

## Our Mission...

Taking our lead from our parish mission statement, found on the front of every bulletin, Health and Bereavement Ministry provides a link between the needs of the whole person, body, mind, and spirit, with resources of the church and entire community, supported by a core of all-important volunteers. The Parish Health Advisory Council, made up of parishioners with a focus or interest in health, provides support to the Parish Nurse and assistance in developing new programs.



*Left to right: Viola Jefferson , John Concordia, Bernadine Piecz, and Doris Racine.*

## Contact Information

To view a more detailed description of the Health Ministry programs offered, you are encouraged to visit our parish website at [www.stmarysparish.org](http://www.stmarysparish.org), click on Ministries, then Health. If you do not have access to a computer, call the Parish Nurse at 508-845-2193 to request a list of programs, but please remember to leave your name, phone number and address. Those interested in volunteering may call or email the Parish Nurse at [jeffersonv@stmarysparish.org](mailto:jeffersonv@stmarysparish.org), or may download and complete a Health Ministry Volunteer Form from the parish web site, and return to Viola Jefferson at the Pastoral Center, 20 Summer Street, Shrewsbury, MA 01545.

## Typical Activities

Our Ministry meets with individuals, couples and families to assess unique or special needs, to make referrals to outside agencies, develops new programs, offers education on current health issues, coordinates flu clinics, and with our priests, extends pastoral and Communion visits to parishioners who are homebound or living in assisted living facilities or nursing homes. Friendly visitors and Eucharistic Ministers are matched with parishioners unable to attend Mass for a short or extended time, and a special outreach is extended to residents of Shrewsbury Nursing Home, with Communion Services and the Rosary offered on a regularly-scheduled basis. In autumn and we coordinate a limited number of service projects offered by young parishioners working with adult supervision, to assist elderly or infirm parishioners with some basic yard work.

Because grief has a major impact on physical, emotional and spiritual health, our parish commits significant time, energy and resources to helping bereaved persons move toward healing. Bereavement aftercare and support is extended to grieving families through personalized letters, inspirational messages, one-on-one meetings, and Bereavement Support Groups.

Health Ministry outreach also includes phone calls and mailings to those unable to attend church but who want to “stay in touch”, as well as “Teas” and meditation for the “nearly” homebound. Prayer shawls are provided through the generosity and creativity of the ladies of our Knitting Ministry, and special liturgies are coordinated for healing (Sacrament of the Sick) as well as the very beautiful Mass of Remembrance and Breakfast each November. At Christmas time, we coordinates gift-giving to residents of Shrewsbury Nursing Home and work with small groups of carolers to bring the spirit of Christmas to the homebound. And of course, there are special support groups for Adoptive and Pre-adoptive Parents and Families with Special Healthcare Needs.

## Why We Exist?

We pray, we plan and we propose all sorts of programs, but we must always stand ready to encounter Jesus where and when He chooses to engage us. New programs are often developed in response to the needs of God’s people as He reveals those needs to us. Our many volunteers, serving quietly and faithfully, are the real secret of the success of St. Mary’s Health and Bereavement Ministry. Everything we do provides us with an opportunity to live out the Gospel by following the example Jesus gives us ...to live a life of service to God by serving his people.

## When We Meet

Look for announcements in the bulletin about upcoming events. All are welcome and you can participate as little or as much as you would like.

*We are Stewards  
of our Time & Talent*

Ministry  
Of the Month