



Prairie Faith Parish Nurse News~~May 2025

*"Walking alongside individuals to meet physical, emotional and spiritual needs,
by connecting and/or creating healthy resources for their lives."*

Communication today: people share their opinions and accomplishments on Facebook, shoot a text or email to anyone, anywhere in the world in an instant, schedule a video chat with friends, family, or co-workers, post a photo on Instagram about their day, or even post a video on YouTube, Snapchat or Tik Tok. When was the last time you sat down and wrote someone a letter--or you opened your mailbox and found, not a piece of junk mail or a bill, but an actual letter from a friend or family member causing you to open it with excitement?! Are you old enough to remember the fun in grade school of having a pen pal? Today's instant communication has transformed the way we interact and has lessened the impact of the messages we want to convey. In a world where millions share their daily lives and its most insignificant details and unsolicited opinions online, it's refreshing to return to a manner of more personal expression—a hand-written personal letter!

*"Sending a handwritten letter is becoming such an anomaly. It's disappearing. My mom is the only one who still writes me letters. And there's something visceral about opening a letter - I see her on the page. I see her in her handwriting."
—Steve Carell*

So, why don't we hand write notes and letters more often? Maybe we think we don't have anything interesting to write about. During my research about the benefits of hand writing, I came across this quote: "Your thoughts don't have to go viral to be valuable!" Or, a perceived lack of time, poor handwriting, or just plain laziness may be reasons we don't write letters--but maybe, in reality, we've forgotten about the value and power of the handwritten word, not only for the recipients of our letters, but also for the writers!

For the "writer", hand writing:

- ✚ Develops fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination.
- ✚ Improves memory, critical thinking skills, and learning comprehension when note-taking. Recent neuroscience research has uncovered a distinct neural pathway that is only activated when we physically draw out letters, as compared to hitting a key on a keyboard. This neural pathway, which gets paved deeper with practice, is linked to our overall success in learning and memory.
- ✚ Improves our focus and eliminates distractions. The process of writing (and even doodling!) uses a particular part of the brain that acts as a filter to block any irrelevant information. It's been observed that hand writing is beneficial for persons with ADHD.
- ✚ Forces the writer to slow down and consider each phrase more carefully, improving our self-expression, giving us time to come up with the right words.
- ✚ Allows us to communicate complex ideas, even if our usual nature is less creative and more analytic.
- ✚ Forces us to see a train of thought out toward its conclusion.
- ✚ Develops our patience. A letter takes more time and effort to write, takes more time to reach its destination and more time to hear back from the recipient.
- ✚ Helps relieve stress, depression and anxiety. Writing by hand slows down our thoughts, boosts mindfulness and increases calm. The act of writing increases activity in parts of the brain similar to meditation. Writing by hand is so effective in combating depression and anxiety that it's often recommended by therapists; writing about one's thoughts and feelings every day for 15 to 30 minutes, can lead to measurable physical and mental health benefits, including lower stress levels, fewer depression symptoms and even improved immune function.

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For the hand-written letter's recipient:

- ✚ Receiving a letter or note in the mail helps a person feel cared for and remembered.
- ✚ Letters are tangible and are often treasured keepsakes. Handwriting is unique to each person and this makes handwritten notes and letters much more personal and valuable than email.
- ✚ A letter keeps the letter-writer on the mind of the person who received the letter, strengthening the relationship.

Sources: observations by researchers/educators from publications by:

University of Washington, Psychology Today, Forbes



You are invited to participate in the parish nurse prayer partner/pen pal ministry! If you know of someone who would enjoy receiving cards/notes throughout the year, let Nancy or one of the advisory board members know the contact information, or if you would enjoy writing to someone and remembering them in prayer, please contact Nancy for a name.

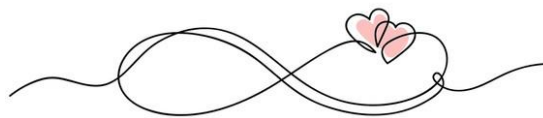


I cannot tell you why there should come to me
A thought of someone miles and years away.
In swift insistence on the memory,
(Unless there be a need that I should pray.

We are too busy even to spare a thought
For days together of some friends away.
Perhaps God does it for us: and we ought
To read His signal as a sign to pray.

Perhaps just then my friend has fiercer fight;
A more appalling weakness—a decay
Of courage, darkness, some lost sense of light.
And so in case he needs my prayer, I pray.

Dear, do the same for me! If I intrude
Unasked upon you, on some crowded day;
Give me a moment's prayer, as interlude,
Be very sure I need it; therefore pray. Amen.



Author of prayer: Marianne Farningham (1834 - 1909)



Feel free to call or email me to: schedule a confidential appointment to discuss your health/wellness questions, schedule transportation to a medical/dental/counseling appointment if you need a ride, request a prayer shawl for someone in the community going through a difficult time, request a comfort meal gift card for a friend or neighbor, locate community health resources, request other parish nurse work, or discuss your ideas for the health ministry! We welcome visitors to our meetings, and we are seeking new members for the parish nurse advisory board from the PFSM congregations and/or the community.

Nancy Bollig, RN

parishnurse@ruraltel.net

785-743-2005 (leave a message, please)