

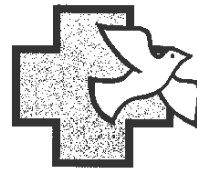
So go ahead... take every opportunity to  
Sing Together this season:

- Arrive a few minutes early for worship throughout Advent for a time of Carol Singing
- Attend the Christmas Eve Service at 7 PM (invite your friends and family!!!)
- There are numerous opportunities to enjoy community choirs and musical groups during the Advent and Christmas season – get out and enjoy this wonderful community building and health-enhancing activity.
- Come enjoy the W-K Choir Concert at 7:00 p.m. on December 20<sup>th</sup>



May Joy, Hope, Peace and Love accompany you throughout the Advent Season

Karen Watson RN BN, Parish Nurse



## Healthy Reflections – Body, Mind and Spirit

December 2015



**What a wonderful time of year to experience the health benefits of singing.**



The Health and Wellness Committee has been exploring the recent research and literature on this topic. Several research studies have shown that all types of singing have positive psychological effects. There is an improved sense of well-being, decreased feelings of anxiety and loneliness, along with improved mood.

Singing together in a group and choral singing seems to have the most significant and dramatic effects. These effects are cumulative... the more we experience singing together, the greater the effects.

Singing together seems to enhance a sense of community and satisfies our basic need for belonging. Apparently there are actual physical effects that take place:

- Lowered cortisol levels (our stress hormone)

- Endorphins are released (our natural “feel-good, pain relieving” hormones)
- There is a calming, yet energizing effect – singing both soothes your nerves and elevates your spirits
- Builds strong positive memories and associations
- Boosts the body’s immune system

In 2013, researchers at McGill University reviewed the current literature of some 400 studies. According to co-author Daniel Vevitin, this review has taken the controversy out of the “...idea that music has positive health effects. I think this has gradually become accepted in the medical community.” (2013, published in the journal *Trends in Cognitive Science*)

One explanation for these health benefits is that the deep breathing that occurs during singing supplies the body’s tissues with more oxygen. Also, the rhythm of deep breathing produces a relaxation effect on the body similar to meditation. Singing can actually initiate the relaxation response, resulting in many positive chemical changes in the brain and body.

Is it any wonder that the “*One who makes us whole*” reminds us so often in His Word to sing and be joyful together?



“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5: 19

In the October 2015 Canadian Mennonite, Marilyn Houser Hamm is quoted as saying that through these activities, (psalming, singing and making melody in our hearts), “...believers open themselves to the fullness of God. Being filled with the Spirit is not an individualistic experience,...” but happens as believers sing and worship in community.

*(Singing with the Spirit, October 2015)*

The following is a quote from a daily devotional that a friend sent to me recently... “Sing a hymn or a worship chorus as you march into your day or wrap up your evening. And if you can't sing, read one of David's praise psalms out loud. To begin and end the day with God's praise will do much to chase away dark thoughts, and open the door to peace.” (unknown source)

