

Caring From All Angles

May 16, 2018

I'm going to be a grandma! My daughter and her husband are expecting their first child in July. As they draw closer to the baby's due date, the flurry of activities is growing. The parents-to-be are preparing a safe and comfortable nursery for the baby. Apparently an essential item for the well-stocked, modern nursery is a giant, faux-wool llama. I had no idea.

From outlet covers to playpens, baby monitors to drawer locks, these soon-to-be parents are planning carefully to keep the baby away from harm and provide him a good start in life. They are testing the waters on what it will mean to be a caregiver.

But, they're worried about how well they'll function on 3-4 hours sleep for months, or years, on end. Frazzled nerves, exhaustion, and frustration await them. Their own health could suffer, and in turn, they will become less effective parents. It can be a vicious cycle.

It's also a cycle that many of us know in different contexts. Some of us care for aging or ill parents. Others of us have taken roles as caregivers, either as professionals or as volunteers. Deacons, chaplains, pastors, and more have felt a calling to care for people who are struggling with illness, addiction, grief, or other profound loss.

In Milwaukee Presbytery, we value caregivers who help us to live into our desire for community and authentic relationships. So, we are offering two simultaneous workshops at the upcoming Presbytery Gathering that seek to steward those gifts of caregiving. Register [here](#) if you are interested in one or other other.

The first option will explore Stephen's Ministries, a formalized program for caregiving to people in the church. A group from Covenant Presbyterian Church (Racine) will explain the program, but will also offer tips more generally for faithful caregiving to people in crisis.

The second workshop opportunity is on resilience training, offered by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. This is intended to help the caregiver identify the warning signs of burnout and to practice good self-care before it's too late.

The workshops are essential for healthy caregiving. We give thanks to God for the many of you who share love and compassion in such tangible ways. As you live into your calling to care for others, we urge you to care for yourself as well. Your ministry is critical to the church!

