



**LUTHERAN FAITH COMMUNITY
NURSE ASSOCIATION**

LFCNA Connections

Volume 5 Issue 1 January/February 2025

Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association (LFCNA) is a membership organization for Parish/Faith Community Nurses who are Lutheran and/or provide ministry in a Lutheran congregation.

Our Vision

To promote a culture of health, healing and wholeness in Lutheran agencies and communities.



Executive Director's Message Carol DeSchepper

I slept and I dreamed that life is all joy. I woke and I saw that life is all service. I served and I saw that service is joy.

— Khalil Gibran —

LFCNA Board Members:

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- Vicki J. Carlson, Secretary
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- Nancy Roberts, Director Region 9

Executive Director:

Carol DeSchepper, Region 5

We know joy because we serve. That's not to say there are not challenges, but with God's guidance, the support of this organization, your colleagues, and others within your families and faith communities, you are equipped to meet them.

We are entering 2025. Unbelievable! Where did that past year go? The days and months fly by and quickly we turn another page on the calendar (do you still do that?). In this issue of *Connections* you will find our 2025 committee goals (see pages 3 and 4). The work is important and focused on continued support of you, our members, and outreach to FCNs who are not members (they are not eligible to be members or simply have not joined yet), to faith communities, and to synods, and churchwide. We will have a presence at Churchwide Assembly in July in Phoenix, AZ. Start to pray now that it will be an opportunity to serve, but also to make connections so LFCNA and Faith Community Nursing is increasingly known to congregations across the country.

The words in the quote at the top of this article have always resonated with me. We all know joy, but sometime we expect it to land in our laps and it exists in life, ad infinitum --- just because. There is great truth that it is in service that we know joy. That is the essence of Faith Community Nursing as we serve as the hands and feet of Christ and care for His children.

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Executive Director's Message Continued ...

In the days of 2025, may you serve well and faithfully. Know joy and rest in His peace at the end of each day. Make self-care a priority so you are not trying to give from an empty heart. And, as I've encouraged often, please join our networking opportunities through LFCNA. As they say "a rising tide lifts all boats." Let's rise together. It's a gift to serve beside you. Blessings in this New Year.

Reminders/Additional Announcements

Grief and Loss Resources: Since this issue of *Connections* focuses on grief and loss, in addition to the grief and loss resources found on page 11, additional resources can be found at <https://lutheranfcna.org/End-of-Life-Resources> and in the Program Library on the Members Only page at <https://lutheranfcna.org>.

PROGRAM LIBRARY

We continue to seek submissions for the program library, in online library of programs and resources that can support your practice. It is a resource for members only and it's a way we can readily support one another in practice. The submission form is found on the program library page behind members only. Please submit programs that have made a difference in the health of your congregants.



Please consider submitting programs in any or all of the following health focus areas:

physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, social/interpersonal, vocational, intellectual, and environmental health. Can we add 25 new programs in '25?

If you wish to share your gifts and serve on an LFCNA Committee, please contact Carol DeSchepper at lutheranfcna@gmail.com. A list of the committees and their purpose are found on the Members Only page of the website — <https://lutheranfcna.org>

LFCNA Connections

LFCNA Committee Goals for 2025

Governance Committee

- ◆ Develop and/or review policies, guidelines and forms as needed for consistency with the bylaws and other policies
- ◆ Evaluate the new board member orientation and modify if needed
- ◆ Develop a ballot for the 2025 election, for Board members and Officers serving in 2026/2027.
- ◆ Draft revisions to the Bylaws as needed
- ◆ Develop the title, description, and scope of work for a new standing committee tasked with development of members only benefits and resources.

Finance Committee

- ◆ Develop a defined fundraising strategy for fiscal year end 2024 and 2025.
- ◆ No later than March 1, 2025, create a databank to support grant writing and for purposes of creating an annual report for the organization.
- ◆ Expand our knowledge and skills related to grant writing and fundraising to support organizational sustainability and viability by attending a minimum of 3 educational offerings on pertinent topics.
- ◆ Continue development of the concept of Fiscal Partnerships and obtain a minimum of two partners by end of 2025.
- ◆ Provide necessary support to the new standing committee developing benefits for members only, offering financial guidance and resources as needed.

Personnel Committee

- ◆ Finalize and seek board approval of the employee handbook.
- ◆ Review the Executive Director position description and revise if needed.
- ◆ Understand the role of the Personnel Committee in employee grievances.
- ◆ Develop other employment policies, if needed.
- ◆ Develop an employee evaluation tool and process.

Education Committee

- ◆ Offer five (5) paid education events in 2025
- ◆ Offer a free educational event as part of the 2025 annual meeting
- ◆ Seek Contact Hours for events described in goals 1 and 2.
- ◆ Continue to offer Replenishing Your Heart events



LFCNA Connections

LFCNA Committee Goals for 2025 continued ...

Outreach Committee

- ◆ Submit an abstract to the American Association for the History of Nursing Conference (October 2025) to present the history of Faith Community Nursing.
- ◆ Continue dialogue with the ELCA Deaconess Community, seeking partnership opportunities
- ◆ Provide needed input to participate in an ELCA Pulse survey
- ◆ Pursue an opportunity to provide an FCN presentation at 2 Lutheran Seminaries
- ◆ Explore partnership opportunities with Portico
- ◆ Have an LFCNA presence at 15 synod assemblies or other events

Communications Committee

- ◆ LFCNA Connections Newsletter Click rate (those who actually open the newsletter) of 65% or greater for active members.
- ◆ Conduct a poll of members regarding newsletter and Facebook.
- ◆ Obtain at least 4 member contributions to each issue of the newsletter.
- ◆ Re-evaluate the purpose, benefits, and options for an organizational Facebook page.
- ◆ Review every website page for currency, appearance, and relevance at least annually.
- ◆ Engage Regional Directors in reviewing their regional pages and make needed updates annually at minimum.
- ◆ Recruit 2 new members.

Membership Committee

- ◆ Recruit 25 new members
- ◆ Maintain Member Retention rate at or above 90%
- ◆ Provide communication to the ELCA staff to make LFCNA more visible and accessible on their website and offer assistance to update the online information.
- ◆ Develop strategies to encourage greater participation in peer networking groups.
- ◆ Evaluate membership options for groups or other organizations. (i.e. ELCA Deaconess Community)
- ◆ Pursue dialogue with members who are faculty regarding non-RNs taking preparation courses and seeking membership.

Grants Committee

- ◆ Award three grants of up to \$750 to congregations, consistent with Grant Guidelines
- ◆ Reevaluate the grant follow-up process and refine if needed
- ◆ Assist with administration of other grants awarded to the organization, as needed.



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Membership Updates

We are well into our renewal period for membership.

**A big THANK YOU
to those who have already renewed!!**

If you have been notified that your membership is due for renewal and you have not taken steps to renew, your membership expired as of December 31. However, you still have a grace period until the end of February without losing membership benefits. End of February your membership becomes lapsed. **The names of those who renew before the end of January will be placed in a drawing to receive a free education event during 2025.** That is worth 1/2 of a two year membership and \$10 short of an annual membership!! Such a deal!!

Here are some further quotes in answer to the question, **“I belong to LFCNA because.....”**

“I joined LFCNA as a way to be able to network with other Faith Community/Parish Nurses. The organization and those who belong to it have been a great resource for me in my role as a Parish Nurse. I enjoy hearing from others what they are doing and learning pearls of wisdom from them. I strongly recommend joining if you are a new Faith Community/Parish Nurse or even if you have been one for a while and would like to network with others in the same nursing field”.

Ann Challes (Region 3)

“I truly believe in the value of LFCNA and am amazed at the work you all are doing to make it such a professional, well-visioned organization. I’m proud to be a part of it and all that “we” do by the grace of God”. Beth Ewing, (Region 6)

We welcome 4 new members for 2025!

Tina Browning (Region 9), Vicky Carron (Region 6), Amy Stros (Region 6), and Amy Carter (Region 6)

Phyllis Bruce, Membership Chair

[Click here to renew or join](#)

Funding Our Future

"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision." Helen Keller

Colleagues and Friends,
Thank you for all the ways you have contributed to the work of LFCNA in 2024. Gifts of time, talents and treasures were given by more than we can count. Thank you to those ...

- who joined and/or continue to be members, some for many years. As of this writing, we now have 160 members in LFCNA. We are grateful for each and all who lend your support to our work of supporting FCNs and expanding Faith Community Nursing across Lutheranism.
- who added an extra gift and/or added a donation to help defray our credit card transaction costs, when renewing your membership.
- who made gifts to the organization as part of their Required Mandatory Distribution.
- who made another financial contribution --- whether a direct gift or converting your registration for our canceled education event to a donation.
- who directed your Thrivent Choice Dollars to LFCNA.
- who served on boards and committees, contributed to the newsletter or the website. Our current estimate is that we have logged in excess of 1200 volunteer hours for this organization in 2024.
- who work behind the scenes writing minutes, hosting peer networking meetings, stewarding our finances, reviewing applications for grants to be given to congregations, planning our educational offerings, and more, and
- ... others who have shared their gifts with the organization in ways I have failed mention.



We are stronger together and every contribution supports our mission ***"To provide leadership, resources, advocacy, and networks that build effectiveness of Lutheran Faith Community Nursing"***. Please accept our gratitude for all that you offer and for all the ways God blesses this organization and our common work through you, our members. Onward to 2025!

The LFCNA Finance Committee and Board of Directors

**Support LFCNA's
Mission—
[Donate Here](#)**



LFCNA Connections

SAVE THE DATE

The Faith Community's Call to Caregiving

DATE: January 23, 2025

**TIME: 3:00 PM AK Time/4:00 PM PT/5:00 PM MT/
6:00 PM CT/7:00 PM ET (2 HOUR EVENT)**

Course description: With recent emphasis on aging in place, the faith community is in a key position to answer the call to be or assist caregivers. Faith community nurses are uniquely equipped to meet this call by developing programs, educational initiatives, research, and policymaking. Information, tools, and resources about integrating an age-friendly vision of caregiving with the faith community will be provided.

**Speaker: Elizabeth M. Long, DNP, APRN, GNP-BC, CNS, CNE
Associate Professor Nursing, Lamar University**

Dr. Long is an Associate Professor of Nursing at Lamar University, gerontological nurse practitioner, faith community nurse, and a Hartford Distinguished Educator in Gerontological Nursing. with over 30 years of experience as a clinician and educator. Currently, she serves as the Chair of the Southeast Texas Regional Commission on Aging Advisory Board, on the editorial board of the *Geriatric Nursing* journal, and as a peer reviewer for nursing professional development with the Louisiana State Nurses Association. Current research interests include geriatrics, loneliness, isolation, and best practices in the long-term care and faith community settings.



REGISTRATION INFORMATION HAS BEEN SENT AND ALSO CAN BE FOUND HERE:

<https://lutheranfca.org/event-5941199>



LFCNA Connections

SAVE THE DATE

Navigating Anxiety with Mind, Body, and Spirit

DATE: February 20, 2025

**TIME: 3:00 PM AK Time/4:00 PM PT/5:00 PM MT/
6:00 PM CT/7:00 PM ET (90 MINUTE EVENT via Zoom)**

Course description: Join us for a time of learning and reflection as we are led through the writings of Curtis Chang in his book "The Anxiety Opportunity: How Worry is the Doorway to Your Best Self." The following learning objectives will be addressed:

- ◆ Recall ways in which the author, Curtis Chang, identifies anxiety as an obstacle and an opportunity
- ◆ Describe the spiritual essence of anxiety
- ◆ Discuss the role of mindfulness as an intervention for anxiety
- ◆ Identify 1 of 3 ways to move from avoiding to holding
- ◆ Discuss the findings in Kim Field's DNP project of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for Teens

Speaker: Kim Feld, FCN at New Hope counseling center. Click [HERE](#) for more information on the speaker.

Cost: \$20 for LFCNA members, \$30 for non-members

This event is jointly sponsored with the Parish Nursing Program of the Tri-State Region (MD, PA, WV) and Meritus Health, Hagerstown, MD.



REGISTRATION INFORMATION WILL BE SENT MID-JANUARY



Go to <https://www.caringforthehumanspirit.org/> for more details and registration information. This year the conference is virtual format only.



Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness

Jeanine McGrath

BSN, RN, Faith Community Nurse (Region 8)
Jeanine is part of the Faith Community Nurse Ministry at
Lutheran Church of St. Andrew in Silver Spring, MD

Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me. Isaiah 49: 15-16.

My interest in working with grieving individuals began in the late 90s when I sat on the Newborn Committee at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, MD. My task on the committee was to help organize the memorial service we held each October to mark Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness, honoring all babies lost to miscarriage, infant death and stillbirth.

All families who had suffered a loss in the previous year were invited to this memorial service. At the service in 2000, I met a mother who made me search for a way I could help other families to find compassionate care navigating the loss of their precious baby. In those days the service was relatively small and was held in the hospital chapel. As the families arrived the rows of chairs filled. Just before the service was slated to begin the door opened and a mother pushed a stroller into the room. The baby in the stroller was obviously a preemie; tiny, nasal cannulas in her nose and the oxygen tank in the basket underneath. The presence of this baby seemed to suck the oxygen out of the room. Many already sad faces became even more grief stricken.

During the service families were invited to come to the front of the room, share a story or thought about their baby and light a candle. When this mother's baby's name was called, she left her little one in the stroller at her seat and walked to the front of the room. She expressed her thanks for having been invited to this memorial service. She told those seated that she had given birth to twins. This was one of the only times she had been given permission to grieve the baby she had lost. She had been told she should "feel lucky", "be grateful". She had been able to take a baby home. These sentiments came from family, friends and even members of her faith community.

Speaking to her later at the reception she shared how difficult it had been to find support to grieve. She had attended support groups that were meeting once a month. She stated she never was able to get past the point in her grief story that one of her babies had lived and one had died. She told me, she had one evening of sharing and then had to go home and endure 29-30 days feeling lost and alone.

Continued on next page...

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness continued

This woman's words haunted me. I went back to the Newborn Committee convinced we must do more than offer a service once a year. I was convinced there must be other support groups that met more often for pregnancy loss. My search came up empty. I found a few once-a-month groups but nothing else. What I did find was a certification course offered by Gunderson Lutheran Hospital in La Crosse, WI for pregnancy loss. Resolve through Sharing (RTC) Bereavement Training is specific to helping families navigate the unique grief journey of losing their precious baby.

Since 2006, I have been offering six-week pregnancy and infant loss support groups for mothers, fathers, and any other people offering support to the grieving mother. In 2020, the in-person format was moved to ZOOM. Although I was skeptical that the group would survive, I have been blessed to support families throughout the US in the past 4 years.

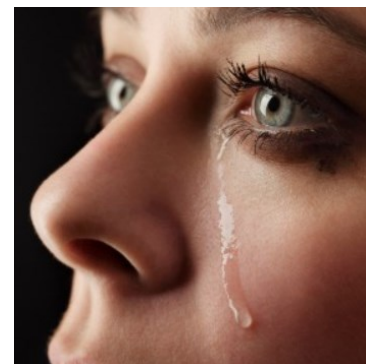
Pregnancy loss is unique. Women who suffer a miscarriage, a loss before 20 weeks, will often endure hurtful words or are left to keep the loss to themselves. Stillbirth, a loss after 20 weeks, may receive more sympathy. If the baby died in their mother's arms or in the NICU the heartache resonates to all the caregivers. I have heard from many, there is a feeling of having a piece of their future stolen from them when they hear, "there is no heartbeat" or "something is terribly wrong". They may have been envisioning what life would look like when that baby arrived. Two lines on a pregnancy test can evoke strong emotions. Losing the baby, at any stage of the pregnancy may trigger even stronger emotions.

I often have people comment that this work must be challenging. I would agree that it is. But I also firmly believe that I was called to do this work. I think the Holy Spirit lit the fire in my heart to help that one mother find comfort. I feel blessed by this work, even when it is hard. Many mothers over the years have shown me that love and support can comfort the most broken heart.

NOTE: Virtual support groups offered by Jeanine are listed as an event on your regional pages. Please share with those in your faith community who may wish to attend.

"With the death of your child, your hopes, dreams and plans for the future are turned upside down. You are beginning a journey that is often frightening, painful, and overwhelming. The death of a child results in the most profound bereavement."

Alan Wolfelt





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Perinatal and Infant Loss Resources

Jeanine McGrath BSN, RN, Faith Community Nurse supporting the FCN ministry at Lutheran Church of St. Andrew, Silver Spring, MD

Isaiah's Promise provides encouragement and support for parents in the metropolitan Washington DC area who have received a severe or fatal prenatal diagnosis. They answer questions and provide resources, help prepare a birth plan and provide numerous personalized keepsakes for the families. <https://isaiahspromise.net/>

Isaiah's Promise

*SEE, I WILL NOT FORGET YOU.
I HAVE CARVED YOU ON THE
PALM OF MY HAND.*

Isaiah 49:15

Be Not Afraid provides bereavement support, practical guidance, information, and referrals so that parents understand what is normal, what is possible, and what might be after receiving a difficult perinatal diagnosis and choose to continue the pregnancy. <https://benotafraid.net>

Postpartum Support International offers numerous peer led support groups including those specific to women struggling with infertility or early, first trimester miscarriage. www.postpartum.net

I am happy to say that there are many new books that have been written discussing early pregnancy loss. This was an area that was lacking for a long time. Miscarriage covers losses through 20 weeks gestation, the midpoint of a pregnancy. The general population hears miscarriage and thinks only about the first 3 months. I have recommended all of these books to many of my families that have attended my support groups. My lending library contains many others.

- **(Mis)carriage A mother's story of why pregnancy loss matters** Regan Parker 2019
- **I Had a Miscarriage A memoir, a movement** Jessica Zucker 2021
- **Companioning at a time of Perinatal Loss. A guide for nurses, physicians, social workers, chaplains and other bedside caregivers.** Jane Heustis, RN & Marcia Jenkins, RN 2005
- **Swallowed by a Snake The gift of the masculine side of healing** Thomas R. Golden 2000
- **The Way Men Heal** Thomas R. Golden, LCSW 2013
- **The Wilderness of Grief-Finding your Way** Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. 2007
- **They were Still Born: Personal Stories about Stillbirth** Janel C. Atlas (editor) 2014
- **An Exact Replica of a Figment of My Imagination** Elizabeth McCracken 2008
- **Our Heartbreaking Choices Forty-six women share their stories of interrupting a much-wanted pregnancy** Christie Brooks, editor 2008



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GRIEF & PARENTAL ESTRANGEMENT

**Janet Mortinsen RN, BSN, Faith Community Nurse at
Bethany Lutheran Church, Cherry Hills Village, CO**



After attending the PEAK (Parents of Estranged Adult Kids) educational opportunity from LFCNA last January, I felt called to do more for congregants and community members living through this experience. Fellow FCN, Sue Ann Glusenkamp, and I have begun a support group and are learning about the particular grief that has been voiced to us by this group.

First and foremost, parents miss the physical presence of their child/ren. As with any loss, the absence is so painful. With estrangement, the other familial relationships can become strained or absent. If there are grandchildren involved, the estrangement may be extended to include this absence as well. Siblings may feel pressure to “take sides” or they may feel as though they have to make up for the absence. This may lead to changes in all family relationships which is an additional loss.

Another loss is the isolation that so many estranged parents experience. Feelings of shame, embarrassment and guilt accompany so many of those experiencing estrangement. Those feelings prevent most parents from openly and honestly sharing what is happening. While other parents share new pictures and updates on events in their children’s lives, estranged parents do not have these to share. It is easier to avoid people and conversations than to bring up the reality of estrangement.

When a death in the family occurs, there is a specific time and cause. For many of those estranged, the cause is unknown and the timeline vague. It is acceptable to share the story of a death again and again in the process of working through grief. People show support in a variety of ways to those who have had a death in the family which is absent in estrangement. There is a focus on re-building a new identity and living into a new reality. All of these usual grief steps are more complicated during estrangement. In fact, parents are most likely to be viewed as the guilty party in the relationship.

For parents who have one child or experience estrangement with all of their children, the issue of identity is a loss. Am I still a mother or father? How do I answer the question, “Do you have children?” The holidays are a particularly difficult time with so much focus on family and questions regarding plans.

Many parents find comfort in the idea that their adult child/ren will assist them as they age. They may have completed a living will and financial will in which their child was an integral part of the plan. There is much stress in wondering what practical steps to take next so this is yet another part of the grief estrangement brings.

My prayer for estranged parents is that they find the people, the resources and the opportunities to express their grief in a way that eliminates blame and allows them to move toward healing.



LFCNA Connections

Upcoming Faith Community Nurse Preparation Courses

If you or someone you know are seeking a Faith Community Nurse preparation course, below are the course options currently on our website. Please go to <https://lutheranfca.org/Foundation-Courses> for more information.

South Carolina Faith Community Nurse Association

Virtual format via Zoom

Tuesday evenings, January 14 through March 11, 2025

Time: 7:00 PM TO 9:00 PM ET

Foundations of Faith Community Nursing 2025 - Westberg Curriculum

Sponsored by FCN Network in the Rockies

Dates: January 30 - April 10, 2025

Online class Thursday nights 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. MST with 30-minute break --- with in-person final project and commissioning on Saturday April 26, 2025 at Augustana Lutheran Church, 5000 E. Alameda, Denver, CO. 80246.

Foundations FCN Course - Sponsored by the FCNNTC

Newly Revised! Foundations of Faith Community Nursing Course Virtual and Self-Guided

Sponsored by the Faith Community Nurse Network of the Greater Twin Cities

Winter/Spring 2025 Dates:

Sundays: 2/23, 3/16, 4/6 2:00-6:30 p.m. (Central Time) and

Thursdays: 3/6 & 3/27 8:00 a.m.– 4:00 p.m. (Central Time)

Foundations of Faith Community Nursing Course – Concordia College, Moorhead, MN

The Parish Nurse Ministry Program of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN will be offering the Foundations in Faith Community Nursing Course **April 28-May 2, 2025** (the deadline to register is April 1st). The course will be held at Atonement Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND. This will be a full week of in-person/classroom learning activities as we do not offer a distance learning option.

After the Magi had found Jesus and made their sacrificial and generous gifts, bowing before him in worship and submission, they returned home by another route. People always do when they encounter Jesus. May you encounter Jesus in new and exciting ways in 2025.





Focus on Research

By Jean Bokinskie, PhD, RN (Region 3)

This is a summary of Jean's full reviews of the following articles. LFCNA members can find Jean's full articles with complete descriptions, implications for FCN practice, and links to the articles by going to our website, <https://lutheranfcna.org>, signing in and clicking on the Members Only tab.

Dear Faith Community Nurses,

Happy New Year! The focus of the research reviews includes topics that are related to spirituality, religiosity, mental health and medication administration. Following each review are implications for FCN practice – aspects for consideration and programming ideas. Enjoy!

1. **Spirituality moderates the relationship between cancer caregiver burden and depression.** *Palliative and Supportive Care*

The findings suggest that spirituality appears to buffer the effects of caregiver burden on depression over the course of cancer treatment.

Implications for FCNs: These findings support the importance of addressing spiritual health through programs such as support groups for caregivers, one-on-one visits, rites and rituals that nurture spiritual needs, and referring individuals who are experiencing depressive symptoms to healthcare providers.

2. **Medication safety: Your knowledge of the fundamentals can prevent harm.** *American Nurse Journal*

It has been reported (NIH, 2024) that medical errors are the third leading cause of death in the U.S. Nurses are often the end point of care provider for medication administration and therefore key to prevention of medication errors.

Implications for FCNs: The FCN should maintain current resources including medication textbooks, nursing journals (MEDLINE, PubMed, and CINAL), and access to online professional resources. Programming ideas include offering a session with local university pharmacy students – parishioners bring in all their pills in a “brown bag” and are reviewed by the students (under supervision of their faculty), or offering a common medication update educational session during an exercise/devotional/education program.

Continued on the next page ...

For all LFCNA Events, National Education, and National Foundation Courses go to our Events page <https://lutheranfcna.org/events>. Please check this page and your regional pages often as events are added frequently.

Focus on Research Continued

3. **Personality and conceptions of religiosity across the world's religions.** *Journal of Research in Personality*

The study identified that highly religious people scored higher on agreeableness, conscientiousness, fairness, and happiness; whereas they scored lower on self-interest and were more likely to make sacrifices for others

Implications for FCNs: These findings underscore the importance of understanding parishioners/clients who identify as not affiliated with a specific religion or denomination yet consider themselves highly religious or value religion for the good of society (religiosity as an axiom). Nurses may need to reconsider how to ask questions on “religious affiliation” when completing spiritual assessments and set aside preconceived notions about different religious traditions.

4. **Mental health service utilization, school experiences, and religious involvement among a national sample of black adolescents who attempted suicide: Examining within and cross-race group differences.** *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*

The overall sample included youth who indicated they had made a suicide attempt in the past, with a focus on Black adolescents. The researchers examined mental health service utilization, school experiences, school involvement and religious belief.). Nearly 40% of Black youth indicated they strongly agreed that religious beliefs were very important (far greater than reports from youth of other race groups), nearly 2/3 had participated in faith-based activities, and 22% had attended religious services more than weekly in the past year.

Implications for FCNs: Recent statistics show that while suicides are greater for Black male youth, there has been a sharp increase in recent suicides/attempts among Black female youth.). Programs to support and engage Black adolescents within faith communities will assist in creating health environments, nurturing youth to stay connected with the faith community. And finally, FCNs need to remain vigilant in addressing mental health concerns of all youth in their faith communities.

Due to limitations of space, I was not able to provide all the study findings. I would encourage you to read the studies focusing on the results and implications for practice – there are many pearls of wisdom to be found. If you have questions about the articles and associated reviews, please do not hesitate to email me at bokinski@cord.edu

Be grateful, be in prayer, be at peace.

Jean Bokinskie, PhD, RN

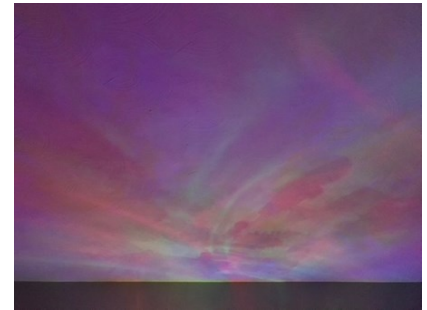
Moving into the Year and Reflecting on Colors

Annette Toft Langdon, RN, BSN, MA (Region 3)



Can you guess what this is?

As you look at this picture, what do you see?
And no, it's not the northern lights.



I took this picture from inside my home shortly before Christmas. It's actually the reflection of the Christmas lights on the ceiling in the pre-dawn light! And I wonder... has this explosion of color been there every year? If so, how did I miss it before?

As we move into the new year of 2025, where do you find your thoughts? What are you noticing that you may have missed before? Is there color... or something new that surprises you? This new year carries with it so many uncertainties, concerns, and perhaps much on our to-do lists. We may feel overwhelmed with it all... and then we find ourselves in the season of Epiphany.

Epiphany is a Greek word meaning "to be visible". It is the season of enlightenment, of seeing God's presence breaking through, bringing hope and healing. We learn of the visit of the Magi, the flight to Egypt, the beginning of Jesus' ministry along with His parables, words of wisdom and stories of healings.

As we move through this year of 2025, may we be on the watch for God's presence breaking into our world. It may be a splash of color, an unexpected kindness, or the phrase of a song or scripture that surprises our hearts... and may our hearts be open to be encouraged with God's hope and healing.

Lord, blanket the earth with your love. Snuff out hatred and let your life-giving presence take root and flourish. Help us to watch and pray for your surprises, explosions of color, and life in our world that brings hope and healing.

Questions for Pondering

What might be important to carry into this new year?

What may be good to leave in the past?

What colors your day?

What surprises you?

Where do you find hope?

LFCNA Connections

Mark Your Calendars!

Month	Date	Time	Meeting/Event	Location
Jan	9	1:30 PM CT/2:30 PM ET	Regions 4, 5, and 6 Peer Networking	Zoom
Jan	9	5 PM ET	Regions 7 and 8 Peer Networking	Zoom
Jan	10	3 pm ET	Region 9 Peer Networking	Zoom
Jan	22	12:30 pm AK Time, 1: 30 pm PT; 2:30 pm MT; 3:30 pm CT; 4:30 pm ET	LFCNA Board of Directors Meeting—contact Carol DeSchepper if you want to attend so the Zoom link can be sent.	Zoom
Jan	23	3 pm AK Time; 4 pm PT; 5 pm MT; 6 pm CT; 7 pm ET	The Faith Community's Call to Caregiving presented by Dr. Elizabeth Long	Zoom—Registration is required
Feb	6	1:30 PM CT/2:30 PM ET	Regions 4, 5, and 6 Peer Networking	Zoom
Feb	6	5 PM ET	Regions 7 and 8 Peer Networking	Zoom
Feb	20	TIME: 3:00 PM AKT/4:00 PM PT/5:00 PM MT/6:00 PM CT/7:00 PM ET (90 MINUTE EVENT via Zoom)	Navigating Anxiety with Mind, Body, and Spirit	Zoom—Registration materials will be
Feb	26	12:30 pm AK Time, 1: 30 pm PT; 2:30 pm MT; 3:30 pm CT; 4:30 pm ET	LFCNA Board of Directors Meeting—contact Carol DeSchepper if you want to attend so the Zoom link can be sent.	Zoom