



FERN LODGE FOCUS — DECEMBER 2021

Dear Friends,

The morning I prepared to write this letter, I read the Christian Science Bible Lesson. The subject was “God, the Only Cause and Creator.” The Bible verses included a story most of you know well. Christ Jesus was called to come quickly to the home of Jairus, an important leader in the community, who pleaded with the Master, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” And Jesus immediately went with Jairus.

But as they hurried through the crowded streets, a woman who had suffered for 12 years came and touched the Master’s clothes, because she had faith that touching his garment would heal her. And it did! Immediately she was whole. Now, the Master could easily have continued hurrying to Jairus’ daughter, as we might expect. But what did Jesus do? He stopped to talk with the woman, and to tell her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

Well, as Jesus was talking with the woman, the sad news came that Jairus’ daughter had died. But Jesus response was, “The child is not dead but sleeping.” And he continued to the house, put out the crowd of mourners, and with just the mother and father and three of his friends in the room, Jesus said, “Little girl, I say to you, arise,” and of course, she did.

This story is such a reassuring comfort to Christian Science nurses everywhere. We often are urgently called to come to a patient who is struggling, perhaps at the point of death. And often as we hurry to meet the immediate need, we meet others who implore us to help them. What are we to do?

Our question—our yearning to help and heal as the Master—demands that we be diligent disciples. As Christian Science nurses we must be earnest students. The sixth tenet of Christian Science requires our solemn promise to “pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus.”

With the Mind of Christ, we will be able to trust as Jesus did, knowing that God is right there with the patient we are hurrying to, and also with the one who wants our help on the way. And we will do as God directs, trusting that healing must follow the absolute, honest understanding of each individual as a whole child of our Father-Mother, Love.

We are daily, deeply grateful to our dear Leader, Mary Baker Eddy, for her tireless, loving work in seeking, understanding, and sharing with us all, the understanding that enables us to trust God in every situation.

With gratitude and affection,

George Strong, Administrator

In June of this year our previous Director of Christian Science Nursing, Deanna Belyk Proctor, left us to bless her family in Colorado. I was grateful to work side-by-side with her and watch her embrace every individual with sweet love. I would like to thank Deanna not only for her friendship, but for her dedication to Fern Lodge!

Being here and working with this particular group of Christian Scientists has been very healing for me. At Fern Lodge each Christian Science nurse is invited to have their Christian Science practice within the context of a family of individuals who share the same goal — to support each patient's radical reliance on God for their healthcare needs. And when we work within a family setting we will have many opportunities to practice Christian Science. And when we practice — we heal ourselves and others.

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I would like to share with you a few recent healings we have seen:

We had a patient who was unable to walk when she first arrived and really wished she could have stayed at home. Her sweet family was very attentive to her needs and the Christian Science nurses were persistent in helping her to take a few steps at a time. She is now demonstrating the ability to, not only walk to the bathroom, but is walking the full length of the building to go to the dining room. One day after a longer walk than usual, she sat down and cried tears of gratitude and thanked the Christian Science nurses who were helping her.

And, I received a call recently about a church member who was on the floor of his living room. The Christian Science nurse (and the family

member supporting him there) were not sure he was conscious. They called for assistance to get him into his recliner and took care of him until morning. Meanwhile, the staff was prayerfully preparing the room to meet his needs. But by morning he was well enough to travel in a wheelchair transport van. We cared for him for about a week and then he returned home. This individual also came with a bandaging need that was just about healed before he left.

Earlier this year, a woman came in to work out the healing of a fractured ankle. Just as we were developing a deep friendship with her, she had her healing and was able to go home. While we may miss the individuals we care for when they go home, we always rejoice in demonstration of Christian Science healing.

Those were quicker healings, but others seem to need more time. We had a very dear friend and resident who was here for the bandaging of a foot. The foot seemed very tender and we needed to have a solid metaphysical approach to this dear friend. Also needed was a very skilled, gentle approach to the physical care of the foot. For several years we did not see much physical progress. Christian Science nurses don't look to the body for evidence of our spiritual nature. But as we persistently worked to help this individual to stay the course and not give in to discouragement, physical healing became evident. Right before our eyes the wound began changing. We saw smooth pink skin show up on several areas of the foot. We continued to work through the patient's discouragement and saw swelling go down. This dear friend left Fern Lodge before we could witness the full healing, but we know that the physical evidence was responding to the healing that had already taken place in thought. Mary Baker Eddy mentions this on page 412 of her book, *Science and Health*, "Realize the presence of health and the fact of harmonious being, until the body corresponds with the normal conditions of

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING

health and harmony.” We all were grateful to see this beautiful proof of God’s care.

You know, Mary Baker Eddy also says in *Science and Health*, “If we would open their prison doors for the sick, we must first learn to bind up the broken-hearted.” You would think by taking several Christian Science nursing courses and getting mentored on mental impositions that this would qualify you to handle any case; that you had learned how to handle mental confusion, and yes, to some extent that is true. But the mortal mind conjures up new and more difficult cases in an effort to confuse, confound, and frustrate us from helping each other. I am so grateful to our Christian Science nurses for working so diligently this year with regard to our patients dealing with challenges more mental in nature. While we haven’t yet seen the full healings of these fellow church members, we are seeing moments of progress.

The Christian Science nurses have had to dig very deep inside to humble their own hearts. They have had to learn who these individuals were before the claims presented themselves and practice separating the lie from the individual. They’ve had to listen for direction from divine Love as to how to approach each patient’s changing needs. For example, one day a patient may be giving hugs to everyone, and the next day they are yelling and upset. But the staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of each patient, which includes dignity, cleanliness, and nourishment. Often the nourishment needed is love, tenderness, focus, clarity, and peace.

I could talk about healing all day, but instead, I would like to invite you to have your practice at Fern Lodge, either as a Christian Science nurse or as a volunteer.

If you are interested in Christian Science nursing courses, you can call and talk with Sharon Strong, our Director of Christian Science Nurses Training. We also have regular volunteers that the current pandemic kept them away for several months, but

as soon as it was safe to do so, they were grateful to return to being a blessing for the patients. Some of the volunteer activities currently happening at Fern Lodge are:

- piano playing for our weekly Hymn sing;
- reading to the patients via Zoom and in person;
- a movement class twice a week;
- guitar playing and singing;
- one woman shares piano music every Friday;
- cookie baking with the patients on Wednesdays;

While we are grateful to be visiting a local church via Zoom each week, we are looking for readers to help start our own services again via Zoom or in person.

Also, Robin Barben, our Activities coordinator, would love help with setting up and taking down the decorations of the upcoming holiday events. If you are interested in volunteering please call Fern Lodge and ask for Robin.



“General Store” at Fall Festival



Piano playing every Friday

Our annual meeting's theme caused me to ponder some meanings of the words "rise and walk." To rise is to move to a higher position; be seen more clearly; achieve success. And walking is moving forward, advancing; pursuing a way of life; continuing in unison. And over the last 12 months, we have clearly seen advancement, success, and unison, in the classroom, where instruction and introduction to skills and ethics take place, and on our patient care floor where actual practice is shepherded and guided by mentors. In her *Message for 1901* (1:19–3), Mary Baker Eddy writes:

Truth comes from a deep sincerity that must always characterize heroic hearts; it is the better side of man's nature developing itself. As Christian Scientists you seek to define God to your own consciousness by feeling and applying the nature and practical possibilities of divine Love: to gain the absolute and supreme certainty that Christianity is now what Christ Jesus taught and demonstrated — health, holiness, immortality.

Defining the nature of God in consciousness; feeling and applying the "practical possibilities of divine Love...." That sounds like a great job description for the Christian Science nurse! It is divine Love that motivates us to embark on a ministry of Christian Science nursing. Students learn more of the nature and practical possibilities of divine Love. And they learn how to apply these in skillful, helpful ways to meet daily needs for personal care, nourishment, mobility, bandaging, comfort, etc. The skills, ethics, and assessments acquired for their Christian Science nursing practice prepare them for endless possibilities and adaptations in this rewarding walk of life!



Practicing bandaging skills

The "better side of man's nature developing itself" is a joy to witness in the life of a new Christian Science nurse. The Manual bylaw for this church activity defines the discipline of this development. Students

learn how to apply their demonstrable knowledge of Christian Science practice, their practical wisdom, and their ability to give proper care. And they learn the importance of expressing the nursing qualities of cheerfulness, orderliness, punctuality, patience, fullness of faith, and receptivity to Truth and Love, — qualities Mrs. Eddy held dear for all who would be nurses, as pointed out in *Science and Health*.

Our Ministry of Christian Science Nursing program continues with greater flexibility and utility, reaching

beyond our walls to help individuals achieve success in their own localities. We continue to teach classes remotely for several organizations. The most successful training occurs when each organization's mentor also attends the class. This enables them to know what is being taught so they can support those ideas. They enrich the instruction by sharing from their experiences, and they help their students practice the skills taught.

The 8 classes taught in the last year ranged in size from 1 to 9. The class of 9 had 4 from Fern Lodge and 5 over Zoom — 2 in Florida, 3 in New York. While there were a few moments resembling herding cats when we were practicing our bandages near and far, the benefit of video classes is a blessing for those who cannot travel or leave home to attend a class. The on-job instruction can then be completed in their home facility under the guidance of their mentor who also attended the class.

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSES TRAINING



Students on Zoom

One unforeseen but wonderful benefit from holding Zoom classes was that 6 individuals who took a class remotely from smaller facilities (and in one case, with no facility at all) later asked if they could come to Fern Lodge for some mentoring! That's what we refer to as "Expected good from unexpected sources!" These all proved to be mutual blessings, adding skills to each student's ministry while providing a little grace in scheduling for our nursing floor. Deb Messmer has been our primary mentor, joyfully fulfilling that role in addition to her

Assistant Director, and now Director of Christian Science Nursing duties. We are deeply grateful she is continuing this activity, and is able to adjust her schedule to help our students progress.

The last year put a halt for awhile on religious and all worker visas. But the government has begun processing the 500,000 backlogged applications, and is making good progress in resolving bottlenecks and processing these applications more efficiently. Our two potential students are now awaiting appointments for interviews in their countries. And I am so happy we have hired a Christian Scientist to help me file these applications. We have six students needing extensions!

We are so pleased with the quality of our students, their commitment to excellence, and their good natured flexibility when called upon to do more, and even to do shift work while attending classes. They are such bright lights in our Movement! The future of Christian Science nursing is truly in good hands.

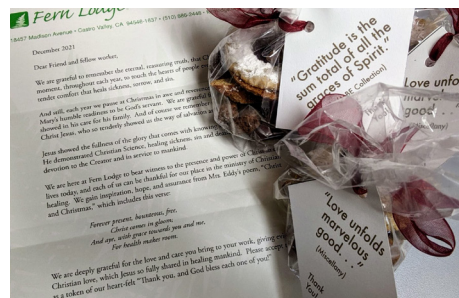


HOLIDAYS AT FERN LODGE

Holidays are very special at Fern Lodge. At Halloween, staff and patients dress up to celebrate Fall festivities. At Thanksgiving, patients and families share a wonderful meal together prepared by our kitchen. And throughout December, we celebrate Christmas with decorations, a tree, festive bakes, and music. We hope you'll enjoy these holiday pictures.

Left: Treats from the Board to our staff

Right: Decorating Christmas tree



HOLIDAYS AT FERN LODGE



Left: Staff and their families dressing up at the Fall Festival

Right: Decorating this beautiful 13 foot tree was a group effort.



As we have been earnestly preparing the house Fern Lodge recently purchased nearby to provide affordable staff housing, we realized the home needed a name. At a Fern Lodge board meeting, one board member asked if there was a Christian Science nurse we could honor by naming the home after her.

Valentine Home! Emily Valentine played a vital role in the development of Christian Science nurses training and nursing facilities. She was among the first instructors in the training program that, for many years, The Mother Church required for all Christian Scientists who wanted to serve as nurses and to be listed in The Christian Science Journal.

After years of service as a Christian Science nurse and instructor at Tenacre, a Christian Science nursing facility in Princeton, New Jersey, Emily moved with her husband, Don, to California. She retired from nursing, and for about 10 years was listed in The Christian Science Journal as a Christian Science practitioner. During those years she saw a great need for nursing care within the Christian Science community, and so she once again began caring for others, opening and operating a Christian Science nursing facility in San Mateo named Valentine Haven.



Valentine Home from the back

Eventually, it was time for her to retire again, so she handed her nursing home over to a group of Christian Scientists who continued to operate it for years, calling it Laurel Haven. This is where Emily becomes an integral part of Fern Lodge's family history.

Fern Lodge began when Mindell Fern Cox and her husband Willard saw the need to care for fellow church members and brought them into their home. This Christian and practical care grew into the Christian Science nursing facility we know as Fern Lodge. They maintained and grew this loving ministry for about 20 years. In 1970, they announced that they would retire and no longer operate the facility. A group of local Christian Scientists knew how much the Christian Science community benefited from Fern Lodge, so they formed a new board of directors to purchase the facility from the Coxes. They needed someone experienced to organize, manage, and staff the facility.

Emily Valentine. A couple of the board members knew Emily, and in 1971 they asked her to come out of retirement in order to establish Fern Lodge on that foundation of loving care that Mindell and Willard had laid. Emily served Fern Lodge for seven years, concurrently as Administrator, Head Christian Science Nurse, Instructor, scheduler, and occasionally as the cook! She served faithfully and tirelessly. Her joyous, attentive, all-embracing, selfless outlook built solidly on Fern Lodge's foundation for the years of development that would follow. Her life inspired many and showed by living example how divine Love meets needs, reveals resources, and erases limitation. Her mission was always to listen and follow Mind's direction, with humility and cheerfulness, regardless of how daunting the picture in front of her loomed. It is fitting to honor Emily by naming the home for our Christian Science nurses in her honor.



Fern Lodge Focus — December 2021

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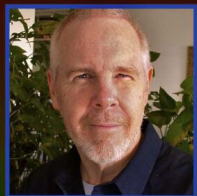
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

YOU ARE INVITED TO



JENNY BURTON



PETER LINK



REBECCA MINOR

And his name shall be called
Wonderful

A Christmas Concert Podcast
with

Julia Wade
and special guests

**Rebecca Minor, Jenny Burton
& Peter Link**

Watch on fern lodge.org
Saturday, December 11 through Friday, January 7, 2021