

FAITHFUL CARE OF OUR BODIES: Our Most Important Tool for Ministry



"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

[\(1 Cor. 6:19-20\)](#)

Prepared by the Presbyterian Health Network (PHN)
A ministry network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)
www.phewacommunity.org and www.pcusa.org/phn



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Use this packet with your congregation as you recognize Health Awareness Sunday 2012, which occurs on February 19th of this year but can be observed at any time that fits in with an individual church's programming. Our focus is on caring for and bringing balance to the body through healthy eating and exercise, and therefore avoiding obesity.

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Linking Faith and Health

by The Reverend Donna Coffman, RN, MACE/M.Div., FCN

Since the last half of the nineteenth century, western societies have been blessed with the miracles of modern medicine. Highly refined surgical techniques, antibiotics, immunizations, and technologies that probe the deepest mysteries of the human body have changed the way we go about curing and healing. Along with skilled, specialized health care professionals these advancements and others have brought us to a time and place in medicine that 150 years ago was unimaginable!

However, in the midst of this flood of discovery and progress, a great tragedy occurred. Many of the bridges between faith and health were washed out. In the excitement and thrill of the explosion of scientific knowledge, the Church relinquished her position as the center of healing for individuals and communities. The bridges that existed for centuries collapsed in a matter of a few decades. Faith and health were segregated. In this new millennium, many are disillusioned and struggle with a gnawing fear about the state of health care in our country and around the world.

In a culture that prizes specialization, health care (and perhaps life in general) has become very fragmented. We take our bodies to doctors, our souls to church, and our minds to school. In the frantic pace of American life, emotions are pushed down until we violently explode or gradually fall into depression. Billions of dollars are spent on health care each year. Health care expenditures account for 16 percent of the Gross Domestic Product; and 97 percent of those dollars are actually for care of illnesses that often are the result of the stress of isolation and fragmentation. Only 3 percent of health care dollars are spent for health education and promotion along with illness prevention. i

People enjoy longer life today, due in part to a decline in deaths from acute illness. Now we find that many of them are trying to manage one or more chronic illnesses.

For those fortunate enough to be able to read and to afford health insurance, navigating a chronic illness or hospitalization can be frustrating. It is like wandering through a desert while shifting sands constantly cover any trails we might follow. Think of the frustration and grief of those who are unable to even get to the desert because they cannot understand the jargon or afford the health insurance! Segregation of body, spirit, and mind, difficult access, high cost, and fragmentation of services are only some of the challenges we face.

Take heart! The problems facing health care today may actually be a chance for the church to once again be seen as a healing place! As current trends move care out of institutions into communities, congregations are reclaiming Christ's healing ministry in a very tangible, visible way. Registered nurses by the hundreds are answering God's call to serve in churches. They are eagerly, joyfully rebuilding the bridges between faith and health. These nurses – called parish nurses or faith community nurses (FCN) – are the anchors of a swelling health ministry movement. They are strengthening the capacities of individuals, families, congregations, and communities to connect what they believe with how they care for themselves. They are empowering members to take responsibility for healthy lifestyles based on faith. These pioneer women and men are opening the way for congregations to experience a depth of spiritual renewal and power often associated with the dynamic, early church that was well known for healing ministry.

Registered nurses with spiritual maturity are joining church staffs as paid or volunteer parish nurses across the United States, Canada, and in a growing number of other countries. Parish nursing began in the mid-1980s in Park Ridge, Illinois, the vision of Dr. Granger Westberg, a Lutheran minister who worked as a hospital chaplain. From that first small group of six or seven nurses, the witness and ministry of parish nurses is multiplying daily. This phenomenal grass roots swell reminds me of the story of the feeding of the 5,000. The multiplication of the blessings of parish nurse ministry may well be a modern day miracle that is feeding thousands of people who hunger for integration of body, spirit and mind and thirst for a caring presence in times of transition.

One of the joys and challenges of these rapidly-expanding ministries is that they are like snowflakes – no two are alike. Using the nursing process of assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation, a particular ministry of a particular congregation in a particular location is created based on the assessed needs and desires of the congregation and the community surrounding it, along with the time, gifts, and skills offered by the parish nurse.

Although no two health ministries are the same, there are common threads that bind all parish nurses together no matter what their region of the country, denomination, or nursing specialty. First, there is the sense of an irresistible call to this ministry. I am constantly amazed at how God works as I listen to their "call stories." Many come to

parish nursing after a walk through their own valley of suffering. Describing a sense of being claimed by God and of being unable to shake off God's "holy nudge," they are giving many their faithful care.

Among these nurses there is also a deep commitment to the leadership of wholistic health ministries that address not only the physical dimension of people, but the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, social, and vocational aspects as well. Parish nurses know that we are created with a built-in desire to pray. So prayer is a key element of all parish nurse ministries.

Parish nurses are keenly aware of the differences between cultural, scientific, and biblical models of health. Culture tells us health is young, firm, disease-free bodies, shiny hair, and sparkling white teeth. This image is vividly portrayed in advertisements for potions and products "guaranteed" to make us slim, trim, and forever young! Science tells us that to be healthy means to be disease or dysfunction free. The absence of disease is quantifiable by charts, scales, and values. The focus of the scientific model is on cure and perfection.

In contrast, parish nurses emphasize the biblical interpretation of health based on the Old Testament concept of shalom or wholeness and the New Testament concept of being saved or healed. To be made whole, healed, or saved means to be brought into right relationship with God, self, others, and creation, to be made "righteous." Parish nurses believe that even someone living with an incurable illness or chronic disease can be healed or brought into right relationship. Healing is a gift from God that comes in community with others and does not necessarily include a problem-free body or life.

All parish nurses focus on health promotion and illness prevention, which is known in faith communities as stewardship of the gift of our bodies. They emphasize personal responsibility for lifestyle choices within the context of faith. The National Institutes of Health and other agencies agree that 50 percent of one's current personal health status is a result of lifestyle choices made on a daily basis. Heredity accounts for 20 percent of personal health status; 20 percent is related to our environment. Only 10 percent of our health status is directly related to the medical care system. ii

The American Nurses Association recognized parish nursing as a specialty practice in April 1997 and acknowledged the Scope and Standards of Practice for Parish Nurses in February 1998. All parish nurses use these boundaries to establish their practice. **This document defines parish nursing as "a unique, specialized practice of professional nursing which focuses on the promotion of health within the context of the values, beliefs, and practices of a faith community...its mission and ministry to its members...and the community it serves."** iii Parish nurses must be currently licensed in the state of practice, have extensive clinical experience and the ability to perform the independent functions of nursing practice. This means that

they do not provide services that require a doctor's order, such as giving medications or intravenous fluids. They do not duplicate existing services like home health or hospice. Parish nurses do not maintain a clinic in the church.

Parish nurses are health consultants for congregations so current health knowledge, good communication skills, and the ability to model wellness are essential. All parish nurses do health education linked to faith and are encouraged to participate in their own educational preparation for this unique effort. A variety of courses offered around the country provide foundations for combining nursing expertise with theological concepts. A basic formation course includes the theology of health, prayer and healing, spiritual development, the ministry of presence, ethical decision-making, and working in a church. Other sessions in the course explore the nursing functions of the role such as referral and resource management, documentation and congregational assessment.

At this time there is no certification or credentialing examination for parish nurses. As this ministry evolves, I expect that certification will be an option as it is now for nurses who specialize in such areas as cancer or emergency care.

I believe that the church has a major role to play in what health care will look like in this century. Jesus not only healed bodily wounds; he also healed the wounds of fragmentation and isolation. He restored hope and healed broken relationships. The church, where people meet weekly to seek healing, is a natural place to learn to care for ourselves. By embracing parish nurses, churches can open the doors to healing for a world that is struggling with managed care, fragmentation of health services, high cost and difficult access to care. The increasing numbers of people who are living with chronic diseases can learn to manage their illnesses so that they can live out their call to life abundant. (John 10:10)

Kairos time, God's time, has come for the church to move towards care of people as whole persons —body, as well as mind and spirit—and parish nurses are joyfully leading the way!

i Kaiser Family Foundation <http://facts.kff.org> downloaded 10-23-08.

ii The Congregation: A Community of Care and Healing, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), social justice and peacemaking unit, office of human service, Louisville, KY, 1991, p. 2

iii The Scope and Standards of Practice for Parish Nursing, American Nurses Publishing, Washington, D.C., 1997, page 1.

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WHO CARES?

For many people, religion and the church are extremely strong motivating forces. Our beliefs, doctrines, and traditions certainly do influence the lifestyle choices we make. *Or do they?*

How do we know if our faith is considered when making daily lifestyle decisions? We can listen to our “self-talk.” What do we tell ourselves in our heads all day about how we feel—body, mind and spirit? Is our choice of the language we use when thinking or talking about others, positive or negative? How do we choose our friends? How much does our culture and media impact our daily choices? As individuals and faith communities, are we open to being shaped and molded by God?

Who cares about Presbyterian pastors and members and families of our Church? The Presbyterian Health Network cares! In May 2010, The Presbyterian Panel, a Ministry of the General Assembly Mission Council Research Services of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), conducted a survey on “Health.” Information for the survey was obtained from PC(USA) members, ruling elders (serving on session), and teaching elders (ordained ministers and specialized clergy). There were some confusing findings.

At first glance the findings looked wonderful. About nine in ten Presbyterians in the sampling groups rated their physical health as excellent or good!

However, it was interesting to note that during the ten years before the survey, one-half of members and elders, two-thirds of pastors, and five in nine specialized clergy were advised by a doctor or health-care provider to engage in more physical activity, improve diet, reduce weight, or make another lifestyle change.

During the same period about one-third of those surveyed were diagnosed with hypertension (high blood pressure) or high cholesterol levels or triglyceride levels that needed to be treated by medication.

In addition, a majority of those surveyed reported that during the ten years before the survey, a family member or close friend was advised by a doctor or healthcare provider to engage in more physical activity, improve diet, reduce weight, or make another lifestyle change.

Who cares? PHN does! We are available to you and your congregation to help you make the connection between faith and health! **Contact the Rev. Trina Zelle at 602-796-7477 or phewainfo@gmail.com.** Trina serves as National Organizer/Executive Director to the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA), of which PHN is one of ten volunteer ministry networks.

To review the entire May 2010 Health survey, visit:

<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/research/pdfs/0510sum.pdf>



How a Congregation Can Help Promote Healthier Living & Eating

All living things need to eat to survive and human beings eat for all kinds of reasons – not just physiological ones! Often, in churches, we come together to eat as a social activity, in addition to the sacrament of Communion where we eat and drink so that Christ can live within us. Much more happens at a meal than satisfying hunger or quenching thirst. We share community when we come to the table together. Yet, it is important to note that food is worthy of our attention – not our worship. It is important for churches not to become the food police but, rather, to encourage helpful behaviors rather than destructive ones.

We have heard a lot lately about the obesity epidemic and the need for physical exercise yet Americans continue to gain weight and engage in unhealthy patterns of behavior. Some folks have a passion for fitness that borders on obsessive-compulsive behavior and others spend way too much time sitting at their desks or on the couch. A life in balance places physical activity in proper perspective with social, intellectual, and spiritual concerns. Health is a state of wholeness of body, mind, and spirit.

Below are some best practices that churches might want to use to help members focus on a healthier style of living and eating:

A Healthy Congregational Cookbook: This can become a social tool as well as a tool for teaching about healthy cooking. One theme might be “Cooking for a Healthy Church” with featured recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, coffee hours, potluck dinners, soups, meals that travel well to someone’s home, meatless Lenten meals, and meals for large gatherings.

Healthy Snacks at Coffee Hour: Try to have healthy choices such as fruit, veggies, or whole grain items. One week, you might want to have a sign saying

something like “Healthier Living Might Mean Walking On By the Snack Table” with a place for donations or just the sign.

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread: This could be an intergenerational baking activity to give bread to a soup kitchen (might also want to make soup), bread for Communion, or bread to those who are visited by the pastoral care team.

Faith Walks: [The International Parish Nurse Resource Center](#) has a program called “Get My People GOING!!” which is “An Invitation to Wholeness,” complete with program guides for recipients and leaders. “Walk to Jerusalem” is a program run by some churches that begins in January and involves members logging their walking hours with the goal being to cover the distance to Jerusalem by Easter. A similar program is “Walk to Bethlehem” which begins in the fall and the goal is to cover the distance to Bethlehem by Christmas. This can be enhanced with a map on the wall with moveable pins or other visual motivation. One set of churches held a competition in the area to see who could walk the most / finish the distance the fastest. One church provided participants with a Bible verse and reflection that could be thought about during the walk. Other ideas are a list of prayer concerns or a “breath prayer” to be said during the walk.

Faith-Based Exercise Programs at Church: There are a variety of faith-based fitness programs available using Christian music or some churches have an exercise program with a trainer generally geared toward older participants which covers a warm-up, stretches, low impact aerobic activities, strength training, and a cool-down. Discussions on health topics and devotions might be included. Some examples are “Body & Soul, ActivPrayer, Body Gospel Workout, Heavenly Bodies, Faithfully Fit Forever.”

Health Seminars and Screenings: Many churches have health professionals or lay ministers who will do blood pressure checks on a regular basis. Local hospitals or other organizations will often come and assist with a health fair where blood sugar readings and cholesterol checks might be done at no charge. Health promotion and disease prevention seminars can be offered on topics such as heart disease and stroke or diabetes, in addition to classes about nutrition. Many hospitals and organizations have a speaker’s bureau that will send someone to give a presentation on a particular topic.

Health Audit: Individual health audits might include questions about personal exercise habits, diet, weight, sleep, lifestyle choices, health checkups, etc. A congregational health audit might include questions related to interest in health fairs, health screenings, health education opportunities, food choices at meetings, exercise options, support groups, and more.

Clergy Health: The PHEWA Community website has several articles related to Clergy Health. They can be found at www.phewacomunity.org/phnhealthnetwork/congregationalresources.html

In addition, Duke University School of Divinity has information about clergy health and they are currently partnering in a 7-year program (closed to new participants) seeking to improve the health of clergy in North Carolina, [The Duke Clergy Health Initiative](#).

Health Committee, Faith Community Nurse, or Health Minister Training: It doesn't take a nurse to initiate a health program at church but often nurses are drawn to this activity as part of their faith and professional commitment. Faith Community Nurse Basic Preparation Courses can be found through the [International Parish Nurse Resource Center](#).

The United Church of Christ has a Certified Lay Minister of Health Program called "[Healthy Connections](#)."

Members of the Presbyterian Health Network Leadership Team and Consultants are happy to help individual churches start a program. For contact information, see www.phewacomunity.org/images/LT_Consult_Roster_5-2011.pdf

Gardens: Community gardens on church grounds can be used to help congregants lead healthier lives, for donations to those in need, and as an intergenerational activity.

Compiled by members of PHEWA's Presbyterian Health Network (PHN) from information provided by Betty Yurkewitch, member of PHN Leadership Team and Parish Nurse of Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, Fairfax, VA.



Ten Commandments of Faith and Fitness

By Henry Brinton and Vikram Khanna

Rev. Henry Brinton, Senior Pastor of Fairfax Presbyterian Church in Fairfax, VA and fitness instructor, Vikram Khanna, build on the concept of the Ten Commandments to give a positive framework for healthy living. They believe in a “proactive approach to daily life that aims to cultivate wholeness and integrate mind, body, and spirit in ways that *maximize our opportunities to do God’s good work.*” Fitness, whether physical or spiritual, comes from making good choices. This is not a “quick fix” book but one that encourages making changes in small steps to drop negative behaviors, start positive ones, and make changes that will stick for a lifetime. They emphasize the “Fitness Trinity” of strength training, endurance exercise and good nutrition to achieve this goal. Each chapter ends with action steps you are asked to take.

The following page is excerpted from Brinton and Khanna’s book and can be used as a bulletin insert, flyer to be posted on a bulletin board or “Back of the Door Wellness Tip” to be posted on the back of the doors in restrooms.

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF FAITH AND FITNESS

Commandment One – *Thou Shalt Be Knowledgeable*

Know What Fitness Is, And How It Relates To The Christian Faith

Commandment Two – *Thou Shalt Be Self-aware*

Be Aware Of Good Information

Commandment Three – *Thou Shalt Endure*

Know The Benefits Of Endurance Exercise

Commandment Four – *Thou Shalt Be Strong*

Discover The Simple Goodness Of Spiritual Strength

Commandment Five – *Thou Shalt Eat From The Garden...(of Eden, that is)*

Good Nutrition Supports A Good Life

Commandment Six – *Thou Shalt Raise The Bar*

Overcoming Emotional And Intellectual Limitations

Commandment Seven – *Thou Shalt Periodize (exercise planning)*

Manage Physical Activity

Commandment Eight – *Thou Shalt Rest*

Know The Spiritual, Mental And Physical Value Of Rest

Commandment Nine – *Thou Shalt Reflect*

Reflect On The Past – Plan For The Future

Commandment Ten – *Thou Shalt Remember*

Know That This Is A Journey – Not A Destination

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Sample Sermons



Prescription for Health by Abigail Rian Evans

What Would You Want Jesus to Heal? by Jeffrey A. Sumner

PRESCRIPTION FOR HEALTH

I Thessalonians 5:14-23

Abigail Rian Evans

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INTRODUCTION

It is indeed a pleasure and blessing to participate in the service here at Fairfax Presbyterian Church—a wonderful congregation. Of course, filling the pulpit of such fine preachers as Jessica and Henry is no small feat. I look forward to getting to know you better as I minister with you as your theological associate. This church is impressive— I attended David Bush’s science and religion class the other week— a brilliant lecture on evolution. And of course your music is fabulous, your emphasis on service projects for all ages, your great elders and deacons who I met with the other week and your involvement in community organizations such as VOICE are testimonies to your Christian faith. I hope that you will help me discover how I can best serve you within my time constraints as I also work as a scholar-in-residence and faculty at GU medical school and center.

Our theme for today is a prescription for health. What does a congregation ‘look like’ which takes seriously its corporate health and wholeness and that of its members and the community? In response to this question we often describe certain targeted programs and projects rather than pointing to the church’s general mission and ministry. The church’s primary resource in moving people toward health and wholeness is its existence as a fellowship and community; its worship and prayer life; and its proclamation and practice of the gospel. It is from this perspective that we can understand a prescription for health based on I Thessalonians 5:14-23.

The context for this prescription is the changing face of illness in this country and the importance of spiritual resources in healing. Fifty-four percent of health contributing factors are lifestyle-related according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Furthermore, studies have substantiated three major types of stressful life events: (1) persistent life strains or deficits; (2) crises; (3) transitions which can produce spiritual, mental, and physical illness. However, there are mediating factors which may lessen the impact of these events: family personality and characteristics; personal belief systems, including religious; emotional mastery; management of individual anxiety; coping responses; and support systems.¹ In light of these facts, the church can obviously play a major role in enhancing individual and community health. In fact, numerous studies reveal that both religious beliefs and church attendance contribute to good health.² One such study done at Johns Hopkins showed that frequent church attendees live on the average of three more years than non-church attenders - so remember that word as you invite others to church.

Crucial to understanding the role of the church as a health institution is the way we define health and sickness.

What is health? We spend over 2.3 trillion dollars per year (2008 or 16.2% of our GDP) to achieve it using surgeons, psychics, prayers, massage, drugs and diet, exercise and meditation. Medicine says health is the absence of disease. The Bible and Christian theology provide a more wholistic vision of health as wholeness, related to the twin concept salvation. In biblical Hebrew and Greek the words for health and salvation are identical. Health is not simply the absence of disease, or the well-functioning of our bodies, or youth and vigor, but a perfect integration of our body, mind and spirit; an inner and outer harmony -- a living out of all we were meant to be. Health is a goal not a state -- a journey toward wholeness which is never completed in this life.

Furthermore and very importantly, health is not an individual achievement, but a community responsibility. "He/she only is whole who shares in the brokenness of others." The narcissistic approach of contemporary Americans to health strongly contrasts to the New Testament call to lay down our life for our brother and sister, to follow the example of the Good Samaritan, to take up our cross - physical well-being is not our ultimate goal, but love and obedience to God which may lead to self-sacrifice which is detrimental to our physical health.

However, this should not be misrepresented as a call to asceticism; to abuse the body as of no value. That attitude forms the basis for the Gnostic heresy. God's creation, Jesus Christ's incarnation, the resurrection of the body, and the existence of the Sacraments bear witness to the consecration of all material things as well as our bodies to God's glory. Exercise, proper diet, enjoying the largesse of God's creation all contribute to our body's well-being as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christ's command is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, body, strength, and soul (Mark 12:30). However, our goal should not be the lean, young body of pampered care, but a whole person who is fully capable of service to God and his/her brothers and sisters.

Paul's prescription for health reflects this broad understanding of health; it offers four directives for health, which if taken seriously, will enhance individual and corporate health.

You may want to follow in your Bibles this text from I Thessalonians 5.

1. **Become Part of a Christian Community to Provide the Milieu for Good Health**

The damaging effects of isolation, lack of love and affection are proven. Living in a community, recognizing our interdependence, supporting and being accountable to one another is one of the ways we stay healthy. It is the reality of the strength of the community of believers that Paul lifts up in the classic passages in I Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Ephesians 4 about many members one body, diverse gifts but one Spirit, a variety of callings but one Lord, all to be used for building up the body of Christ.

Quite practically in a church community this can translate into bringing casseroles, praying, and visiting with a family suffering the death of a loved one, holding fellowship dinners which incorporate those who usually eat alone; praying for healing (physical, emotional, or spiritual) in a personal or family illness; counseling people in a crisis. One of the

strengths of this church is your ministry of compassion to one another not only by your pastors, but elders, deacons, and members to each other.

Community support also takes the form of accountability to one another. Other's health defeating patterns become our concern. Paul admonished the idlers in the Thessalonian church because they were so preoccupied with the imminent return of Christ that they quit their jobs; this idleness contributed to the ill health of that congregation.

2. Enhance Other's Health by Love and Support, Not Judgment

"Encourage the Faint Heartened." Discouragement in the face of "gainst-goings" in life is a natural reaction, but also a contributor to sickness. Caring for a mother with health challenges, who is demanding and critical; helping children with homework who are not interested; trying to hold together an office staff involved in power plays and back biting may produce discouragement or even despair. An encouraging word is healing through the liturgical and educational ministry of the church which moves people to a positive and hopeful perspective. Even more crucial may be the conversations, counseling, and positive assistance of one another which can occur in a church community.

"Support the weak." Paul was concerned that those who were spiritually weak should not call forth judgment, but understanding from more mature Christians. In I Corinthians he writes of abstaining from meat or certain foods if our weaker brother or sister does not believe in it (I Corinthians 8-11). This support logically extends to those who are physically weak, who do not have the strength to care for themselves. When we receive support rather than judgment in response to sharing our weakness, it forces us to be honest about our needs to other people, releasing our energy for coping or overcoming our limitations rather than for self-protection. Our brokenness may manifest itself physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually.

This reminds me of a true story. Stanley Hauerwas, in *Resident Aliens*, tells of a woman who was dealing with horrible problems in her life. She had been raped in her own backyard and the therapist suggested she confide in someone else about her terrible feelings. In a meeting with her pastor he said perhaps it would help if she talked to someone in the church and he named several members including the Sunday school teacher. She said, "No, I think I want to talk with Sam Jones." "Sam," said the surprised pastor. For Sam was an alcoholic constantly struggling with his problem but faithful in church involvement. "Why Sam?" "Because he's been to hell and back - he'll understand. Maybe he can tell me the way back." Even in our weakness we can help others.

3. Reduce Stress by Patience Not Retaliation

Be patient towards all people. Impatience, judgmental attitudes, and judging of others all produce stress in us which is self-defeating and certainly prejudicial to our health. Patience is rooted first in viewing others better than ourselves.

This patience should even extend towards those who have abused and violated us. "Do not render evil for evil." Loving our enemies, turning the other cheek is very freeing. Instead of wasting energies in retaliation they are channeled elsewhere. We only have a limited amount of physical and psychic energy. If it is drained off in useless and non-

profitable directions we will not have the reserves needed for fighting off germs, crises, problems and the stresses and strains of life.

Living out in the life of a congregation this patience towards one another and returning good for evil to all people, becomes a mediating factor in reducing stress.

4. **Promote Health by Clinging to that which is Good**

A prescription for health is not primarily avoiding prejudicial behavior and lifestyle, but preventing sickness by a positive practicing of the good. We replenish the inner spirit by “holding fast to that which is good” so that we can draw on our deep spiritual wellsprings in times of adversity.

The good in terms of health-enhancing behavior normally reduces to injunctions about diet, exercise, or abstinence from alcohol and tobacco; these are important but not definitive. We are integrated persons whose body, mind, and spirit may interact to produce health or sickness. Following the positive prescriptions offered in this passage is central to our health. These prescriptions include rejoicing, praying, giving thanks, and prophesying.

“Rejoice evermore.” Joy we generally regard as a fleeting emotion; the happiness or pleasure we seek which we rarely find. Happiness from the Christian perspective is the same word for blessedness in the beatitudes. Joy or happiness here is achieved by being “poor in spirit, peacemakers, suffering for righteousness sake.” This type of joy is a deep and abiding inner peace which enables us to confront crises, problems and misfortunes with a positive spirit. “I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content” (Philippians 4:11). This joy is health giving; and even in its more fleeting sense of laughter, formed part of Norman Cousins’ prescription for healing in *An Anatomy of Illness*.

“Pray without ceasing.” Prayer is a natural part of the rhythm of our life which unclogs the pores of our soul, releasing God’s healing power in ours and other lives. It turns our attention outward instead of inward and enables us to replace anger and bitterness with thanksgiving and love. Studies are emerging about the physical effects of prayer. A control study was conducted in a California hospital of children with leukemia, all with the same medical prognosis, race, age, socio-economic background. The prayed-over group all recovered; in the unprayed-for group all died but two!

A major portion of our Sunday morning worship is spent in prayer for the sick and suffering. However, prayer is no guarantee of recovery; people of great faith, with thousands praying for them, do die, while others recover without prayer. Suffering and healing are a mystery. However, even for those who do not physically recover, prayer invites God into our spirits, minds, and emotions enabling us to bear suffering. The knowledge that a whole congregation is praying for us is healing. A woman came into church services one Sunday angry at God, as her only son was killed in a car accident. She had terrible back pains but she happened to see, several pews ahead, a young boy who had cystic fibrosis and could not move on his own. She fervently prayed for him and suddenly her back pains were gone.

“In everything give thanks.” Even in the face of what we understand as unanswered prayer, or answers from God that we may not particularly like, our response should be that of thanksgiving, not complaint. How much of our energy is wasted in fretting, regretting and apologizing, wishing for a different life or circumstances. We dream of what we picture as the

perfect past or the more desirable future rather than living with relish in the present. If our energies are instead husbanded for integrating our lives, released by a grateful spirit for the blessings and the “curses,” there is no doubt in the broader sense of the word our health will improve.

Thru the testimony of other Christians to God’s grace in their lives - an attitude of thanksgiving can be encouraged and hope instilled.

“Quench not the Spirit.” The birth of the Christian church at Pentecost was through the power of the Holy Spirit. One of the important functions of the Spirit is to fill us with hope in the midst of our despair. In the face of grief at the loss of a job, a home, a loved one, we struggle to affirm reality. Despair cannot be answered by an illusionary hope. This is a hope that “things will return to the way they were” or that the lost person, job or loved object will return. The Spirit can lead us into hope which is grounded in the reality that God is in control; that God can work good out of any evil. God takes our brokenness and heals us through it. Sharing and living this message of hope within the life of the church is an important part of leading people to health and wholeness. It does not mean there is no sorrow, no suffering, no tears, no regrets, but that the end is not despair. Hope, not despair, is the foundation for good health.

“Despise not prophesying.” Prophesying is an affirmation that the future is important; a forward look, a vision of what life can hold. A sense of God’s purpose being worked out, even in the face of pain and suffering. This future orientation is not an escape from the present, but lifts us from the plane of our daily struggle.

If the church takes seriously implementing this prescription for health, then it can become a force for health and healing. My closing prayer for you may echo that offered for the Thessalonians - “God sanctify you wholly--spirit, soul and body and preserve you blameless until His coming.” This is the vision of wholistic health. Not just the sanctification of our souls, but our whole selves - the spirit which is the God conscious aspect, the soul, the self conscious aspect of the inner life; the mind- the center of our knowing; the body - the temple of the Holy Spirit. The church is called to proclaim this message of wholeness even in the midst of our brokenness.

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Audio version of this sermon is available at:

http://www.fairfaxpresbyterian.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=563:prescription-for-health-rev-dr-abigail-rian-evans&catid=25:sermons&Itemid=49

¹Wheatridge conference report, 97.

²See David Larson et al. *Faith Factor* studies.

WHAT WOULD YOU WANT JESUS TO HEAL?

Mark 1: 21-28

Jeffrey A. Sumner
January 29, 2012
Westminster-By-The-Sea Presbyterian Church
Daytona Beach Shores, FL

In spite of the very popular uses of DVRs to skip over commercials on television, there are some shows that are rarely recorded: the daily news, for example, or sporting events, and other live performances. In any one of these venues, pharmaceutical companies work on our philosophies of life. We are told in commercials that we could live longer, look younger, and be pain free. Men are given promises that their middle or old-aged body can act like a 20 year old, and women are given hope of turning back the clock on their bodies as well. These are well paid advertising companies who know how to convince you and me, or at least make us consider, that we need not live with pain and that even over the counter medicines can fix our symptoms, masking our health issues. Even though in recent years we have said that medical care in our country is broken, it is more the delivery of care that is broken, rather than the level of competence. But even one of my doctors, years ago admitted to me, "Jeff, there is almost nothing that doctors can fix. All we can do pave the way for the possibility for the body to heal." And my friend, Dr. Dan Hale, author of several books on medical and religious partnership, is convinced, as I am, that there is a body, mind, and soul connection. The world of healing today can include traditional medicines, holistic approaches, osteopathic or chiropractic care, and prayer. I have not read or heard about a single person who says that all things can be

cured, nor have I heard of ones who say nothing can be cured; from some situations we heal, and from some, we do not. What do we do about both of those times? That is the issue I want to address with the topic “What Would You Want Jesus to Heal?”

The gospels, by their own stated purposes, are written to convince those who hear them or tell them that Jesus Christ is Lord. From reading the gospels, I believe that: Jesus is my Lord. But if ad people of today make a case for their products, could writers out to convince a skeptical first century world include mostly the good and convincing parts of the healing ministry of Jesus? Could there have been some people, men, women, or children, who were not healed after he touched them, or did not stay healed? Today, the ad people of the Gospels want to call Jesus “healer.” And we have many credible witnesses to show that he did heal. But were there times when he did not or could not? We’ll not know, because the writers wanted the readers to believe the “good news.” Why would a preacher bring this up today? *I bring it up so that you can give thought, and not simply lose faith, when someone you love gets ill or dies.* It seems to me there are several things that can happen when we get broken, or ill: **1)** We can learn how to find our voice in our brokenness; or **2)** we can be healed; or **3)** we die or live with an illness or disease. **First, some learn how to find their voice in their brokenness.** One of the best examples of someone who does this is Ruthann Ralph in our church. With a body racked with fibromyalgia, a weakened bone structure, and chronic fatigue, she grieved over the death of her son Bruce when he lost his life in a boating accident, and she thinks constantly about others. Though she can barely get out, she reads *the Spire* and stays in

touch with me by email and phone calls and will be an upcoming Westminster Institute class teacher. She once found a book, and she gave me a copy. Called, "My Beautiful Broken Shell," it tells the story of woman who used to walk the beach near her house to find perfect shells; she would get up very early to do so. But one day, she noticed the number of broken shells that got left behind by others, and she decided to also pick up the broken shells; the ones no one wanted. Ruthann's body is broken, but she wants to care for others who are broken, and have a kindred sharing in their brokenness. Still, for the picture directory, she enlisted the help of her other son Christopher, to come pick her up, bring her to church, help her onto her walker, and move into the Sunday School wing for her Olan Mills picture. While she was there, she asked if I would place a hand on her back and pray for her pain to ease, something that I had done with success before, not because of my power, but because of God's power and her belief. I took her and Christopher into our chapel and I prayed for her as my hand was on her back. The next week she wrote this: "Dear Jeff; I thought that you would appreciate an update since your laying on of hands last Saturday.

I felt some relief right away and it continued to increase; I am sure it will more so. Yesterday I actually went outside in my chair and got up and down at times to do what I wanted to do. I took down some worn out decorations of silk flowers, arranged my beach bricks and cleaned out a ton of old leaves and weeds that I could reach and got them to the garbage. I guess I was out there working for over two hours. I haven't done that in, I can't even tell you when, a very long time, years. Praise the Lord and thank you for being there for me to help with this. I am sure Christopher knows and has always known I had faith, but I know that he was impressed and awed by what you did for me. Thank you so very much. Love, Ruthann

Sometimes, as in the Gospels, through prayerful contact with God, a healing takes place. Ruthann is still broken, but still, a healing took place. Another one in our church was too weakened by chemotherapy to be around the germs that

people carry. For awhile she was sick at home; but then she found her voice and made regular calls to those in our church who were homebound, reporting to our Congregational Life committee what she had learned and said. That was finding a voice in a person's brokenness.

I, too, prayed that, when I learned that I had diabetes, that I might be healed from it. God listened, but had other plans. My disease has now given me a voice in health ministry that I would not have had before. I am a board member of the national Presbyterian Health Network, and I have been invited to Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore to be a speaker for one of their Symposiums this fall. I also know of those who have lost a child and they turned tragedy into a triumph; I know others who have lost their spouse, who found the strength to go on and connect with others in ways that they would not have before. "Caring Friends of Westminster" is just one group that specifically walks with those who are broken. Some even find their emotional legs to move forward. Brokenness may lead us to new connections, rather than bitter faithlessness that asks, "Why has this happened to me?"

A second response to illness or disease is a healing. This is the one everyone wants; it's the one we cling to as we read about the raising of Lazarus, or Jesus healing a blind man, or the man by the pool who was lame and told to stand up and walk. It's the thing that makes many people flock to men who say they can, on cue and on time, get people on television to walk again, to see again, or to hear again. Most everyone first wants healing; their first hope is healing, and if there is a lack of healing, it shakes the foundations of their faith: understandably

so. So as in Jesus' day, even in our day people go to healers in droves, in the desperate hope that a person who has healed before might heal them. They go to Pentecostal preachers, or medical specialists, or holistic healers, or to other countries for alternative treatments. Desperate illness brings out desperate measures. It is natural for people to seek them out. If your choice of healers is a preacher, you will need great faith that you *will* be healed. I once entered the hospital room of a man who was the husband of a woman who attended our church, but he didn't. When I asked him "Would you like me to have a prayer with you?" he said "If it will make *you* feel better!" I told him it wouldn't particularly, so I did not pray with him. *Prayer has to have the consent and the collaboration of the one being prayed for to be most effective.* But sometimes, through medical care, or prayer, or a renewed immune system due to laughter and love, people are healed. These are extraordinary and celebrative times. As in our text today, people can even be delivered from psychological or physical disorders. *This is the hope for all healers; this is the hope for all broken people. It is the gold standard for all hopeful people, for their child, or their grandchild, or their best friend, or their spouse. But not everyone who asks, even people of faith as we have learned, is healed.*

That leaves us in the dreadful third category: some beloved people do die early, and some do have to live with a disease. The Gospel of Mark, one of the ones written to be packed with "good news," records a chief priest saying this, pointing to our bleeding, tormented Savior on the cross: "He saved others; he cannot save himself." Jesus could not save himself. *But when life drained from his body, his death became even more significant than his three years of ministry; he*

changed the world with a dreadful crucifixion. So there are some who do die young, or live with cancer or heart disease; some with diseases like leprosy that still ravage people in third world countries today; and others have debilitating conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, Lou Gehrig's disease, or macular degeneration. When they turn to Scripture and long to get a word of hope for themselves from the healings recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the astute Christian might gently lead them also to other places in the Bible where some broken people have turned to God: places like the Psalms, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Not everyone in the Bible gets healed; and we only know of the ones Jesus healed that were written down. *Life is filled with unexpected sorrows and certainly with brokenness. But it is in my brokenness, I have discovered, that I depend more completely on God and on others, and our shared brokenness is the starting point of a new relationship.* We will celebrate healings for sure; but let us also walk with one another in our brokenness. As we connect with others and with God in prayer, Isaiah preaches this message to us: "those who wait upon the Lord *shall* renew their strength; they *shall* mount up with wings as eagles; they *shall* run and not be weary; they *shall* walk and not faint." (40:31)

Let us pray:

O God who created us: you surely must know how much our prayers ache for healing; that is our first hope for ourselves, for our child, our grandchild, or our spouse. We want healing because Jesus healed. But the one who could not save himself also comforted those in sorrow; and there are people in the Bible with infirmities that are not healed and deaths that come too soon. And dear

Omnipotent God: we know you hear us as we pray; but you see the world and our circumstances with a much broader view than we have. Remind us that in all things “you work for good for those who love you.” We will work to put our trust in thee, even during our darkest days. Amen.



Prayers for Health Awareness Sunday

The following prayer was composed by the Rev. Jeffrey Sumner, member of PHEWA's Presbyterian Health Network and pastor of Westminster-by-the-Sea Presbyterian Church in Daytona Beach Shores, Florida.

Dear God of the birds of the air, the beasts of the land, the crops of the field, and the giver of living water: in a land of plenty, some of us consume too much. In America, busy and budget-stretched families sometimes survive on inexpensive, fast food. Activities may seem to take priority over one person having the time to prepare food with fresh vegetables or fruit. Many necessarily use a car for transportation because walking is too unsafe or our destinations are too far away. Then at some point in life, the warning flags might go up: up for hypertension, diabetes, worn-down joints, fuzzy-mindedness, or a stroke or heart attack.

Call us to reassess the ways our bodies have been called a temple, and how we have been fearfully and wonderfully made. Help us to do what we can do with that hand we have been dealt; to make changes that work for us; and to not fret over what we cannot do. In our world, when we are particularly in need of help, we are grateful for counselors, medical doctors, nutritionists, and coaches who can guide our lives and inspire our spirits. Lead us to them when needed; but call us to our knees as well. Then, in a posture of prayer, we can acknowledge that we cannot go on in certain areas of destruction in our lives. Then, also, we can ask you to help us in the living of our days. Guide us to be able to not only save souls, but also our bodies, from the pit of destruction. In the name of Jesus we pray, the risen Christ. Amen.

The following prayer was written by Rev. Deborah L. Patterson, the Executive Director of Northwest Parish Nurse Ministries, and is quoted from healing **WORDS** for **HEALING** People: Prayers and Meditations for Parish Nurses and Other Health Professionals (Book) Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2005. While this is a prayer for health during the holiday season, it can easily be adapted as a prayer for healthier living at any time of the year.

Loving and intimate God, thank you for these days of harvest and homecoming that lead us into the holy days of remembering your presence with us. As we remember the years gone by, we give thanks for loved ones who have gone before, who nurtured us with hugs and hot chocolate, kisses and cookies. Help us to dwell on the hugs and kisses, and to pass those on to our loved ones.

We remember the joy of celebrating Holy Days and holidays with food, and we long for things to be special. Help us to remember that as your people, we are already special in your accepting eyes, much more than any meal we could prepare. Fill our emptiness – the spiritual hunger, loneliness, and insecurity that we feel. Help us see that we are loved for who we are, not for what we cook or bake for others. Help us to celebrate our precious bodies and to care for them with nourishing and health-giving food.

Generous and encouraging God, show us how to meditate on your sacred and perfect nature, and not get caught by the seductive promises of earthly perfection that beckon from magazine headlines. Help us not to fall into the trap of believing that “this year we will do it right.” Everything is already right when we are right with you.

And finally, eternal God of summer, fall, winter, and spring, empower us to move our bodies each day in response to your love, as we run joyfully into the future you have prepared for us. In your loving name we pray, Amen.



Hymns and Biblical References for Health Awareness Sunday

Hymns

O Christ, The Healer – page 380 in the Presbyterian Hymnal
O Savior, in This Quiet Place – page 390 in the Presbyterian Hymnal
There is a Balm in Gilead – page 394 in the Presbyterian Hymnal

Biblical References

Matthew 11:28 and 29
John 10:10
1st Corinthians 3: 16 and 17
1st Corinthians 6: 19 and 20
2nd Corinthians 7:1
Ephesians 2:10
3rd John 1:2

Proverbs 3:7 and 8
Proverbs 14:30
Proverbs 17: 22
Jeremiah 29:12

Compiled by Betty Yurkewitch, RN, FCN,
Parish Nurse, Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, McLean, VA

Suggestions for Congregations for Observing a Day of Prayer for Healing and Wholeness

The 219th General Assembly (2010) took action on [an overture brought by the Upper Ohio Valley Presbytery](#) urging congregations to set aside a day every year as a day of prayer for healing and wholeness and suggesting

“ . . . that this be done in conjunction with the day currently designated on the Presbyterian Planning Calendar as Health Awareness Sunday. Local churches and communities are encouraged to gather together and offer prayer for the discovery of ever more effective means of treatment. These gatherings may be an occasion to give thanks for the lives of saints who have died; prayers for healing for those who are currently receiving treatment; as well as prayers for doctors, nurses, and scientists who are seeking to bring healing and hope.”

Service of Healing and Wholeness

Consider holding a service of healing and wholeness for your congregation. Included in the *Book of Common Worship* are “A Service of Wholeness for Use with a Congregation” (p. 1005) and “A Service of Wholeness for Use with an Individual” (p. 1018).

Suggested Hymns

For Healing and Wholeness:

“O Christ, The Healer” (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #380)

“O Savior, In This Quiet Place” (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #390)

“There is a Balm in Gilead” (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #394)

“You Are Mine” (*Sing the Faith*, #2218)

“Healer of Our Every Ill” (*Sing the Faith*, #2213)

In Celebration of a Life:

“For All the Saints” (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #526)

“Give Thanks for Life” (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #528)

“When We Are Living” (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, #400)

Suggestions for Prayer:

The following prayers from the *Book of Common Worship* can guide a time of prayer, both for use by persons in a time of private prayer and for prayer in a service of worship. Other appropriate prayers, as well as sentences of scripture, scripture readings and liturgies can be found in the section "Pastoral Liturgies" (p. 967 and following) in the *Book of Common Worship*.

For healing

Mighty and Merciful God,
you sent Jesus Christ to heal broken lives.
We praise you that today
you send healing in doctors and nurses,
and bless us with technology in medicine.
We claim your promises of wholeness
as we pray for those who are ill in body or mind,
who long for your healing touch.
Make the weak strong,
the sick healthy,
the broken whole,
and confirm those who serve them
as agents of your love.
Then shall all be renewed in vigor
to point to the risen Christ,
who conquered death that we might live eternally. **Amen.**

-*Book of Common Worship*, copyright 1993 Westminster/John Knox Press, p. 831.

For healing

By your power, great God,

Our Lord Jesus healed the sick

And gave new hope to the hopeless.

Though we cannot command or possess your power,

We pray for those who want to be healed

(especially for _____ (names)).

Mend their wounds, soothe fevered brows,

And make broken people whole again.

Help us to welcome every healing as a sign that,

though death is against us,

you are for us,

and have promised renewed and risen life

in Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

-*The Worshipbook: Services*, copyright MCMLXX The Westminster Press. As altered and printed in the *Book of Common Worship*, copyright 1993 Westminster/John Knox Press, p. 988.

For health restored

Almighty God,

We rejoice that, by the power of your Spirit,

You have given the gift of healing and wholeness

To your servant _____ (name).

In thanksgiving we renew our commitment to you,

so that health regained

May provide opportunities for service
in the helping and healing work of Jesus Christ,
our Lord and Savior. **Amen.**

-Book of Common Worship, copyright 1993 Westminster/John Knox Press, p. 831.

For the sick

Lord of all health,
you are the source of our life
and our fulfillment in death.

Be for _____ (name) now

comfort in the midst of pain,
strength to transform weakness,
and light to brighten darkness,
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*-Services for Occasions of Pastoral Care, Supplemental Liturgical Resource 6, copyright 1990
Westminster John Knox Press. As altered and printed in the Book of Common Worship,
copyright 1993 Westminster/John Knox Press, p. 988.*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving, Supplication, and Intercession (from "The Funeral: A Service of
Witness to the Resurrection")**

O God,
before whom generations rise and pass away,
we praise you for all your servants
who, having lived this life in faith,
now live eternally with you.

Especially we thank you for your servant _____ (name),

Whose baptism is now complete in death.

We praise you for the gift of **his/her** life,
For all in **him/her** that was good and kind and faithful,
For the grace you gave **him/her**,
That kindled in **him/her** the love of your dear name,
And enabled **him/her** to serve you faithfully.

Here mention may be made of the person's characteristics or service.

We thank you that for **him/her** death is past and pain ended,
And that **he/she** has now entered the joy you have prepared;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

-Book of Common Worship, copyright 1993 Westminster/John Knox Press, p. 921.



Resources for Faithful Care of Our Bodies

Unless otherwise noted, books are available through www.amazon.com

Ten Commandments of Faith and Fitness ; A Practical Guide for Health and Wellness (book) Henry Brinton and Vikram Khanna, Authors, CSS Publishing Company, 2008.

Food and God: A Theological Approach to Eating, Diet, and Weight Control (book) Joel Soza, Author, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009.

The Bible's Seven Secrets to Healthy Eating (book) Joyce Rogers, Author. Crossway Books, 2001.

Fat Proof Your Family: God's Way to Forming Healthy Habits for Life (book) J.Ron Eaker, MD, Author. Baker Publishing Group, 2007.

The W.O.W. Diet; Words of Wisdom and Dietary Enlightenment from Leading World Religions, and Scientific Study (book) Michelle Snow, Author. Bonneville Books, 2010.

"How your faith can make you fit" (Article) from *Jet*, June 25, 2007. D. Slagle, Author.

Faith and Fitness: Diet and Exercise for a Better World. (book) Tom P. Hafer, Author. Augsburg Books, 2007.

Resilience of the Soul: Developing Emotional and Spiritual Resilience in Adolescents and Their Families; A Program and Resource Guide for Congregations, Based on the Kedushat HaGuf

Program. (book) Written and compiled by Rabbi Edythe Held Mencher, LCSW with Yael Shmilovitz and Rabbi Michael Howald. URJ Press, 2007.

Essential Parish Nurse: The ABCs for Congregational Health Ministry (book) Deborah Patterson, Author. Pilgrim Press, 2003.

Healing Church, The Practical Programs for Health Ministries. Abigail R. Evans, Author. Pilgrim Press, 2000.

The healing word: Preaching and Teaching Health Ministry (book) Deborah Patterson, Author. Pilgrim Press, 2009.

Health Ministries: A primer for Clergy and Congregations (book) Deborah Patterson, Author. Pilgrim Press, 2008.

Health, Healing, and Wholeness. Engaging Congregations in Ministries of Health (book) Mary Chase-Ziolek, Author. Pilgrim Press, 2005

Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach (book) Peter L. Steinke, Author. Alban Institute, 2nd edition, 2006.

Web Sites

Let's Move www.letsmove.gov/learn-facts/epidemic-childhood-obesity

Let's Move! is a comprehensive initiative, launched by First Lady, Michelle Obama, dedicated to solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation, so that children born today will grow up healthier and able to pursue their dreams. Combining comprehensive strategies with common sense, *Let's Move!* is about putting children on the path to a healthy future during their earliest months and years. This site will send information directly to your inbox on this topic in addition to having many areas to explore on the website.

Coordinated School Health Program www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/cshp/

On this site, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say that "Coordinated school health (CSH) is recommended by CDC as a strategy for improving students' health and learning in our nation's schools. These pages outline the rationale and goals for CSH, provide a model framework for planning and implementing CSH, and offer resources to help schools, districts, and states improve their school health programs."

UCC Bookstore https://secure3.convio.net/ucc/site/Ecommerce?store_id=1401

The United Church of Christ (UCC) Bookstore has many fine resources. Among them are:

- 20 Life Lessons Learned from Cooking. Your Life is Better series, A. Jannsohn, Author. 24 pages, \$6.95
- Counseling Persons with Addictions and Compulsions: A handbook for clergy and other helping professionals. A. J. Weaver, C. Hosenfeld, and H.G.Koenig, Authors. \$8.50 (originally \$34.)

Overeaters Anonymous <http://www.oa.org>

On their site they say, "Overeaters Anonymous (OA) offers a program of recovery from compulsive eating using the [Twelve Steps](#) and [Twelve Traditions](#) of OA. OA is not just about weight loss, weight gain or maintenance, or obesity or diets. It addresses physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. It is not a religious organization and does not promote any particular diet."

Church Health Reader <http://www.chreader.org/>

Is a website that offers resources for congregations to engage in healthier living including programs such as the *Alphabet Appetite: Teaching Children Healthy Eating through the Alphabet* which is a faith-based, healthy living curriculum for children ages 2-5 years. *Walk & Talk* is a year-long walking Bible study for adults. Other programs and resources are also available.

Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)

www.pcusa.org/phewa

PHEWA is a community of ministries providing resources, peer support and networking connections for Presbyterians involved in social welfare and justice ministries. PHEWA has also worked, since its creation by General Assembly action in 1956, to make the church more responsive to the needs of those too often excluded or on the margins of the church and of society. PHEWA provides a forum where these persons can make their voices heard, offering perspectives that enrich the church. Volunteer ministry specialists, through the [national networks of PHEWA](#) provide assistance in developing strategies for effective responses to a wide variety of needs encountered in the practice of ministry, both in the congregation and in the surrounding community. Stay connected, and help to keep these ministries strong, through [membership in PHEWA](#) and any/all of the PHEWA Networks.

The Rev. Trina Zelle serves as National Organizer and Executive Director of PHEWA. Trina spends a lot of time out in the field and in communication with congregations who either have or hope to have active ministries in the areas addressed by PHEWA Networks; as well as with presbyteries and synods. She helps folks make connections and gather resources that are useful and that reflect the policies of the PC(USA). She can be reached at (602) 796-7477 or at trinazelle6@gmail.com. Trina also manages PHEWA's independent resource website: <http://www.phewacommunity.org/>

Presbyterian Health Network (PHN)

A ministry network of the Presbyterian Health, Education & Welfare Association (PHEWA)

Leadership Team, January 2012

“Sowing Seeds of Wellness in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.”



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