

RELIGION  
CALENDAR

If you want to submit an item for the religion calendar fax it to (734) 591-7279 or write: Religion Calendar, Observer Newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, MI 48150. The deadline for an announcement to appear in the Thursday edition is noon Monday.

**CIVIL CHORUS SHOW**  
Clarenceville United Methodist Church, in Livonia, will host the performance of The Plymouth Community Chorus at 8 p.m. Friday, June 7. Tickets are available in advance or at the door. The suggested donation is \$5. The church is located at 20300 Middlebelt, Call (248) 474-3444.

**CIVIL NEW SCHEDULE**  
Clarenceville United Methodist Church will make the following schedule change effective June 2:

Traditional Worship Service - 8:45 a.m.; Sunday School for all ages - 10 a.m.; Casual Service for "Late Risers" - 11:15 a.m. (The casual service will be replaced by a contemporary worship service in the fall)

## ON-GOING

## WIDOW/WIDOWER SUPPORT

New Hope Center for Grief Support, a Christian-based bereavement outreach center, offers support for widows and widowers with children on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The group meets at 7 p.m., at St. Kenneth's Parish offices, 14951 Haggerty, Plymouth. New Hope for Kids meets at the same time and place and is aimed at children, age 4-11. (248) 348-0115.

## Role of religion in health care is varied

When I first began this series of articles over a year ago I wrote first about the role of faith as a factor to help bring one to healing and wholeness. I wanted to revisit that topic just recently to share some of what is going on there.

Two important areas where health-care professionals and religious professionals work together are in general wellness and in medical care. In many hospitals across the country there are Spiritual or Pastoral Care Departments; they may be called Chaplaincy offices. Chaplains can be of several faiths but are very often Jewish, Muslim, or Christian, either Protestant, Catholic, or both. Most Chaplains are certified by any one of a number of a professional bodies which have national standards to accredit chaplains.

The chaplain works with both patients and staff to not only understand the physical and emotional pain present in with each patient but to offer spiritual support through visits, prayer, the offering of religious resources and religious services. The chaplain is often a crisis counselor with patients, their families, and staff. National standards of medical care in medical settings require the availability of spiritual or pastoral support. General

wellness, or raising awareness of lifestyles, patterns of living and habits which may inhibit good health and its maintenance also include the integration of one's spiritual or religious perspective as contributing to a healthy body, mind and soul.

Another area where the integration of healthcare and wellness is seen is in the network of Parish Nurses present not only in many local congregations but in hospitals as well.

Parish nurses do a variety of important tasks; they conduct education and training on various health issues, they assist the pastoral staff in the visiting of members of the congregation with health related issues, either physical or spiritual, and offer particular interventions where one's spiritual needs are integrated with emotional and physical needs. The parish nurse is a trained medical professional with advanced training in religious and spiritual study. Healing

services take on a new dimension in congregations with the input of a parish nurse. Health education for family members of all ages becomes part of congregational outreach to families with parish nurses on the staff.

In congregations where there is a mental health professional on the staff, such as the congregations in the Southeastern Michigan area where the Samaritan Counseling Center has an office, parish nurses and our pastoral psychotherapists, trained mental health professionals, work together on the specific issues around mental and spiritual needs of a congregation and its members. One area that is important to recognize and integrated both medical and psychological interventions around would be the kind of stress that a physical illness or a sudden death might bring to a family. A person with a serious medical problem often has a coexisting depression, which a medical and

mental health professional together can recognize.

The final area to look at, already suggested in the preceding paragraph, is the pastoral psychotherapist, that mental health professional who is not only trained in psychotherapy and counseling but also has done religious study as well. The advantage of such a professional is that this person is sensitized to the importance of faith, spirituality and belief systems in the overall mental health and stability of an individual, couple or family. As a lay or professional member of a congregation him/herself the pastoral psychotherapist brings to the counseling situation not only a professional understanding of the place of faith or spirituality in a person's life but also a personal experience which brings understanding of why faith is important. Just as Chaplains are accredited and adhere to national standards and codes of ethics so,

too, do pastoral psychotherapists. Samaritan Counseling Center of Southeastern Michigan is accredited by the Samaritan Institute of Denver, Colorado. Samaritan is the only accredited Service Center and Approved Training Program in Michigan of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. By holding these accreditations the public can be assured, as with chaplains and parish nurses, of competent care held to the highest standards.

When concerns of health arise it is important to acknowledge what your own particular spiritual or religious perspective is and understand how is a resource for you on your journey for health, healing, or relief of pain.

Dr. Paul Melrose is Clinical Director of the Samaritan Counseling Center of SE Michigan. He can be reached at (248) 474-4701 or at [www.paulmelrose.com](http://www.paulmelrose.com).



PAUL MELROSE

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