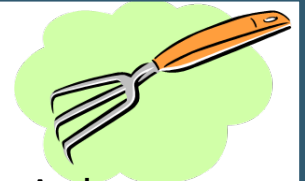


# Garden Givers



Our Karmel garden season will be starting soon and we are looking for someone to co-lead this amazing ministry with Steve Anderson. If you are interested or have any questions, please reach out to Steve Anderson or Glenda Haverinen.

## Parish Nurse

Have you been hearing the term “Autism Spectrum Disorder” lately? Per Mayo Clinic, “Autism spectrum disorder is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, causing problems in social interaction and communication. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behavior. The term “spectrum” in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity.” Autism disorder spectrum includes other conditions like autism, Asperger's syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder and an unspecified form of pervasive developmental disorder. Autism spectrum disorder begins in early childhood and often shows symptoms in the 1<sup>st</sup> year. Other children may seem normal but start to show regression at 18-24 months such as unique behavior patterns, decrease in level of functioning. There can be a lot of variation in ability to learn, level of intelligence, ability to communicate or to speak, or ability to be physically coordinated.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has no known single cause. There are some children with genetic disorders like Rett's syndrome or fragile X syndrome. I saw Shelleta Brundage (a radio personality) on a PBS show recently. She has several children with autism; she recently had herself tested and found she has a genetic component that puts her on the ASC scale. There are several different genes that appear to be involved with genetic changes or mutations that increase risk of ASD. Some are inherited and others may occur spontaneously. Researchers are currently exploring if environmental causes may play a role in triggering ASD.

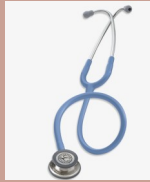
Regarding an original study about vaccines causing autism, that study was retracted as it was not a reliable study, had poor design and questionable research methods.

Some risk factors: Boys are about 4 times more likely to develop ASD than girls are. If one child in the family has the disorder, there is increased risk another child will also. It is not uncommon for parents or relatives of a child with ASD to have minor problems with social or communication skills themselves or certain typical behaviors of the disorder. Some have inherited genetic component like fragile X syndrome or Rett syndrome which occurs almost exclusively in girls, slow head growth, intellectual disability and loss of purposeful hand use.

There is no way to prevent ASD but there are treatments available. It is important for early diagnosis and intervention to be most helpful to improve behavior, skills and language development. “Though children usually don't outgrow autism spectrum disorder symptoms, they may learn to function well.”

Happy Mother's Day to all mothers!

## Parish Nursing Through the Years – compiled by Cheryl Benson



In 2007, Pastor Alan Johnson encouraged us all to use our gifts and talents. Because of that, Judy Foster felt encouraged to follow her calling to be a parish nurse. After attending classes at Luther Seminary, Judy, along with Pastor Alan Johnson, brought the Parish Nursing Ministry to Karmel and Judy was subsequently consecrated in October of 2007. A health care team was also set up at that time to help support the program.

The mission of this unpaid position was to, "be a ministry of Karmel Covenant Church through the understanding that the Church has a role in healing which has been recognized since earliest Christianity. The very nature of the Church is to be a healing community in the holistic concept of recognizing health as encompassing body, mind and spirit. The person filling this position will embody this concept in her/his parish nurse ministry with the main focus being integration of faith and health."

Can you guess the seven roles that the Parish Nurse Ministry embodies?

1. Integration of faith and health
2. Health educator
3. Personal health counselor
4. Coordinator of volunteers
5. Referral agent
6. Developer of support groups
7. Health Advocate

Judy and the health care team's role has evolved and morphed over the years with their impact on our Karmel Family and Community too large to adequately capture – but we will try!

Monthly blood pressure checks began right after Judy was consecrated and continued until Covid in 2020. An exercise committee was formed and initiated exercise programs including walking through our local county parks. Parish Nursing brought various speakers to our church on topics such as depression. They also arranged for our church to have an AED (automated external defibrillator) and had CPR classes on occasion. Cindy Swanson had started a prayer shawl/blanket ministry and Parish Nursing took on that ministry when Cindy's health began declining in 2009. Over the years, Cindy's ministry has impacted over 200 people who have received a shawl or blanket from Karmel. To Cindy and the many fine seamstresses over the years, we say thank you for that tangible expression of God's love.

In 2008, Judy started writing an article for the monthly newsletter on various health topics. A survey of health issues that the congregation was concerned about helped to dictate the topics for this. There was also a bulletin board which had a variety of information posted on different health issues and concerns. Another way this ministry impacted people was by getting free bike helmets for our young people – made possible by Jackie Hovis.

Some other things that the Parish Nurse Ministry has done over the years is give out gift bags at the Night of Tranquility with medical information and treats, facilitated an 8-week balance course in collaboration with Oxlip, provided transportation to medical appointments for people unable to transport themselves and created first aid kits for use by our congregation and the softball players. Occasional home visits to check on someone with medical concerns or issues, to provide education, encouragement and even to refer to appropriate sources of help were sometimes performed.

One thing you may not know about the Parish Nursing Ministry is that they have a dedicated room by the library which houses medical equipment that can be used on an as needed basis. It includes crutches, wheelchairs, canes, raised toilet seats and some other things. This is a free resource thanks to a generous gift by Diane Kinnard in memory of her mother. What a wonderful resource!

Thinking back from its inception to today, almost 18 years, there were many people who used their gifts and time to help with this ministry. I am not going to name all the individuals for fear I may unintentionally miss someone. In their own way they made a difference in the lives of those people who were touched by this ministry. We thank you for the love, compassion and care you provided to others.

Judy Foster will be retiring from her role as Parish Nurse in May. This is not because her passion for helping others has diminished, but rather due to health issues which she feels impact this role. Her experience, wisdom and passion will be missed. The exact number of people whose lives were impacted in one way or another by this ministry is unknown, but we do know there were several hundred. We extend many thanks to Judy for following her calling, for letting God work through her and for sharing her passion for faith and health with us all. Creating a new ministry from the ground up is a large undertaking and expanding it through the years, enhancing it and maintaining it is a remarkable and admirable feat.

The ministry that Judy and Pastor Alan started many years ago will continue. We are currently working on what this ministry will look like for the remainder of 2025 and beyond. Part of that is determining the needs and health concerns of our Karmel family so we are looking into the possibility of a survey to help provide that information. Watch for further news to come.

*Thank you for your service, Judy Foster.*