

Driven to Touch and Heal

From the beginning, her dream was to become a nurse. But Amy Jenkins lost her way.

Shortly after graduating from high school, plans for college and the pursuit of a clinical career got sidetracked by a quick courtship, a wedding, the births of two daughters and, sadly, the breakup of her marriage.

A single mother with two mouths to feed, she took a job as a dispatcher for a Cookeville, Tenn., trucking company. But that desire to touch and heal never went away. So, at the age of 32, Amy resolved that – whatever it took – she would become a nurse. Working and going to school, she graduated as a licensed practical nurse from Tennessee Technology Center in Livingston in 2006, and is now employed at Cookeville Regional Medical Center.



But that dream won't allow her to stop there. She is set on becoming a registered nurse, and is studying to get that license.

I'm proud of Amy. You see, she is my grand niece. As president of Life Care, a company that employs about 8,700 nurses and with opportunities to have regular contact with many of them, I see qualities in Amy that affirm what God intended her to be. She has the temperament, the skills that are both inherent and acquired, the patience, and – most of all – the heart of a nurse. She loves people, and she has a yearning to help those who are facing pain and infirmity.

Amy's story is not unlike the experiences of many of Life Care's nurses – men and women who were determined to achieve their professional calling, and the obstacles they had to overcome in its pursuit. And their sacrifices do not stop with the licensing. Every day, they give generously of their time, their talents, their energy, their tears and, yes, their laughter and their encouragement to those they serve.

Nursing is, indeed, a noble profession. Today is National Nurses Day, the start of National Nurses Week, which runs through May 12, the birthday of Florence Nightingale. The theme of the week is *Delivering Quality and Innovation in Patient Care*, which is the dedication of Life Care nurses. By their example, they live out the Nightingale Pledge:

Before God and those assembled here, I solemnly pledge to adhere to the code of ethics of the nursing profession; to cooperate faithfully with the other members of the nursing team and carry out faithfully and to the best of my ability the instructions of the physician or the nurse who may be assigned to supervise my work; I will not do anything evil or malicious and I will not knowingly give any harmful drug or assist in malpractice. I will not reveal any confidential information that may come to my knowledge in the course of my work. And I pledge myself to do all in my power to raise the standards and prestige of the practical nursing. May my life be devoted to service and to the high ideals of the nursing profession.

God bless our nurses – one and all!

– Beecher Hunter