

Article Sidebar: JAH026

THE PARISH NURSING ALTERNATIVE

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Parish nursing is a contemporary outgrowth of the late Lutheran minister Granger Westberg's vision for establishing holistic health centers in churches. It focuses on the integration of physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional health needs of people within a congregation, yet remains grounded in a biblical worldview.

Parish nurses have played a major role in local congregations. They have been influential in reintroducing health-related ministries to the elderly, frail, and other vulnerable populations, as well as healing services that often include the laying-on of hands and anointing with oil, specific prayer ministries for healing, and rituals of remembrance for those who are grieving the loss of loved ones.

One Christian organization, Nurses Christian Fellowship, actively disseminates helpful information on parish nursing. Its Web site includes pages with resources for parish nurses (<http://www.intervarsity.org/ncf/pn/main.html>) and books for parish nurse reference (<http://www.intervarsity.org/ncf/pn/bib.html>) that provide comprehensive coverage of all aspects of parish nursing.

The International Parish Nurse Resource Center is also a primary resource for congregations, although some of the programs that it advertises are more open to incorporating therapies such as Healing Touch into parish nurse training. More about the history of parish nursing and other resource material is available through its Web site (<http://www.ipnrc.parishnurses.org/index.phtml>).

— Sharon Fish Mooney