Go, fight, win!
Breast cancer reunites cheerleaders

Prayers for pastor
Hospital's staff ‘God's gift’ to grateful family

Rejoicing and relief
Mom survives rare post-partum heart crisis
Dear Neighbor,

As part of my introduction to Via Christi, I have been visiting with our patients and the physicians, nurses and other clinicians who care for them throughout Manhattan, Pittsburg and Wichita.

I have to say, Kansas is blessed with some of the friendliest, warmest people I’ve ever met. Via Christi also is blessed with teams of caregivers who are committed to listening to our patients and meeting their needs with compassionate, personalized care. As you read this issue of Via Christi Life, you’ll see our commitment reflected in every story.

One story features Daniel Fowler and the Via Christi Wellness Center in Wichita. An exercise physiologist, Daniel devoted his career to helping patients battling cancer and other chronic diseases in memory of his father, who died of cancer in 2013. Patients such as Deby Springer partner with Daniel to use exercise to regain their energy and vitality. Deby says the program has “been a godsend.”

Our Wellness Center was made possible thanks to the generosity of community donors who have provided nearly $90,000 for exercise equipment and a patient scholarship program. “It would be virtually impossible to keep the doors open if we didn’t have philanthropic support from the community,” Daniel says.

We have been equally blessed with strong support from Credit Union of America for our Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals at Via Christi Health programs. In August, I had the pleasure of meeting and thanking Bob Thurman, CUA president, and members of his team who raised $30,844 during the 10th annual CUA Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals Golf Classic in Wichita. During a tour of Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan, Bob Coppola, hospital president, left, and Mike visit with Larry Couchman, RN, in the Emergency Room.

Many Kansans don’t realize that Via Christi is a non-profit health ministry committed to caring for everyone. Philanthropic donations help us continue to expand our mission of caring for all who need our help. All of our generous supporters have our sincere thanks.

Sincerely,

Mike Mullins
CEO and Ministry Market Leader
Via Christi Health
Breast cancer treatment reunites survivor with high school classmate

As a Wichita South High School cheerleader, Rhonda Hicks loved cheering together at Wichita South High School. Terri Leschuk, RN, left, and Rhonda Hicks reminisce about cheerleading at Wichita South High School.

For the past 16 years, Rhonda has shown the same enthusiasm as she helps at-risk high school and first-generation college students through the education system.

But three years ago, the now 47-year-old divorced mother of two found herself needing help navigating. “I was watching TV and all of a sudden I got a revelation to touch my left breast,” she says. “I felt a bump — one that wasn’t painful, but was hard.” Although scheduled to have a routine mammogram in a couple of weeks, Rhonda called her family physician, Carol Nibert, MD, at Via Christi Clinic, who got her in right away.

“I think it’s more than a bump,” Dr. Nibert said, and quickly scheduled her for a mammogram and biopsy.

The evening after her biopsy, Rhonda’s phone rang. “I am so sorry, but we found a triple negative carcinoma, which is a very aggressive type of breast cancer,” said Dr. Nibert, who recommended that Rhonda see her colleague, breast care specialist Patty Tenofsky, MD, for a consult the next day.

She went to see Dr. Tenofsky, “and lo and behold, there was Terri,” says Rhonda of her fellow cheer squad member, who now is a nurse navigator for the breast care specialist’s patients.

Rhonda’s winning strategy

- Find a scripture you can stand on. Rhonda’s came from Hebrews 13:5: “I will not relax my hold on you.”
- Seek, rather than avoid, information, so you can make the best decisions possible.
- Look for the treasure in your pain — which Rhonda found in reconnecting with Leschuk and developing friendships with her care team.

“During this journey, I didn’t want to have any further worries,” says Rhonda, who has a 16-year-old son, Kevin, and 22-year-old daughter, Kamika.

Go, team!

After chemotherapy, Rhonda had surgery and continued her care at the Cancer Institute at Via Christi Hospital St. Francis in Wichita.

“After a lady came in to give me a massage, I told them, ‘You’ve got to stop all this wonderful treatment because I don’t plan to come back here,’ ” Rhonda says with a laugh.

A week later, she tested cancer-free.

Rhonda underwent radiation therapy with David Bryant, MD, a Via Christi Cancer Center radiation oncologist, and then began reconstruction with Richard DaSpalter, MD, a Via Christi Clinic plastic surgeon.

While radiation-weakened skin caused her reconstruction process to be longer than average, Rhonda says she never lost confidence in the treatment plan Dr. Tenofsky outlined and Leschuk helped her navigate.

“I don’t want anyone to go down this road, but the phenomenal care I received from start to finish brings tears to my eyes,” says Rhonda, now well on her way to recovery.

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Looking back, the signs were there. Jacque Groves noticed her mother, Gladys, was becoming detached and less talkative, allowing Jacque’s father, Kenneth, to do most of the talking when she called.

“She knew she was going to die,” the 39-year-old Jacque’s father, Kenneth, to do most of the talking when she called.

“Her doctor gave her about two months to live, but she never gave up,” she says.

As her mother’s health deteriorated, Jacque, an endoscopy technician at Via Christi Hospital in Manhattan, began noticing sticky notes with black ink popping up around her parents’ Iola, Kansas, home.

“My mom started making my dad do things for himself — cooking dinner, doing laundry — he liked doing laundry,” she remembers.

Gladys died in May 2014.

Tough choices

Other women in Jacque’s family have had breast cancer, which gave her the suspicion that she, too, could fall victim to the disease. Jacque knew she had to do something; she couldn’t imagine her son Jackson, 5, and daughter, Kingston, 3, growing up without her.

A few months later, Jacque visited David Pauls, MD, a general surgeon in Manhattan, and requested to be tested for a gene mutation that can put individuals at a greater risk of cancer.

“Dr. Pauls explained everything to me and we talked about the pros and cons of being tested,” Jacque says.

After a couple of weeks, her results were in.

Jacque tested positive for the BRCA 2 gene, which means there is a good chance her children and younger brother would also test positive. Jacque says when her children are older, she will talk to them about being tested.

“I wasn’t sad about losing my breasts,” she says.

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“Even though I’m happy with having two children, I was sad that I would never have the chance to have another one if I changed my mind one day.”

With having her breasts and reproductive organs removed, Jacque’s chances of developing cancer are much lower, but she still frequently visits her doctor to check for abnormalities.

“I know I made the right decision,” she says. “I just couldn’t take that chance. It just shows that you have to trust your instincts, but you also have to be prepared to know the answer.”

Cancer risk testing

Most cancers occur due to environmental causes (sporadic), but chances of developing breast cancer greatly increase with inherited gene mutations such as BRCA1 and BRCA2 (for Breast Cancer).

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“I think I knew it was going to be positive before I even went in for the results,” Jacque says.

In January 2015, Jacque had a full mastectomy and hysterectomy, and a year later, a total hysterectomy.

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Deby Springer has survived two battles with cancer and, in the process, discovered the secret to optimal health: regular exercise.

Deby, who also suffers from a chronic lung disease, is a believer in the exercise programs at the Via Christi Wellness Center in Wichita. She works out at the center three times a week — once under the guidance of board-certified exercise physiologist Daniel Fowler and twice through pulmonary rehabilitation classes.

“It’s been a godsend,” says Deby, 61, of Andale, Kansas. “I feel remarkably better. I have more stamina and my breathing is better.”

Now, Deby has the energy and enthusiasm to fully enjoy trips with her husband, Mark Springer, MD, a pediatrician with Via Christi Clinic, to pursue his hobby of restoring and riding railroad motorcars — especially on mountain railroads where the high altitude and thinner air are a concern.

‘Like a new person’

Fowler says Deby’s progress has been an inspiration to other patients.

“She has a contagious attitude and enthusiasm and is really helpful to me,” says Fowler. “I feel remarkably better. I feel stronger. I have more stamina and my breathing is better.”

Deby’s health struggles began when she was diagnosed with breast cancer over Christmas in 2007 and underwent a mastectomy. Thankfully, the cancer was detected early and was considered low-risk. Though her cancer was removed, she faced another health challenge. She suffered from interstitial lung disease as a complication of acid reflux. “I was inhaling small amounts of stomach acid and that damaged my lungs.”

As part of managing her chronic lung condition, a CT scan in 2013 revealed a spot in her left lung. When a repeat test showed the spot was growing, she underwent surgeries in October 2014 to biopsy and remove a dime-sized tumor with half of her lung. Follow-up testing showed her lymph nodes were cancer-free and she didn’t need additional treatment for the lung cancer.

But she developed a persistent cough after the surgery and felt weak and run-down. “I sat around for four or five months just coughing,” she says. “I was really a lot more short of breath than I had been and I just didn’t feel well.”

That’s when she discovered the Via Christi Pulmonary Rehabilitation program and the Wellness Center, located in the Via Christi Cancer Center on the campus of Via Christi Hospital St. Francis. She began her journey to wellness through exercise in the rehab program’s group classes, then seized the opportunity to accelerate her recovery and training by working with Fowler at the Wellness Center.

“Daniel has training in how to work with people with chronic diseases,” Deby says. “He’s able to push you gently. I’ve worked up to about 40 minutes of cardio. He also has me do free weights, the weight machines, and strengthening exercises that are challenging. It really has helped me feel like a new person.”

Deby Springer’s husband, Mark, restores railroad motorcars, once used to transport track repair crews. They like to take vacations with other collectors to ride their motorcars on the rails in states like Colorado.

The Wellness Center has been made possible by nearly $90,000 in contributions from 146 donors, helping to create two scholarship programs that provide nine visits with Fowler. Philanthropic donations also help keep the program’s cost low — an additional benefit because most insurance doesn’t provide reimbursement for exercise programs.

One of the largest donations — $22,000 — came from the Ross Foundation after Michael Sheets met Fowler through his volunteer service on the Via Christi Oncology Patient Advisory Council. Sheets’ wife, Susan, is a trustee of the foundation established by her late grandfather, G.M. Ross, a prominent and charitable Wichita businessman from the flour-milling industry.

“It’s just terrific what Via Christi has done with the Wellness Center,” says Michael, who is cancer-free today after being treated for prostate cancer in 1995 and colon cancer in 1997. “It’s the kind of program you’re really proud to be able to help succeed.”

To learn more about how you can support the Via Christi Wellness Center, please contact Monica Coen, chief philanthropy officer, at monica.coen@viachristi.org or 316-239-3521.

Visit viachristi.org/cancer-wellness to learn more about the program. To attend a free orientation session and learn more about the benefits of exercise during or after cancer treatment, call 316-689-5700.

A GIFT OF WELLNESS FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Thanks to generous philanthropists, the Via Christi Wellness Center offers scholarships for patients who want to get started using exercise as part of their recovery. In addition, donors have provided money for exercise equipment and the creation of the center’s workout room.

“It would be virtually impossible to keep the doors open if we didn’t have philanthropic support from the community,” says Daniel Fowler, pictured above right, who runs the program.

Visit viachristi.org/cancer-wellness to learn more about the program. To attend a free orientation session and learn more about the benefits of exercise during or after cancer treatment, call 316-689-5700.
Rare heart condition turns mom’s joyful moment into life-and-death challenge

Julie Shoup was a freshman and her husband, Cary, a sophomore when they first met at Bishop Carroll High School’s homecoming game. They’ve been together ever since.

But shortly before their 18th anniversary, the Wichita couple’s life together came dangerously close to an end with the birth of their fourth child. Julie, age 40, had developed a relatively rare condition during delivery called post-partum cardiomyopathy, which caused her heart to fail and her organs to begin to shut down.

Her condition was so grave that their parish priest performed last rites and their three children were taken out of class. Julie, whose breathing was increasingly erratic, was admitted to the intensive care unit, where she appeared to stabilize after being intubated and the fluid on her lungs removed.

But by early morning, her condition deteriorated rapidly and Bassem Chehab, MD, who leads Via Christi’s Structural Heart program, was brought in for a consult.

Dr. Chehab told Cary that they were doing everything they could. “But we have to do more.”

Julie was taken to the heart catheterization lab, where Dr. Chehab inserted a balloon pump in her heart to stabilize her for transport to St. Francis, which is staffed and equipped to provide advanced heart care to the most critically ill patients.

“We felt the love of a very large prayer community,” says Cary. “Everyone in the CTICU was crying,” says cardiovascular sonographer Tristan Shaver.

When Julie left the next day, her ejection fractions — a measurement of how well the heart is pumping out blood — had gone from 15 percent to 30-35 percent. By early July, her ejection fractions were almost back to normal and she was expected to make a full recovery.

“My guardian angel told me it would be OK. And it was.” — Julie Shoup

“We have to do more”

On Tuesday, May 24, Julie — 37 weeks into her pregnancy — went for a routine checkup. Her OB/GYN, who had been closely monitoring Julie because of gestational diabetes, was out of town. So she was seen by her doctor’s Via Christi Clinic colleague, maternal-fetal specialist Michael Wolfe, MD.

Her blood pressure was elevated, so Dr. Wolfe sent her to the Via Christi NewLife Center at St. Joseph for further testing and it was determined that she should be induced. Cary joined Julie at the hospital and arrangements were made for family to care for Madalyn, 15, Alexander, then 12, and Emily, 5.

After receiving medication to induce delivery, the anesthesiologist came in for her epidural.

“I don’t remember much after that,” says Julie.

Maximus arrived at 2:10 a.m., weighing 7 pounds, 2 ounces, and was admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for observation. Julie, whose breathing was increasingly erratic, was admitted to the intensive care unit, where she appeared to stabilize after being intubated and the fluid on her lungs removed.

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“Every moment of care that Julie received, had a lot to do with her recovery.” — Cary Shoup

Truly blessed

Julie, who was in and out of consciousness, was transported to St. Francis, which is staffed and equipped to provide advanced heart care to the most critically ill patients.

“The Shoup family, clockwise from top left: Cary, Maximus, Julie, Alexander, Emily and Madalyn.

“My guardian angel told me it would be OK. And it was.” — Julie Shoup

click+learn:
Visit viachristi.org/heart for information about Via Christi’s Heart Valve Clinic and Structural Heart program.
Striking advance

Retiree Robert Dilli loves golf and bowling with his former colleagues – activities that a severely narrowed aortic valve curtailed as he became increasingly fatigued and out of breath.

“They told me eventually they were going to have to put in a new valve,” says the 72-year-old former production control supervisor.

But having had quintuple bypass surgery in 2009, he didn’t want to undergo another open-heart procedure unless it was his only option.

Fortunately, it wasn’t.

‘Go-to procedure’

In May, Robert underwent transcatheter aortic valve replacement at Via Christi Hospital St. Francis – a procedure that now has brought renewed hope for patients statewide who suffer from severe aortic stenosis.

In doing so, he became one of the more than 250 patients to have TAVR performed at St. Francis and among the first to undergo the procedure there under conscious, or minimal, sedation.

Robert’s daughter, Hailey Busch, says it was great that her dad didn’t have to be on a ventilator, as it allowed him to recover more quickly. He recently resumed bowling and since the start of his fall league is “doing pretty good.”

Via Christi’s Structural Heart team members, whose TAVR outcomes continue to be better than the national average, see the less-invasive procedure as the way of the future.

TAVR is no longer the procedure of last hope, but instead is becoming the ‘go-to procedure’ for people with aortic valve disease,” says Bassem Chehab, MD, who serves as medical director for the program. The program’s team includes cardiologists, cardiovascular surgeons, anesthesiologists and a cadre of dedicated nursing, OR, heart catheterization lab and Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit staff.

WICHITA

Childbirth/parenting
For details/to register: 316-689-5700 or viachristi.org/events
- Baby care seminar • Free
- Boot Camp for New Dads • Free
- Car seat safety • Free
- Childbirth preparation • $55
- Grandparenting • Free
- Happiest Baby on the Block™ • $20
- Infant massage • Free
- NewLife Center tours • Free
- Nursing Your Baby • $15
- Siblings: Baby and Me • $10
- Weight management
  - Weight loss orientation • Free
  - For details/to register: 316-689-6082 or viachristiweightmanagement.com
  - Surgical weight loss session • Free
  - For details/to register: 316-689-6082 or viachristiweightmanagement.com
- SHAPEDOWN® for kids/teens • Call For details/to register: 316-609-4448 or viachristi.org/events
- Cardiac health
  - For details/to register: 316-689-5700 or viachristi.org/events
  - Dining out strategies • $5
  - Flavorful, low-sodium eating • $5
  - Heart-healthy nutrition • $5
  - Low-fat cooking • $5
- Diabetes
  - Details/registration info: 316-274-8989 or viachristi.org/diabetes-ed
  - Self-management education • Costs often covered by insurance.
- Joint pain
  - For details/to register: 316-689-5700 or viachristi.org/jointcenter
  - Hip or knee • Free
- Living with Parkinson's
  - For details/to register: 316-689-5700 or viachristi.org/events
  - Meets monthly • Free
- CPR
  - Details/registration info: 785-587-5413 or viachristi.org/ed
  - Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers (BLS HCP) • $80
  - BLS HCP Renewal Verification • $80
- Support groups
  - For details: viachristi.org/manhattan-education
  - No registration is necessary.
  - Diabetes — Manhattan • Free
  - Call 785-587-5481 for details.
  - Diabetes — Wamego • Free
  - Call 785-587-5481 for details.
  - Heart failure • Free
  - Call 785-587-4264 for details.
  - Milk Matters — breastfeeding • Free
  - For details/to register: 316-776-4779 x 7681 for details.

MANHATTAN

Childbirth/parenting
Details/registration info: 785-587-5413 or viachristi.org/manhattan-education
- Baby care seminar • Free
- Boot Camp for New Dads • Free
- Car seat safety • Free
- Childbirth preparation • $55
- Grandparenting • Free
- Happiest Baby on the Block™ • $20
- Infant massage • Free
- NewLife Center tours • Free
- Nursing Your Baby • $15
- Siblings: Baby and Me • $10
- Weight management
  - Weight loss orientation • Free
  - For details/to register: 316-616-6520 or viachristi.org/events
  - Look Good ... Feel Better™ • Free for women with cancer.
  - Driver safety
  - For details/to register: 316-689-5700 or viachristi.org/events
  - AARP Smart Driver class • $15-$20
- Support groups
  - East Wichita — For details/to register: 316-634-5400 or viachristi.org/events
  - Amputee • Free
  - Brain injury • Free
  - Stroke • Free
  - West Wichita — For details/to register: 316-796-7235 or viachristi.org/events
  - Stroke • Free

Cancer
For details/to register: 316-616-6520 or viachristi.org/events
- Look Good ... Feel Better™ • Free for women with cancer.
- Driver safety
- For details/to register: 316-689-5700 or viachristi.org/events
- AARP Smart Driver class • $15-$20
- Support groups
  - East Wichita — For details/to register: 316-634-5400 or viachristi.org/events
  - Amputee • Free
  - Brain injury • Free
  - Stroke • Free
  - West Wichita — For details/to register: 316-796-7235 or viachristi.org/events
  - Stroke • Free

Visit viachristi.org/lifematters for dates and air times for our monthly broadcast with Via Christi experts answering questions that matter to you.

PITTSBURG

Childbirth/parenting
Details/registration info: 785-587-5413 or viachristi.org/pittsburg-education
- Childbirth preparation, breastfeeding and parenting • $25
- Call 620-235-7516 for details.

Smoking cessation series
- Wednesdays for four weeks • Free
- Call 620-232-5705 for details.

Diabetes
- Self-management education • Costs often covered by insurance.
- Call 620-235-7381 for details.

Cancer
- Look Good ... Feel Better™ • Free for women with cancer.
- Call 620-235-7900 for details.

Yoga for wellness
- Mondays • Free for Via Christi patients.
- Call 620-231-1068 for details.

Support groups
- Breast cancer • Free
- Call 620-235-7900 for details.
- General cancer • Free
- Call 620-235-7900 for details.
- COG • Free
- Call 620-704-8822 for details.

Visit viachristi.org/lifematters for dates and air times for our monthly broadcast with Via Christi experts answering questions that matter to you.

Visit viachristi.org/TAVR for more information.
“Went to the emergency room this morning and they admitted me,” Joe wrote on his Facebook page. “Should be here about 48 hrs. Pneumonia wasn’t improving but feel like I’m in good hands.”

Initially, the bed rest, fluids and steroids seemed to be helping. But shortly after lab results confirmed that Joe had contracted H1N1, or swine, flu, his condition began to rapidly deteriorate.

**Last ditch effort**

Joe was moved to St. Teresa’s Intensive Care Unit, sedated, intubated and placed on a bi-vent, which even at the maximum setting wasn’t enough and had to be replaced with a manual bag valve mask to maintain his oxygen levels.

In “a last ditch effort to save his life,” says St. Teresa nursing director Brenda Larson, a special, high-tech bed was shipped in from Topeka.

The bed’s rotisserie-like function allows patients to lie in a facedown position, causing the heart to fall forward, lifting weight from the lungs and allowing more oxygen into the bloodstream. It also allows the team to easily turn and swing sedated and intubated patients like Joe, who was tethered to six different IV lines, to help move accumulated fluid in the lungs.

“It’s one very smart bed,” says Larson.

But it’s also one that’s rarely needed at Via Christi’s Wichita hospitals, so it required training by every member of Joe’s bedside care team.

“That bed was a godsend,” says Glenda.

“Once they got him in that bed, that’s when things started to turn around.”

That is, until the bed’s computer system stopped working.

Lori Link, RN, immediately called tech support, says Glenda, who told her, “You keep working and we’ll pray.”

Suddenly, says Glenda, a long-time member and large cadre of friends and family were answered as the bed began to function again.

While that bed was replaced, Glenda adds Glenda: “I don’t know why anyone would ever want to go anywhere else.”

“They were always thinking ahead to what they might need to do next,” says Glenda, whose appreciation extends beyond Joe’s clinical care team, led by hospital chaplain Sister Janet Rowley to the Nutrition and Environmental Services staff and hospital volunteers — “has been God’s gift to us.”

**Very thankful**

After 20 days in the ICU, Joe was transferred to the medical-surgical unit; five days later, he moved to the hospital’s rehabilitation unit, where the therapists helped him rebuild strength lost during his stay.

After several weeks, Joe was well enough to go home. Although weakened by his ordeal, Joe is grateful for the care he and his family received.

“At 38 years old, you don’t think you’re going to die,” he says. But having come close, he says he has a new appreciation for the importance of having St. Teresa, a full-service hospital, in west Wichita.

“It makes you very thankful,” says Joe.

Adds Glenda: “I don’t know why anyone would ever want to go anywhere else.”

Are you ready for flu season? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone at least 6 months old get the flu vaccine every year.

Those most at risk for serious flu complications include:

- Children
- People with conditions such as asthma, diabetes and COPD
- Pregnant women
- People age 65 and older

Visit viachristi.org/flumist to read why the FluMist vaccine isn’t recommended.
A seasonal favorite for those avoiding gluten and dairy

Crisp, cool air and the sweet smell of baked goods are enough to make you wish for the fall season all year long. Coffee cake, the perfect blend of crumbly pastry and moist cake, is a tried-and-true fall favorite.

But not everyone can enjoy traditional breakfast pastries and desserts. They may be choosing an alternative way of eating or unable to eat certain foods because of an allergy or intolerance to ingredients. Thankfully, substitute ingredients are readily available to help you create a warm, sweet treat that will have your gluten-free and dairy-free guests asking for more.

A Gallup poll showed that 20 percent of Americans include gluten-free foods in their diet, and a separate study from the Nutrition Business Journal showed that 36 percent of Americans prefer milk alternatives to regular milk. If you or your holiday guests are avoiding both gluten and dairy, this easy recipe is one you will feel good about serving, because you won’t be sacrificing the rich flavor, moist cake and crumbly topping that makes a coffee cake sing. Plus, it includes a layer of pumpkin goodness to confirm that the air outside is cool and the coffee is brewing inside.

The best part about this delectable cake is how easy it is to make. Your prep time is just eight minutes. The longest part is waiting the 45-50 minutes that it takes to bake. So put some coffee on and set your timer. Enjoy!

Gluten-free, Dairy-free Pumpkin Coffee Cake

Serves 9

Crumb topping

- 1/4 cup coconut flour
- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 2 tablespoons coconut palm sugar

For the batter, in a large bowl combine coconut oil, maple syrup, coconut sugar and pumpkin. Mix well using a whisk. Add in the eggs and mix until incorporated. Add in the almond flour, coconut flour, baking soda, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon and salt. Mix until no dry pockets remain.

Pour into prepared pan and top with crumb topping. Bake for 45-50 minutes. Refrigerate after the first day.

Why coconut & almond flour?

Common bleached wheat flour can contain additives such as whitening agents and preservatives, but almond and coconut flours do not. Almond flour is ground from almonds that are without a skin — also known as blanched almonds. Coconut flour is made from coconut meat — the white inside lining of a coconut once the husk is removed. Both are high in fiber and are good sources of protein and healthy fats. Both also provide a gluten-free alternative that is naturally low in carbohydrates.

Preheat oven to 325°. Line a 9-by-9-inch pan with parchment paper.

To make the crumb topping, in a small bowl combine coconut flour, almond flour, coconut sugar, cinnamon, maple syrup and coconut oil. Mix well — it should resemble wet sand. Set aside.

For the batter, in a large bowl combine coconut oil, maple syrup, coconut sugar and pumpkin. Mix well using a whisk. Add in the eggs and mix until incorporated. Add in the almond flour, coconut flour, baking soda, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon and salt. Mix until no dry pockets remain.

Pour into prepared pan and top with crumb topping. Bake for 45-50 minutes.

Refrigerate after the first day.

Adapted from jaysbakingmecrazy.com

Find more great recipes at viachristi.org/recipes
Did you know there are almost three times as many hernia surgeries each year than surgeries to remove an appendix? Between 750,000 and 1 million hernia operations are done in the U.S. annually, compared to 280,000 appendix operations.

Here, Via Christi Clinic general surgeon, E. Ragnar Peterson, MD, answers six common questions about hernias.

**What is a hernia?**

Put simply, everything in the body is designed to be in its own compartment, with barriers between the compartments. A hernia occurs when a barrier has a hole and tissue from one compartment travels into another compartment.

An example is to imagine your backyard with a fence around it. Next, think about a hole in the fence that allows the neighbor’s cat to run back and forth between the two yards. The hole in the fence represents a hole in your abdominal wall. The cat represents herniated tissue, be it bladder, intestine or fat.

Numerous types of hernias can be found in various locations throughout the body.

**What causes a hernia?**

Essentially, the body is designed with areas of natural weakness. The repeated stress of an active lifestyle leads to these weak areas developing into actual holes in the abdominal wall. Hernias are also common after operations in the abdomen. These are referred to as incisional hernias.

**What are symptoms of a hernia?**

A painless bulge is the most common hernia symptom. Pain can occur as well, increasing in severity toward the end of the day.

**What are the main treatments?**

Surgeons recommend that most hernias be surgically repaired for several reasons. As patients age, hernias tend to get larger, and therefore more difficult to fix. Smaller hernias can also present problems known as incarceration and strangulation. Incarceration involves the herniated tissue becoming trapped in the wrong compartment. This is not an emergency but is an indication that the hernia should be fixed soon. Strangulation, however, is a significant complication that is a surgical emergency and can be life-threatening in a matter of hours. The herniated tissue becomes starved of its blood supply and the tissue starts to die.

**What is the most common type of hernia?**

Hernias of the groin, referred to as inguinal hernias, are the most common type and are much more common in men than women.

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**Can lifting heavy objects cause a hernia?**

The increased abdominal pressure that accompanies straining or lifting can contribute to the formation of a hernia over time. However, one episode of straining or lifting will not usually cause a hernia. Patients commonly notice the hernia after straining, lifting or running, but the actual weakness in the abdominal wall has been present for a long period of time.

“Looking for a doctor? Visit viachristi.org to learn more about Dr. Peterson and other Via Christi physicians.”
“It’s a miracle”

David cannot recall his March 7 collision with a semitrailer. He was en route from his home outside Colwich, Kansas, driving before sunrise to work in Buhler, located about an hour northwest of Wichita.

“IT was the first time I’ve used the weed trimmer since the accident,” says David, during an outpatient rehabilitation session in June at Via Christi Therapy Center on Socrates in West Wichita. “Pull-starting it was tough. I had to stand on it with my foot because I can’t use my right hand.”

Given that three months earlier doctors had estimated his chances for survival at 50 percent, he’s pleased to be doing yard work again.

“I broke my collar bone, sternum, three ribs and my right humerus,” says David, astonished that he escaped more severe injury. “It’s a miracle I’m here. God looked out for me.”

He was transferred from a nearby community hospital to Via Christi Hospital St. Francis in Wichita, where the trauma team worked to stabilize his internal injuries. Once his overall health improved, they repaired his broken bones.

“Busy family man ‘blessed’ to survive collision with semitrailer”

David and his wife, Christi, are moved to tears recalling the compassion extended to them at Via Christi. How trauma nurses reassured Christi when she needed it most. How they advocated for getting David’s breathing tube removed on his 50th birthday so he could speak again. How they kept him comfortable and clean, preserving his dignity.

A culture of care

David’s therapists helped him summon the strength and confidence to push his recovery. He was discharged four days later, March 31, and returned to his loving family and dogs, Otto and Ivo.

“I was ready to be home for my son, Zach,” he says. “I could see that he wanted and needed me home.”

Today, David’s active lifestyle includes rehab sessions with Beauchamp, his occupational therapist. They work to improve use of his right shoulder and elbow as they wait for his damaged radial nerve to restore function to his wrist, hand and fingers.

“Our doctors were unbelievable and the nurses were wonderful,” says David. “There’s a culture at Via Christi to be commended. Everyone has the perspective that they’re dealing with people who are struggling with something. No one seems to lose sight of that.”

The road to home

When David had improved enough to focus on physical and occupational therapy, he was transferred to the inpatient rehabilitation unit at Via Christi Hospital St. Teresa in northwest Wichita.

“I said, ‘That’s right down the road from my house. That’s perfect for where my family lives so they can come visit me more easily,’” he recalls.

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Today, David’s active lifestyle includes sessions at Via Christi. They work to improve use of his right shoulder and elbow as they wait for his damaged radial nerve to restore function to his wrist, hand and fingers.

“IT can take up to a couple of years for that nerve to heal,” says David’s orthopedic surgeon, Bradley Dart, MD, medical director of Orthopedic Trauma at Via Christi. “Patients like David who have a positive outlook about their rehab and recovery all seem to improve the most.”

“Nothing is easy for me, but I plan on being able to do everything I used to do,” he says. “It’s never going to be the same but it’s going to be dang good.”

David is hopeful and motivated to continue his progress.

“It looks like you got some sun,” says occupational therapist Lea Beauchamp to David Rife, as she works to mobilize and stretch his right shoulder area.

“We expect the unexpected”

Patients like David often have inspiring stories of overcoming unanticipated obstacles, with the help of Via Christi doctors, nurses, therapists and other clinicians. Read about two of those patients online:

We expect the unexpected

- Speech therapy helped a teen and three years of nearly nonstop coughing. Read about his often-undiagnosed condition: viachristi.org/karson
- Her headache turned out to be a rare autoimmune disorder: Therapists at Via Christi Hospital St. Teresa in Wichita got her back on track: viachristi.org/jenn

David continues his recovery from an accident with support from his wife, Christi, and son, Zach, age 9. Opposite page: David walks the family’s German shepherd, Otto.

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— David Rife
Mike Mullins
CEO and Ministry Market Leader
Via Christi Health, Wichita

Hometown: El Paso, Texas
Family: My wife, Melissa, and I have two sons, Nicholas and Austin.
Pets: Terriers Bo and Murphy
College: University of Texas at El Paso for my undergraduate degree in chemistry and Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas, for my master’s in healthcare administration.

How long have you been at Via Christi?
I have been at Via Christi Health since July. I have worked with Ascension for two years and have been in the healthcare industry for 30 years.

How do you spend your free time?
I spend time with family and am a captain in the Medical Service Corps, United States Naval Reserves.

How much do you enjoy your job?
I love my job. It is a place where I can make a difference.

Favorite movie: "Gettysburg." There are so many leadership lessons in this movie.

Favorite TV show: "T.I.M.E. Travelers.


Favorite place to travel: I like to go to the gym and try to play golf and basketball. Father Time, however, is not forgiving.

Favorite hobby: I like to go to the gym and try to play golf and basketball. Father Time, however, is not forgiving.

Favorite activity: I have liked to have met St. Vincent DePaul. Now it would be retired Gen. Colin Powell.

Favorite quote: "Don’t get too close to people who are always busy or on their phone all the time."—Dr. Phil

Favorite saying: "You can’t say something you’ll regret if you’re listening" and "Own it, seek joy and don’t be a jerk."—Colin Powell.

Most rewarding thing about working in the healthcare industry: Supporting others so they can better care for patients.

Most rewarding thing about working in Via Christi: It is an awesome place that provides great care and service.

Volunteer activities: In the past I have served on chamber boards, Salvation Army, Rotary, United Way activities and fully participated in hospital ministry activities.

Still on my bucket list: To learn about all of Via Christi’s leaders

Person I would like to meet: Two of my favorites are: "You can’t say something you’ll regret if you’re listening" and "Own it, seek joy and don’t be a jerk."

Hobbies: Walking, hiking, backpacking, gardening and making jam — it’s like a chemistry experiment.

First job: Carry-out boy at Dillons grocery store in my hometown.

Alternate career choice: Manufacturing. Or I would have found a way to be a farmer.

Latest accomplishment: I hiked 18 miles through Rocky Mountain National Park with a bunch of Boy Scouts in July.

Most rewarding thing about working in Via Christi: I see all the good people can do. I enjoy helping to allow that to happen. Personally, I always wanted to work in a nonprofit, specifically one that was faith-based.

Still on my bucket list: I would like to hike all 59 national parks.

Not many people know: I grew up in a 4-H/Future Farmers of America family. My mom forced all five kids to learn to cook. It’s amazing that 40 years ago I learned something and it stuck.

Mike Mullins and Carla Yost, RN, Chief nursing officer, admire a recent thank you cards with nurse Brittani Armstrong.
Defying the odds

Pittsburg grandma grateful for wound care expertise, family support

In mid-March, Marie Mariano was worried. Her toes were swollen and hurt. She made an appointment with her physician, who thought perhaps Marie had gout.

Then, her toes became numb and turned red.

“I had no feeling in them and I knew something was very wrong,” recalls Marie, who was diagnosed as a type 2 diabetic years ago.

By the end of that week, she woke up with a black spot on her foot and an abscess.

“There was exposed bone,” she says. “My 8-year-old grandson said it looked like an animal had taken a bite.”

Michael Nagle, MD, director of Via Christi Wound Care in Pittsburg, saw her immediately, but the prognosis wasn’t favorable.

“He said there was a high risk of losing my toes,” Marie says.

Journey to healing

Dr. Nagle and his staff set to work on a course of treatment: A combination of ongoing wound care and hyperbaric therapy.

“Cells require oxygen to heal, Dr. Nagle explains. The air we breathe contains 21 percent oxygen. With hyperbaric oxygen therapy, patients breathe 100 percent oxygen under pressure in a specially designed chamber.

There, the arterial oxygen pressure can be 10 times that of breathing normal air. In turn, that increases oxygen to the wound and promotes healing.

Dr. Nagle started Marie on a course of 40 treatments in a hyperbaric chamber, done two hours daily Monday through Friday for eight weeks.

“The first time I went in the chamber, I was scared to death,” Marie recalls.

She soon realized that there was nothing to be frightened of; the chamber is transparent, staff never leave her side, and she could watch a flat-screen television as she relaxed.

“It’s really not a big deal,” she says. “Your ears kind of pop like being in a plane but that’s it.”

Marie says hyperbaric oxygen specialist Lance Fairchild and all her Via Christi caregivers are like family now.

“They visit with you, explain everything step by step,” she says.

As the therapy gradually improved the health of her cells, Dr. Nagle worked on wound care through a weekly debridement — removal of unhealthy tissue — and compression wraps.

“Dr. Nagle is so kind, so gentle. He has real compassion. I notice those things because I’ve been taught to be that way in my job,” says Marie, a medical office assistant for 60 years.

She has had to slow down and must continue to keep her foot elevated as it heals — frustrating, she said, because she is used to her independence and doing things for herself. She also misses being active with her two grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

But the wound is very small now, and Marie and her daughter, Twyla, who drives her to treatments, are both optimistic about her future and are grateful for the medical care she received.


Do you need hyperbaric treatment?

If you have a wound that hasn’t healed in 30 days and doesn’t respond to traditional treatments, your physician may decide you are a good candidate for Via Christi’s hyperbaric therapy.

During hyperbaric therapy, you lay inside a transparent, pressurized chamber for about two hours and breathe 100 percent oxygen, which promotes healing in injured areas. Such care can be helpful for ulcers, traumatic and surgical wounds, wounds related to diabetes, skin irritations and wounds caused by poor blood flow or circulation.

Learn more about wound care treatment and hyperbaric chamber therapy at Via Christi Hospital in Pittsburg at viachristi.org/pittsburg-wound. For services in Wichita, visit viachristi.org/wound.
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We learned what to look for and what to do if you believe someone is having a stroke, and how strokes can be avoided or prevented.

Insulin myths and facts
There are a lot of misconceptions around taking insulin for diabetes. Learn the facts from diabetes educator Stephanie Brown, RN.

‘Silent’ heart attacks
Half of heart attacks may go undetected. Cardiologist Andre Saad, MD, explains why and what’s being done to find them.

Get your ZZZs
Sleep helps the body in unexpected ways. Learn 25 reasons why your body wants more sleep from health educator Angie Cassity.

Morning meal
Is it hard to fit a healthy breakfast into your morning routine? Pittsburg pediatrician Jessilyn Humble, MD, offers six tips to make it happen.

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Allergy shots can be a great way for some people to alleviate their symptoms. Learn who would be a good candidate, and what to expect, from Via Christi Clinic allergists Thomas Scott, MD, and Laura Veras, MD.

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One year ago, Dorothy Perry could barely walk to her front door. A narrowed aortic valve left her so tired and out of breath, “she was virtually homebound,” says her daughter, Teresa Clough.

The open-heart surgery traditionally used for valve replacement isn’t a viable option for ill or high-risk patients like Dorothy. Fortunately, Via Christi’s advanced structural heart program offered her hope. A less invasive treatment called transcatheter aortic valve replacement, or TAVR, meant Dorothy could receive a new heart valve with less risk.

Twelve months later, Dorothy was well enough to share miles of sightseeing while on vacation with Teresa and her grandkids. “I have my Mom back,” says Teresa. “And I’m back to doing the things I love to do,” says Dorothy.

Catching up on life

Dorothy Perry, given a new life by minimally invasive heart care, shows off a crappie she reeled in on a recent outing.

Dissolving stents, evolving hope

Via Christi has been selected as an early provider of the first fully absorbable stent to treat coronary artery disease.

Talk with your doctor to see if this long dreamed about natural alternative to a permanent metallic stent is right for you.

To learn more about minimally invasive heart procedures, visit viachristi.org/heart