

Making history with healing hands: Blue Mountain to graduate first class of nursing students in August

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On August 2, the first graduating class of the Blue Mountain Christian University (BMCU) School of Nursing will take a step of faith and make history. With a significant emphasis on Christian nursing, the program offers an educational foundation rooted in Christlike compassion for every patient. This historically monumental graduating class also falls within Blue Mountain's 150th Anniversary of celebrating God's faithfulness.

Established January 2023, the new nursing program started with only a few future nurses. Although the entering class was much smaller than she had originally hoped, Dr. Barbara McMillin, President of BMCU, recognized the program needed room to grow. Already, applications for the next entering class are ten times as many students – between 70 and 80 applicants – as the first group. The next nursing students will also start on a regular schedule.

Weeks after graduation, the School of Nursing will hold a white coat ceremony for the first nurses. Mentors will pray a blessing over the nurses as they hold out their hands, sending them out to minister to those who are in need.

"The first time I saw students wearing scrubs on campus, it dawned on me so clearly, 'Those are *nursing students* at our university'" expressed McMillin. "It still just excites me."

“A Christian nursing program,” continued McMillin, “is so important, and here are two reasons why. Firstly, what did Jesus do? He went about the countryside teaching and preaching and healing. At Blue Mountain, we have a teacher education program, which was our cornerstone for years, and then preachers came. We have been educating preachers since 1956. Now we educate nurses. We believe that we have, for a long time, been anticipating the fulfillment of a threefold ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing. That is vitally important to us. At the heart of our mission is to provide a Christ-centered experience in all three of those areas.

“Secondly, there are shortages in all three of those areas. We don’t have enough teachers, we don’t have enough preachers, we don’t have enough nurses. In this critical time of our culture, we are doing our best to meet those three needs, but those needs also complement the mission of our institution in remarkable ways.”

One of the first nursing students, Emily Carr, shared her experience in this history-making class. “I genuinely cannot imagine being in a nursing program that does not teach from a Christian worldview. There is a huge spiritual aspect to taking care of those who are hurting and vulnerable. At Blue Mountain Christian University School of Nursing, our teachers instruct us to care for the whole person, not just treat symptoms and check off boxes, and that makes a noticeable difference in how we care for patients in the clinical setting.



Carr

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“Promoting healing is a powerful tool for anyone to have in any capacity – physical, spiritual, or emotional,” said Carr. “My hope is that, through obtaining this degree, I’ll be equipped to bring the hope of healing – in each of those three ways – to those who are currently living in hopelessness; and I know that Blue Mountain has exceptionally prepared me both academically and spiritually for this career and ministry. Blue Mountain Christian University provides an academically excellent experience, and prepares every student, no matter their major, for their future career from a godly perspective. I am so blessed to have been able to go to school at this university for the last four years, and I know without a doubt that I will take and apply the lessons I have learned from every teacher – from my intro to U.S. History class to my Community Nursing course – with me into the medical field.”

Adding a spiritual depth to an already demanding profession urges Mississippi Baptists to pray for the nurses being sent out and the students coming in. “Pray for those students to know distinctly if they are being called to practice as a nurse, and to see it as their calling and ministry,” stressed McMillin. “Pray for their strength and focus because it is a very challenging program. It’s easy to get discouraged when a program is as difficult as all nursing programs are. So pray for clarity, for calling, for endurance, and for their ability to be compassionate as they interact with patients.

“The nursing students are called to model that compassion of Christ. We often reflect on the fact that if you are on your deathbed and you have a healthcare provider at your side, you want it to be someone who can minister to your spirit as well as your body. That’s the kind of individual we are hoping to educate and produce.

“Pray for our nursing faculty, too,” McMillin added. “We have an outstanding nursing faculty, and they work so hard, so pray for their stamina, their clarity, and that they would continue to teach their subject matter from a Christian worldview. We

are thankful for them.

“Another way MS Baptists can support is to give. We are excited and believe that this will be the year when we break ground on our new Science and Nursing building. We are looking for people who want to help support. If someone wanted to invest in this ministry, there are offices, labs, and classrooms that can be designated after your family name and leave a legacy. So people can pray for the nurses and pray about how they can be involved in supporting this ministry addressing a need within our community. Then people can spread the word and tell students about this new nursing program in North Mississippi. Just getting the word out there would be a great service to us,” McMillin affirmed.

To learn more about the Blue Mountain Christian University School of Nursing, [click here](#).