

READING
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First Church of Christ
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Rev. Eric Redard
First Congregational
Church, United Church
of Christ

Rev. Dr. Steven Notis
Rev. Judith Gould
Rev. Nancy Smith
Old South United
Methodist Church

Rev. Arthur C. Flynn
Rev. Ed Malone
Carol Gaudette
St. Agnes Roman
Catholic Church

Rev. Thomas Conway
Bill Lucey
St. Athanasius Roman
Catholic Church

Rev. Doris Hunter
Unitarian Universalist
Church

Thursday, March 24, 2005

To all residents of Reading:

The Reading Clergy Association would like to let you know of its strong support of the Community Parish Nursing program. We are sharing this because we particularly believe in the importance of **town warrant article 17**, which would make available nurse advocacy for frail elders residing in the Town of Reading.

As clergy we have a close relationship with many elders in Reading and feel that this initiative is very much in line with our mission and the values of our respective faith communities. There are 4,293 seniors in Reading over the age of 60 years, 586 of these seniors are 85 or older. The population of frail elders will be growing considerably over the next 20 years. These individuals are our neighbors and church members. As church communities we know how difficult it can be for our frail elders to get the help they need in order to live their remaining years outside of a nursing home. In our faith communities our mission has always been to care for our neighbors as ourselves. Professional nurse advocates, funded by the town, will assist all of us in carrying out this mission.

In addition to our faith based reasons for supporting this initiative, we also feel it is prudent public policy. It has been estimated that nurse advocates will save the hospital trust fund budget approximately \$100,000 by negotiating for services that should be provided by the state free of charge to Reading residents, and by using Reading volunteers to provide some of the assistance needed to help our frail elder citizens to age in place. Meeting the needs of frail elders to age in place requires the town to identify this group as the priority senior population and devote critical amounts of the elder services existing budget (approximately \$141,000 in town funds and \$160,000 in hospital trust funds) to this priority population. Nurse advocacy will require the services of two full time equivalent professional nurse advocates, costing approximately \$100,000.

Community Parish Nursing has a track record over the last 4 years that has helped over 200 elder Reading citizens. Based on our work with CPN we feel strongly that this warrant deserves our full support. So please do what you can to support town warrant article 17, which would provide nurse advocacy for elders in Reading. Your clergy leaders see it as a great opportunity to be a community that supports and cares for elders, helping them age in their homes with dignity and grace.

Yours Truly,



Rev. Dr. Steven M. Notis, president for the Reading Clergy Association