Dear Friends of Faith Community Nursing,

This special booklet has been created to tell the story of Gwinnett Medical Center's Faith Community Nursing over the last 20 years.

Our vineyard is ripe with stories of the planting, growing and harvesting that has occurred since the first vision of this practice of nursing became a reality. Since 1994, many ministries have been created, nurses have been educated for their advanced role and, above all, God’s people have been ministered to in faith communities across Gwinnett and beyond. In the past 20 years, this program has impacted nearly two million lives through contacts, education participation and referrals.

There are broad shoulders and visionary leaders who nurtured this growth. There are dedicated and passionate nurses who created ministries to God’s people in traditional faith community settings. And there are nurses who have stepped into non-traditional faith community settings as the vineyard has grown.

This is their story. With thankfulness for the blessings of these fruitful 20 years, and a prayer that the vineyard continues to grow, we share it with you.

Thank you for sharing in this 20th anniversary celebration with us!

Sincerely,

Reverend Debbie Huckaby, M-Div, MAT, MBA, RN, FCN
Manager, Faith Community Nursing
Faith Community Nursing is a specialty practice of professional nursing. The Faith Community Nursing department at Gwinnett Medical Center forms partnerships with faith communities to establish and support health ministries led by a faith community nurse. This ministry supports mental, physical and spiritual health.

**What do Faith Community Nurses do?**

Faith community nurses are registered nurses who:

- Enhance the health of members by leading them toward physical, social, emotional and spiritual wholeness
- Serve as members of the church ministerial team
- Combine nursing and knowledge of theological concepts to facilitate healing and wholeness
- Support church ministers in situations that require knowledge of health care and the health care system
- Lead and mentor volunteers to serve as members of their faith community’s health ministry team

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Personal health counseling
- Health education
- Hospital & home visits
- Health screenings
- Health promotion
- Referrals to community services
- Support groups
- Advocacy
Sharing our Story

Plant
Frank Rinker, 1994-2002
Joan Wood, 1994-2002
Debra Herring-Gates, 1994-2011

Grow
Bob Duvall, 1987-present
Jean Holley, 2002-2012
Linda Hughes, 1999-2007

Harvest
Debbie Huckaby, 2009-present
Joan Purdon, 2012-2014
Donna Galucki, 2013-present

Plant, Grow and Harvest

Parish Nursing

Frank Rinker
1994-2002

Frank has always had a heart for the people of Gwinnett, and when he heard about the practice of parish nursing, he knew it was exactly what Gwinnett Medical Center needed. Together with Rev. Dr. James B. Mooneyhan, from Snellville United Methodist Church, and Joan Wood, director of nursing, Frank plowed the political and financial fields and planted the seeds for the department and practice of parish nursing at GMC.

Joan Wood
1994-2002

Joan is one of the first leaders who had a vision for the program at GMC. She built on the work of the late Granger Westberg who laid the foundation of parish nursing in the 1980s. Joan embraced the idea that nurses could integrate faith and health in the practice of nursing in a faith community. She wrote an initial grant and boldly stepped out of her role as director of nursing to begin planting the seeds for faith community nursing as we know it today.

Debra Herring-Gates
1994-2011

Debra was one of the first parish nurses to serve during the beginning years. She initiated and led a dedicated parish nurse ministry at Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church in Norcross from 1994-2011. In conjunction with a very active health and wellness ministry, Debra's nurse ministry touched countless individuals and their families through health fairs, blood pressure screenings, health education and collaboration with community resources.
Rev. Robert “Bob” Duvall
1987-present
Rev. Bob Duvall, the director of the GMC Chaplaincy department, has provided leadership support to the department for decades and continues to nourish the growth of the parish nurse vine through mentoring and spiritual direction. He taught health and wholeness to new parish nurses in the basic preparation course and continues to assist the nurses associated with GMC Faith Community Nursing in strengthening their relationship skills and developing their knowledge of what it means to be in ministry.

Jean Holley
2002-2012
In 2002, the vines began to sprout new growth and another dedicated leader came to nurture the tender vines. Jean Holley was chosen as the director to provide program development, organization and management of the Congregational Health Ministry department. For 10 years, Jean sustained the ministries and led the growth in congregations throughout Gwinnett and beyond. Jean implemented and taught in the education program for new parish nurses in conjunction with the International Parish Nurse Resource Center. She initiated the hiring of an education coordinator and faithfully mentored the department until she retired in 2012. She continues to serve the profession of faith community nursing through her activities in the Georgia Faith Community Nursing Association and through teaching the preparation course for new nurses. Faith community nurses all over Georgia have been the recipients of Jean’s care of the growing vines.

Linda Hughes
1999-2007
Linda faithfully served as the parish nurse for Alpharetta United Methodist Church from 1999-2004 before becoming GMC’s Congregational Health Ministry Education Coordinator. Linda brought together her experience and teaching expertise to coordinate excellent monthly nursing education programs for the nurses associated with GMC. She marketed, coordinated and taught the basic preparation course for congregational nurses.
Rev. Debbie Huckaby
2009-present

Rev. Debbie Huckaby took the GMC Parish Nurse course in June 2007, became the education coordinator in August 2009 and became the manager of the department in February 2012. Under Debbie’s leadership, the name changed to Faith Community Nursing in accordance with the American Nurses Association adoption of the official title. She continued to expand the practice of faith community nursing into non-traditional settings providing long- and short-term care. During these years, the foundations course was expanded to include care for persons of other cultures. A cultural components module was developed and included in the basic foundation course curriculum to prepare nurses to practice in a variety of cultural settings.

Joan E. Purdon
2012-2014

Joan served several years in a small Lutheran parish in Ohio, nine years in a large Episcopal parish in downtown Atlanta and 20 years as a nursing educator for both ADN and BSN educational programs. As the education coordinator for GMC’s Faith Community Nursing program, she combined her expertise as a nursing educator and a faith community nurse to provide educational opportunities for the monthly meetings. Additionally, Joan coordinated and taught in the GMC Foundations of Faith Community Nursing course offered twice a year. In 2013, Joan expanded the course to include a new module, Faith Community Nursing in a Global World, which featured a skyped keynote address by an instructor from Kiev, Ukraine. The spring 2014 class included six nurses whose countries of origin were Canada, Romania, Jamaica, Bermuda, Kenya and Haiti and instructors with experience in Ukraine, Rwanda, Egypt, Syria and Kenya.

Donna Galucki
2013-present

Donna Galucki has been a nurse in the Atlanta area for several years. Beginning in 2007, she volunteered and served on the board of directors of Norcross Cooperative Ministry representing Johns Creek United Methodist Church. She was introduced to Faith Community Nursing in fall 2012 when she felt the call to serve. She now serves as the faith community nurse for Norcross Cooperative Ministry.
Non-Traditional Faith Community Nursing

Mary Lawder
Atlanta-Roswell District United Methodist Church, 2009-present

Beginning in 1998, and for more than a decade, Mary Lawder practiced at Norcross First UMC. In 2009, Mary became the parish nurse for the clergy and their families of the Atlanta-Roswell District of the United Methodist Church, where she continues to care for approximately 90 clergy and their families over a wide geographic region. Thus, while still holding onto the traditional practice of life span and long-term relationships, Mary expanded the practice of parish nursing outside the traditional setting of the church to a specific population. Mary's nursing practice focuses primarily on the role of personal health counselor to the clergy and their families.

Vicki Parker
Stone Mountain Park, 2008-present

Vicki Parker's job is unique and one-of-a-kind. Her office is 3,300 acres with a train, a sky lift, museums, restaurants and a mountain top view — it even has its own fire and police department. All of her patients wear name tags and she clocks more than 10,000 steps on her pedometer each day visiting them where they work. Vicki, known affectionately as Nurse Vicki, is the health advocate nurse at Stone Mountain Park and her patients are the employees. “Because they know I care, employees are willing to share health concerns and more willing to work towards a solution,” she says. To Vicki, faith community nursing is more than a job or a title — it is a calling. Vicki’s precedent-setting nursing practice has been replicated in six other parks such as Dollywood and Silver Dollar City, and now Vicki serves as coordinator for six nurses in other parks.
Barb Kennedy
Wages & Sons Funeral Home, 2009-2013

After seven years at Corpus Christ Catholic Church, Barb Kennedy moved into a new and innovative role by offering her specialized care to those in the community experiencing grief and loss. Through Wages & Sons Funeral Home, Barb coordinated grief support groups, taught seminars and provided personal health counseling to people in need in the greater Gwinnett area.

Donna Galucki
Norcross Cooperative Ministries, Norcross, 2013-present

Norcross Community Ministries is a cooperative of 29 churches who work together to assist families in crisis due to homelessness and unemployment or underemployment and the resulting poverty. The focus of this ministry is to return families to independent living and sustainable lifestyles. Donna receives referrals from the case managers and ministers to families in all the roles of the faith community nurse, focusing on whole family health.

Mary Cooper
GMC Faith Community Network Navigator, 2013-present

“I love my job” is the response Mary often gives when asked about her new position as the GMC Faith Community Network Navigator. Mary initiated the practice of parish nursing at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Snellville and served that congregation for 13 years. When GMC’s Faith Community Network was created, she embraced the concept of providing faith community nursing to members of network churches while patients at GMC and working with clergy and church liaisons to facilitate post-acute care. Along with patient care and frequent speaking opportunities, Mary teaches a 10-hour health liaison course and coordinates monthly and quarterly meetings for the network liaisons and clergy partners.
Building on a foundation laid by Besty Wallace, the education coordinator position is now filled by a faith community nurse with a master’s degree who collaborates with the other nurses to assess the health education and health promotion needs of the nurses and their congregations. He or she then develops appropriate educational programs and strategies to meet the identified needs. The coordinator plans, delivers, implements and evaluates the Foundations of Faith Community Nursing course twice yearly. Ultimately, this person promotes the concept of faith community nursing in every aspect.

The administrative assistant is indispensable to the success of GMC’s Faith Community Nursing program. This individual supports the operational integrity of the department and functions as a team member in conceptualizing, operationalizing and always improving quality and decreasing cost.
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