

Nurses Notes

By Jean Kapolnek, RN



Aging Caregivers in our Church Family

As our journey continues we have been or will be a caregiver to someone in our family or neighborhood. There are quiet heroes among us, those caring for a spouse with memory loss, a parent or adult child with a chronic illness, or a loved neighbor recovering from surgery. Caregiving is an act of deep love, but with it is exhaustion, isolation, and emotional strain. In my family we did this way sooner than I ever thought with my husband's cancer diagnosis 12 years ago. We didn't struggle silently ,but in many cases people do. Our family was all hands on deck. I am lucky to be from a large family and have an even larger in-law family. What I surely have found out since living full time in Door County is that we also have a large church family.

As a church family, we are reminded that asking for help shows a sign of faith. It is an invitation for the Body of Christ to function as it was designed. A phone call, a meal, a ride to an appointment, or simply sitting and listening can lighten a heavy load more than you realize. I was in disbelief in all the notes I received and offers of meals when I had a heavy load. In this Lenten season we are constantly reminded that our acts don't have to be big acts. As parish nurse I

encourage all who are weary to reach out. We are many and can make a big difference when we are working together.

Above all, let caregivers know they are seen, valued, and not alone. When we bear one another's burdens, we reflect Christ's compassion in tangible ways and strengthen the heart of the congregation.