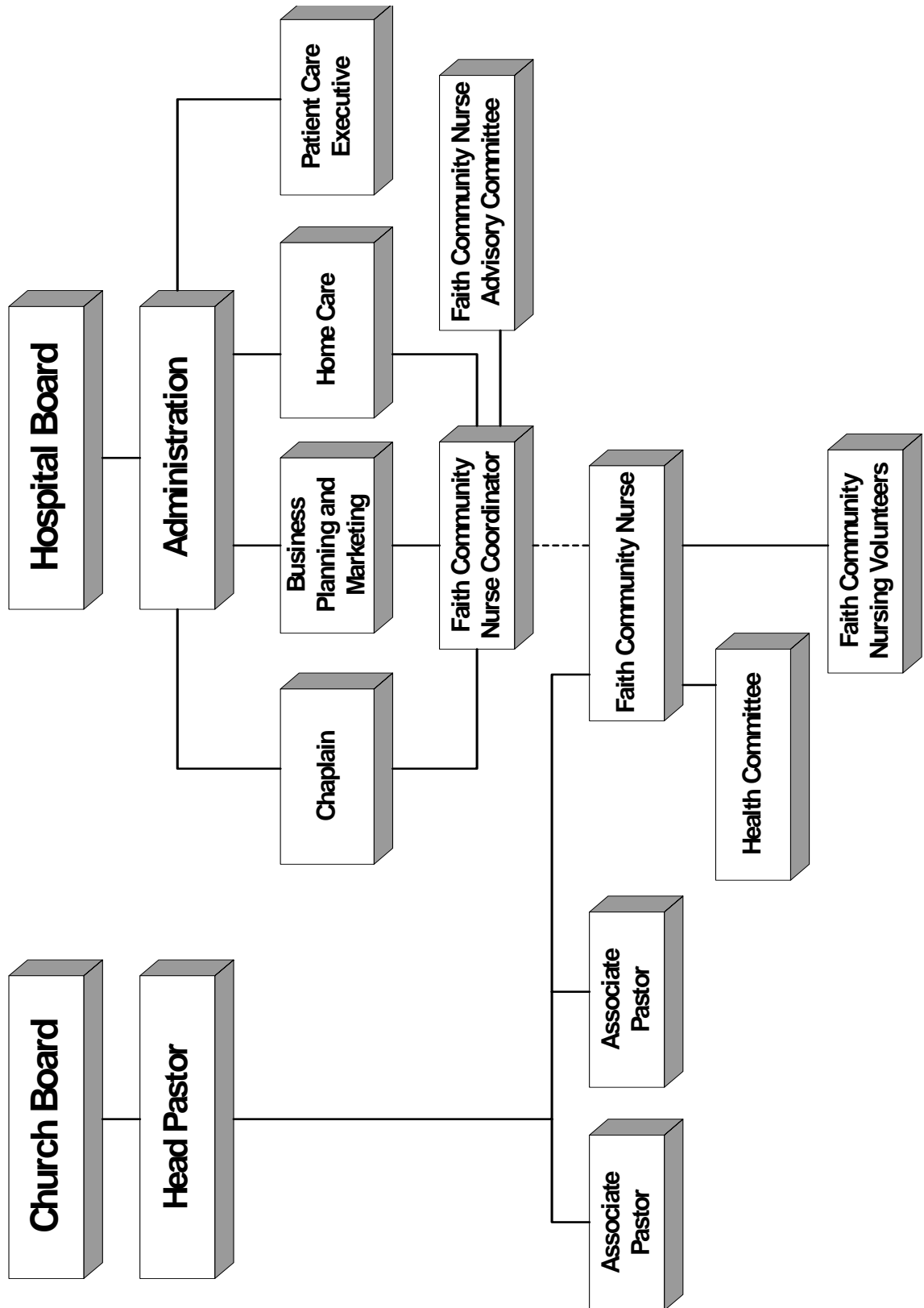
Factors contributing to health, based on figures from the National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control, and National Institutes for Health.

- One half of all young adults in the U.S. are without health insurance. Estimates have placed the number of uninsured Americans at about 46 million, including 11 million children. There is growing concern across the country over the diminishing number of people who cannot afford insurance.¹

¹ U.S. Library of Medicine and The National Institutes of Health, April 2006

Organizational Chart

Faith Community Nursing Program



Roles and Services

Defining the Role of the Church Faith Community Nurse

The Faith Community Nursing ministry, which arises from the needs of the congregation, operates through the talents of the registered nurse serving in a ministerial role.

The Church Faith Community nurse works with the health ministry committee to foster the health and wellness of the members of the congregation. It is essential to the success of a health ministry program that the nurse and the pastor work closely together, sharing information and making referrals to one another.

Some of the main responsibilities of the Faith Community nurse are to:

- Work closely with the health ministry committee to develop and plan the health ministry within the congregation.
- Meet regularly with the pastor to report on the activities of the health ministry and to share information about those who are ill within the congregation.
- Serve as a personal health counselor.
- Plan and teach classes, secure guest speakers, and coordinate support groups and special sessions on specific health topics with the health ministry committee members.
- Provide regular health screening and monitoring.
- Work with the health ministry committee to promote health education through the church newsletter, bulletin, and other church services.
- Provide health referral information.
- Serve as a liaison between the congregation and community resources.
- Maintain appropriate health ministry records.
- Recruit and train volunteers to help with health ministry—such as visiting the homebound and hospitalized—with help from the committee.
- Attend meetings at the medical center and the quarterly meetings of all who participate in the corporate network Faith Community Nursing partnership.
- Join groups that promote Faith Community Nursing.

Another important aspect of a Faith Community Nursing program is the frequency with which various services are provided. Basically, there are five categories of services.

Integrator of Faith and Health

The Faith Community nurse strengthens the lives of the people they are in contact with, both in spiritual and health matters.

Health Educator

The health educator is responsible for the development and presentation of educational programs which include group discussions, written materials, and video presentations on current health issues.

Personal Health Counselor

Health Counseling may be provided by the Church Faith Community nurse coordinator, health educators, or clinical specialists from the hospital or agency as arranged by the Faith Community nurse coordinator.

Healthcare Referral Liaison

The Faith Community nurse coordinator acts as a referral agent who makes formal or informal recommendations of services within the church or community.

Volunteer Trainer

The trainer coordinates formal and informal training for volunteers so that they can carry out their ministries in an informed and effective manner.

Support Group Developer

A Faith Community nurse coordinator initiates a group that is intended to provide help to the participants in dealing with a particular issue—grief, loss, care giving, etc.

Health Advocate

In this role the Faith Community nurse works with the client, the faith community, and all available resources to provide whatever is in the best interests of the individual's whole health.

Note: It is suggested that you use materials from the International Parish Nurse Resource Center. The book, "*The Parish Nurse*," by Granger E. Westberg, should be made available to every church having such a program.

Health Committee

Purpose

The purpose of the health committee is to function in a governing and advisory capacity. Each church will be organized according to the goals and size of the congregation, which will vary from church to church.

Function

- Develop an overall plan for the Church Faith Community Nursing program.
- Develop the role of the health ministry committee members.
- Sponsor new programs or activities, and assist with special resources for a selected health related activity.
- Have a strong influence on the health of the congregation by being part of the analysis of the overall health and “unhealth” of the church members, and design methods for meeting those needs.
- Promote a volunteer program.
- Look at ways that other church committees can become more sensitive to the needs of those within the church and surrounding community.
- Review and evaluate the Faith Community Nursing program annually.

Membership Selection

- The Church Faith Community nurse
- The Church pastor
- Volunteers who are concerned about health and are committed to seeing that the health ministry of the church is carried out

For Your Consideration

“The church is a powerful resource for reaching the underserved people in our country. I am convinced that churches can play a much more active role in improving the lives of the disadvantaged. Even the weakest church organization structures are far more powerful than most of the other systems reaching the disadvantaged.”

— Jimmy Carter

“...it is not only the American medical system that we are asking to change its ways. Many of us are firmly rooted in another establishment – the Western Christian church – which also needs reforming, especially in regard to its philosophy of health, wholeness and salvation. This seems to be a strategic moment in history for both establishments, the church and medicine, to re-examine their concepts of health – to investigate ways by which, in this time of stress and change, they can restructure their ways of promoting health in our day.”

— Granger Westberg

“Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.”

— 3 John 2

An Invitation

Thank you for considering a health ministry partnership with Adventist Health. Adventist Health realizes that by joining hands with the faith community, the healing ministry of Christ is growing stronger and more effective every day.

At your earliest convenience, please contact Adventist Health to set up an appointment with our Faith Community Nurse Coordinator. She/he will work with you and the unique mission of your church to help you create and grow a health ministry that will work for you and your congregation.

The Faith Community Nursing program is sponsored by Adventist Health and related hospitals, along with participating area churches. Adventist Health provides the following:

- resource manual
- church start-up information
- training programs
- on-going consultation.

Please call **(916) 781-4691** or email **nelsonte@ah.org** to get in contact with the Faith Community Nurse Coordinator.

Visit www.adventisthealth.org for more information on the Faith Community Nursing program.

