

Twenty Years of Faith and Health at North Park Theological Seminary (1998–2018)

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The 2018 faith and health symposium, “Being Well: Connecting Church, Faith and Health,”¹ marked twenty years since the first interdisciplinary course in faith and health was offered at North Park Theological Seminary (NPTS). This anniversary presents a fitting opportunity to provide a retrospective on the journey from that first class to the recent symposium. This twenty-year period also coincides with my own career at NPTS. I was appointed director of health ministry programs in August 1999 and now serve as professor of health ministries and nursing. The trajectory of my own professional development has simultaneously contributed to the shaping of the events narrated and been shaped by them in turn. I offer this retrospective, drawn from program documents² and two decades of firsthand experience, hoping that it may both illuminate the first twenty years of faith and health initiatives at NPTS and shine light on the way forward.

Laying the Foundation (1886–1998)

Substantial prior groundwork paved the way for NPTS’s innovative faith and health programming. While 1998 marks the beginning of faith

¹ See notes 41 and 42 below for more information on this event.

² Cited program reports, newsletters, and other documents are in the author’s possession and can be made available to anyone wishing to pursue further study.

and health work at the seminary, within the School of Nursing at North Park University (NPU), the connection between faith and the healing ministry of nursing goes back to 1968, when the first baccalaureate class graduated. The strong connection between nursing and the Christian faith is articulated in the philosophy of the School of Nursing.³

NPU's nursing program in turn builds on a deep tradition of care reflected in the ministry of Swedish Covenant Hospital. The very first denominational initiative of the Covenant Church after its organization in 1885 was to create the Home of Mercy in Chicago. Approved at the Covenant's first Annual Meeting in 1886, the Home of Mercy cared for the aged, orphaned, ill, and destitute. Due to the pressing need for healthcare, the Home soon expanded to a hospital in 1903 and reorganized to become Swedish Covenant Hospital in 1921.⁴ This ministry of care evolved into Covenant Ministries of Benevolence, which in 2010 included two hospitals, fourteen retirement communities, seven enabling residences for adults with disabilities, and other initiatives to serve those in need.⁵

With this strong tradition of care, when issues of access to healthcare became centered in national dialogue in the 1980s and 1990s, the church brought its voice to the conversation. Many denominations, including the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) began addressing issues of health and access to healthcare.⁶ The 1984 Covenant Annual Meeting passed a resolution on "Access to Adequate Health Care." This resolution affirmed the ministries of healing and health care as central to the ECC from its inception and offered six ethical principles, addressing both individual obligation and social responsibility to ensuring equitable healthcare for

³ North Park University School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Mission, Vision, and Philosophy, dated August 2014, is available at http://www.northpark.edu/wp-content/uploads/SON_Mission.pdf. Accessed January 28, 2019.

⁴ For the history of the Home of Mercy and its transition to Swedish Covenant Hospital, see Karl A. Olsson, *Quality of Mercy: Swedish Covenant Hospital and Covenant Home; Seventy-fifth Anniversary 1886–1961* (Chicago: Swedish Covenant, 1961), and the timeline provided by Swedish Covenant Health, https://swedishcovenant.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/schealth-timeline-final.pdf?sfvrsn=bf7ad2c8_4.

⁵ "Resource for Health Care Reflection," *Covenant Companion* (January 4, 2010), available at <https://covenantcompanion.com/2010/01/04/7478n/>.

⁶ Faithful Reform in Healthcare has compiled many denominational statements on healthcare, past and present. See <http://faithfulreform.org/>, accessed January 23, 2019.

all.⁷ This resolution was reaffirmed in 1992 and followed by a 1993 resolution on “Health Care.”⁸

The 1993 resolution provides the most significant groundwork for faith and health at NPTS. It claims that concerns about health are central to Christianity generally and to the Evangelical Covenant Church specifically. It challenges the church to extend its care for the sick to the promotion health and wellness in congregations and neighborhoods, working to ensure that all have access to adequate healthcare. Finally, the resolution suggests congregational responses in the forms of parish nurse programs, health and wellness programs for congregations and neighborhoods, and the practice of letter writing to encourage political representatives working on health-care reforms.

In addition to passing resolutions, the ECC created resources for the church. In 1989 an ad hoc Committee on Health Care Curriculum prepared *Health Care and Caring*, an adult education curriculum, with the partnership of the Department of Christian Education and Discipleship and the Covenant Resource Center. The health ministries of the Evangelical Covenant Church grew in 1991 when Covenant Ministries of Benevolence added wellness to their services with the formation of Galter Life Center.⁹ In addition to serving the local community in Chicago, for many years Galter Life Center has provided health screenings for clergy at Midwinter Conferences and Annual Meetings.

During this same time period (1984–1993), parish nursing emerged on the national scene. Parish nursing was pioneered by Lutheran chaplain Granger Westberg as a model in which nurses lived out the connection between faith and health, serving as educator, counselor, referral agent, advocate, and facilitator within specific faith communities.¹⁰ Within the ECC, the ministry of parish nursing developed most significantly in the Northwest Conference, initially under the leadership of Joan Erickson. In 1997 the Northwest Conference developed a parish nurse task force, which became a commission in 2000, to support nurses serving in par-

⁷ *Covenant Yearbook 1984*, 270–71.

⁸ Available at <https://covchurch.org/resolutions/1993-health-care/>, accessed January 23, 2019.

⁹ See https://swedishcovenant.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/shealth-timeline-final.pdf?sfvrsn=bf7ad2c8_4.

¹⁰ Peggy S. Matteson, “Parish Nursing—A New, Yet Old Model of Care,” *Massachusetts Nurse* 69, no. 3 (199): 5.

ish ministry¹¹ and continues to be active today. While many Covenant churches are involved in ministries that promote health, the Northwest Conference is unique in having a conference-level commission to support this work.

One of the logical questions to emerge from this increasing denominational attention to health ministry and community health was the education needed to prepare people to promote access to healthcare and healing within congregations. Joan Zetterlund, professor of nursing and former director of nursing at NPU and an ardent supporter of the integration of faith and health, was central to this project, as was Judy Shelly, then serving as director of Nurses Christian Fellowship. Shelly had completed her doctor of ministry degree at Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1997 and was looking for a place to pilot the dual-degree curriculum she developed as her doctoral project.¹² Thus was *Theology of Caring and Health*, the first course in faith and health, offered in the summer of 1998 by Zetterlund, Shelly, and John Weborg, seminary professor of theology who had a long-standing interest in health. Weborg contributed thoughtful theological reflection, personal experience, and love of medicine, while Zetterlund brought her work in Scandinavian caring sciences and commitment to interdisciplinary education in faith and health. The inaugural class was comprised of fourteen seminary and nursing students. This course continued to be taught regularly until 2009.

Zetterlund's enthusiasm captured the interest of then seminary dean of faculty Stephen Graham as well as professor John Weborg. This led to conversations with Paul Peterson, head of Covenant Ministries of Benevolence (CMB). An agreement was made whereby CMB provided seed funding for a new seminary/church initiative that would provide educational programs in faith and health and resource congregations interested in ministries of health. Beginning in 1999, the initiative received initial funding of \$140,000 over a two-year period, which was then extended at a declining rate of support through 2004, thus helping establish the

¹¹ Eleanor Edman, "Out of the Clinic," *Covenant Companion* (April 2009): 6–9. Parish nursing was later renamed "faith community nursing," in the American Nurses Association standards of practice to better reflect the diverse religious traditions involved in this type of nursing.

¹² Judith Allen Shelly, "Health Ministries: A Dual Degree Program for Graduate Nursing" (DMin diss., Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia 1997).

Health Ministry Programs.¹³ The foundation was now established for integrating health ministry into seminary education and church life.

Beginning of Health Ministry Programs (1999–2008)

Interdisciplinary Education. In August 1999 I joined the NPTS faculty as assistant professor of health ministries and director of health ministry programs. The twofold charge of this new position was to develop a curriculum that would provide interdisciplinary education in faith and health, including supporting a newly created dual degree, master in nursing and master in theology,¹⁴ and to resource the growing interest in health ministry within the ECC. The curriculum expanded with a second course, Ethics of Caring and Health, co-taught in 1999 by F. Burton Nelson, professor of theology and ethics, and Dan Dugan, ethicist for Swedish Covenant Hospital. Recognizing the need to make these courses accessible to those living outside of Chicago, the courses were most often taught online or as a one-week summer intensive.

Developing Congregationally Based Health Ministries was the first course taught online in the fall of 2000 with five students, three of whom were members of Covenant churches. This class considered the conceptual and practical frameworks for developing health ministries in a way that fit a congregational culture. It continues to be taught today as Engaging Congregations in Ministries of Health, renamed to reflect the mutuality of the process. It was clear that engaging congregations in promoting health was inherently interdisciplinary and needed to use language that prioritized what was most important. This led to a shift in thinking and terminology from “health ministry” to “ministries of health.”¹⁵ The content of this course provided the basis for *Health, Healing and Wholeness*, published in 2005.¹⁶

As the faith and health curriculum continued to expand, a class on the Bible and health was considered essential. James Bruckner, professor of Old Testament, agreed to develop a course, and thus Biblical Perspectives

¹³ A memo from Stephen Graham to the Board of Benevolence, dated April 15, 2004, summarizes this process.

¹⁴ This dual degree stimulated interest, but no one graduated from the program, and it was discontinued.

¹⁵ Mary Chase-Ziolek, “Rethinking Our Terms: Health Ministry or Ministry of Health?” *Journal of Christian Nursing* 20, no. 2 (2003): 21–22.

¹⁶ Mary Chase-Ziolek, *Health, Healing and Wholeness: Engaging Congregations in Ministries of Health* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2005).

on Health and Healing was taught in the summer of 2000 by Bruckner and John E. (Jay) Phelan, then seminary president and professor of New Testament. Eventually this course was taught online and became the foundation for Bruckner's book *Healthy Human Life: A Biblical Witness*.¹⁷

Acknowledging the importance of clergy connecting faith and health in their own lives led to a spiritual formation course in spring 2001, Spirituality and Health. This course was later integrated into Embodiment, a course required for all master of divinity students from 2002 until 2015.¹⁸ Later renamed Being Well, the course provided an opportunity to think about health and wholeness for individuals with a particular lens toward those preparing to go into ministry. Clergy who experience the connection between faith and health in their own lives are better equipped to flourish in ministry and may also be more likely to see health as an appropriate ministry for the church.¹⁹

Finally, while promoting health and wellness are important, the recognition that illness does happen led to the development of Spiritual Issues in Chronic Illness and Disability, taught by Mary Chase-Ziolek, John Weborg, and Phillis Sheppard, assistant professor of pastoral care and counseling. A unique feature of this class inspired by Sheppard was bringing in the arts to reflect the experience of living with a chronic illness or disability.²⁰

With this full complement of faith and health courses, a certificate in faith and health was created that could be taken in a combination of online and intensive courses. This certificate also became part of a concentration for the master of arts in Christian ministry. The table below provides a timeline of the development of faith and health courses over

¹⁷ James Bruckner, *Healthy Human Life: A Biblical Witness* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012).

¹⁸ Richard Carlson, professor of ministry, was a valued colleague with whom I taught Embodiment. Work from this course is articulated in Richard Carlson and Mary Chase-Ziolek, "Wholeness: Rhythms of Intimacy and Health," pages 274–91 in Philip J. Anderson and Michelle A. Clifton-Soderstrom, eds., *In Spirit and in Truth: Essays on Theology, Spirituality, and Embodiment in Honor of C. John Weborg* (Chicago: Covenant Publications, 2006).

¹⁹ Mary Chase-Ziolek, "Honoring the Body: Nurturing Wellness through Seminary Curriculum and Community Life," *Theological Education*, 46, no. 1 (2010): 67–78. I explored further the relationship between spiritual practices and wellbeing through completing NPTS's certificate in spiritual direction in 2018. Cf. Mary Chase-Ziolek, "The Gift of Spiritual Direction," *Church Health Reader* 7 (2017): 18–21.

²⁰ Mary Chase-Ziolek, "The Arts as a Lens for Understanding Spiritual Issues in Chronic Illness and Disability," *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 12, no. 4 (2009): 348.

the past twenty years. Course offerings altered over the years, reflecting faculty changes and curriculum revisions. The table demonstrates the variety of course created, engaging diverse disciplines including ministry, pastoral care, Bible, theology, and nursing. Moreover, the many individuals involved in creating these courses indicates clearly that this work came from a team, doing together what could not be done by any single individual. Between 2000 and 2008 especially it was quite common to team teach courses in the seminary, providing rich opportunities to collaborate and learn from colleagues and enabling students to learn simultaneously from professors with different perspectives. Eight of these twenty courses are still taught regularly.²¹

Faith and Health Course Development, 1998–2018

Course	Instructor(s)	First Taught
Theology of Caring and Health	John Weborg, Judy Shelly, and Joan Zetterlund	Summer 1998
Ethics of Caring and Health	F. Burton Nelson and Dan Dugan	Summer 1999
Developing Congregationally Based Health Ministries (later renamed Engaging Congregations in Ministries of Health)	Mary Chase- Ziolek	Fall 2000
Spirituality and Health	Chase-Ziolek	Fall 2001
Reflections on Health Ministry Practice	Chase-Ziolek	Fall 2001
Experiences of the Body in Pastoral Ministry	Phillis Sheppard	Fall 2002
Embodiment	Chase-Ziolek and Richard Carlson	Spring 2003
Christian Spirituality and Health (later renamed Being Well)	Chase-Ziolek	Spring 2004
Faith, Health and Community Development	Chase-Ziolek and Bob Hoey	Summer 2005

²¹ Three were connected to particular events (e.g., a symposium or trip) and therefore intended to be taught only once; one was integrated into another course.

Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture—Health and Healing	Chase-Ziolek and Michelle Clifton-Soderstrom	Fall 2005
Living Responsibly in the Realm of God	Carlson, Chase-Ziolek, and Kazi Joshua	Spring 2006
Connecting Faith and Health in the Congregation	Carlson, Chase-Ziolek, and Joshua	Spring 2006
Religion, Spirituality, and Health	Chase-Ziolek	Fall 2006
Missions and Ministry in Africa—with an Emphasis on Community Health	Chase-Ziolek and Paul de Neuvi	Fall 2007
Health and Justice	Clifton-Soderstrom	Fall 2008
Stewarding Creation: Justice, Food, and Health	Chase-Ziolek and de Neuvi	Spring 2015
Trauma and Healing	Elizabeth Pierre	Summer 2016
Faith and Health Symposium—Journeying Together: A Faithful Response to Addiction	Pierre	Fall 2016
Faith and Food	Chase-Ziolek	Summer 2017

Supporting the Church. Concurrent with the development of interdisciplinary courses in faith and health at NPTS, efforts were made to provide continuing education for the church. This resulted in the first pre-Midwinter conference (then called a “Connection”) in January 2001 on “Faith and Health: Making the Connection.” Seventy-five people attended, and G. Timothy Johnson, medical editor for ABC and NPTS/NPU alumnus, provided the keynote address. Pre-Midwinter connections were repeated in 2003 on “The Church’s Challenge in Chronic Illness and Disability,” 2005 on “The Church Responds to Health Care Injustice,” and 2008 on “Faith, Food, and Fitness.” These collaborative events were supported by the ECC and by Swedish Covenant Hospital, which provided continuing education credits.

Informal education and networking approaches took advantage of online media. For example, in January 2002 forty people from across the United States and Mexico participated in an online conference, “Trans-

forming Power of the Church to Promote Healthy Communities,” offered in collaboration with the ECC’s Department of Christian Formation. In 2007 an email listserv enabled information sharing that continued through 2013. These informal approaches provided ways to network and share information.

In addition to national conferences held in Chicago, from coast to coast workshops were offered, questions were answered, and resources were shared. Between 2000 and 2010, I led at least one workshop on themes related to faith and health in eight of the eleven ECC regional conferences. Churches also took advantage of phone and email consultations I provided regarding developing health ministries. With the partnership of seminary students, I created resources for the church, including a publication on health ministries in the *Covenant Companion* April 2000²² and two videos created in 2003. The Center for Faith and Health produced a video on the *Church’s Challenge in Health*; seminary student Sue Radosti produced *All Together Healthy* as a summary of her field education.

Center for Faith and Health. In 2003 Health Ministry Programs was renamed the Center for Faith and Health. The purpose of the center was equipping Christian leaders in health and ministry fields to integrate faith and health in their professional and congregational settings by providing educational opportunities and consultation. The structure of the Center for Faith and Health followed the model of the newly created Centers for Justice Ministries and Youth Ministry Studies, which were also collaborative ventures between NPTS and the ECC. An outcome summary issued by the center in 2006 celebrated the progress made in the initiatives begun in both seminary and church since 1998 and united and carried forward through the center.²³ By 2006 eleven ongoing faith and health courses had been offered to a total of 332 students. Eight people had completed the certificate in faith and health, and five master of arts in Christian ministry graduates had completed a concentration in faith and health. Seven hundred people had participated in nineteen workshops on various faith and health topics offered through regional conferences, local churches, and the Covenant Midwinter Conference. At national meetings for health ministries and parish nursing, members

²² Mary Chase-Ziolek, “Health Ministries Reach Out to Congregations and Communities,” *Covenant Companion* (March 2000): 23.

²³ Mary Chase-Ziolek, “Outcomes of the Center for Faith and Health, 1999–2006,” (2006), unpublished report.

of Covenant churches gathered for informal discussion.

Bridging academy and church, NPTS's 2005 Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture focused on "Health and Healing," bringing together scholars and practitioners from around the United States.²⁴ This symposium provided me the opportunity to explore the biblical foundations for the church's role in promoting the health of communities. Working with individuals was the focus of much of parish nursing in the early 2000s. My background in community health led me to consider what the church could do to promote the well-being of neighborhoods as well as individuals.²⁵ My study of Isaiah 58 led to an understanding foundational to my work expressed as, "The health of each of us is related to the health of all of us."²⁶ This perspective continued to be part of my teaching and professional work, and later, when the Affordable Care Act first required hospitals to work with their communities to assess and address community health needs in 2014, it became an opportunity to further consider how churches could be part of this process.²⁷

In 2006, NPTS received a Practicing Our Faith grant of \$9,199 from the Valparaiso Project for a seminary wellness initiative implemented by the Center for Faith and Health. The grant expanded attention to personal wellness from the curriculum to seminary community life more broadly. Focused on the theme of faith, food, and fitness, the grant included a harvest dinner, a cooking class, theological reflection on faith and fitness, and small groups studying *Just Eating: Practicing Our Faith at the Table*, by Jennifer Halteman Schrock. In the area of faith and fitness, the seminary community engaged in a Walk to Jerusalem that had students, faculty, and staff collectively walk the 7,200 miles from Chicago to Jerusalem, fueled by devotions created by the community.²⁸

²⁴ Proceedings of the 2005 symposium are published in volume 21 of *Ex Auditu*.

²⁵ Mary Chase-Ziolek, "The Transforming Power of the Church to Promote Community Health," *Covenant Quarterly* 61, no. 3 (2003): 29–42. Two additional articles on faith and health by Phillis Sheppard and James A. Swanson are also in this issue.

²⁶ Mary Chase-Ziolek, "Repairing, Restoring, and Re-visioning the Health of Our Communities: The Challenge of Isaiah 58," *Ex Auditu* 21 (2005): 150.

²⁷ Mary Chase-Ziolek, "(Re)Claiming the Church's Role in Promoting Health: A Practical Framework," *Journal of Christian Nursing* 32, no. 2 (2015): 100–107.

²⁸ "Faith, Food, and Fitness: Devotions on Honoring the Body," North Park Theological Seminary, December 2007, unpublished document.

This activity was repeated two years later in 2009 as part of a continuing pattern of encouraging wellness.²⁹

The years 2004 through 2008 were peak times for the center, with faith and health well established in the seminary curriculum and community life and in regular denominational events. Building on the strength of the Center for Faith and Health and the Center for Justice Ministries, in 2005 a new course was added to the master of divinity curriculum, Living Responsibly in God's Realm, integrating themes of justice, stewardship, and health. Thus, from 2005 to 2015 all master of divinity students were required to take two courses that addressed health, one from a personal perspective and one from a community perspective.³⁰

Collaboration was central to the work of the Center for Faith and Health. In 2004 as the center's director, I began providing a column for *inSpirit*, the Covenant Women magazine, which continued until 2009. Several workshops were held for Covenant Retirement Communities and Swedish Covenant Hospital. I also served on the board of the Galter Life Center from 2006 to 2012. In 2006 a collaborative venture with the ECC's Department of Church Growth and Evangelism sought to raise awareness regarding access to healthcare through a communication to Covenant congregations, sharing examples of congregations responding to this challenge and requesting prayer.³¹

Of particular interest is the diverse professional backgrounds of students who have completed a certificate in faith and health. In addition to nurses and people interested in chaplaincy, graduates have come from the fields of medicine, athletic training, occupational therapy, massage therapy, healthcare administration, and veterinary medicine.³² Similarly,

²⁹ "The Walk to Jerusalem: Reflections, Challenges, and Prayers for the Journey," North Park Theological Seminary, January 2009, unpublished document.

³⁰ See Mary Chase-Ziolek, "Honoring the Body: Nurturing Wellness through Seminary Curriculum and Community Life," *Theological Education* 46, no. 1 (2010): 67-78, which summarizes faith and health work at the seminary.

³¹ In 2006 I was aware of two Covenant churches that provided free medical care. The fullest congregational response to barriers to healthcare access was Covenant Community Care in Detroit, Michigan. Established in 2001, Covenant Community Care became a federally qualified health center. It now has multiple locations offering a full range of services. For more information, see <https://covenantcommunitycare.org/>.

³² Early program graduates included Sue Radosti, a massage therapist and the first person to complete the certificate in faith and health in 2003, who later completed a master of arts in Christian ministry, concentrating on faith and health in 2005. Lorraine Beaumont, a veterinarian completing the certificate in faith and health in 2004 was the

faculty with diverse backgrounds have been engaged in teaching courses in faith and health from the fields of theology, ethics, Bible, nursing, pastoral care, and missions.

A Time of Transition (2008–2009)

With the presidential election of 2008, healthcare reform returned to the center of national discussion. The Center for Faith and Health organized a health and justice summit with leaders from NPTS, NPU, Swedish Covenant Hospital, and the ECC, held May 1, 2008. Anticipating the growing number of people without healthcare insurance in congregations and communities—and anticipating that healthcare reform would be high on the political agenda after the November 2008 election—this summit considered what resources the church needed to promote individual health, develop congregationally based health ministries, and be a voice for justice in national healthcare policy. While other collaborative efforts among Covenant institutions had addressed matters of health, the particular focus of the 2008 summit was access and inequity.³³ The follow-through on this summit was limited by the 2008 financial crisis.

The financial crisis of 2008 had more wide-ranging implications for faith and health initiatives at NPTS. In May 2009, amid responsive fiscal adjustments, North Park University decided to restructure or eliminate several centers, including the Center for Faith and Health. The professor of health ministries position was relocated from the seminary to the School of Nursing (a dual appointment was subsequently worked out with the seminary), and resources for faith and health were decreased to one seminary class each year in addition to one course load for coordinating an undefined “faith and health initiative.”³⁴

first person to be ordained to specialized ministry in the area of health ministries by the Evangelical Covenant Church. See Center for Faith and Health newsletter, Summer 2008.

³³“Covenant Health and Justice Discussion—Notes Thursday May 1, 2008,” unpublished document.

³⁴Memorandum of Understanding for Joint Appointment in NPU School of Nursing and Theological Seminary, October 15, 2009, unpublished document.

Re-evaluating: Living into the Faith and Health Initiative (2009–2018)

With the closing of the Center for Faith and Health and resultant decrease in personnel resources, development slowed. The role of faith and health at NPTS was re-evaluated, and collaborative work was rechristened as the Faith and Health Initiative. Linda Cannell, then academic dean of the seminary, was instrumental in working through this transition, along with the dean of the School of Nursing, first Linda Olson and later Linda Duncan. In 2012, the major activities of the Faith and Health Initiative were described as

collaboration between the seminary and the school of nursing to provide interdisciplinary continuing education opportunities for professionals in healthcare and ministry and offering courses in support of the Certificate in Faith and Health. Collaboration with Covenant institutions continues on matters of faith and health. The seminary and the school of nursing continue to work on how to best develop this partnership.³⁵

While faith and health efforts at North Park were being reorganized, momentum for the work continued. Just prior to the closure of the Center for Faith and Health, NPTS had received a second Practicing Our Faith grant from the Valparaiso Project. The grant, Honoring the Body: Spreading the Word, involved telling the story of faith and health at NPTS through publication.³⁶ A second activity was a forum on faith and food for Chicago-area seminaries held on April 17, 2010. This grant also enabled three regional conferences on faith and health for the Evangelical Covenant Church at a time when school funds for denominational support of faith and health activities had been eliminated. In November 2009, a workshop on “Biblical Foundations for the Church’s Ministries of Health, Healing, and Wholeness” was held in collaboration with Covenant Community Care in Detroit. February 2010 was a workshop held in Anchorage, Alaska, on “Faith and Health: Making the Connection,” in partnership with Providence Alaska Medical Center and Eagle River Covenant Church. New Brighton, Minnesota, was the location for an

³⁵ Mary Chase-Ziolek, Faith and Health Initiative 10-2-12, unpublished report.

³⁶ Chase-Ziolek, “Honoring the Body”; Chase-Ziolek, “The Arts as a Lens for Understanding Spiritual Issues in Chronic Illness and Disability,” *Teaching Theology and Religion* 12, no. 4 (2009): 348.

April 2010 workshop on the church's challenge in chronic illness and disability, in collaboration with the Parish Nurse Commission of the Northwest Conference of the ECC.

While only a single annual faith and health course was taught in the immediate aftermath of the center's closing, in time new courses were developed. In 2014 the seminary offered Stewarding Creation, Justice, Food and Health, a ministry course that built on the framework of Living Responsibly in God's Realm. In 2017, a new spiritual formation course was offered titled Faith and Food. Other faculty's expertise expanded faith and health offerings, most notably the work of Elizabeth Pierre, assistant professor of pastoral care and counseling.

The shared faculty position between NPTS and the university's School of Nursing opened new possibilities for collaboration in interdisciplinary continuing education. The first such event through the Faith and Health Initiative was the workshop "Health within Illness: Giving Voice to Experience," offered October 22, 2011. This half-day workshop, offered in collaboration between the seminary and the School of Nursing, brought an interdisciplinary audience of fifty-five people to participate in this public workshop portion of an intensive course, *Spiritual Issues in Chronic Illness and Disability*. Covenant Ministries of Benevolence, Swedish Covenant Hospital, and the newly formed Good Shepherd Initiative of the Covenant Chaplains Association³⁷ provided support for this collaborative event.

The publication of James Bruckner's book, *Healthy Human Life a Biblical Witness*, provided another opportunity for interdisciplinary conversation. An event held October 31, 2012, drawing fifty people, brought together a panel discussing the relevance of Bruckner's book to their work. The panel was comprised of Linda Duncan, dean of NPU's School of Nursing; C. Louise Brown, vice president of health ministries for the Progressive National Baptist Convention and former director of public health nursing for the city of Evanston; and Phil Staurseth, pastor of Ravenswood Covenant Church in Chicago.

In partnership with NPU's Center for Youth Ministry Studies, the Faith and Health Initiative sponsored a second interdisciplinary con-

³⁷ For a description of the formation of the Good Shepherd Initiative, see "Chaplains Group Pursuing Pastoral Care Initiative," *Covenant Companion* (May 25, 2011), available at <https://covenantcompanion.com/2011/05/25/chaplains-group-pursuing-pastoral-care-initiative/>.

tinuing education event, “Talking about Health: A Dialogue with Health Professionals and Youth Pastors.” This workshop, held February 16, 2013, with forty-seven people in attendance, was also part of a youth ministry topics class and received support from the Good Shepherd Initiative.

The success of these initial interdisciplinary continuing education events laid the foundation for considering a larger venture. The idea for a faith and health symposium offered collaboratively between the seminary and the School of Nursing (which in 2015 became the School of Nursing and Health Sciences) emerged from conversation between Mark Olson, then NPU vice-president of church relations, NPTS dean David Kersten, and School of Nursing dean Linda Duncan. Valuing collaboration with the denomination, the input of ECC superintendents was sought as well. In these conversations, the theme of the church and mental health rose to the surface as significant and timely.³⁸ Covenant Ministries of Benevolence and the Good Shepherd Initiative contributed major financial support, enabling the livestreaming of many sessions. This symposium, held November 8, 2014, was highly successful, with more than 200 people in attendance.³⁹

Building on the tremendous interest in mental health, addictions was chosen as the focus of the second faith and health symposium, “Journeying Together: A Faithful Response to Addictions,” held November 12, 2016. Sponsored by Covenant Ministries of Benevolence, the Good Shepherd Initiative, and the Kappa Nu chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, 140 people from a variety of backgrounds attended. Elizabeth Pierre taught a course on addictions and the church, bridging continuing education and academic work.

Two recent events stand out as exemplars of the collaborative work between the seminary and the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. First, Joan Zetterlund was awarded an honorary degree at the May 2017

³⁸ Two recent, highly public suicides made this topic very timely, those of Matthew Warren, pastor Rick Warren’s son, in April 2013, and actor Robin Williams in August 2014.

³⁹ Several of the presentations from 2014 can still be viewed online. John Swinton’s keynote address, “A Faithful Response to Mental Illness,” is available at <https://vimeo.com/113926192>. The password is “npts.” Pablo Anabalon’s workshop on “Culture and Mental Health” is available at <http://covchurch.tv/culture-and-mental-health/>. David Hawkinson’s workshop, “Adding Our Voices: Spiritual Care and Reflection in Mental Health and Healing,” can be viewed at <http://covchurch.tv/spiritual-care-and-mental-health/>.

NPTS commencement ceremony, in acknowledgment of her instrumental role in establishing the faith and health program and her ongoing commitment, advocacy, and support for this interdisciplinary effort. Zetterlund is the first nurse to be awarded this honor. Second, the third biennial faith and health symposium, held November 10, 2018, reflects progress made through the past nine years of living into the faith and health initiative. Moving beyond illness to the church's role in promoting health, the theme for the symposium was "Being Well: Connecting Church, Faith, and Health." The day began with devotions on John 5:6 considering the question, "Do you want to be well?" Reflections from both Linda Duncan, dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, and Dwight Perry, dean of faculty at NPTS, modeled interdisciplinary dialogue for the church, one of the key event objectives.⁴⁰ In the history of faith and health at NPTS, this symposium marked a strong collaborative effort and ownership from NPTS, SONHS, and denominational entities—the strength of which resulted in a particularly strong program. Sponsorship expanded beyond the previous symposia to include Covenant Retirement Communities, which hosted group viewings of the symposium livestream at four locations.⁴¹ Thus, almost ten years after the closing of the Center for Faith and Health, a firm commitment to the interdisciplinary work of the Faith and Health Initiative endures, building on the distinct strengths of the seminary and the School of Nursing and Health Sciences and working in collaboration with the Covenant denomination.

Looking to the Future

Having reviewed the past twenty years of faith and health initiatives at NPTS, it is fitting to look to the future and what it might hold for both the seminary and the church. Several avenues of further inquiry

⁴⁰ The full program is outlined in this issue's Comment, pp. 1–4.

⁴¹ Through the support of the Good Shepherd Initiative, video of Ruth Haley Barton's keynote address, "Honoring the Body as a Spiritual Practice," can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/p8OmPTWYbvE?t=2769>; Scott Stoner's plenary on "Living Compass Model of Wellness Ministries" can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/p8OmPTWYbvE?t=17872>. Kara Davis's plenary, "Works without Faith Is Dead: Restoring Purpose to Health Ministry," can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/p8OmPTWYbvE?t=21404>. James Bruckner's workshop, "Integration of the Heart and Mind? Biblical Root-Concepts," can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/p8OmPTWYbvE?t=9379>. Video of Michael Washington's workshop, "Healthy and Not: Being Both at Once," can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8OmPTWYbvE&feature=youtu.be&t=26229>.

would provide a more robust understanding of the past two decades in faith and health, its significance, and impact. Regarding education, it would be useful to know how those who completed the certificate in faith and health have used this education. A comparative study with other seminaries that offered concurrent programs in faith and health would also be instructive. This would include Andover Newton Theological Seminary, Wesley Seminary, Duke Divinity School, and Candler School of Theology. Regarding practice, it would be useful to study the impact of faith community nursing and other models of health ministry on congregations and communities. In this area, the Northwest Conference would have the largest number. Additionally, it could be informative to look at Covenant congregations that had ministries of health for a limited season, what work they did, and what factors contributed to their ending these ministries. Oral histories with key figures in the development of this work, from both North Park and the ECC, would add insightful dimension to the chronology of events. This article is written from the perspective of one who was intimately involved in the events it narrates; an outsider reviewing similar material would undoubtedly offer complementary insights.

In looking to the future, it is critical to consider the next generation that will shape ongoing work in faith and health. What questions are young Christian health professionals asking about how to integrate their faith in their practice and with their congregations? What questions are young clergy asking about how their faith might influence their own health practices and the ministries of their churches? We are seeing increasingly diverse models of health ministries beyond faith community nursing or a health ministry team. A growing number of churches are engaged in growing healthy food through gardening; fitness ministries of all kinds are getting people moving together; and support groups abound to help people through challenges from addictions to grief. Particularly in communities with limited resources, churches are seen as valuable partners for collaborative efforts to improve community health. What do these many faces of health ministry look like, and how might they contribute to the mission of the church?

The work continues. The faith and health work of NPTS has survived the closing of the Center for Faith and Health and emerged streamlined yet strong through the Faith and Health Initiative. At the time of this writing, there are four students currently enrolled in the certificate in faith and health. Three faith and health classes will be taught during the

2019–2020 academic year. The work of the past twenty years has been built on the shoulders of many who went ahead of and alongside me. I pray that others in turn will be able to build on this work going forward.

Timeline of Significant Events

- 1998 First faith and health course taught at North Park Theological Seminary—Theology of Caring and Health
- 1999 Covenant Ministries of Benevolence provides funding to hire director of Health Ministry Programs and assistant professor of health ministries at NPTS
- 2000 First online faith and health course taught—Developing Congregationally Based Health Ministries
- 2001 First faith and health pre-Midwinter conference, “Faith and Health: Making the Connection”
- 2003 Pre-Midwinter conference, “The Church’s Challenge in Chronic Illness and Disability”
Center for Faith and Health begins (former NPTS Health Ministry Programs)
- 2005 Pre-Midwinter conference, offered with the Center for Justice Ministries, “The Church Responds to Healthcare Injustice”
NPTS Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture, “Health and Healing”
- 2006 Practicing Our Faith grant received for Faith, Food, and Fitness
- 2008 Pre-Midwinter conference, “Faith, Food, and Fitness”
Second Practicing Our Faith grant received for Honoring the Body, Spreading the Word
- 2009 Center for Faith and Health closed, Faith and Health Initiative (FHI) begins
- 2011 First continuing education event of FHI, “Health within Illness: Giving Voice to Experience”
- 2013 FHI continuing education event, offered with the Center for Youth Ministry Studies, “Talking about Health: A Dialogue with Health Professionals and Youth Pastors”
- 2014 First faith and health symposium, offered with NPU’s School of Nursing, “Being Present: A Faithful Response to Mental Illness”
- 2016 Second faith and health symposium, offered with NPU’s School of Nursing, “Journeying Together: A Faithful Response to Addictions”
- 2017 NPTS awards Joan Zetterlund honorary doctoral degree in recognition of her foundational work in faith and health
- 2018 Third faith and health symposium, offered with NPU’s School of Nursing and Health Sciences, “Being Well: Connecting Church, Faith, and Health”