

## What is a parish nurse?



Mary Sophia Hawks, BA, BSN, RN, GRN  
Parish Nurse  
Messiah Lutheran Church

A parish nurse is a registered nurse with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing, who has completed the Foundations of Faith Community Nursing Course and practices in a community setting. A minimum of 3-5 years of nursing experience is required. The American Nurses Association recognizes parish nurses as a specialty practice under the title of Faith Community Nurse (FCN). There are faith community nurses practicing all over the world in different faiths and hospital settings.

The purpose of faith community nursing is whole-person centered care with intentional care of the spirit. The program was started by a Lutheran chaplain named Granger Westberg, who realized that patients would do better after discharge if someone was present in the community to guide them. FCNs work in concert with

doctors, home care providers, long-term care facilities and families.

The parish nurse program at Messiah Lutheran Church is included in the Elder Care program that was founded by Kathy and Merton Badenhop, long-time members of Messiah. As this couple aged without family to help, they realized the need and left a bequest for Elder Care.

The parish nurse portion started January 17, 2012.

Duties include: 70+ member contacts per month, to include calls, office visits, MD visits, hospital visits, home visits, facility visits, transportation, referrals.  
Staff meetings, meetings with the Pastor  
Monthly OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans) lunch and learns  
Quarterly Parish Nurse Sundays with Education  
Email blurbs weekly  
Parish Nurse News Bulletins 3-4 times a month  
Assisting members/family in determining when a facility is needed  
Assisting neighbors-in-need with access to medical care, insurance, and medications  
Maintaining medical equipment lending library  
Assessment of home environment prior to surgery with set up of medical equipment as necessary.

The parish nurse is available to all members for listening, medical education, referrals, and many other needs.

Your parish nurse is Mary Sophia Hawks, BA, BSN, RN, GRN. Her email is [parishnurse@messiahknoxville.org](mailto:parishnurse@messiahknoxville.org). Cell phone during business hours is 865-356-1453.