



AUSTRALIAN  
FAITH  
COMMUNITY  
NURSES  
ASSOCIATION

faith in action  
hope in expression  
love in motion

# Whole Health

Volume 26 Number 2 August 2021

*I can't wait to tell you that...*

## God is our refuge.

It has been 25 years since we began supporting the health and care ministry of Faith Community Nursing. AFCNA commenced in 1996 and were incorporated in 1997. In those years God opened many opportunities for service in churches and schools and aged care facilities across Australia.

There has never been a more important time during the past 25 years than the present time of pandemic for Christian churches to support their community and care for one another: steward personal, family and community health; and willingly practice biblical justice for the sick, poor, refugee, widow, orphan. Yet AFCNA is not seeing a growth in health and pastoral care ministries in our churches. Please pray for this situation.

Our world is full of sickness, the pandemic rages on, natural disasters abound, countries are at war, there is fighting across many countries in the world, and civil unrest abounds. We see famine, injustice and greed everywhere and people are restless, agitated and angry. Australians are witnessing a rapid rise in mental illness, a new wave of COVID-19 and increased family violence. Our governments are grappling to arrest the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant whilst maintaining economic security, sustaining jobs, enabling the flow of goods and services, and keeping people supported. All these things are out of our personal control and come on top of the many personal trials people are experiencing in their own lives.

*"Rest in God alone, O my soul,  
for my hope comes from Him.  
He alone is my rock and my  
salvation; He is my fortress; I  
will not be shaken. My  
salvation and my honour rest  
on God, my strong rock; My  
refuge is in God. Trust in Him  
at all times, O people; pour  
out your hearts before Him.  
God is our refuge.'*

*[Psalm 62:5-8, Berean]*

It is easy to feel hopeless along with the rest of the community. Our Bible is full of people who were discouraged and lost hope—Job, Moses, Jeremiah, Jonah and Elijah. We have to ensure our HOPE is placed in God, for he is our REFUGE, our strength, our hiding place, and the rock on which we can safely stand in these turbulent times. Our churches can be beacons of hope, help and health, and places of safe refuge. Our church-based ministries to our community are vital, so please join me in praying for our ministry leaders, our health and pastoral care workers as we seek to be purveyors of hope, and bringers of good news and effective help in these turbulent times.



Anne van Loon RN PhD  
AFCNA Chairperson 2021

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## A prayer for these times



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HEAVENLY FATHER we thank you and praise you for watching over us. LORD, continue to watch over those who are afraid, those who weep, those who wait, those who are lost.

BLESS our work as we tend the sick, feed the hungry, shelter the vulnerable, empower the poor, heal and save where YOUR Spirit leads.

BLESS our churches, our mission, our faith community nurses and all who provide support to people in need. Help us be generous, so we can offer ourselves and our resources to meet the needs of those we are surrounded by and sustain the ministry to which you guide us.

LORD, so many are hungry to belong, to experience authentic friendship. Let us be communities of welcome and inclusion, where doors are open and hearts are full of love.

LORD, there is so much violence in our houses, our cities and our nations. God of

peace let your shalom abound in our homes, so our families and our nations will know your SHALOM.

LORD, people are lonely and afraid, in need of hope, relationship, and identity. Help us to be purveyors of hope, to show what it means to be a child of God - fully accepted and loved by our Heavenly Father, so others may know a better way of living that brings meaning, purpose and abundant life.

LORD, this pandemic is spreading like a wild fire around the globe. Let your love, peace, hope and shalom move with the same speed - freeing the oppressed, bringing healing to the hurt, light to those living in darkness, despair and self-destruction, so all may know YOU are the LIGHT of this world, in YOU there is salvation and healing, hope and a future.

LORD you promise to do so much more than we could ever dream or hope for. Our dreams for our families, our churches, our nation and our world are BIG. Hear our prayer and work your will in our lives in these troubled times.

In JESUS' precious name we pray, AMEN.

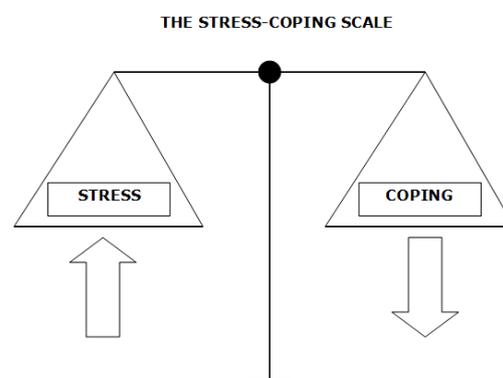
## Cope with COVID lock downs by tapping into your strengths

When life becomes stressful and you are not finding joy in what you do, or you are stressed by so many areas of global concern that are out of our control, it's time to tap into God's word and find comfort, hope and strength in Him. God has also enabled us to develop resilience, strength and coping strategies from our prior life experiences and also from what works for others. Below is a quick list for you to try (it is not exhaustive but provides options). See which ones you can use that help you cope.

Where possible you may choose to avoid the stressor and stressful situations but if not, see how you might reduce the stressors' impact on your ability to function well. If you cannot change the impact, can you change your perspective about the stressor and its impact?

It can help to **brainstorm healthy ways to cope with stress**. For example:

1. Define your triggering situations and decide which ones you can control and those you cannot control.
2. List ways you can control your situation or try to identify why you cannot control it.
3. Jot down how you can cope with that situation in the moment, or how you have coped with similar situations in the past.
4. Brainstorm ways to cope with situations that can reduce/eliminate the stress with a trusted friend, counsellor, pastor, partner, and take it all to God and ask for wisdom and help which he promises to provide.



**Choose a distraction:** write, draw, paint, take photographs, play an instrument, sing, dance, act, take a shower or a bath, garden, take a walk, go for a drive, watch a positive television program or a movie, preferably one that makes you happy or makes you laugh, watch cute videos on YouTube, play a game, go shopping, clean or organise your environment, read, hobbies...

**Choose your people:** talk to someone you trust, set boundaries and say “no”, write a note to someone you care about, be assertive, laugh, spend time with friends and/or family, do something small and positive for someone else, play with a pet, role-play a challenging situation with another, encourage others, accept compliments when they are given to you, make time to just sit and be with people you love, give and accept support from others when you need it.

**Choose your thinking:** note 3 things each day for which you are grateful and write them down in a diary, brainstorm solutions to issues with a trusted friend, lower your expectations of situations and keep them realistic, identify and address your shifting mood, keep inspirational quotes and scriptures with you and read them regularly, be flexible, write 2-3 simple goals, take a class, act opposite to your negative feelings, write a list of pros and cons for difficult decisions, reward or pamper yourself when you have success, write a list of your strengths and read it aloud every morning, understand who you are in Christ and read that daily, accept challenge with a positive attitude...

**Choose tension releasing activities:** learn how to be at peace with yourself, get enough sleep and get into a sleep routine, eat healthy foods, have a daily plan/routine, limit caffeine and alcohol, practice deep breathing, practice relaxation techniques, undertake regular simple activity, exercise or play sport, go for a walk, punch a boxing bag, cry, and laugh. Use prayer, learn to meditate, use spiritual exercises, practice reflection and introspection (for understanding an issue not dwelling on it) then pray about it, confess/repent/accept forgiveness, enjoy nature, get involved in a worthy cause and commit, share your burdens with others, especially those who have been through similar things.

**Choose to set limits:** say 'NO' when this is needed, drop some involvement if you are time poor or if the activity is causing distress. If this is impossible then prioritise important tasks first and schedule time for fun. Use assertive communication when setting limits, schedule time for yourself.

**Choose to focus on your strengths:** "Which strengths have helped you deal with negative or stressful experiences in your past?" List five strengths you gained because of that experience. Consider additional strengths. Remember when you coped, when you thrived, when you excelled and recognise God has given everyone gifts and talents, strengths and assets. When negative thinking slips in, say to yourself "I choose not to think that way about this issue?" Try to frame a positive perspective to every stressful situation, so you can see the good in every situation and perhaps even see opportunities.

**REST:** Remember God gave us all a 24 hour day. God sets the sun every day so we can rest. Keep a regular bed time and allow yourself regenerative sleep.

**RECOVER:** Keep a 'Sabbath' day to worship God and recover your spiritual strength and allow yourself to retreat from stress and distress.

**RENEW:** Take regular short times of retreat to a place of rest that allows the spirit of God to **renew** you to whole health.

**REPEAT:** God commands one day of rest each week for everyone, including you! So repeat this pattern each week so you can sustain your coping when uncontrollable situations occur.



Anne van Loon RN 2021

## A lesson from the eagle



Did you know the eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it occurs? The eagle will fly to a high point and wait for the wind to arrive. When the storm arrives, it sets its wings to the wind so it is picked up and driven higher, until the eagle soars above the storm. The eagle does not escape the storm; it uses the storm to lift it up, rising to safety above the destructive storms.

When life's stressors bring storms into our lives, we can set our mind on God so life's storms do not destroy us, but lift us higher. The Spirit of God has the power to lift us above our trials, above the winds of sickness, stress, tragedy, failure, disappointment. It is not the burden of life that holds us down and destroys us, but how we handle these burdens. When we give them to God, he enables us to rise above every storm life can throw at us.

“...but those who hope in the  
Lord will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like  
eagles; they will run and not  
grow weary, they will walk  
and not be faint.”

(Isaiah 40:31)

## Manage your social media to manage your mental health



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Lately I have seen many posts, news items and memes causing me to feel frustration, disappointment and anger. They are ignorant posts about COVID-19, pandemic restrictions, infection control and vaccinations. It seems everyone has to share their opinion even when that opinion is not factual. Some statements are patently false, others hearsay and political conjecture but seldom based on science. It's easy to despair and feel hopeless when so much mis-information and confused thinking abounds. Here are a few strategies to maintain hopefulness and faithfulness that will support your mental health during strange times.

### Evaluate what you read and see on social media platforms Ask yourself:

- **Is this newsfeed igniting hope within me, or sucking joy and hope out of me?**  
If it brings joy, hope and words of life then read/view on. If it draws life from you, reducing your hope and joy, close it. Don't give it any time, scroll on, or delete! If someone on your contact list regularly posts life-sapping news or mis-information (fake news) hide their posts from your newsfeed, or defriend them. Such people jeopardise your mental health.
- **Is the post a positive or negative focus?**  
Read positive posts and consider the content. Leave positive comments that encourage and build up one another. If it's negative, use the snooze, hide, or defriend options.
- **Does the post contribute to positive living?**  
Posts that provide or engender positive solutions to your situation are worth reading. Posts that provoke outrage or pedal misinformation should be deleted. Don't engage in such conversations as they will bring you down or ignite frustration. Ignore the thread. Move on.

### Consider your own posts carefully. Before you post/share a thought, opinion, meme, you should fact check if needed. Ask yourself:

- **Is this true?**  
Fact-check information and evaluate the site it comes from or fact check on sites such as [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com). Get facts from reputable, substantiated, evidence-based websites and always think through the faith implications of your posts. When you pray before you post and ask God for wisdom you are less likely to respond in ways you might regret.
- **Is this encouraging and positive?**  
If it is, post it. If it is not, rewrite the post so it is positive, don't post it, or remove it.
- **Is it enriching or up-building?**  
If it is, post it. If it sows discord, discontent or false information, DON'T! Use Philippians 4:8 as a filter: "...whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

We can use this as a guide for all our communication. Just manage your exposure to social media to care for your mental health.

## 10 ways to nurture your spirit

It can be challenging to sustain your mental and spiritual health and hopefulness at this challenging time in our world. FCNS may find it difficult to get Health and Pastoral Care Ministry established and sustained at this time. To keep going for the long haul you must practise good self-care and responsible stewardship of your whole health. You must nurture your spirit to sustain a healthy relationship with God, your loving heavenly Father. This will enable you to keep your heart full of God's love and your ministry reflective of Jesus Christ.

### 1. Trust in the LORD

You can have confidence in the LORD (Prov. 14:26) because we have nothing to fear. The Spirit of God lives in you and will sustain you and enable you to love and care with power and self-discipline, so you and your ministry remain resilient (2 Tim. 1:7). Additionally, God promises that if you remain/abide in him, your ministry will bear fruit.

*"But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." (Jer. 17:7-8)*

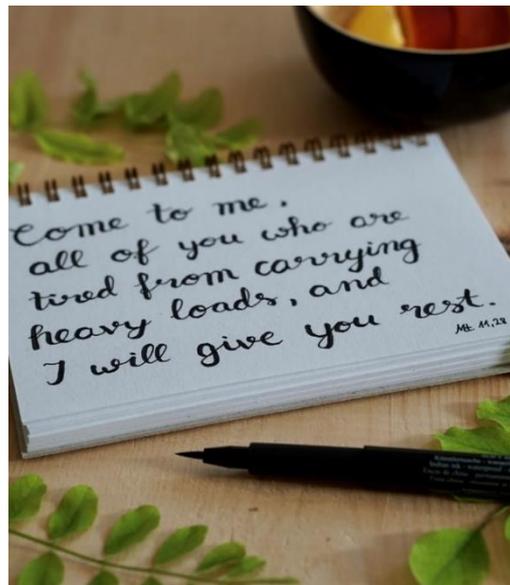


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### 2. Know God

We can know about God from his word the Bible, but we get to know God when we have a personal relationship with him. For example, I may know about the prime minister of Australia, but I can't say I know him. I would have to meet him personally, and share life with him to say I know him. God lets us know himself and He wants to know us, so we can do life together, now and forever.

God became a human person in Jesus to show us who he really is, so we can have a relationship with God the Father (John 14: 6, 21-23). Then he left his Spirit, which indwells us when we believe in him (Titus 3:5; 2 Peter 1:4, Rom. 8:26-27; Gal. 5:22-23).

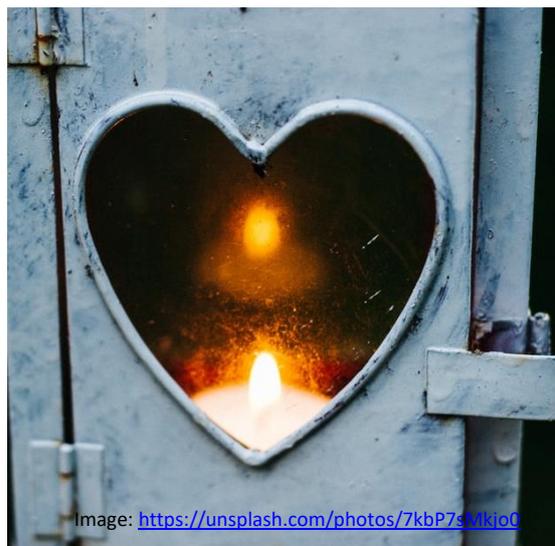
So to nurture your spirit and know God, read his word in the Bible, pray/talk to God, spend time with God in study, retreat, and just being in relationships with him.



*"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them." (John 14:21)*

### 3. Guard your heart

The Bible uses the heart to describe the part of humans that is spiritual, mental/emotional and physical. From our heart we choose for God or against God, and from that choice flow our behaviours. The heart in scripture is the seat of our conscience (Rom. 2: 15), free will and emotional life. In contemporary understanding we would term the heart as our mind, character and personality.<sup>1</sup> It is the centre of the whole person and from it springs forth life (Prov. 4:23). Our human spirit comes to fullness of life when we surrender our heart to God, who also has a heart that desires and loves us, and directs His behaviour toward us (Acts 13:22; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 John 3:20).



Scripture says much sin originates in the heart (Mark 7:21-23), so much so that God says he must "remove the heart of stone" and replace it with "a heart of flesh" (Ez. 36:26). Scripture often classifies the heart of people e.g. good, upright, clean, pure, contrite, tender, steadfast, wise (Ps. 51:10,17; 32:11; 57:10; Deut. 5:29; 2 Chron. 34:27; Prov. 14:30; 15:13; 17:22) and hard, bitter, stubborn, deceitful and many more descriptors (2 Chron. 25:19; 26:16; 36:13; Prov. 21:4, Ez.14:4, 7; Heb. 3:8,15; 4:7; Ps. 11:2, 24:4; 73:21; 81:12; 95:10; Jer. 17:9, Matt. 5:8; Luke 6:45; 8:15, Acts 7:39).

We are to guard our heart and protect it from becoming misguided, lost and deceived. We can do this by seeking a heart after God's own (1 Sam. 13:14; Phil. 2:20). We have to let Christ govern our heart. Stay focused on God's word and let it soak into our heart, read it, meditate on it, memorise it, and above all put it into action by living it. Obey what God commands and serve Him with our whole heart.

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7)

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:9-11)

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight." (Prov. 3:5).

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<sup>1</sup> Bolin, B., 2012, 'The heart and the mind ~ what the biblical word "heart" means (notable work)', 07/06/12, <https://faithbibleministriesblog.com/2012/07/06/the-heart-and-the-mind-what-the-biblical-word-heart-means/>

#### 4. Watch your thoughts

Our attitude is shaped by our thinking and if we want to become more like Jesus Christ then we need to focus our thinking and this will impact our words and actions, which in turn forge our character, so we (and our ministry) more closely reflect Jesus.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”  
(Phil. 4:8)

Satan is called the ‘father of lies’ (John 8:44) and the great deceiver (2 Cor. 11:13, Rev. 20:3). He will seek to undermine our thought-life so we mistrust God and start to rely on ourselves. Satan distracts our thinking, so we become discouraged, fearful, uncertain and perhaps anxious, and eventually hopeless, which can lead us to give up our ministry.

Alternatively, Satan deceives us into thinking our ministry depends on us, and we may become self-reliant, busy, and so activity-focused that it diminishes our prayer life and our reliance on the Spirit of God disabling us from discerning God’s will and serving in his strength. To defend and protect ourselves we need to clothe ourselves with the full armour of God (Eph. 6:10-12) to ensure we are not deceived and keep full reliance on the God’s truth so we can be his vessels. This requires time for reflection on our actions and our ministry. We must then confess our shortcomings and sins, repent from them and lean into our heavenly Father again so our lives and our ministry stay centred on God, then we will be ready and able to do his good work.

“Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonourable, he will be a vessel for honourable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.” (2 Tim. 2:21)



Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/EPpmQg24lpk>

“Watch your thoughts, they become your words;  
watch your words, they become your actions;  
watch your actions, they become your habits;  
watch your habits, they become your character;  
watch your character, it becomes your destiny.”

— Lao Tzu2 Quote. Goodreads.com. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/8203490-watch-your-thoughts-they-become-your-words-watch-your-words>

## 5. Transform your mind

The only way to replace our worldly thinking with godly thinking is to go to the source of God's truth, His word, the Bible. Transformation is not something we can do; it is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. The Spirit enables us to "behold the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:16-18). Our role is to expose our mind to God's truth by hearing it, having it exposed at church, reading it, singing it, meditating on it, studying it. We must then pray that the Spirit of God would open our hearts to receive God's word, discern his will and allow our mind to be transformed, our spirit nurtured and our lives empowered to move forward in freedom as a new creation in Christ.



**"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Rom. 12:2)**

**"And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2 Cor. 3:18)**

## 6. Cultivate a strong prayer life

To nurture your spirit you should maintain your connections to the LORD with prayer. It is with our hearts we choose to live for God, connect to him and speak with him. Prayer is neither prescriptive nor an art-form<sup>1</sup>. It is our heart turning with honesty and faith toward our LORD to share life with him and express our love, praise, joy, thanks, wonder, worry, disappointment, anguish, defeat, longing, needs, etc. Prayer can be long, short, audible, even our groans or our silence... the only requirement is that it is sincere. We can pray alone or together, with a person and for a person. We can sing, recite, read, quote scripture (Matt. 6: 9-13), or simply speak in a conversation from our heart. Just take some time every day to be still in the presence of God and speak to him.



**"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**

**"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." (1 John 5:14)**

**"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." (Col. 4:2)**

**"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth." (Psalm 145:18)**

## 7. Care for your body

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit so care for it in the way you would care for an amazing and precious temple that God entrusted you to look after. Nourish it with the right food and water. Move it with intention and exercise it well to maintain whole health. Let your body feel, experience, and enjoy the many wonders of the creation, because it brings healing, restoration and spiritual nurture. Give it quality rest both physically, emotionally and spiritually.

“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.” (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” (1 Cor. 9:24-27)



Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/r38u2Uq1AXk>

## 8. Take regular rest

Health and pastoral care ministry can be 'Go! Go! Go!' Therefore, it is important to recognise you cannot minister from an empty love cup. You can't fill your love cup in your own strength. Only God - who is love, can fill your cup with his love. That means we need to turn to him for rest, refuelling and renewal, so we have the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual strength and vitality to bring God's love to those to whom he sends us. The Hebrew word 'sabat' means "to rest, stop, or cease from work"(Gen 2:3; Mark 2:27; Heb. 4). We should set aside a day each week for Sabbath rest as scripture commands. We can rest in God's creation and sit in wonder, gratitude and worship of our amazing LORD. We can ensure we sleep enough restful hours. We can find rest in God's presence through prayer and meditation. The important thing is to recognise we all need rest and we can always find complete rest in God (Psalm 23).

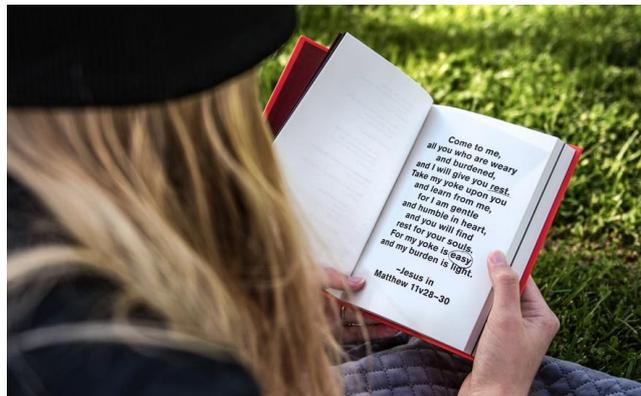


Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/nRV1zFRIn0M>

“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest.” (Prov. 6:10)

“Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28)

## 9. Live an abundant life



Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/LEgwEaBVGMo>

So much of today's life in our country consists of a full calendar, a full wardrobe, a full house, a full garbage bin... and we need to spend time that we don't have decluttering.

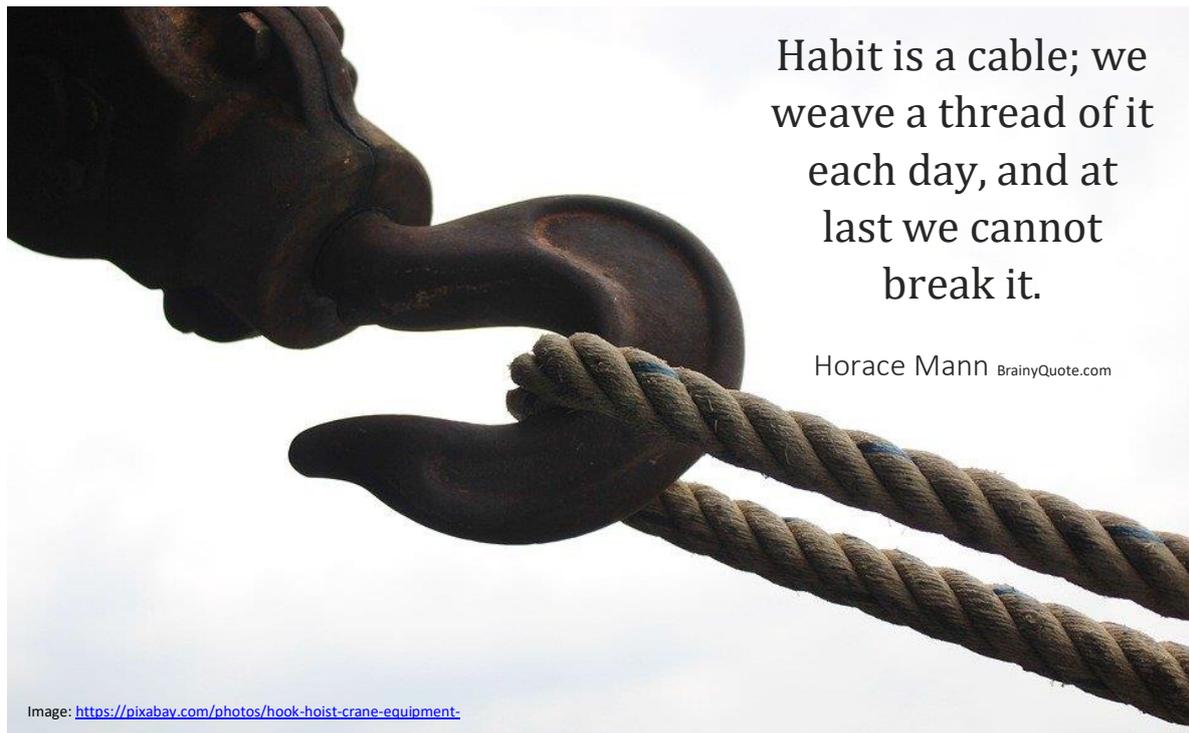
When scripture says Jesus came to give us a full/abundant life it doesn't mean a life full of 'things' that encumber it; it means freedom to be and live following Jesus. In an abundant life with Jesus we experience full hope, full forgiveness from sin, full victory over guilt and shame, full access to the Spirit of God and a harvest of the Spirit's fruit in our life—"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22). We are free to live our life with vision, purpose, intention and LOVE.

We may need to declutter the calendar so we can experience the fullness of life we have in Jesus Christ. Make sure you create a habit of setting aside time to read God's word, to pray, spend time in his creation and allow yourself to experience abundant life in Jesus Christ.

**"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)**

**"Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return." (Luke 6:38)**

## 10. Now do it!



Habit is a cable; we  
weave a thread of it  
each day, and at  
last we cannot  
break it.

Horace Mann BrainyQuote.com

Image: <https://pixabay.com/photos/hook-hoist-crane-equipment->

The question is, how will *you* nurture *your* spirit so you can sustain service in God's health and pastoral care ministry? It is easy to read this and think, 'Yes, I agree!' but to make the changes that create the habit requires setting the goal, consistently practising the activity and daily discipline and focus to stop the world from distracting you from your goal. Remember a habit is like a cable, every day you lay a thread until it cannot break. It's up to each one of us to nurture our spirit as a priority, so we can be effective servants for God.

Please pray regarding these 10 suggestions on spiritual nurture and ask God to open your heart and speak through his word to you. Then read the accompanying Bible verses for each of the suggestions and see which resonate for your personal life and service for God. Then create 1-2 goals to action the suggestions.

*"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." (2 Cor. 9:8)*

*"Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." (Col. 4:2-6)*

*May "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:7)*

Anne van Loon RN PhD 2021

## Is your fridge prepared for an emergency?

The question 'Is your fridge prepared for an emergency?' is not asking if your fridge is stocked with food to ensure you can eat during a pandemic lockdown. This question is asking if your fridge is prepared for your medical emergency.

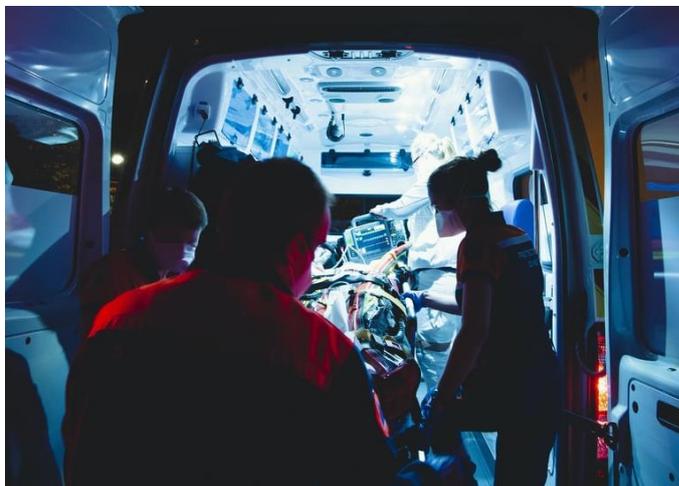


Photo by [Mat Napo](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Did you know that ambulances calling to your house instruct their paramedics to look at your fridge for your emergency health information? The *Emergency Medical Information Book* is a small booklet that comes in a plastic sleeve with a strip magnet so it can attach to your fridge door. It should be completed with your details and your disease-specific action plans, carer information, instructions for your medical conditions, and your emergency

contact details. This is invaluable information for your immediate treatment and ambulance personnel will take it to hospital to assist health care providers with information that can inform your care.

### Emergency Medical Information Book (EMIB)

The original concept for the Emergency Medical Information Book <https://emib.org.au/> came from the SA Ambulance Service Modbury Team in 1999 and the booklets are produced as a community service project by Rotary, Lions Clubs and the Ambulance Service. Over 1.4 million have been distributed in Australia. There is a wallet edition available that you can take with you when you are out and about.

“All people, adults and children who ‘take medications or have a medical condition’ should have an EMIB, especially elderly people living on their own.”<sup>2</sup> Books with completed medical history and a current list of medications are important for people who have diabetes, a history of stroke or cardiovascular issues, renal conditions and allergies.

### What does the EMIB contain?

- Front cover: your name and the date your book was started
- First page: instructions for completing the booklet. You can get help to complete the booklet from a carer, a relative or a Faith Community Nurse. You can ask your doctor for your latest medical summary and they may check your information is recorded accurately.
- Patient information: includes your Advance Care Directive (or similar title in other states) with details of your substitute decision maker.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://emib.org.au/recognised-by-the-council-of-ambulance-authorities/>

Medication list: This must be kept updated at all times.

Medical Conditions: known allergies and your Medic Alert ID details. The last page includes details of your 'service providers and patient history'. Completing the service provider section identifies the names and contact details of your medical specialists and allied health professionals involved in your care. Your local doctor's details are recorded in the patient information section and they may be contacted in an emergency to provide additional health information.

In summary the EMIB helps paramedics provide a quick response to your care, identifying pre-existing medical conditions, medication risks, and this really helps hospital staff make health care decisions and to complete your admission paperwork quickly and to contact your family in an emergency.

### The role of the FCN in emergency planning

As a Faith Community Nurse, you can promote the use of these emergency planning resources to people in your church and community and assist them to fill them out. Helping people to complete the booklet opens up conversations about health and wellbeing and will help you complete a holistic nursing assessment.

As an FCN you can explore what the person knows and understands about their health and identify gaps to support them. Completing the medication list can be a discussion starter regarding what the person knows and understands about their medications and how to administer them. In such discussions you can identify who is involved in the person's care and whether they might need help to navigate the care systems. As an FCN you can talk about emergency planning, advanced care planning, pet care, carer's plan, action plans for emergencies, the use of Medic Alerts and personal alarms etc.

### Where do I get copies of the EMIB book?



The EMIB can be ordered by individuals and organisation from the EMIB website <https://emib.org.au/Organisations can order> in batches of the booklet and a display box. Mine came with my business name printed on the front so you can use them to advertise your FCN role. The display boxes hold approximately 50 books and by requesting a gold coin donation for each book, the project can become self-funding.<sup>3</sup> Your church may like to order batches of books as a community service that supports your FCN ministry.

<sup>3</sup> <https://emib.org.au/about-emib/>

## Where can you get other help from for emergencies?

FCNs can help people prepare for an emergency using the EMIB booklet but there are other things an FCN can discuss with a person to facilitate their emergency care planning.

### Medic Alert ID

All people who have serious and/or life-threatening health conditions, allergies (especially to medication) and some high-risk medications should wear an emergency Medic Alert ID that informs health workers of their condition and relevant treatment information. A Medic Alert ID looks like jewelry worn as a wrist bracelet or necklace. It informs first responders and the health care team to the person's condition, medical history, allergies, and medications. Find out more here: <https://www.medicalert.org.au/>



### Emergency plan for people who are carers

Carers can become ill and they may suddenly be taken to hospital. Therefore it is important that a plan is developed to provide care instructions that support the person for whom they care in their absence. FCNs can facilitate this planning by asking these questions:

- Will the person being cared for be able to manage if left home alone while the emergency care plan is actioned? Will they need immediate support or transfer to another care option?
- What alternative care options are there? Who needs to be contacted and how?
- Who provides the existing service arrangements that are in place? What are their contact details and how do you contact them?
- With the carer unable to provide care, what additional tasks can/will these services provide and how should this be enacted?
- How long can the person manage at home with same level of care before additional service must commence?
- Has the person been ACAT assessed and/or approved for respite care? Where will this take place, by whom and what is the referral process and contact details?



Image: <https://pixabay.com/photos/hands-old-old-age-elderly-4344711/>

The Carers Gateway can assist in seeking emergency respite—phone 1800 422 737 or website <https://www.carerssa.com.au/how-can-we-help/emergency-respite/>. The Carers

Gateway provides a downloadable Emergency Care Plan that “makes it easy for someone to take over your loved one’s care as quickly as possible. It compiles all the information about the person’s care in one place so it can be accessed quickly and easily.”<sup>4</sup>

Download the plan and wallet cards for the person being cared for and the carer here:

<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/document/256>

The emergency care plan collects the contact details of the people to be reached in an emergency. It notes the care needs of the person being cared for, including medical information, service provider contact details, medication list, and carer emergency cards. The person can complete as many of these sections as they need – the decision is theirs. An FCN can support the completion of such cards by older people and vulnerable people within their faith community.<sup>5</sup>

People who have an EMIB should write in red pen on the front cover of the person’s EMIB booklet, the name of their carer, contact details and a note stating where the emergency plan for that person is kept.

Copies of the plan should be given to the person’s emergency contacts. The FCN may agree to be one of those contacts for people who have no family close by.

### My Pet is home alone card



People who live alone with their pets can be reluctant to seek assistance from health care services because they are worried about what will happen to their pet if they are not home.<sup>6</sup>

ACT Ambulance service worked with other organisations to produce wallet cards that form part of a person’s emergency care plan regarding pet care. This card should be kept with medications and other paperwork so Ambulance personnel can locate it easily. One side of the wallet card alerts people to the presence of a pet, and the other provides contact information for 1-2 people who can step in and care for the pet while the owner is absent. The card may also be kept in the person’s wallet or as a key tag.

Photo by Ken G on Unsplash

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.carergateway.gov.au/help-advice/planning>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.carergateway.gov.au/document/256>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.racgp.org.au/afp/2012/june/the-pet-effect/>

## Advanced Care Planning

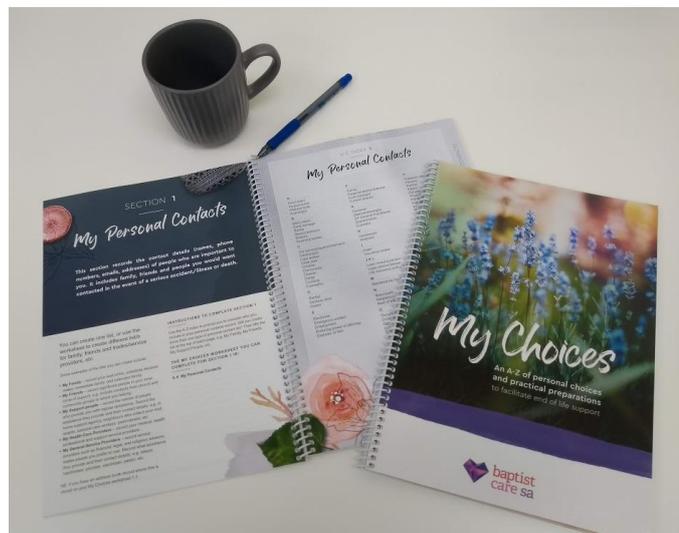
Advance care planning ensures your family and health care providers know your health and personal care preferences. You should start preparing this well in advance by thinking about what you want. It does not need to be complicated or lengthy but it should reflect YOUR wishes. Having that conversation might be challenging and difficult, but there are hints on [starting the conversation](#) here. The legal document is



an [advance care directive](#) and this form varies between states and territories. The information specific to your state or territory is available at [Advance Care Planning Australia](#). You can also **upload your advance care plan to [My Health Record](#)** so it's available for doctors and health services when/if it is ever needed. Learn more here <https://www.advancecareplanning.org.au/>

## 'My Choices' resources

There is an excellent resource that FCNs can use with their congregations published by Baptist Care SA. 'My Choices' poses the question, 'If something were to happen to you today, are you practically prepared for someone to manage your affairs and ensure your care preferences are fulfilled?' If not, the 'My Choices' resource provides an A-Z of topics for which people can make practical preparations that facilitate quality end of life support.



An FCN or pastoral care worker can run a workshop that helps people talk about dying and think through their preferred support and care preferences as they age and/or move toward end of life. Remember talking about dying will not make it happen any faster, so people have nothing to fear by opening up this discussion.

The 'My Choices' guide book (costs \$15 plus postage) and provides a colour case study exemplar illustrating how the various A-Z lists are used and how the various forms may be completed by participants. The editable forms and A-Z lists can be download free from Baptist Care SA <https://baptistcaresa.org.au/resources/my-choices-resource> as a community service.

Vicky Legge RN 2021

## Case study: Thelma and Ian



Image: <https://pixabay.com/photos/man-dog-company-grandfather-2680910/>

Ian cares for Thelma who has diabetes, heart disease, poor eyesight and unstable angina. He has support for cleaning and they receive Meals on Wheels two days each week to give Ian a break from cooking. They live in their own home with their active dog Millie and Max, their snoozy cat.

Ian had an unexpected hospital visit for diverticulitis and although Thelma had an action plan to manage her diabetes and an emergency plan to manage her angina, they had no plans in place for supporting Thelma in Ian's sudden absence. They contacted Sally, their Faith Community Nurse and she supported them through that situation and then helped them become better prepared for any future emergencies.

Sally supplied them with two copies of the '[Emergency Medical Information Book](#)' (EMIB) and supported Ian and Thelma to complete their information. She asked them to get a copy of their most recent health summaries from the GP to assist in that process and they used Ian's diary to help work out who was involved in their care by looking at what medical and allied health professional appointments they had over the past year.

In chatting about advanced care planning, Sally discovered that Ian and Thelma had completed plans five years ago, but they had no idea where the plans were, or whether they were up-to-date, as one of their children had moved overseas three years prior and she was their nominated substitute decision maker.

Sally downloaded the [Emergency Care Plan](#) from Carers SA and used this to create an emergency care plan for Thelma should Ian need to go to hospital again.

In the ensuing discussions Thelma said she was happy to manage at home by herself for a few days. She would require a couple of hours additional support each day and a daily lunch supplied by Meals on Wheels. They added the contact details of the support services she used to supervise her shower, do some cleaning and check her medications, and do odd jobs. These activities were listed in the plan to guide her service providers.

Contact details for Meals on Wheels were added to the plan and Ian stocked a box in the freezer with some of her favourite meals so she could heat them in the microwave.

Thelma's plan reflected that if Ian was away from home for more than two days extra supports could be organised for grocery shopping and potentially respite care for Thelma via their care agency. All the phone numbers were listed in the plan and a comment added about who to contact to organise respite care.

Thelma was concerned about not being able to care for their dog that needed lots of exercise, so they added into the emergency care plan the name of a friend who had agreed to walk their dog. If Thelma went into respite care, the plan included the names of local pet sitters who knew their dog and the details of their neighbours, who agreed to feed and care for the cat while they were away.

Ian completed the wallet card so that in the event that he was taken to hospital they knew he was Thelma's primary carer. Sally wrote in red pen on Ian's EMIB that he was Thelma's carer and that emergency plan was placed in Ian's EMIB wallet.

As well as putting the plan in the plastic sleeve with Ian's EMIB, a copy was given to the family who were listed as emergency contacts, as they will be the people enacting the plan which guides them to the services Thelma and Ian use, who to contact and how to mobilise the plan. Sally, the faith community nurse had her name and number on this list so she could mobilise pastoral care and support for Ian and Thelma should the need arise.

Vicky Legge RN 2021

## AFCNA goals for 2021

The space between vision and reality involves ACTION and AFCNA needs YOU.

### **MEMBERSHIP: Grow the number of committed members**



AFCNA is a charity run entirely by volunteers. We need your membership to support our work. Your donations go to resource the mission and ministry. Without membership growth AFCNA cannot reach future potential FCNs.

### **EDUCATION: Facilitate new Faith Community Nurses (FCNs) via our Education Hub**



There are significant costs for software licenses, website upgrading, platform hosting fees, Zoom conferencing charges. If you have donations or skills to donate that can support AFCNA in this area please talk to us.

### **PROMOTION: We want to keep promoting the opportunities an FCN can bring to churches and communities and recruit nurses to prepare for this ministry.**



We need a refined marketing plan and fresh advertising material. If you have graphic design expertise and/or skills in marketing we would love your assistance. Please talk to AFCNA about how we can work together.

### **CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: We want to grow AFCNA's education hub with quality, affordable, Christ-centred continuing education**



If you have knowledge, expertise and qualifications in nursing/health/theology and you can donate your time and knowledge to develop a short course for FCNs and churches to take, AFCNA would like to hear from you.

### **PUBLICATION: We want to get polished AFCNA promotional material**



This is expensive and beyond our budget capacity at this time. AFCNA wants professional publications that promote the FCN role for churches and for nurses. We need graphic design, publishing support and finances to achieve this goal.

### **PRAYER: WE desperately need prayer warriors who will hold AFCNA Board and its ministry before the throne of God in your personal and group prayer**



AFCNA is keen to establish an active AFCNA Prayer Network to sustain the ministry and members. We need a volunteer who would be willing to organise and coordinate this support. Is God calling you to support us in this way?

## AFCNA Annual General Meeting

**When:** Fri September 17th 2021 at 7.00 pm  
**Where:** Zoom at 7 pm (AEST)  
**Speaker:** Jacqui Bowden  
**Topic:** Navigating Community Aged Care; How a Faith Community Nurse can help



AUSTRALIAN  
FAITH  
COMMUNITY  
NURSES  
ASSOCIATION

Join us to hear what action AFCNA is undertaking and how you can join in,

At 8 pm our guest speaker, Jacqui Bowden, a registered nurse and former AFCNA Board member with years of experience in the regulation and management of aged care, will help us understand how aged care packages work so we can effectively support our ageing church and community members to navigate the aged care system.

**RSVP** via email and we will provide Zoom details.

P: 0409 921 337

E: [afcna@outlook.com](mailto:afcna@outlook.com)

W: [www.afcna.org.au](http://www.afcna.org.au)



## Bringing faith to community nursing and nursing to the faith community

## Our new online regional 'Community of Practice' for FCNs

In 2021 AFCNA has commenced an online *Community of Practice*. We had our first meeting in March and we would love you to join us when we next meet at 7 pm AEST on Wed 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021. We connect via Zoom so we can meet across this vast country and even include other countries in our region to share joys, problems, solve challenges, encourage one another, share resources and pray for one another. If you would like to join together with other interested Faith Community Nurses let us know on [afcna@outlook.com](mailto:afcna@outlook.com) and we will forward the Zoom link to our email.

### Why are communities of practice important?

Communities of practice provide several critical functions.<sup>7</sup> They:

1. **Educate** by collecting and sharing information on practice questions and issues
2. **Support** by organising interactions and collaboration between members
3. **Cultivate** by assisting groups to start and sustain their learning
4. **Encourage** by sharing members' work (and in our case praying for one another)
5. **Integrate** by encouraging members to put their knowledge into action for real change in their own FCN/health and pastoral care ministry.
6. **Praying** for one another is an added function AFCNA includes.



Don't forget members can also connect to an international community of practice via the international Knowledge Platform hosted by the Westberg Institute. Go to [www.community.westberginstitute.org](http://www.community.westberginstitute.org) and request an invitation. Further details of how you access this are in the *Members' Area* on the AFCNA website [www.afcna.org.au](http://www.afcna.org.au).

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<sup>7</sup> Wenger, McDermott and Snyder. *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2002. Accessed 26 February 2021, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2855.html>

## Professional development opportunities

### AFCNA Education Hub

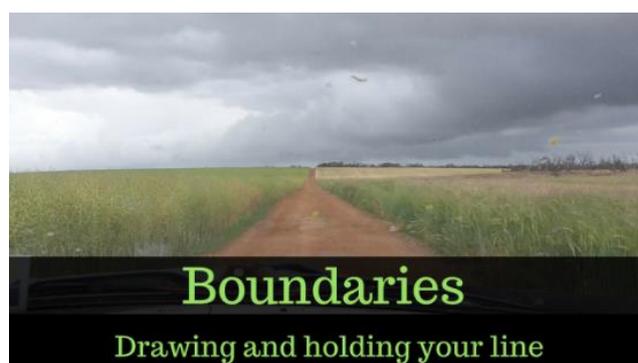
Check out and show others the **AFCNA Education Hub** courses



**[Introductory Pack](#)** FREE *Introducing Faith Community Nursing* booklet and fact sheets

**['Introducing Faith Community Nursing'](#)** FREE online course of 1 hour re FCN role

**['Foundation of Faith Community Nursing'](#)** course – 36 contact hour online course has just commenced. You can find out more and register your interest in the next course on the website.



**Boundaries:** a FREE short course

<https://afcna.teachable.com/p/boundaries>



**Lifelines—**a Christian journaling workshop

<https://afcna.teachable.com/p/life-lines>



**How to make a change that sticks**

<https://afcna.teachable.com/p/how-to-make-a-change-that-sticks>



### **Restoring Balance**

avoiding compassion fatigue

<https://afcna.teachable.com/p/restoring-balance-avoiding-compassion-fatigue-1>

AFCNA Members can access courses at discounted prices. Log into the Members' area on the website. Find the ['log in'](#) button in top menu.

### **Lutheran Pastoral Care News**

AFCNA would like to thank Angela Uhrhane for her work in coordinating Pastoral Care Nursing in the Lutheran Church of Australia. Angela has stepped aside from that position to focus on carer responsibilities for her ageing parents and her mother-in-law. Angela continues to serve on the AFCNA Board and has brought considerable wealth of knowledge re aged care to our Foundations course where she teaches several modules. We are very grateful for her willingness to share her knowledge with future FCNs. Angela served for many years as a Pastoral Care Nurse in the Lutheran church in Wodonga, Victoria and more recently at Lutheran Aged Care in Albury. She was recognised for her outstanding service in those roles as the inaugural Lutheran Nurse of the Year in 2020. God bless you and keep you Angela as you continue to serve where you are called.

### **Saline Process Online Training (SPOT)**

The Saline Process healthcare witness training is designed to equip and mobilize Christian healthcare workers as witnesses of the love and reality of Jesus at the bedsides and in the clinics where they work. It can now be undertaken online.



It is an international training program jointly conducted in Australia by Nurses Christian Fellowship (NCF) and Christian Medical and Dental Fellowship (CMDFA). Saline Process training programs are delivered live by qualified trainers (in-person or video conferencing). A free, self-paced [online version](#) is available as a useful pre- or post-course supplement to live courses. To enrol in the FREE course, visit [spot.ihsglobal.org](http://spot.ihsglobal.org).

Inquiries: [nca.salineprocess@protonmail.com](mailto:nca.salineprocess@protonmail.com)

The next full day Saline Process Witness Training will be held in Newcastle NSW and via Zoom) on Saturday 23 October, 2021 8:30 am to pm.

Trainers: Georgie Hoddle, Catherine Hollier, Gabi Macaulay and Michael Burke

## Luke's Journal - for Christian health workers

This journal produced by the Christian Medical and Dental Fellowship Australia (CMDFA) has many excellent articles of great relevance to Faith Community Nurses and Christian health workers generally.

The June 2021 issue focused on Palliative Care. With debate around Euthanasia occurring in much of our nation, it is worth reading this edition. There are excellent articles and book reviews. They also point out two resources produced by CMDFA on the case for Palliative Care and not euthanasia which is sensitively and expertly discussed by Dr Megan Best in: [Euthanasia](#) (booklet form<sup>8</sup>) and [End of Life care](#) seminar (in six 20-minute podcasts<sup>9</sup>). They are a valuable resource that brings reason to the debate.



Christians can start to respond by being the good news: “They will know we are Christians by our love” are Jesus’ words. Christians will love their neighbours as themselves. We will enter our community with respect, compassion, patience and hope. Many cry out: “Send somebody to love me!” As we love, we will kindly remind our neighbours of the good news. The incentive for serving needy neighbours is that this is both the way to follow Christ but also a way to encounter Christ himself”

Dr Paul Mercer, Voluntary Assisted Dying, [Luke's Journal 2021 | Dying & Palliative Care | Vol.26 No.2](#)

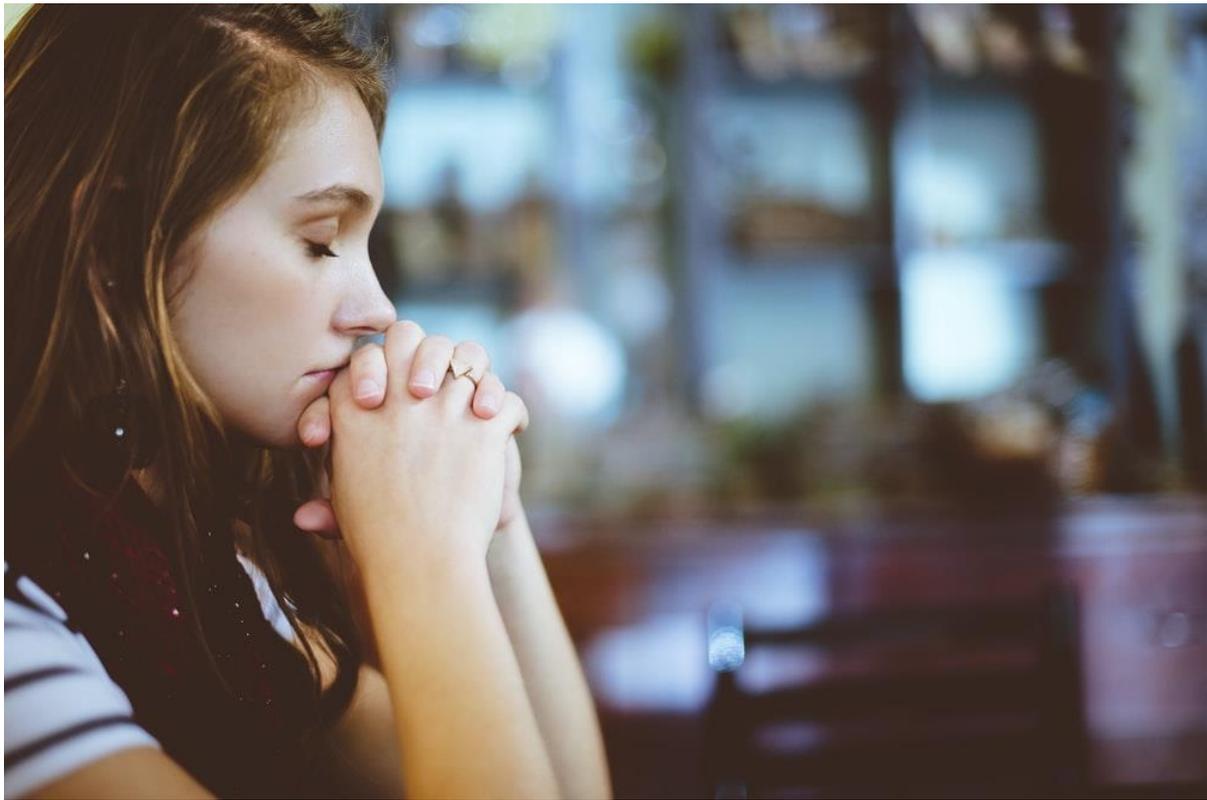
“Compassion starts with care. Care offers hope and, with Palliative Care, the tri-unity of spirit, soul and body come together to encourage the growth that brings a good death.”

Dr Michael Nicholson, CMDFA End of Life Resources, [Luke's Journal 2021 | Dying & Palliative Care | Vol.26 No.2](#)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cmdfa.org.au/articles/euthanasia-response&nbsp;nbsp;>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cmdfa.org.au/ethics>

## Prayer Points



- Thank God COVID-19 vaccinations are starting to move through the world. Pray that many countries where the pandemic is raging will get vaccinations. Pray for our global health workers who are really on the frontline battling against this pandemic.
- Pray that churches will see the MANY opportunities faith community nursing can provide to respond well to the health concerns we are experiencing globally.
- Pray AFCNA's vision for more nurses preparing to be FCNs. Pray AFCNA marketing reaches God's intended hearers.
- Pray AFCNA will get the financial support it urgently needs.
- Pray for AFCNA's students doing the online Foundations course as they use the knowledge to benefit the health of their community.
- Pray for NCFCA as they undertake their AGM this quarter and NCFI as they progress the FCN course coordinated coordinated by Alicia Banas.
- Pray for FCNs and Christian nursing colleagues across the globe.
- Pray for AFCNA and NZFCNA boards as they undergo their AGMS. Both organisations need to make difficult decisions about future directions for the organisations and require wisdom, vision and Spirit-filled guidance as to future direction that is God's will.

## Donations

### We need and value your donation



Image: <https://unsplash.com/photos/oqStl2L5oxl>

AFCNA is grateful to receive every donation. It enables us to facilitate Faith Community Nursing. We value your partnership as a significant and vital way of enabling us to continue to grow and develop Faith Community Nursing in Australia and beyond.



#### Our Aims

- Provide education, resources and networking for nurses in faith communities
- Provide resources, education and consultancy to faith communities
- Liaise with government and other organisations to further FCN ministry
- Facilitate FCNs in meeting their professional practice requirements

#### You can give a gift as a:

- Tribute to honour a person
- Thanksgiving gesture
- Part of your tithe
- Gift for a special occasion (birthday, anniversary, retirement, birth)
- Just because you can.



#### You can make a one-off donation or you may wish to donate on a regular basis via:

- **AFCNA Website** at <https://afcna.org.au/donate/>
- **Direct Deposit:** Australian Faith Community Nurses Association Inc.
- **New Account:** BSB **704-922** Account: **100012768** Please insert your name as reference code and mark as 'Gift Fund' donation.
- **Post cheque to:** AFCNA (Attention Treasurer): PO Box 2707, Kent Town DC, SA 5071.

## AFCNA membership

### It's a new financial year and time to renew your membership.

We invite you to commence or renew your AFCNA membership. From July 2021 AFCNA our membership contribution is \$50 per year (and \$30 / year for concession card holders). Your membership allows AFCNA to keep you networked with Whole health magazine, e-newsletters, website with many resources, access to online education via our digital hub, and 'members only' content at [www.afcna.org.au](http://www.afcna.org.au). Your fees enable us to support FCNs and keep an ecumenical Christian presence in the profession of nursing via our membership of the Council of National Nursing and Midwifery organizations.



**Please renew your membership and invite others to join us** as we seek to develop health and pastoral care ministry with churches via faith community nurses.

You can sign up and pay via the net at <http://afcna.org.au/members-options/> or complete and send us the form below, paying with a cheque or via internet transfer.

#### Australian Faith Community Nurses Association MEMBERSHIP 2021

Name ..... Address .....  
..... Postcode ..... Phone (.....).....  
Mobile..... Email .....

1. I am happy to be included in AFCNA networking via the AFCNA data base Yes  No  (privacy assured)
2. Practising FCN/Health Ministry Yes  No
3. Current AHPRA Registration Yes  No
4. I consent to my details being shared with AFCNA members' prayer network. Yes  No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Full membership** (\$50.00/year)     **Concession** (\$30.00/year)     **Donation:** AFCNA General Fund

**Electronic transfer (New account):** Australian Faith Community Nurses Association Incorporated  
BSB: 704-922 Account No. 100012768 Please insert your name as the reference code

**Make cheques payable to:** Australian Faith Community Nurses Association

**Mail to:** Treasurer, Australian Faith Community Nurses Association, PO Box 2707, Kent Town, SA 5071

Please submit your photos and stories for *WholeHealth* to [afcna@outlook.com](mailto:afcna@outlook.com) or send to [annevanloon@internode.on.net](mailto:annevanloon@internode.on.net).

Deadline for next issue: 31 October 2021

Your snippets and stories are essential for the content of the newsletter to be both informative and share the joys and opportunities of the FCN role.

**Disclaimer:** In no event will AFCNA be liable to anyone for any decision made or action taken by anyone in reliance on information in this newsletter.

## OUR AIMS

- Provide education, resources and networking for nurses working in faith communities
- Provide resources, education and consultancy to faith communities to enable viable health & care ministry
- Liaise with government and other organisations to further the FCN ministry
- Enable FCNs to meet their professional practice requirements

## CONTACT US

Australian Faith Community  
Nurses Association Inc.

PO Box 2707  
Kent Town SA 5071

Email: [afcna@outlook.com](mailto:afcna@outlook.com)

Webpage: [www.afcna.org.au](http://www.afcna.org.au)

Facebook: [Australian Faith Community  
Nurses Associations](https://www.facebook.com/AustralianFaithCommunityNursesAssociations)