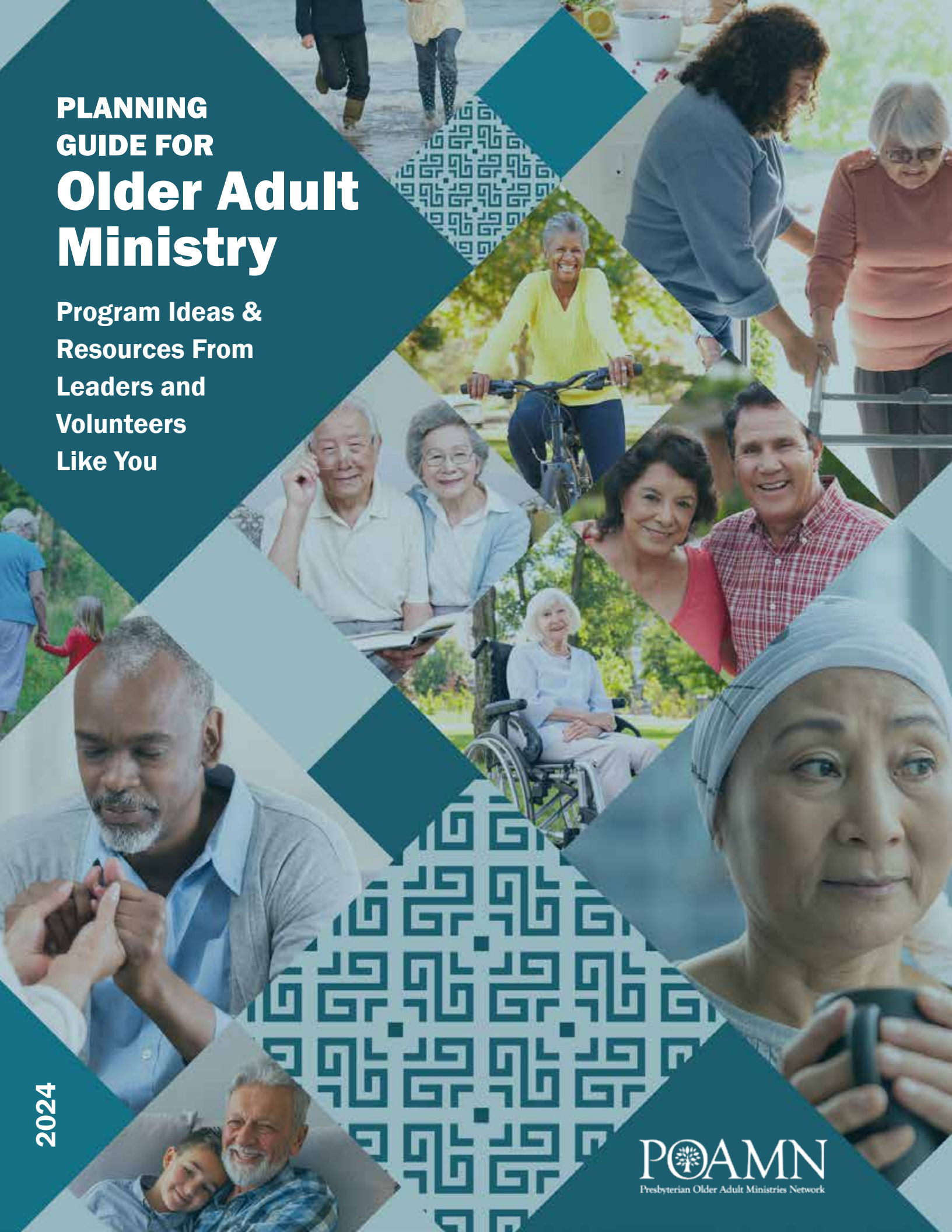


PLANNING GUIDE FOR **Older Adult Ministry**

Program Ideas &
Resources From
Leaders and
Volunteers
Like You

2024

POAMN
Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network



Prepared by



www.poamn.org

March 2024
Edited by Kelley Hope



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Welcome

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The POAMN Board is pleased to bring you this annual planning guide of valuable resources for Older Adult Ministry activities. We urge you to circulate it among your older adult leaders and even to the younger members of the church. The guide can help spread the word about the value of OAM, inspire ways to initiate or expand OAM in your congregation, and introduce POAMN to people who aren't familiar with our organization.

This year, Older Adult Sunday is May 5. Please consider recognizing Older Adult Sunday in your community. Feel free to adapt the worship service on page 28 to suit your needs; hopefully much of the hard work has been done so that you can just "plug and play".

You'll find that many of the articles and information in previous years' planning guides are timeless and can thus still be used effectively in 2024. You can find this wealth of information under the Resources tab on the POAMN website, www.poamn.org.

Make plans now to attend POAMN's 2024 Conference in San Diego, May 29-30. Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church has kindly agreed to host the event and their director of Senior Adult Ministry, Elaine Burrell, is working closely with us to formulate the two-day event. The program will be filled with resources that will provide both know-how and ways to conduct meaningful and relevant OA programs.

Finally, we'd love to know what OA activities you are pursuing in your church community. Please don't hide your light under a bushel! Share your good works with us so that we can put them in a future planning guide or in the regular POAMN Network News delivered to your email. You can sign up to receive the PNN on the POAMN website, www.poamn.org/newsletters, or by contacting POAMN administrator Kelley Hope at poamnetwork@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Peace and Blessings,

The POAMN Board of Directors



Older Adult Week & Month

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has designated the first Sunday in May (May 5, 2024) as the beginning of Older Adult Week. Many congregations choose to celebrate older adults for the entire month of May. The resources in this planning guide, including the worship, can be used throughout the year at any time that works for your congregation.

Did You Know?

POAMN has been around for more than 40 years. We started in the early 1980s as a project funded by Presbyterian Women.

POAMN works in collaboration with the Office of Christian Formation in the Presbyterian Mission Agency, PC(USA).

POAMN is a member of the Christian Formation Collective that supports and provides resources across every age and stage of ministry.

Christian Formation Collective Members



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Association of Partners in
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apcenet.org



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Conference Association
pcca.net



Presbyterian Older Adult
Ministries Network
poamn.org



Presbyterian Youth
Workers' Association
pywa.org



UKirk
Collegiate Ministries
ukirk.org

Turn to New Guide for Older Adult Ministry Inspiration

In early 2024, POAMN launched a new online resource. Called “Expressions of Older Adult Ministry” and housed on the POAMN website, this guide provides helpful material for effectively working with, to, and for older adults. New and experienced leaders and volunteers in older adult ministry will find valuable resources inside.

“Expressions” covers guiding principles for serving older adults, a reformed theology framework, and a multitude of ideas you can implement in your context. The information is communicated through instructional videos, interviews with ministry leaders, and written materials.

The content was created by a variety of knowledgeable individuals who are actively involved in serving older adults.

This resource came into being through the efforts of many people—from POAMN and elsewhere—working under the guidance of the Office of Christian Formation in the Presbyterian Mission Agency, PC(USA). The project started in 2022, when POAMN board

members wanted to update older adult ministry manuals created by PC(USA) in the 1990s. Rather than print new paper materials, POAMN instead developed this online resource that will be improved and supplemented over time. With funds, expertise, and connection from the Office

of Christian Formation, “Expressions” was born.

Begin exploring the wide variety of “Expressions of Older Adult Ministry” at poamn.org/expressions.

POAMN
Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network

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Expressions of Older Adult Ministry

A project created in partnership with the Office of Christian Formation of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, PCUSA

Engaging in Christian Community with Older Adults

With so many of those active in our churches and communities being older adults it is important to be intentionally in ministry with this group of God's children.

This is a place for you to engage as a leader and learner in Christian community. You are invited to explore the Guiding Principles of Older Adult Ministry (GOAM), an Older Adult Reformed theological framework, some best practices, as well as specific expressions of Older Adult Ministry which may be adapted for your setting. We hope this is a resource you can take a deep dive into, tip a toe in and return often, or search for specific resources. There is something for you, whether you are a volunteer leader, formation leader or pastor. You can engage on your own, in a small group, or share pieces with other leaders.



Inside “Expressions of Older Adult Ministry”

“Expressions” is composed of four sections, described below. Choose how interacting with the resource works best for you. You can undertake it all at once or by sections over time. You also can engage individually or with a team. Reflection questions throughout give you opportunities to pause and consider what you have heard or read. Additional resources allow you to go further into a topic if desired.

- **Guiding Principles for Older Adult Ministry**

Learn important principles for working with older adults, explore the gifts of aging, reflect on relationship and community, and vision and plan your ministry. Rev. Joyce MacKichan Walker is your guide.

- **Theological Framework for Older Adult Ministry**

Learn how to ground your work in ways that relate to foundational aspects of Reformed Theology and practice with Rev. Sarah Erickson.

- **Ministry in a Variety of Contexts**

Ministry with older adults looks different depending on the context, size of church, number of older adults, community setting, and more. Find examples of programs with and for older adults from congregations and communities across PC(USA). Many colleagues contributed video and written materials to this section.

- **Explore More**

Find links to additional materials that can elevate your ministry.

“Expressions of Older Adult Ministry” is a place for you to engage as a leader and learner in Christian community. Whether you are a volunteer, formation leader, or a pastor, you are invited to explore and adapt the resources for your setting.

Explore the New Face of Aging at POAMN's 2024 Conference



POAMN invites you to our 2024 conference, May 29-30, at Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church in San Diego.

Join ministry leaders, chaplains and lay leaders for fresh perspectives on older adult ministry. Come ready to be inspired with new ideas to implement. Leave with tools to deepen your spiritual connection to serving older adults in your faith community.

We're putting together an agenda of keynote addresses and workshops to help you address emerging challenges and needs of older adults, caregivers, and faith communities.



Sample of Sessions Planned

Bible Journaling

Blend artistic expression and thoughtful reflection to weave a richer understanding of God's word.

A Well-Loved Life

Explore tools and resources to transform end-of-life planning into a spiritual practice.

No Senior Left Behind

Learn how gaps in technology affect the participation experience of seniors and hear about six innovative solutions to overcome these hurdles.

How to Carry Grief

Find hints for ways to carry the burden rather than be paralyzed by it.

Don't Let the Singing Stop

Investigate the power of music in all stages of our lives.

Chaplain Chat

Gather with colleagues serving in retirement communities, hospice organizations, skilled care centers, and more to connect over the special challenges and circumstances of serving as a chaplain.

Find information and registration at poamn.org/conference.

Start or Enhance Your Ministry With a POAMN Grant



Have an idea for a new program or event focused on older adults? Need funds to boost an existing activity?

Apply for a grant from POAMN. Our grants give POAMN members a little financial help (typically \$250 to \$500) to explore a new opportunity.

Use the funds to:

- Initiate and build a new older adult ministry.
- Re-imagine and re-shape an existing program.
- Be innovative and experimental.












Grants may be used for a single event, like a workshop, or a recurring activity.

Individual, affiliate, and designated representatives of organizational POAMN members are invited to apply.

Visit poamn.org/grants to learn more.



Bright Ideas in Older Adult Ministry

-  Holding an intergenerational event (see page 13)
-  Supporting caregivers (see page 14)
-  Teaching seniors about technology
-  Studying a topic like end-of-life decision-making
-  Offering a craft, art, or religious arts course
-  Building intercultural bridges through an activity with another faith group
-  Organizing community nutrition workshops
-  Focusing on a timely issue such as ageism or racism
-  Organizing a retirement workshop
-  Making church facilities older adult-friendly
-  Planning a mission trip or activity

How Faith Communities Can Intentionally Address Loneliness

Robin Johnson, Clear Lake Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas

Loneliness is a common problem in the world today. It seems that the more technologically connected we are, the lonelier we become.

Loneliness, while impacting the individual, also takes a toll on society.

To individuals, the health costs of loneliness rival those of being obese or a heavy smoker. For society, the costs exceed \$160 billion annually in the United States alone.

It is also worth noting that loneliness is not an issue that is exclusively experienced by older adults. In fact, loneliness doesn't discriminate. It is not limited by age, race, ethnicity, gender, or income.

In my role as the director of Adult 55+ Ministry at Clear Lake Presbyterian Church, especially following COVID, I am aware the concerns surrounding loneliness and isolation within our congregation, particularly for our older members.

Because of this awareness, I chose to learn more about the challenges and solutions

while working on my Older Adult Ministry Capstone Project which I completed as part of the Older Adult Ministry Certificate Program through Columbia Theological Seminary.

My project was titled "Addressing the Issues of Loneliness in Older Adults: A List of Best Practices in Faith Based Settings." Unsurprisingly, my research affirmed that faith-based organizations have an important and unique role to play in addressing the crisis of

loneliness for our members and our community.

There are several advantages that faith communities possess when addressing loneliness. Faith-based organizations are already established in their communities. Familiarity gives faith-based organizations a head start in their impact toward reducing loneliness.

In addition, faith-based organizations often offer other some key program characteristics that can reduce feelings of loneliness.



These characteristics include promoting social connectedness and active engagement that give participants the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships, bringing people together for a common purpose, partnering with other organizations in the community on various projects, and providing opportunities for volunteer work that also connects volunteers to those in the community.

In addition to these valuable opportunities, we also offer the unique opportunity to join with the body of Christ to love God and love others.

Ideally, being part of the body of Christ would banish loneliness. Unfortunately, the world is not ideal, and Christians can be lonely. Here are some intentional steps that faith-based organizations can take to address loneliness.

Best Practices from Research

Provide education aimed at raising awareness about the causes of loneliness and how to alleviate it.

Helping members of a faith community understand that loneliness is not a normal part of aging is a great first step. Teaching people how to take steps to relieve loneliness and actively engage with others, especially if that education involves a mentoring relationship is another effective strategy.

Faith communities leveraging recognized faith tools, like prayer and fellowship, to increase connection is another way that education plays a part in diminishing loneliness.

Create opportunities for volunteers to connect to the community.

Older adults are often transitioning from a working environment where worth is based on the ability to produce. Creating new connections and ways to identify themselves as valuable members of a community is important in providing a sense of belonging.

Whether volunteers are being asked to serve other group members or the larger community, service is a tool that increases connection.

When sharing things that their congregations are doing to address issues surrounding loneliness, Pastor Kimberly Cheng, formerly of Clinton United Methodist Church (Clinton, OH), Jo Ann Branton, chair of the Act III Older Adults Ministry at Heritage Baptist Church (Cartersville, GA), and Rev. Mark Frailey, pastor of Coolspring Presbyterian (Mercer, PA) and Union Presbyterian (Clintonville, PA) churches, all talked about enlisting volunteer participants in their older adult

Loneliness (continued)

ministries to reach out to other older adults who might be experiencing loneliness, loss, and disconnection.

By asking volunteers to serve by reaching out one-on-one in an intentional way, their ministries are seeking to strengthen connections between members and provide an enhanced sense of purpose for those initiating the contact.

Offer opportunities that engage creativity and encourage personal growth.

Involving participants in programming helps them develop new skills, insights, and connections.

Add to the impact of existing activities by exploring ways to increase opportunities for creativity. Trying something new in a supportive environment can spark creativity.

Providing time for participants to explore how particular topics speak to them personally and share their insights with others is one way to foster connection. First Baptist Church in Friendswood, TX held an Adult Vacation Bible



School this year to provide purposeful interaction and intentional fellowship in a playful way for adults. While this wasn't programming exclusively for older adults, the intentional engagement and opportunity for creativity makes it worth mentioning.

Foster opportunities for active social contact.

In many traditions, the main religious service is one of passive engagement. Participants can attend and leave without ever actively engaging with other members of the faith community. This

is a tempting proposition for a person who is feeling lonely.

Within faith communities, it is helpful to look at each opportunity for social contact in such a way that we maximize the potential for each participant while remaining sensitive to the needs of those choosing to avoid contact for other reasons, including social anxiety.

This may be as simple as having a team trained to welcome people as they enter the building or start conversations with people who are standing/sitting alone.

Encourage in-person activities.

Even before COVID, research indicated that gathering in a supportive space was preferable to being alone. Post-COVID we know that there are aspects of in-person gathering that cannot be duplicated by technology. Though technology can be a tool in our strategy to reduce loneliness, nothing takes the place of in-person connection. Calesa Leach, founder of CLS Ministries, created a Blue Christmas Vespers Service designed to address issues relating to the loss of a loved one, depression and isolation. Because of COVID related concerns the service was offered virtually in 2022. While the service was impactful via ZOOM, Calesa plans to host it in person this year because she believes that an in-person service will provide a level of support and relationship building not obtainable by virtual attendance.

Train or enlist highly trained facilitators to lead activities.

This may mean seeking out those who are already trained, offering additional training to current facilitators, or recruiting new facilitators who are willing to increase their skills through training.

Older adults value expertise and the confidence it inspires. Providing and expecting a certain level of expertise from facilitators promotes confidence in participants and lets them know that they are worth the time and energy required in preparation. It also lets the facilitators know that their job is important and valuable.

Include participants in the decision-making process at every level of planning and implementation.

By offering opportunities for everyone to feel invested in programming at every level we create more connections with the faith-based organization and with the people who are part of each activity.

Jennifer Dunfee, pastor at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church in McLean, VA, shared with me that Lewinsville Presbyterian switched names

for a monthly program from “Single Seniors” to “Senior Lunches.” The group was formed about six years ago to support those who had lost a spouse.

As time passed, many of the older adults attending identified their loneliness as stemming from caregiving responsibilities of an ill spouse or one with cognitive decline/ Alzheimer’s. These older adults expressed discomfort at attending a program entitled “single” since they aren’t but were seeking fellowship due to loneliness. By having the decision-making capacity to change the name, this group is intentionally engaging others to combat loneliness.

Engage in intentional relationship building.

Building relationships is not a side effect of attending a service or study. Building relationships is an intentional product of participation. The way we think about time and participation matters at every level.

University Baptist Church in Houston, TX intentionally

See LONELINESS on page 12



Loneliness (continued)

provides space for older adult men to build relationships. On Wednesday mornings the church hosts a group called “He Brews” to drink coffee and chat. The group is attractive to men from a variety of backgrounds who aren’t typically joiners, allowing them time and space to develop relationships with each other.

Cooperate with other community organizations to strengthen connections and reach.

Every organization has things they do well and things they can improve. By tapping into

the strengths of those around us and participating with them we all become stronger.

Jennifer Dunfee also shared that Lewinsville Presbyterian is planning a retreat for older adults entitled “Aging with Grace, the Third Third of Life” in cooperation with another local church. The goal is to connect older adults within the community while exploring issues of aging.

In his letter to the Ephesians chapter 4 beginning at verse 15 Paul says, “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every

joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

The kind of growing and bodily formation that Paul portrays doesn’t happen by accident. With curious attention and thoughtful consideration we can intentionally engage older adults and all who are lonely, joining them and holding them as part of the body of Christ, equipping others to serve them, and empowering all to join the work of loving God and loving others. This is an excellent way to live into the calling of building the body up in love.



Robin Johnson is the director of Mental Health and 55+ Adult Ministry at Clear Lake Presbyterian Church (Houston, TX). In this role, she invites church members and those in the community to engage in mental wellness throughout their lives. She also implements programs and encourages habits that foster strong faith and community in later life. Robin is a former educator, administrator, and counselor.

Hold a Grandparent Camp Using New Guide From POAMN, PCCCA, and OCF



“Grandparent Retreat: Building Memories” is a new resource available to help older adults and elementary-aged children gather across generations. Participants will enjoy exploring and discovering together through a variety of activities.

The guide creates opportunities to spend time growing together, learning, playing, sharing, and exploring God’s word and world. The activities meet campers where they are on their faith journey, both young and young-at-heart.

Retreats provide a chance for grandparents to get away with grandchildren, getting to know them better, sharing experiences together, and creating memories. Participants build upon a relationship that might feel different in other settings with other family members around or across a distance.

The program can be adapted for nonfamilial groups by eliminating the grandparent/grandchild titles.



This retreat module was developed by Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association/Campfire Collective and POAMN in collaboration with the Office of Christian Formation in the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

Download the free guide at presbyterianmission.org/resource/retreat-module-grandparent-camp.



Caregiver Support Fair Connects Families With Resources

Pat Baker, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Tucker, Georgia

Working for five decades in public, private, and faith positions in the field of aging, I can guarantee that every congregation has caregivers who are in need of support and help. While your congregation likely has an abundance of compassion for this population, they may lack confidence in how to respond.

Fortunately, there are lots of resources available to help churches become more involved with caregivers in their congregations. Start with the list on page 15.

Then consider hosting a caregiver support event that brings together these resources in person. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in the suburbs of Atlanta, where I serve as director of Older Adult and Caregiver Ministries, recently hosted such an event for our community.

Our goal was to provide families with information and tools to help them address the challenges they face caring for loved ones. More than 100 people attended the very successful day.

Hold your own event with these tips:

- Invite local businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies to participate. Nearly 30 vendors showcased their programs and services at our event.
- Ask for financial support. We solicited sponsorships from the local chapter of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers (CareNet), the Atlanta Regional Area Agency on Aging, and a non-profit that serves dementia clientele. The sponsors funded



lunch for all participants and fees for the keynote speaker.

- Engage other churches in the community. Many hands make light work in planning, advertising, and carrying out the event.
- Promote the event. Send it to your local news teams. Ask sponsors and exhibitors to include the event in their newsletters, websites, and social media.

Pat Baker has been involved with POAMN since its inception in the early 1980s. After retiring in 2018, she began tithing her time at her local church to coordinate ministry to older adults and caregivers. Contact Pat at pat@sapctucker.org.



Caregiving Resources for Churches

Here are four tools and organizations to help you and your congregation members enhance your knowledge about caregiving or initiate a program to assist caregivers.

Care Partner Toolkit

This online resource from POAMN and APCE launched in 2023. It includes information, ideas, and resource links to assist individuals in the role of care partner and help faith communities in supporting them. The information is designed to help people approach the role with confidence in bite sizes and remind them they are serving God in all they do for others. Quicksheets are available on multiple topics for both caregivers and congregations. Find the toolkit at poamn.org/care-partner-tool-kit.

Your Local Area Agency on Aging

These branches of the U.S. Administration on Aging cover every community in the United States. Find the Area Agency on Aging that serves your county by visiting eldercare.acl.gov or calling 1-800-677-1116. Your local office can identify other services within your area that provide resources, programs, and lots of other help for caregivers.

The Alzheimer's Association

Formed in 1980, the Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support, and research. Visit www.alz.org or call the 24/7 helpline 1-800-272-3900.

AARP

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to the more than 100 million Americans 50-plus and their families: health security, financial stability, and personal fulfillment. AARP has extensive resources available for caregivers to ease their journey of caring for a loved one at aarp.org/caregiving.

Workshop Series Explores Glimpses of Heaven

People are eager to explore and understand what the Scriptures say about heaven. To address this interest, Solana Beach Presbyterian Church's Mature Adult Ministry hosts a series of classes called "Glimpses of Heaven."

The series, offered at the church and in local senior living facilities, helps participants explore what our faith says about heaven and what it means for their lives today.

John Illian, pastor of visitation at Solana Beach Church, developed and leads the class.

"This class has been well received by all, including those with different faith backgrounds," shares Pastor Illian.

Over four weekly sessions of 75 minutes each, members of the class gather to discuss heaven, read scripture, and sing hymns.

Pastor Illian recommends 8 to 12 people for each session as it makes for a comfortable, interactive gathering.

At each meeting, Pastor Illian poses a question to the



group to begin conversation. Conversation starters include "Describe your picture of heaven" and "How have others pictured heaven down through the ages?" There are many examples of scripture that give a glimpse of heaven. You may wish to start with John 14:1-3 and Rev. 21:1-5. Hymns ideas include "For All The Saints," "When We All Get To Heaven," and "Hymn of Heaven."

"For a richer experience for all, invite members of the class to contribute hymns and verses and suggest questions to the group," he adds.

Pastor Illian advises leaders to anchor the exploration of heaven across the storyline of the Bible. Consider imagery and descriptions mentioned at creation, the in-between time, and in new heaven and new earth.



Tips for Hosting Your Own “Glimpses of Heaven” Series

- Incorporate visuals, pictures, and short videos
- Use hymns that participants may have sung earlier in their lives and, when appropriate, hymns or songs that are contemporary
- YouTube is a helpful resource for recordings of hymns
- When offering this in a senior living facility, mention that this is from a Christian perspective

For more information about the Glimpses of Heaven series, contact Pastor John Illian at john@solanapres.org or Cindy Wright, minister of care, at cindy@solanapres.org. They welcome your comments or questions.

Helping Aspiring Retirees Is a Valuable Service

Chris Pomfret, POAMN Board, New Orleans, Louisiana

Retirement is a big deal! It ranks up there as a stress raiser along with divorce, moving house, and loss of loved ones. But how much help or encouragement do we give to our church members who are going through the ordeal? My belief is not enough.

Here's some ways that you can consider helping your worshippers grapple with pre- and post-retirement stress. And, at the end of this article is a practical solution which combines quality and meaningful fellowship with the challenges of retirement.

First, it's prudent to be aware of members who are anticipating retirement. Maybe ask, say once a month, if anyone has a retirement in the near future. This sends the message that the church cares and wants to know which of its members are retiring and the circumstances, to the extent that the individual is comfortable sharing.

It also will give other retired members the opportunity to engage with the individual and possibly create a new bond. The community can ascertain



if the individual is happy, or reticent, or truly distressed by the event. Some people might be forced to retire before they wanted or expected to, and this would understandably cause stress, especially if they had not anticipated this scenario.

This leads to the second issue of whether the person is mentally prepared for life after work.

There are those who really fear retirement, whereas others are eagerly awaiting the day. We all know people who say that they don't know how they ever found time to work, while

others who had been retired for six months went back to work for something to do (because "every blade of grass was pointing in the right direction in their yard and every shingle was securely nailed down on the roof").

Whatever the person's feelings, how can we as a church community be there for them to help them through the transition? It's easy to pour well-intentioned advice onto the budding retiree but, generally, it is better to listen to their situation and get them to

talk about how they feel about severing the tie with their work and what they anticipate doing when their lifelong routine is permanently altered.

Third, people about to retire often worry about the loss of purpose. What is there to get up for each morning now that they don't have to go to work?

A common statement is that, once retired, it was harder to know what day of the week it was because every day seemed like a Saturday or Sunday.

This led me to visualize retirement as seven days of specific activities. My intent is to be more focused on what I do with my days as opposed to what day of the week it is. So, the days of the week were re-named to embrace seven major headings that I feel creates a complete, balanced and fulfilling use of time in retirement.

Physical Fitness

1 For some of us, retiring might generate more natural exercise than our sedentary job.

Whatever the case, striving for those magic "10,000 steps per day" could become a realistic goal. But how?

Walking is excellent exercise and you can do it at your own pace and for as long as you like. Be intentional about taking a walk every day. Whether with a spouse, friend, or neighbor, you'll get some quality social interaction in the process.

But walking is not the panacea to staying physically fit. Other forms of low-impact activity are necessary for strength training, balance retention, and mobility. Consider yoga or aerobics, including the water variety. The body just feels so good after the stretching and extensions that you can accomplish at a level that fits your own capabilities.

Pickleball, tennis and golf are other excellent ways to stay mobile, supple, and in the fresh air. Along with the physical benefit, we get social interaction and mental concentration to boost our mood.

2 Mental Fitness

No matter what our prior work was, staying mentally fit in retirement is not only a good goal, it's vital for cognition and staving off dementia.

Some turn to crosswords. Other options are mind games like Wordle, Connections, and Suduko. Board games such as Sequence and Qwirkle may also interest you.

Writing a book is a good long-term project. It could be fiction, a history of your local town/city, or reflections on your life. The message is to find things that interest you and/or will fulfill you that are mentally engaging; the list is literally endless. Once again, as with physical activity, it's important to do a variety of mental activities.

3 Service to Others

If you have had a good working life and maybe feel fortunate/blessed by what life has dealt you so far, why not help to pass it on, or pay it forward, by helping others?

Retirees (continued)

Find something that motivates you, fulfills you, and that you enjoy doing. It could be reading to children who need extra help in a local school, or driving the Senior Center bus to collect people who can't drive, or giving out refreshments to blood donors. Or there's a wealth of things to do for one's church that perhaps you couldn't sign up for when you worked.

There's literally an infinite number of volunteer opportunities. Giving to an organization generates an abundance of good feelings and wholesomeness. And feeling good about what you do creates endorphins in the brain and

keeps your gray matter in good shape.

4 Time with a Spouse, Loved Ones, and Friends

If you're married, make special time for each other one or more times a week. Do something simple, like going to a local town or village that you've not visited, have coffee or lunch, or go to a movie together or... the list is endless and it doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. It's the time together that counts.

If you are not married or are no longer married, do something with your children,

grandchildren, or a special friend. You all get some quality time together and have an enjoyable day that creates memories and, most importantly, you won't be guilt ridden in the future when those special people, or you, are no longer around to enjoy times together.

5 Hobbies/Interests

Many people don't get to pursue their hobbies or interests when working full time. When retirement arrives, one can finally indulge oneself and make up for lost time. Isn't that a good incentive to retire?

Travel is often top of peoples' list of retirement goals. And if you don't have any hobbies? Then dream about what you'd like to do if only you had the time. There must be something that captures your curiosity.

Learn to play a musical instrument, pursue a sport, take art classes, take up reading, study a subject at the local Lifelong Learning Center. The world is truly your oyster.

6 Home Tasks

All of us have a "honey do" list or a list of projects that we want to tackle, if only there was





more time than a weekend in which to try and do it. Now one has that opportunity to take on a project that might need a week or two to complete, such as cleaning out the attic. And, in so doing, you get to reduce the amount of stuff you've accumulated over the years, ready for when you need to downsize.

The upside is you can do what you want to do when the moment captures you. Just make sure that you spend some time doing the long-postponed projects while you have the mental and physical desire. Accomplishing them will make you feel good and fulfilled.

7 God, Faith, and Spirituality

As well as going to church and giving thanks to God for a great life, there's a lot we can reflect on in our lives and find our spirituality and strengthen our faith, as we will need both these things as we age.

Spend some time contemplating how the rest of your life will play out and how you can make the best of the things you can control. How can we adjust our minds to ask for help or accept help instead of being that independent person we always were when younger and

working full-time.

Recognize that, while we're alive on planet Earth, God has a purpose for us. Search your mind to figure out what it is and how you can make the most of your time in these retirement years.

Also, be mindful of the challenges that face us as we age. In our early years we had plenty of challenges to overcome, so why should it be any different in our later stages of life?

Our life is a journey and it's good to look ahead and see what's coming so that we can be ready to address each of them when they arrive.

Among the biggest issues are where to live as we age, how we will have the courage to stop driving when the time comes (i.e. before we have an age-related accident) and how will we let our children engage with us and gradually adopt the role of parents to us.

By this stage, retirees are typically saying "I don't have enough time to do all this", which is a good sign as it means that they have embraced retiring as a thing of beauty

See RETIREES on page 22



Retirees (continued)

and excitement as opposed to a time of sitting in the rocking chair watching the world go by, or as something to fear.

Embracing the Seven Days of Retirement and scrambling it into a “school timetable” enables us to cover all the bases and accomplish things that are good for us, our families and the Earth as a whole. And we tend to find that many of the categories are overlapping; for instance, a hobby could also be mental or physical stimulation, volunteering could be part of your God/Faith/Spiritual activities, etc.

However we categorize the activities we pursue, the important outcome is that we finish life strong and well and be a role model to those who come behind us. So, ask yourselves, what does God want from me now that I have retired? Having reached an exciting fork in the road where working for a paycheck is no longer a necessity, what are you going to make of the rest of your life?

Churches could take the lead and provide an invaluable service by facilitating an occasional (monthly)

discussion group where members share their retirement experiences with those nearing the occasion, and/or just chat with each other. How do each of us regard this chapter of our lives? Just talking about our lives may be inspiring to others.

A retired aerospace consultant, Chris Pomfret founded the Third Thirty concept in 2012 after witnessing the aging of his parents. He has been a member of POAMN since 2014 and serves as its treasurer. Contact Chris at cjpomfret1954@gmail.com to request a free copy of his Third Thirty curriculum.



Enhance Your Ability to Serve Older Adults With Courses From Columbia Seminary

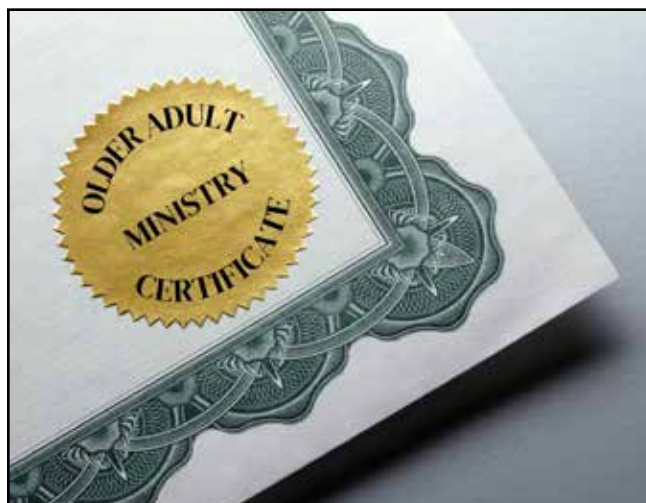


Want to know more about older adults so you and your faith community can more effectively serve and minister among them? Sign up for online courses through the Center for Lifelong Learning (CLL) at Columbia Theological Seminary.

The Older Adult Ministry (OAM) program is a partnership between POAMN and the seminary. It includes four courses:

- The Process of Aging and Implications for Ministry
- Teaching for Transformation with Older Adults
- Theological Reflection in Older Adulthood
- Spiritual Formation and Older Adult

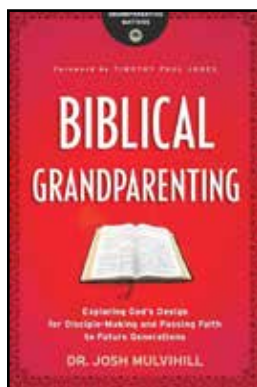
Individuals who complete these courses will earn a Certificate in Older Adult Ministry. Those wishing to go deeper can earn a Level II certificate by completing a capstone project. Find information about the program at poamn.org/courses.



Recommended Reading for Individuals and Groups

One of the most fulfilling older adult-related activities within a church or senior living community is discussion of meaningful topics. A book club can generate many opportunities for interaction, mental stimulation, fellowship, and learning something new. Check out these books recommended by POAMN members.

Have you read a book that you'd like to recommend? Send the title and a brief review to poamnetwork@gmail.com. Look for other book recommendations in future issues of PNN, POAMN's monthly newsletter. Subscribe at poamn.org/newsletters.



Biblical Grandparenting

Recently, a woman grasped my hand after church with an urgent question. “Our world is a mess. What can we do?” she implored.

As a parent, grandparent, and retired pastor, I share her concerns.

Biblically, we older ones are not off the hook to spend down our resources and have fun as retirees. Instead, we are commanded by God to continue impacting our world by leaving a legacy of children and grandchildren raised in faith.

After my interaction with the concerned woman, I read a book that gave me hope. “Biblical Grandparenting” by Dr. Josh Mulvihill is a valuable resource to help older adults continue shepherding their families.

Dr. Mulvihill reminds us that if we can't change the world at the White House, we can begin changing it at our house.

Consider suggesting this book or the topic of involved grandparenting to a group in your congregation.

- Recommendation by
Gloria Sannermark



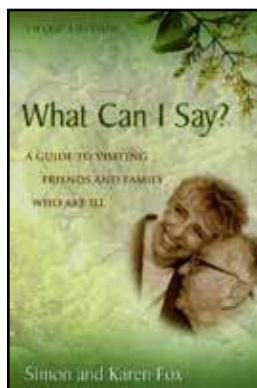
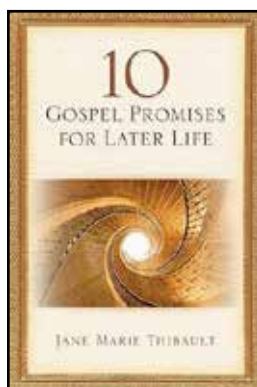
10 Gospel Promises for Later Life

“Standing on the Promises,” a familiar hymn, leads the reader into a ‘hits close to home’ introduction of Jane Thibault’s purposeful book. She begins by compiling fears she heard often during her 30 years of conversations with senior adults. Following this is a thoughtful list of “just a few of Christ’s gospel promises for those of us who have fears about aging.”

Gerontologist, social worker, counselor, Jane Thibault addresses both these fears and the responses, or promises of the gospels, that give the assurance of God’s constant love and desire to provide us with abundant life both now and forever. She examines the promises and discusses their strong message of hope for later life. Each chapter offers “Food for Thought and Talk” questions for personal reflection or group discussion.

This book is easy to dig into and sparks thought and discussion on important issues for senior adults who are looking to make the most of, and enjoy, God’s gift of a long life. It also is available in an enlarged print edition, an added bonus for your senior adult book group!

- Recommendation by Cindy Wright



What Can I Say? A Guide to Visiting Friends and Family Who Are Ill

Reading this small book will help you visit friends who are seriously ill or in danger of dying. “What Can I Say?” grew out of co-author Karen Fox’s experience surviving brain cancer.

Karen wanted to reach out to help others who were experiencing serious illness. So, she intentionally went far out of her normal comfort zone - dressing up as Raggedy Ann and paying a brief visit to a patient at the hospital across the street from where she worked. Her visit on that day helped that patient, and it also helped Karen.

Such visits continued and soon Karen and her husband, Simon, formed a non-profit organization, Adventures in Caring Foundation, which enables others to be more helpful when visiting someone who is seriously ill.

This book is built upon four fundamental elements used by gifted caregivers: attention, acknowledgement, affection, and acceptance. Each of these four elements addresses a fundamental human need of a seriously ill individual. Practicing these four

See BOOKS on page 26



Books (continued)

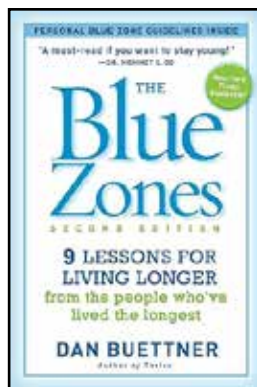
elements will help you support your friend or family member.

“What Can I Say?” does not offer a set routine. Rather, it provides a compendium of things that you can do, and say, to be open and vulnerable to someone who is seriously ill. Medical science is what their doctors provide. However, the human side is equally powerful – and that is what you can personally provide regardless of the perceived difficulty of their current situation.

In addition to providing helpful resources, this book also provides several examples of things NOT to say to the person who is ill. These are simple clichés that many of us may well have blurted out to a dear friend who was struggling. At the time, our intent was to be helpful. However using one or more of these clichés is insensitive at the least, and can even be downright hurtful.

I highly recommend this book to family members, friends, deacons, and anyone else who is seeking to be helpful to a seriously ill individual by visiting them in person.

- Recommendation by
 Quentin Holmes



The Blue Zones: 9 Lessons for Living Longer

The human body is amazingly adaptable and profoundly affected by how we live. When author Dan Buettner heard of small areas of the world where longevity far exceeded anywhere else, he decided to visit these microcosms.

What he found was compelling and eye-opening, not only in how diet but also lifestyle affects health and longevity. The reasons for people living so long are different in each area, but there are similarities.

Some of the specific stories are astounding, such as the story of Stamatis Moratis who lived and worked in the US for many years and found his own cure for cancer when doctors had declared there was nothing more they could do.

I think the book will stimulate an excellent discussion. A group could read about one microcosm each week and discuss the findings. There are spiritual-based components that are likely to come out in the group discussion.

- Recommendation by
 Chris Pomfret

It's How You Say It: Exploring the Language and Imagery of Aging



Mike Ferguson, Presbyterian News Service

The Rev. Dr. Keith Albans, who served 16 years as the director of Chaplaincy and Spirituality at Methodist Homes in the United Kingdom, is something of a wordsmith. His prodigious abilities were on display during a webinar, “It’s How You Say It: Exploring the Language and Imagery of Aging,” put on by University of Waterloo’s Conrad Grebel University College in January 2024.



“How we speak of who we are and who we were reflects how we are feeling,” he said.

“I’m just a housewife” or “I was a chemist” indicates “our entire life is in the past,” he said.

Then Albans launched into a study of words containing the consecutive letters “age.” Some—“ageism” and “ageing,” the British spelling—have a negative value, Albans pointed out, while others, including “agelong” and “ageless,” are more affirming.

“Agent” was on the list because “enabling people to be the doer is at the heart of a lot of what we’re trying to achieve,” he said. “Agency” is also a “significant concept.” So is “agenda,” Latin for “the things that must be done,” which Albans called “a positive way of embracing the process of aging” because we “think about what’s important for me and us to do.”

“How important,” Albans asked, “is the notion of agency for your own hopes about aging or for

someone you know? Many of today’s older people never expected to live to the age they have. Embracing aging means we can think in a wider and more proactive way.”

“What do we affirm and what do we reject thinking about how we speak about and depict ageism?” he asked. “Embracing aging means we can be agents of our own aging by having a plan or agenda. The choice is ours, and

how we use it is up to us.”

During a question-and-answer session following his talk, Albans was asked what people can do to combat language that’s ageist.

“If we look at ways society has addressed issues around racism, sexism, and homophobia, change has only come by calling it out for what it is,” he said. “The difference, of course, is we are talking about ourselves.”

“Some ageism,” he said, “is actually a way of saying, ‘I’m not there yet.’ We have to be honest if we’re calling it out. We may be as guilty ourselves as other people are. That’s why talking about it is helpful. We can plot our own course into later life.”

Citing something she once heard, one person attending the event said it this way: “Age is simply the number of years the world has been enjoying you.”

Worship Service: Journey of Life

Rev. Burnetta Armour, First Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, Georgia

Call to Worship

For everything, there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is
planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather
stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from
embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

Let us worship our God who is Lord over all the
seasons of our lives.

Opening Prayer

God of our life, you are present in all the seasons
of our lives and this time we have on this earth.
Our lives are a journey from you to you. As we
journey, remind us of your presence, surround us
with your loving care, and help us to live our lives
that they may always give glory and honor to you.
Amen.

Call to Confession

from The Worship Sourcebook (p.84)

God's word assures us: If we say that we have no
sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in
us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and
just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from
all unrighteousness. In humility and faith, let us
confess our sin to God.

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, we confess that sometimes we think
we know it all. That there is nothing more for
us to learn in this journey of life. We are blind
to the newness around us. We are deaf to the
new word you long to speak to us. Our hearts
are closed to the change you long to bring in us.
Forgive us for thinking we have it all figured
out. By the power of your Holy Spirit, open us
to growth in you that our days may be filled
with the joy and peace of knowing you more
fully.

Assurance of Pardon

Based on Psalm 71:17-19

The Psalmist writes:

“O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.
So even to old age and gray hairs,
O God, do not forsake me,
until I proclaim your might to all the generations to come.

Your power and your righteousness, O God, reach the high heavens.

You who have done great things, O God, who is like you?”

From youth to old age and gray hairs, you have loved us. Let our words proclaim the joy of your forgiveness and the blessing of your mercy. Know that you have been forgiven and be at peace.

Possible Scriptures

Psalm 71

Psalm 139

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

Ecclesiastes 11: 7-10; 12:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

Romans 8:31-39



Response of Faith

from Iona Abbey Worship Book (p. 65)

Leader : With the whole church

All: we affirm
that we are made in God's image,
befriended by Christ,
empowered by the Spirit.

Leader : With people everywhere

All: we affirm
God's goodness at the heart of
humanity
planted more deeply than all that
is wrong.

Leader : With all creation

All: we celebrate
the miracle and wonder of life,
the unfolding purposes of God
forever at work in ourselves and
the world.

Worship Service (continued)

Offering

Everything we have and everything we are belongs to God and God alone. Let us give thanks by giving to God from the gifts of our lives and labors.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

by Robert D. Young in Let us Pray: Reformed Prayers for Christian Worship (p. 98)

Father,
 With steadfastness and patience
 Help us

to serve you and
 to trust you,
 to know
 that the road under us is solid,
 that your companionship
 at our side is real and
 that we need fear no evil.

Help us to keep our balance
 and to approach each day with expectancy.
 Amen.



Find additional worship services for Older Adult Sunday at poamn.org/older-adult-month.

Rev. Burnetta Armour is pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland, Georgia. A native of Asheboro, NC, she attended Western Carolina University and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.



Additional Ideas to Celebrate Older Adults

Sharing Social

Have the elementary children or youth host an intergenerational luncheon or “tea” party after worship to celebrate older adults. The young people can serve as table hosts bringing food to the table, serving drinks, and making conversation. Place table tents with basic get-to-know-you questions on the table. What is a favorite book you have read as a child? What hobbies do you have? Tell about a pet. Where is somewhere you would like to travel?



Mission and Outreach

Choose an organization that supports Older Adults that you can highlight and collect funds and materials to help them. Perhaps something for a local senior center or retirement center can be brought forth at the offering.

Highlight the volunteer hours that Older Adults donate to various programs in your church and community.

Plan an intergenerational outing to a retirement community or a senior member’s house to do spring yard clean up, sing, or play bingo.

Resource Fair

Plan a senior expo or resource fair for Older Adult Week that shares services and resources available to older adults in your community and from your congregation.

Worship Resources

Gilliss, Martha S., ed. *Let Us Pray: Reformed Prayers for Christian Worship*. Louisville: Geneva Press, 2002.

The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. *The Worship Sourcebook*. Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2004.

The Iona Community. *Iona Abbey Worship Book*. Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2017.

The Office of Christian Formation compiled these resources in partnership with the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network (POAMN).

Planning Guide Sponsors

This publication is made possible because of the generous contributions by the following Presbyterian-related retirement community organizations. If you, or someone you know, are seeking senior care, consider one of these fine Presbyterian-related retirement community organizations.



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2109 Sandy Ridge Road
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Columbus, OH 43229
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Senior living communities throughout South Carolina

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If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for future OAM Planning Guides, please contact poamnetwork@gmail.com. We'd love to partner with you!



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Presbyterian Association of
Homes and Services for the Aging

www.pahsa.org

Sponsor Spotlights



Presbyterian SeniorCare Network: Innovating for More Than 95 Years

For more than 95 years, Presbyterian SeniorCare Network has been focused on making aging easier for older adults and their families. It offers personal care and skilled nursing communities; specialized Alzheimer's and dementia care; more than 30 affordable and supportive housing communities; and several other service lines dedicated to enriching the aging experience. The nonprofit, faith-based organization serves more than 6,500 older adults through in-home and community-based programs across 10 Western Pennsylvania counties. In 2024, Presbyterian SeniorCare Network will break ground on a new affordable housing community in Pittsburgh, PA, that will be the region's first LGBTQ-friendly residence for older adults. To learn more about Presbyterian SeniorCare Network, visit www.srcare.org.

Brightspire Serves as Beacon for Community, Comfort, and God's Love

Brightspire is a faith-based, not-for-profit organization serving more than 2,000 residents across North Carolina. Brightspire began as The Presbyterian Homes, Inc. and was formed in 1952 to create a community for seniors focused on faith, everyday wellness, and fulfilling lifestyles. In 2016, Brightspire extended its mission into affordable housing for seniors by partnering to support Capital Towers, a 298-unit housing community in Raleigh, NC. Brightspire is now working on a project that will transform Milner Memorial Presbyterian Church into affordable housing for individuals aged 55+ of modest means. Ten percent of the units will be reserved for people with disabilities or formerly homeless transitioning to permanent housing. Learn more at www.brightspire.org.



www.poamn.org