

February 2012

Health Topic

Sturgeon Bay United Methodist Church
Carol Moellenberndt, parish nurse

Keys to a Healthy Heart



February is Heart Health month. We all know that our hearts are a very important part of keeping our bodies healthy. It is such an amazing organ! With four muscular chambers which, when they work together well, gather oxygen and nutrients and distribute them to all the cells of our body. It is no wonder that the word "heart" is so central to the "heart" of who we are! There are many things which can go wrong with the heart to cause us problems. The electrical part or the "spark plugs" of the heart may not be firing correctly causing the heart to not work efficiently or to beat too slowly to get the blood where it needs to go. Or the heart may not be getting enough nutrients itself because of narrowed blood vessels, causing damage to the heart muscle (as in a heart attack). Sometimes the muscles are just tired and are not able to work as hard. Depending on what part of the heart is tired fluid might accumulate in the lungs or in the extremities (This is called heart failure, or congestive heart failure) No matter what type of heart problem we are looking at, there are several things we can do to help keep our hearts healthy. Here are a few tips I have found in recent Health and Nutrition Newsletters from Tuft's University and University of California at Berkeley.

Come and hear
Dr. Fergus,
cardiologist, talk
about how to
keep your heart
healthy
February 22nd
at 4pm in the
Fellowship Hall

Heart Health Tips

- **H** is for Heart Healthy Foods. Recent studies have shown a connection between eating quantities of red meat and developing heart failure. The saturated fat content and cholesterol could be the problems. So they recommend limiting red meat and using leaner cuts. The type of fat you eat can influence the health of your heart, as shown in other studies. Limiting saturated fats and removing trans fats from your diet can help keep your heart

healthy. But just adding olive oil without taking out other calories can still cause you to gain weight. One way to keep calories in check and help with a healthy heart is to add vegetables to your diet. When people add a couple servings of vegetables they tend to decrease the calories they eat.

- **E** is for exercise. The American Heart Association says that "By exercising for as little as 30 minutes / day you can reduce your risk of heart disease. Start with a small goal and commit to it regularly."
- **A** is for appointment. It is important to have regular appointments with your physician to make sure your heart is working as it should. Or to ask questions about fluid in your ankles, or just feeling tired all the time.
- **R** is for relaxation. Chronic stress, according to the American Heart Association, causes an elevated heart rate and can raise blood pressure— both which can contribute to heart disease. Positive self-talk can help you to relax,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."
Luke 10:27

Health News Notes

- **Parish Nurse hours** 10am–2pm Thursdays. **Blood Pressure check** on February 5th after services.
- **Parkinson Support Group** Thursday February 2nd 1–2:30pm View DVD from Wisconsin Parkinson Association Symposium in 2011 on "Anxiety".
- **Heart Health** program on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd at 4pm in the Fellowship Hall. Dr. Peter Fergus, cardiologist with Prevea Health, will be our speaker. Join us for heart-healthy soup and muffins after the program and before the Ash Wednesday service at 6:30.
- **CPR-AED class** The full class for those who have not had CPR before and those for whom it has been over 2 years. Tuesday February 28th from 10am – 2pm, lunch included. Contact Carol for registration form. The church will cover the cost of the class and we will share books.

as well as saying a prayer. Reach out to feel God's calming presence in your times of stress.

- **T** is for Tai Chi. One study of people with chronic heart failure showed that the group doing Tai Chi showed improvement in quality of life, mood and confidence. Check out classes at the Senior Center and the YMCA. ***In this time of Lent it is a good time to try some heart healthy tips as you center your life on Loving God with your whole Heart. Let's make those "whole hearts" as healthy as we can!***