“Every nurse is in a sense a minister. Therefore she will include in her nursing care the care of the whole man. She will be as sensitive to spiritual pain as to organic pain. She will not walk away from spiritual suffering, because she knows that there are ways she can help to relieve it and assist in turning suffering into a growth experience.” Rev. Dr. Granger Westberg, Nurse, Pastor, and Patient: A Hospital Chaplain Talks with Nurses: Augustana Press, 1956, page 36.

How a Faith Community Benefits from a FCN Ministry:

All faith traditions have a mission to care for and heal the sick—A faith community nurse is an extension of that mission and works with the ministerial team to help those hurting with not only spiritual pain but with physical pain as well.

- **Healing ministry, if we’re honest and intentional about it, includes body, mind, spirit and relationship.** Most pastors—and by default, their churches—are pretty good at the "mind, spirit and relationship” stuff but not so good with interpreting and practicing how physical health is part of the wholistic approach to faith. This is where parish nursing shines, for the parish nurse, when seen by the pastor as part of the "pastoral ministry team," can delve into areas where most pastors fear to tread and so minister in ways that are crucial to ‘big picture’ Christian discipleship.—Rev. Glen Bocox, Mahomet United Methodist Church, Mahomet, IL

The mission of the church is to care for every person who enters its doors—The nurse will assess the client to see what ministries of the church (meals, transportation, support, respite, etc) and/or community may be helpful to the mental, physical, and spiritual concerns of the member and his entire family. The goal is to achieve better health and better coping with life’s challenges.

- **Our parish nurse ministry program is one of the most utilized and spiritually rewarding programs in our parish.** Through our parish nurse program so many people who want to take good care of their health are finding a safe, trusting, and spiritual resource through our parish nurses. Our parish nurses also help meet the spiritual needs of our people, both young and old. They assist the elderly with medical visits, they take Holy Communion to our homebound. They make sure our elderly parishioners’ medications are in order and they publish health news in our bulletin applicable to everyone in the parish. They are a great resource and source of support for all parishioners. They are a joy to have in our parish and they minister with Christ-like love and compassion. I don’t know what I would do without them.—Monsignor Mark Merdian, St. Matthew Parish, Champaign, IL

The church is a “safe” place—Members may feel uncomfortable going to the doctor or uncertain that their complaint is worthy of sharing, but a faith community encourages its members to care for and help each other. A health ministry gives structure to the faith community’s caring and concern which ultimately helps members to stay connected and healthy.

- **Parish Nursing Program makes the difference.** Arriving at church one Sunday morning, my son-in-law was feeling a bit down. It was the day that the Parish Nurses were taking blood pressures. His was taken and he was sent immediately to the hospital. It may have saved him from a stroke. While he knew that his blood pressure was extremely high, he was not taking his medication.—Dr. Ouida Lee, Church of the Disciple, DeSoto, TX.
Much of the pastor’s ministry is health related—Many conversations with homebound, hospitalized or institutionalized congregants include physical issues or components. Because of this the pastor is frequently included in the health issues of his/her members. A faith community nurse, with his/her medical expertise and spiritual grounding, can assist the pastor in care for these members.

- Parish Nurses are partners with clergy and congregations in wholistic ministry and mission. Our parish nurses have been partners with me in care of and outreach to those facing health challenges—be they the elderly facing the issues related to aging or the young facing the task of caring for a new baby. Their informative, compassionate and caring promotion of health and wellness provide a model of ministry that reveals glimpses of God’s Kingdom among us! —Rev. Donna Hacker-Smith, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Champaign, IL

Faith communities are asked to fill in the blanks—Health care services are changing and there are gaps in care so faith communities are being asked to help support those who fall through the cracks. A faith community nurse can coordinate the services of the church with those of the community to meet the needs of the faith community and its surrounding neighborhood.

- Clergy persons are usually the firefighters running from one pastoral care crisis and hospital to the next. Our parish nurse comes behind to do the follow-up care helping parishioners navigate through rehab centers, nursing homes or entry into hospice. She is the critical link between crisis and solid long term care.—Pastor Ruth Ann Loughry, Associate Pastor, Bethany Lutheran Church, Denver, CO

Faith communities flourish under well-structured teams—A faith community nurse is a professional who can work with the clergy and staff to provide assistance in the areas of health issues with which the pastor/staff is not familiar. Likewise, the staff can assist the nurse according to their strengths.

- I am convinced our Parish Nurse is the second pastor on our staff. I cannot imagine my ministry without her as a colleague. Her compassion, knowledge, and spiritual life are a gift to us all. She deepens the ministry and care our church provides; she is a resource person for so many of us. She models Christ’s healing care in many ways. I am so thankful for the Parish Nurse ministry and our Parish Nurse in particular. It is great to have this partnership in ministry.—Rev. Becky Sherwood, First Presbyterian Church, East Moline, IL

Volunteers have become harder to find and more tasks fall to the pastor—A faith community nurse can assist with visitation, training volunteers, coordinating lay ministry, and assessing members’ needs.

- Because our parish nurses do so much hands on ministry in addition to training, advocating and educating, they enjoy an extraordinary degree of trust in our congregation. Not only is this highly useful in our ongoing ministry but it proved to be essential during a recent time of difficult decision making. Banked trust is a silent part of this ministry that grows slowly as people share their hurts and hearts with our parish nurses. This church loves and supports our parish nurses because we never know when we will need them. I consider them faithful, core partners in my ministry.—Pastor Marty Dasler, Amazing Grace Lutheran Anchorage, AK