

Dear fellow WELS Pastor:

If you received this letter from a church member, it is because your member desires to enroll in an online course for parish nurses offered at Wisconsin Lutheran College this summer. The course will prepare your member to serve as a parish nurse. The cost of the course is \$600.

The WELS Nursing Association has financial aid for your member to attend. The financial aid requires two conditions: a personal financial commitment to the program, and a congregational commitment to this training. We ask all students to pay the full \$600, but we offer a \$200 grant to those students whose congregations also contribute \$200. In other words, we believe that it is worthwhile to subsidize students whose congregation is supportive of this training for service to the church. Such students only pay \$200 for the course, instead of the full \$600, after both the congregation and the WELS Nursing Association grants.

This may come to you as a surprise, but I hope not. Are you aware of the benefits of training to someone in your congregation who can assist you by serving as a parish nurse? Pastor Mike Woldt of David's Star Lutheran Church in Jackson, Wisconsin, wrote a letter in support of this class. He listed these benefits:

- Good training will help them share the law and gospel message of Scripture with the people they serve.
- Good training will help them function within the framework of the congregation and in partnership with the called leaders of the church.
- Good training will help them recognize opportunities for serving God's people with the abilities they possess and the skills they have cultivated as practicing nurses.

Your member can explain more about a Parish Nursing program, if you are not familiar with how a parish nurse can be a blessing to your people.

You probably also are facing this question: your congregation's budget does not designate \$200 for parish nurse training for this year. As a fellow pastor, I encourage you to approach your leaders with a spirit of "let's make this happen" and see if money can't be found in a memorial fund, a fund for continuing education or conferences, or perhaps in a recent undesignated gift. I know church funds are always tight (I served over 30 years in parish ministry), but I also want to stress that this financial aid – which will not always be offered for a WLC course – provides your member with training at only one third the cost of what the congregation might pay if they pay 100% of continuing education courses.

May God richly bless your ministry, and may these weeks provide spiritual and physical refreshing!

In Christ,

Pastor Jim Behringer  
WELS Special Ministries