

WAC CHURCHLETTER

FEBRUARY 2010



WYOMING ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES - ON LINE NEWS
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LEGISLATIVE PRAYER SERVICE

Join us at the (almost) annual Legislative Prayer Service during the lunch break following the opening session on Monday, February 8. We will gather under the Capitol rotunda for a service of song, prayer, scripture and message. If you are in Cheyenne for this year's budget session, make a special effort to be present!

WAC will be following several bills this session. Watch for our special Legislative Issue coming out next week!

Health Care Issues

- **Pastoral Letter**

The Wyoming Association of Churches joins with the Colorado Council of Churches in support of their Pastoral Letter on Health Care Reform.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Faith across Wyoming

Health care reform is presently the focus of much debate. It is good news that this vital justice issue is receiving concentrated attention. The bad news is that some of our disagreements are being expressed in ways that are not civil. We, the undersigned denominational leaders, call upon all people of faith to express their views in ways that are both respectful of others and constructive to the process of seeking solutions.

While not supporting one specific proposal, we would put forth four principles that we believe must be a part of any reform. These four principles are the four "marks" of any reform that would meet the call of our God to "...do justice..." Micah 6:8

We, as people of faith, envision a society where each person is afforded health, wholeness, and human dignity. That vision embraces a health care system that is inclusive... accessible...affordable... and accountable.

Vision ~ **Inclusive**: Health care is a shared responsibility that is grounded in our common humanity. In the bonds of our human family, we are created to be equal. We are guided by a divine will to honor each person's dignity and to live together as an inclusive community. Affirming our commitment to the common good, we acknowledge our enduring responsibility to care for one another. As we recognize that society as a whole is

healthy only when we care for the most vulnerable among us, we are led to discern the human right to health and wholeness. Therefore, we are called to act with compassion by including everyone in the sharing of our abundant health care resources.

Vision ~ **Affordable**: Health care must contribute to the common good by being affordable for individuals, families and society as a whole. We believe that in the sacred act of creation we are endowed with the talents, wisdom and abundant resources necessary to meet the needs of one another, including the health care needs of all. Therefore, in our calling to be faithful stewards, we understand our responsibility to use our health care resources effectively, to administer them efficiently, and to distribute them with equity.

Vision ~ **Accessible**: All persons should have access to health services that provide necessary care and contribute to

wellness. We believe humanity is sacred and that all persons should benefit from those actions which contribute to our health and wholeness. Therefore, we are called to act with justice and love, to ensure that all of us have access to the health care we need in order to live out the fullness of our potential both as individuals and as contributing members of our society. We must work together to identify and overcome all barriers to and disparities in such care.

Vision ~ **Accountable**: Our health care system must be accountable, offering a quality, equitable and sustainable means of keeping us healthy as individuals and as a community. We believe that as spiritual and sacred vessels, we are responsible for the care of our bodies to the best of our ability and for the care of one another regardless of individual circumstances. Therefore, individuals, families, governments, businesses, and the faith community are called to work in partnership for a system that ensures fully-informed, timely, quality and safe care that treats body, mind and spirit.

We encourage all people of faith to be actively involved in advocating for these four to be the foundational principles on which any health care reform is built.

Member Churches:

The American Baptist Church of the Rocky Mountains

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Central Rocky Mountain Region

The Episcopal Church - Diocese of Wyoming

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America - Rocky Mountain & Montana Synods

Presbyterian Church USA - Presbytery of Wyoming

The Roman Catholic Church - Diocese of Cheyenne

The United Church of Christ - Rocky Mountain & Montana-Northern Wyoming Conferences

The United Methodist Church - Rocky Mountain & Yellowstone Conferences

The Religious Society of Friends - Wyoming Friends Meeting

Observer Status:

Unitarian Universalist - Mountain Desert District

- **Through with Chew**

From our friends at ***Wyoming Through with Chew-***

For *Wyoming Through With Chew* (WTWC), one of the most difficult parts of tobacco prevention is getting the message to the people who need it the most. The faith community can help! Faith brings people together and that's what is needed, another way to reach people where they are. Involvement in religious activities is a protective factor for substance use. Research from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health has shown youth who are highly involved in religious activities are less likely to use tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs. The numbers are similar for adults.

In Wyoming, the use rate for smokeless tobacco use among youth and adult males is double the national average and the use rate for young females is triple the national average. As a result, communities across the state celebrate Through With Chew Week in order to educate youth and adults about the risks of using smokeless tobacco and to get communities/businesses involved in the issue. WTWC would appreciate the opportunity to work with the faith community during Through With Chew Week. In the Wyoming Through With Chew Week Toolkit, there are ideas of how the faith community can collaborate during this week, such as:

1. Provide information to your congregation on Sunday, February 14, 2010
2. Include information about "Through With Chew Week" in your church bulletin
3. Invite our staff to present an educational program to your congregation
4. Include your name in a newspaper ad endorsing "Through With Chew Week" and participation

Please contact **Candida Odde**, Project Coordinator, Wyoming Through With Chew at candida@throughwithchew.com

- **Parish Nursing**

Information and contact information on how your church can learn about the Parish Nursing program.

WHAT IS FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING (a.k.a. Parish Nursing)?

In the late 1970s/early 1980s the Rev. Dr. Granger Westberg, a Lutheran Minister and Hospital Chaplain (author of the best selling book Good Grief), developed the modern day concept of Parish Nursing. This relatively *new* concept of health ministry actually builds upon the centuries old traditions of religious orders that cared for the sick and needy and, as exemplified in the past in this country, by the many hospices, hospitals and schools of nursing that

were developed by various Judeo-Christian religious institutions. In recent years, the concept of Parish Nursing/Faith Community Nursing has swept the nation. In our neighboring state of Montana over 350 such nurses have been trained in the past ten years!

Parish Nursing, also known as Faith Community Nursing, is a 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. This practice is guided by three general principles:

- Effective healthcare requires more than medical treatment of disease or illness.
- Promotion of health and healing are part of the mission and service of a faith community to its members.
- Wellness and wholeness can only fully be achieved when we acknowledge the close connection between body, mind and spirit.

In 1998 the American Nurses Association (ANA), in collaboration with the Health Ministries Association (HMA) the professional membership organization for this specialty, developed the *Scope and Standards of Parish Nursing Practice*. In 2005 this document was transformed into *Faith Community Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* in order to embrace a non-denominational, ecumenical perspective. The *Scope and Standards* point out that the Faith Community Nurse (FCN) bridges two disciplines and thus must be prepared in and responsible to both. “Appropriate and effective practice as an FCN requires the ability to integrate current nursing, behavioral, environmental and spiritual knowledge with the unique spiritual beliefs and practices of the faith community into a program of wholistic nursing care. This is necessary no matter the level of education the nurse has achieved.” (pg. 4). The ANA and HMA are currently developing a portfolio process for nurses desiring professional certification as an FCN.

FCNs focus on helping the patient (which can be an individual, family or the entire congregation) to achieve health, healing, and wholeness by implementing health promotion and disease prevention practices. They must be caring, spiritually mature people who reach out to comfort, console, strengthen, teach and encourage the faith community. They must have good communication skills, the ability to work with others within the congregation and the larger community, a demonstrated relationship with a faith community, and the time and desire to implement a health ministry program within their faith community. Their practice focuses on the roles of:

- Integrator of Faith and Health
- Health Educator
- Personal Health Counselor
- Referral Agent
- Trainer of Volunteers
- Developer of Support Groups
- Health Advocate/Health Care Navigator

FCNs must hold an active license as an RN and should have completed a recognized PN/FCN basic preparation course. FCNs may be paid or volunteer and should work in cooperation with their priest/minister/pastor as part of the faith community’s staff/pastoral care team. Other health professionals (e.g. LPNs, retired RNs, social workers, health educators, physical therapists, physicians, etc.) can be recruited to partner with the FCN as a Health Ministry Team/Health Cabinet thus developing a model to utilize the expertise of many valued health professionals within the faith community.

Over the past three years, the Wyoming Health Council has trained 24 PNs/FCNs utilizing the curricula developed by the International Parish Nurse Resource Center, St. Louis, MO. They also sponsored a PN/FCN retreat in August 2009.

The 35 hour/CEU basic preparation course includes the following topics:

- Health, Healing and Wholeness in the Faith Community
- History and Philosophy of Parish Nursing and Health Ministry
- Ethics

- Six Traditional Functions of the Faith Community Nurse
- Self-care
- Functioning within a Ministerial Team
- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
- Grief and Loss
- Family Violence
- Documentation
- Prayer and the Worship Leader
- Legal Issues and Accountability
- Assessment: Individual, Family, Faith Community
- Getting Started

To learn more about Faith Community Nursing check out the web sites for the Health Ministry Association (www.hmassoc.org) and the International Parish Nurse Resource Center (www.parishnurses.org).

For more information about the next Wyoming FCN / PN Basic Preparation Course, the Wyoming Faith Community Nurse Network, or the Summer 2010 retreat contact **The Rev. Carol E. Peterson**, MS, RN at 307-638-2942 or cepeter2@bresnan.net.

2010 WAC Membership

Membership in WAC is easy. Just send us a check and your email address. Please have your congregation include us in the 2010 budget. We are a great Wyoming Mission project.

Congregational Memberships are:

\$40 for 50 members or less

\$75 for 51-100 members

\$125 for 101-200 members

\$200 for 200 or members

Individual and family memberships are \$25. Of course, additional gifts are also always appreciated. Please send contributions to: WAC, 321 Gardenia Drive, Cheyenne, WY 82009.

Upcoming Events

- WAC Board Meeting--March 19, 2010 - Casper, Wyoming
- Annual Pastors' Conference--August 23-25, 2010, Ring Lake Ranch, Dubois, Wyoming

The Wyoming Association of Churches, John Peacock, Director, publishes this newsletter. We welcome your comments and suggestions. If you know of someone who would like to receive our publication, please e-mail us at wychurches@wyoming.com. If you do not wish to receive the ChurchLetter, simply e-mail wychurches@wyoming.com and type "unsubscribe" in the subject line.