



A History and Update of Parish Nursing Health Ministry At St Matthew's United Church

How It Began,

Parish Nursing Health Ministry was of interest to a core group of women long before it actually got launched as a pilot ministry at St Matthew's United Church in November, 2003. These women invited Barbara Cager, Parish Nurse, at Holy Trinity, in Thornhill, to speak about her role as a Parish Nurse. They also spoke with Rev. Henry Fisher, from Interchurch Health Ministries (ICHM), to learn more about their Parish Nursing Health Program offered at Emmanuel College, Toronto, Ontario.

As it happened, a member of our church, Linda Alldred-Johnson, a Registered Nurse, was also interested in this program. She spoke with Wayne Reed, Pastor at St Matthew's about this ministry. He was very supportive and suggested she make a request to the Board to do her three year practicum at the church.

At the same time, Linda also asked the Board if they would like to initiate and support a three year pilot for this health ministry. The Board agreed with the congregation's blessing, and both offered their support and prayers. St Matthew's entered a partnership with ICHM in January 2004 and our journey began!



Rev. Wayne Reed



Linda Alldred-Johnson PN/RN

Linda began the ICHM Parish Nursing Health Ministry Program in November 2003. Joining her in this program were several women from this core group: Helen Smith, Barbara Beattie, Peggy Curtis, Verda Stoness, and Catherine Laird. These committed women along with other parishioners: Joann White, Joanne Gray, Laura Whiting, Vicky White, Lorri Dinning and Gordon Bamford, joined forces to form St Matthew's Health Cabinet in January 2004. This group have spent the last three years, fulfilling the educational requirements of the program and attempting to make Parish Nursing Health Ministry a reality at St Matthew's. Linda, Helen and Catherine graduated from the program in November, 2005. Unfortunately, Verda died before she graduated. We miss her as she was not only a dear friend to us, but a wonderful proponent of this ministry. Peggy, Barbara and Joann are expected to graduate November 2006.

Parish Nurse

As your Parish Nurse at St Matthew's Linda is actively involved in church life as well as to her calling to health ministry. Her role involves visiting in private homes, nursing homes, hospital and in the church as requested through Wayne, or by individual or family request. Her focus is to promote the well-being of all individuals in, *body, mind and spirit both* in the congregation and community, Linda is also an advocate for you and your health. She can assist you through the maze of our Canadian Health Care System to ensure you receive the care and attention you require should you require it.

Education

Parish Nurse and Health Cabinet Members receive their education through (ICHM) InterChurch Health Ministries through its' affiliation with Emmanuel College, University of Toronto. ICHM provides the church with the resources and ongoing consultation to support Parish Nursing Health Ministry. ICHM, in turn requires the support of the partnership congregations, prayerfully and financially, in order to deliver the education programs, support Parish Nurses Support groups and mentorship programs, and expand Parish Nursing Ministry throughout Canada. (One way in which you at St Matthew's have generously supported ICHM is through some of our fund raising events (Heart Health Dinner) and this year the CE& O committee donated funds to recognize and support this outreach ministry. - Thank-you!

Health Cabinet Committee

Your Health Cabinet for Parish Nursing Health Ministry as previously mentioned is comprised of eight dedicated folks who bring their interesting health issues and their unique and diverse talents to our ministry! Along with these individuals the Parish Nurse and Pastor complete the team. We meet monthly, on the 4th Monday evening at 7 p.m. You are welcome to attend any time! We are also looking for new members especially a youth representative. So if you are interested or have suggestions or questions for the team please join us, or contact any member of the team who will be happy to assist you.

Activities /Accomplishments/Dreams

We have been blessed with the gifts of many people here at St Matthew's and in our community who have willingly shared their stories and expertise on topics of interest and need to learn more about Living with Cancer, Diabetes, Arthritis or Heart Disease or have joined in the fun for Heart Healthy swims, dinner, yoga, and walk-a-thons to name a few. These programs have all been offered ecumenically and open to the community.

A Blood Pressure & Therapeutic Touch Clinic is held monthly on the 4th Sunday following the worship service. Linda is available every Wednesday morning at the church during the coffee hour for anyone wishing to discuss any health concerns.

Prayer Shawl Ministry has also been implemented this year and has been positively received by everyone, those who received them as well as by those who tenderly made them & prayed.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Yes, your health & healing ministry continues to grow with your interest, prayers, and financial support. May we continue to learn and serve Christ together, making a difference in the lives of others!