

# April 2013

## Health Topic

Sturgeon Bay United Methodist Church  
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### Spring - a Time to do a "New Thing"

Are You a Caregiver?

It might be time to try some new things...

Spring is a time of Newness of Life. Flowers "spring forth" as does our flurry of activities! Spring as a Caregiver can bring more frustrations as one thinks of things that need to be done or things that a person would like to do this time of year. It is also a time to think of new ways to approach old problems of caregiving. Since April is Parkinson Disease Awareness Month and our church makes an effort to support people with Parkinson Disease, I would like to write about some, maybe new ideas for people who are caregivers for those with the Parkinson or related diseases.

One thing about Parkinson Disease is that it is a movement disorder, but the

slowness which can develop, can also present difficulties with memory, slowed thinking or communication. This can be a challenge for caregivers and people with Parkinson Disease. What are some ideas to help with these challenges?

- Keeping life simple is the best way of ensuring that he or she will be able to continue to participate in normal activities as effectively as possible. A simplified home environment can reduce the risk of confusion.
- Consciously slow your rate of speaking to

ensure that the person with Parkinson Disease is able to process everything you say, and give ample time for them to respond. They may respond slowly but their memory is still intact. It is good for all of us to slow down & listen.

- Placing a large calendar in a frequently used place with appointments or events for each day helps the person maintain independence.
- Utilize "to do" lists for daily tasks so that the person can follow the list to accomplish a given task. (for the caregiver too!)
- Sometimes it helps to provide clothing that pulls on or has Velcro closings, arranging them in the order in which they should be put on.

These tips and others can be found on the Parkinson's Disease Foundation website. One article addressing tips for caregivers emphasizes the importance of communication with each other and those people in your family and community. Educating people about the disease helps with understanding and respect towards the person with Parkinson's. They emphasize that it is important to not let the disease take over and define the lives of the person with the disease and the caregiver. It is also important to get support as a caregiver. That support can be from friends and family, other caregivers or a support group. Lastly it is important to take care of yourself and to accept help that is offered to you.

April is  
Parkinson  
Disease  
Awareness  
Month



*"I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth,  
do you not perceive it?"*

Isaiah 43:19

#### Health News Notes

- **Parish Nurse hours** 10am-2pm Thursdays.
- **Blood Pressure checks** Sunday April 14th
- **Parkinson Support Group** Thursday April 4th "Take Care of Yourself" for Parkinson Disease Awareness month. Chair massages, Aromatherapy and smoothies – come join the fun!
- Mark your calendars for a Health Program on Thursday May 9th at 6:30 pm. **"What is Healing Touch?"** will be the topic

The Parkinson Disease Support Group meets on the first Thursday of every month in our church lounge. From 15 – 22 people gather each month to learn about the disease, ways of coping with it, and to share with each other about their own challenges and solutions. In April we will celebrate Parkinson Disease Awareness month by "Taking Care of Ourselves as caregivers and as people with the disease. Two massage therapists from Ministry Rehab Services will be giving chair massages, Jenelle Berg will be talking about Aromatherapy and someone from Healthy Way will talk about eating healthy- making some smoothies for us. Anyone is welcome to come!

As you try new things this Spring remember our church and the goals we are setting for ourselves. As we gather together in small groups of different kinds may we use the Parkinson Disease Support group as our example of a group coming together to get to know each other, to share joys and concerns and to reach out to each other as they journey through this life. We have much to learn from all of them!

Happy Spring!