



FERN LODGE FOCUS — SEPTEMBER 2021

This is my favorite place to be every day. That was my thought as I walked down the Fern Lodge hall to go to the 6:00 a.m. change of shift meeting. The Christian Science nurses on duty are there. We share any needed information. And then we take a few minutes to share together our devotion to Christian Science practice and healing, and we affirm our simple Christian care for our fellow man.

That's Fern Lodge. That's what Christian Science nurses and facilities are committed to. Together we are lights shining in darkness, and we will continue through the years to offer mankind healing refuges, places where together we demonstrate God as Love, and us, Her reflection, as the immediate expression of divine Love, the love that helps and heals.

It's been a busy and productive year. Like all care facilities in our state and local area, regulations have required us to make adjustments to our daily routine. I'm sure you will join us in our gratitude that through this whole time, Fern Lodge has continued to accept patients who need Christian Science nursing care, and we have stayed nearly at full capacity.

Earlier in the year, our dear Director of Christian Science Nursing, Deanna Proctor, relocated to another state. We are so grateful for her years of loving service. She came to Fern Lodge as a clear answer to prayer, and she brought to us exactly the qualities we most needed. Thank you, Deanna!

It's with the deepest, heartfelt gratitude that I get to tell you that Deborah Messmer, who had been serving so competently as Assistant Director of Christian Science Nursing, agreed to step into the position of Director. Deb is a treasure. Every day she shows her heartfelt commitment to the healing practice of Christian Science nursing, and she brings to Fern Lodge a wealth of experience in other Christian Science nursing facilities, including serving as Co-Director of Christian Science Nursing at Broadview, the Christian Science nursing facility in Los Angeles.

Thanks to a generous grant, we have purchased a house just a little up the road from Fern Lodge. Soon we will begin remodeling to meet our ongoing need for staff housing, and we will be grateful for any donations to help us with this work.

The photo at the top of this page honors our long-time gardener, receptionist, cook, and friend, Ken Gourley, pictured here, who passed this year.

With gratitude and affection,



George Strong,
Administrator



DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING — DEBORAH MESSMER

When I was newly *Journal*-listed as a Christian Science nurse, I worked in the field on private duty cases. I remember my eyes being opened to the possibilities of Christian Science nurses working together more as a team. I had several cases I was visiting every day and found the calls just kept coming. I started to feel overwhelmed. Then I got a call from a fellow Christian Science nurse asking if I could help one of her patients with a shower



the following day. I asked her if she could do a bandage for one of my patients the same day. It worked out for both of us to take the other's case and meet the individual needs of those dear members. The

way that worked out was like a little miracle to my thought. This type of cooperation continued with different Christian Science nurses in the field. We would call each other, often for support, but also to find ways to meet the needs of all who were calling. I often wondered why there wasn't a team of visiting Christian Science nurses in all the metropolitan areas of the country.

Some years later, I was working for a Christian Science nursing facility that had several patients who needed two nurses to give the care needed. The Christian Science nurses became so willing to help each other because the needs of the patients outweighed the need to stick to our own schedules. Again, this was a little miracle to my thought.

About three months ago, Fern Lodge's dear Director of Christian Science Nursing (DCSN) moved away. The Director of Christian Science Nurses Training and I began supporting the nursing floor. As we all prayed for a new DCSN to join us, something amazing started to happen at the facility. Knowing that we didn't have a DCSN, everyone started to pitch in and help. Other departments took on some

of the paperwork, the Kitchen took on some of the duties to support the Christian Science nurses, the Maintenance Department began offering to take on certain duties, and the Housekeeping and Christian Science nursing departments found ways to support each other. I realized one day that all of the departments were working as a team. Instead of the Christian Science nursing department being put first, we all were supporting each other's need to support the patients. The business office, the kitchen, housekeeping, and maintenance all support the Christian Science nursing department daily. So, if anyone from those areas needs something from the Christian Science nurses or the DCSN in order to get their own job done, we respond in a timely manner to support them. This began happening effortlessly. No one had to ask that this be done.

Also, the Christian Science nurses began helping each other more without being asked to do so. Traditionally, the DCSN position is there to ensure the harmonious running of the nursing floor. Often, the Christian Science nurses will rely on that individual in ways that do not promote their own growth. If personal sense should crop up between individuals, they may go to the DCSN to settle the matter, instead of humbling their hearts to see the true man in each other and then move forward. Sometimes we don't let each other grow. Our view of each other helps or hinders our growth. Lately Christian Science nurses have been sharing with me how they have worked out a situation on their own and telling me they feel buoyed by God and have more confidence to handle future challenges.

The idea of working as a team is based in Christianity. What I've learned from my own practice of Christianity is that when our relationship to God is intact, He sends us out to help each other.

I took the DCSN position on one condition—that we all continue to work as a team like we did when we did not have one. Everyone agreed, and Fern Lodge is a happier place because of it!

Go team!

GRATITUDE FROM THE FERN LODGE STAFF

This past year my husband (who worked at Fern Lodge years ago) has been battling a serious illness. It has been a tough and painful journey for all of our family. With the knowledge I have gained from Fern Lodge I was able to make sure he stayed strong and healthy. Even though he was unable to eat solid foods for over a month, he only lost 4 pounds! On some of the darkest days I would think about the love that George, Sharon, and Deanna expressed consistently to us. Thank you!!! I would not have been able to take such good care of my husband without the love, support, and knowledge I have gained from Fern Lodge. We are so grateful for everyone's love and kindness.

Fern Lodge Staff Member



I am so deeply grateful to Christian Science and to Fern Lodge. I've witnessed a lot of healings of patients since I came here. It's good to know that our Father-Mother God is protecting and keeping us all safe especially right now. We just always need put our whole trust in Him. Say NO to fear, doubt and negative thoughts. Always go back to "perfect God and perfect man" as the basis of thought and demonstration.

Christian Science Nurse at Fern Lodge



Deb Messmer comforting a patient

I would love to express gratitude for the infinite, unending love and support I get from my Fern Lodge family! 2020 was an unusual year, but 2021 has also had some very new twists to it for me personally. Every time I have found myself in a situation that had new and not always easy moments, staff members and administrators have stepped in with everything from metaphysical support, hugs and smiles, time off to care for my family's needs, car battery changed, and a loaner car. The list is endless and obviously, as to quote one of the Fern Lodge angels, "This is what we do!" I am in awe of the magnitude of Love, generosity and support from Fern Lodge.

Christian Science Nurse at Fern Lodge



I am so grateful for the sizeable collection of art that hangs from the walls at Fern Lodge. Over the years, the collection has grown, and changed, and functioned as a background for our work and our lives. There are quite a few colorful pieces that quickly draw the eye. At times these are my favorite, as they usually brighten my mood. Other days I favor the wood block print or the high contrast paper cuts. There are landscape paintings of many lovely places, molded paper art, photographs, oil paintings, acrylic, pencil sketches, oil pastels, carved painted wood, and more. All are unique and worth a look. Today I observed a patient engrossed in an abstract painting of a cross by Kayleigh Mayes Ebenrick. It was a gift to me to catch this moment. There was a quiet stillness in the hallway at that time, and the observer, alone with her thoughts and the painting, seemed transported into the art itself. The presence of the art really does bless us all. Many thanks to George Strong for continuing to purchase art and for inviting patients and employees to hang pieces in their rooms and offices.

Fern Lodge Staff Member



My first memorable lesson happened on the day I met my first patient while in my first weeks of Christian Science nurses training. On one hand, these incredible metaphysical teachings were being given to me in class, and I delighted in the ideas, but I had yet to practice them on the nursing floor, and I still held a very material and unenlightened concept of Christian Science nursing. I was quickly learning that I needed a more spiritually minded outlook to match my actions and activity, but it hadn't yet come alive for me.

I was introduced to a patient who had worked for Walt Disney. As I reached out looking for a practical way to be helpful and loving, I opened my thought to the divine perspective I was learning. Instantly I was struck by a wave of love that was so dynamic I knew it had to be God. This love encompassed me in the most radical way during those few moments, and God's pure love became my only consciousness.

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I felt deeply connected to her, to God, to myself. Although we had just met, I saw beyond the picture of an elderly woman in a wheelchair, and I felt the beauty and purity of her true identity with what I felt of my own (just newly and momentarily discerned) purity. It was a definite Apostle Paul experience, where I literally felt the room around us flooded in Light as it dawned on me what nursing, day in and day out, would be for me. I was going to learn about God as infinite Love, and also how to imbibe the Spirit of that Love in ways that have changed my relationship to my daily life in every way. God gave me the grace in that one moment of divine consciousness to see that every moment in nursing could be an awakening to fully experiencing God as divine Love. I suddenly knew why I had been led to Fern Lodge. But I also learned that although

God gave me that one perfect moment, I would have to overturn a lot of mortal thinking to learn to live more and more within than perfect and pure consciousness.

I began to learn how false beliefs and their correlating fears kept me from accepting divine Love as my own consciousness. One day, I was working with four patients and each one seemed to require a lot of time. I started to feel that dreaded feeling when the idea of time becomes a dominating factor in thought and begins to impinge on my experience. Fear of not being able to finish, and fear of feeling suddenly burdened, threatened to rob me of my joy. After getting the first patient up and out of bed, I heard in my thought, "Make the bed." It was a very clear message. I knew exactly what to do, but because I felt the pressure of being limited by time, I balked at this direction. But, as directions do, it came again, "Make the bed." "But we have

housekeepers who do that," I reasoned to myself. I didn't see how it was even possible to add one more thing to my activities. A third time the message came strongly to my mind, and this time I felt impelled to follow the directions given. I felt the resistance break and a strong, impelling force made me feel capable of completing the task.

So I made the bed. After the next patient's morning care I received the same instruction, "Make the bed." I'm sure I rolled my eyes, but now that I was pretty sure where the direction was coming from. So after the initial resistance quieted down, I made the bed. I made all four beds, each time being given a strength to overcome an adamant insistence and resistance to time being what governed my actions. I didn't fully get what God was showing me until the end of my shift. I had made four extra beds, requiring more time than I had. And yet I had finished my work a half hour early. That had never happened, and I had the same four patients everyday for a quite a while.

ROBIN BARBEN, ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSE

Obedying God's directions and doing what is asked, regardless of any material resistance and temptation to skip over these spiritual impulses, is one of many ongoing lessons that has brought God's grace into nursing rooms in ways I could never have imagined. One of the biggest lessons for me is learning that the Kingdom of Heaven is an actual consciousness, where Mind knows, and let's you know, too.

One day I was facilitating a Bible-lesson study with several patients, and one of the patients lost her ability to speak. When I would ask questions about how to apply ideas in the lesson to our daily life, she would become very animated and try to talk, but the words made absolutely no sense to me. But her joy and animation captured my heart, and I prayed to understand what she wanted to express. Grace came to my rescue once again. Within my thought, words formed as she spoke. I said, "Do you mean this..." and then I spoke them aloud. To my surprise, she excitedly shook her



head yes! We continued on that way for many weeks, Spirit telling me what she wanted to say until she regained her voice and began to speak for herself.

The inner message I was hearing and expressed out loud not only helped her to feel loved and included, it helped overcome some of her fears. For me, learning to communicate with patients who could not speak

was the beginning of my finding an active divine consciousness within my own thought. More and more I learned (and am still learning) to trust and express these true ideas and understand that this is my true consciousness, identity, and expression.

All these lessons are ongoing, and continually unfolding in my practice of Christian Science. God's love for me is revealed as I learn to express divine Love day to day, in a job that, after 20 some years, is never boring but always filled with lessons of growth and enlightenment.



A GIFT FROM OUR KITCHEN STAFF

We are so deeply grateful for all Fern Lodge staff members! In August, Anna Berk, our Kitchen Manager, and her devoted staff hosted a party for us. All staff was invited, and we were treated to a delightful afternoon of food and games. All we can say is our humble and heartfelt "Thank You!"



Diane — winning a prize at the ring toss!



Cupcakes!!!

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD — A STAFF HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Fern Lodge is in a lovely, quiet, semi-rural setting, on a narrow, dead end lane in suburban Castro Valley. The patients we serve regularly take walks up the road, and others who live and drive on the road have to slow down and pull over to make way for us. Our staff and visitors account for much of the lane's traffic every day of the year. At times we have had patients who wandered alone on the road, and others who could be heard by the neighbors who took walks past our facility.



Madison Avenue—our neighborhood

That's why we were deeply touched when a neighbor couple, who has lived for 16 years just up the road from us, recently called to tell us they were planning to sell their home and wanted us to have a chance to purchase it before they put it on the public market for the highest bidder. We thanked them profusely and told them that we definitely were interested. A short time later, Fern Lodge received a substantial grant so we could buy this property. The sale has been completed, and we will be able to occupy the home soon.

We know the importance of being a good neighbor. We humbly realize that what many of our neighbors may know of Christian Science is from what they see and hear as they walk and drive by our facility all through the years. Fern Lodge extends our loving Christian affection and care to include everyone we live and work beside.

Finding housing for the Christian Scientists who relocate from around the world to work and to learn Christian Science nursing at Fern Lodge has been increasingly difficult due to a lack of affordable housing in the Bay Area. They frequently do not have cars, and public transportation is not adequate to serve the needs of the Fern Lodge staff. The home we are purchasing will provide housing within easy walking distance of the facility for six or more of our staff members. *What a blessing to us all!*

MORE FROM THE KITCHEN STAFF PARTY



Brian, Mark, Allison, George, staff and patients, all enjoying a great lunch!



Catalina, one of our dear kitchen staff members

ANNUAL MEETING — *RISE UP AND WALK!*

Again this year the Fern Lodge annual meeting will be available to anyone who has an internet connection. You can watch by going to our website: fernlodge.org/annualmeeting. Please see the back page for instructions on how to join the meeting. The meeting will include reports from the Fern Lodge Board of Directors, the Director of Christian Science Nursing, and the Director of Christian Science Nurses Training. We are pleased that our dear friend, Doris Goff, will give an inspirational talk on a vital topic:

RISE UP AND WALK!

**Sunday, October 10
at 2:00 in the afternoon.**

Doris Goff is a life-long student of Christian Science. She lives in Garland, Texas, and is a wife, mother, grandmother, and a great grandmother. Doris enjoyed a career as an educator, teaching kindergarten through high school, and in mental institutions. She has also been a successful businesswoman and entrepreneur, as co-owner of a fine jewelry and design business with family friends. She also owned Mais Oui Monogram, an embroidery, monogram and quilting company. Her success has always focused on building good relationships and serving her communities, while meeting and demonstrating challenges using the teachings of Christian Science.



Doris Goff, C.S.

Doris heard God's next message loud and clear, and for ten years embraced another career as a Christian Science nurse, training at The Leaves in Dallas, Texas. She worked with private duty and newborn cases, in Christian Science facilities, and traveled internationally as a *Journal*-listed Christian Science nurse. Then in 2002, she focused on Christian Science healing, global outreach, and working with the public by becoming a *Journal*-listed Christian Science practitioner.

For over 75 years, Doris has been active in all facets of her branch churches. At the age of 12, she joined Second Church in Kansas City, Missouri, where she was given the high office of bell ringing in the belfry, pulling long sturdy ropes, to ring in the hymns before the church services. To this day, of all the church duties she has ever done, bell ringing remains Doris's favorite!

In addition to her Mother Church and branch church activities, Doris' community service has included:

- Organizing and speaking at a World Peace Event, in Terrell, TX, collaborating with local ministers.
- Visiting every Christian Science nursing facility in the United States in support of this comforting art.
- Being a featured speaker around the country, giving Christian Science talks and Association addresses.

Always ready for divine Love's adventures, Doris and her husband, Henry, hung up their pilot's wings to be river captains, and lived on their 40 foot Gibson motorboat on the Delta in California and Columbia River in Oregon. They also explored The Great Loop with her son and crew on his Catamaran for a year. And at every docking, they visited Christian Science churches and met their precious members.

We hope you will join us online at our Annual Meeting!

Fern Lodge Focus — September 2021

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

YOU ARE INVITED TO

Fern Lodge Annual Meeting 2021

Sunday, October 10, 2021 at 2 pm (Pacific Time)

This year's annual meeting will be live streamed at

fernlodge.org/annualmeeting

You can also call on the telephone by dialing 1-669-900-6833

When prompted, dial the meeting ID: 879 2064 6351#

If asked for a participant ID, hit #

