

POAMN Network News

Resource Guide for Older Adult Ministries

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Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries



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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Good Morning from Oregon,

Currently, *PNN* is sent out via U.S. mail to some 2,000 people at an overall cost around \$2,000 per issue. This summer we will change over to electronic delivery. If you wish to continue receiving *PNN*, and have an e-mail address, please send it to Ginny Nyhuis at gnyhuis@frontier.com. (NOTE: *PNN* will continue to be available via mail to anyone who doesn't have e-mail – phone Ginny at (615) 426-1545 to arrange for that.)

The joint ARMS/POAMN Convention & Conference in San Antonio, Texas this October will be amazing. For a peek at what wonders await you there, see the article entitled *2011 Joint ARMSS/POAMN Convention & Conference* by Michele Shultz Hendrix.

The theme of this issue is Pastoral Care of Older Persons. You will find a lengthy article with that title. Cascades Presbytery held a workshop on this topic in May 2009. Our workshop was based on Rev. T. Ronald Vaughn's "*Pastoral Care of Older Persons*", which appeared in the book, **Dimensions of Older Adult Ministry: A Handbook** published by Witherspoon Press. Rev. Vaughn is an ordained United Church of Christ minister. This article will help you work through the difficulties that folks experience in visiting members in retirement facilities.

Other articles along our theme include: *An Open Letter on Pastoral Visitation* by Rev. Mike Fonfara, *High Tea* by Desri Gilmore, *A Time to Receive* by Mark A. Johnson, PhD, and *Thanks for the Memories* by Helen Morrison.

PNN is your newsletter. We need you to send in short notes about things you have done, and ideas that you have found to work. Our congregations are blessed with many older adults. By the power of God, plus our faithfulness, and our warmth, we *can* reach out. Thanks be to God!

Quentin Holmes / Marcola, OR

POAMN BLOG IS NOW AVAILABLE

As promised, the beginnings of the POAMN blog are up and ready to be viewed! To take a look, go to <http://poamn.wordpress.com/>

Julie Jensen

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POAMN PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Welcome to the Spring Issue of PNN! For those of you who live in the North, it is a good feeling to have this winter behind us. Now as our

ministries begin to buzz, I hope that this newsletter will give you the tools to enhance your ministry with older adults.

If you have not yet registered for the 2011 Joint ARMSS/POAMN Convention & Conference in San Antonio this October, I would encourage you to do so now. As we "Stand at the Crossroads of Change" this conference will equip you in stepping up your ministry to Older Adults a few notches. I am thrilled with the work that Michele Hendrix and her counterpart from ARMSS have done to provide a top-notch conference for you.

I want to remind you to renew your membership for 2011. While you are renewing your membership please consider making a gift membership for your church or presbytery. This will encourage our churches and presbyteries to think about the importance of ministering with Older Adults

The next issue of the PNN will be distributed by electronic e-mail. If you have not yet submitted your e-mail address to Ginny at gnyhuis@frontier.com please do it as soon as possible. It costs POAMN more than \$2,000 per issue to print and mail out some 2,000 copies of the newsletter. Please assist us in limiting our hard copy distribution and receive it electronically.

I hope that you are utilizing the Older Adult Ministries Planning Guide. Ginny Nyhuis has done a fabulous job in creating this issue. It is a resource that can be used year round. If you need a copy it is available on our web site: www.poamn.org, or by contacting Ginny

May God continue to bless you and your ministry.

Doug Kurtz

Doug Kurtz, POAMN President: dkurtz@uam.org

2011 JOINT ARMSS/POAMN CONVENTION & CONFERENCE

October 11-14, 2011 - San Antonio, Texas
Texas: 175 years young!

by Michele Shultz Hendrix
POAMN Conference Chair

Howdy y'all! You'll hear that expression a lot no matter what part of the state you visit. That is because Texans are friendly; in fact, the word Texas comes from a Native American word, *tejas*, which means friend. Friendly folks aren't all you'll find during your visit. The San Antonio area is filled with so many wonderful things to see, do and experience. It's the reason we say, "*Texas. It's like a whole other country.*"

From living history exhibits and battle reenactments, to commemorative celebrations and tours of historical sites, there are plenty of opportunities to get in on the action and celebrate one of the most significant cities in early Texas history. There is only one way to celebrate the 175th anniversary of Texas Independence, and that is to experience it firsthand. You will have the opportunity to discover many interesting and historical sites in your leisure time at the 2011 Joint ARMSS/POAMN Convention & Conference, October 11-14 in San Antonio Texas. For additional information on the San Antonio area, check out the State Travel Guide at www.TravelTex.com.

Here are a few highlights...

The Alamo – The most famous spot in Texas, where 189 defenders fell on March 6, 1836. www.thealamo.org.

Casa Navarro State Historic Site – Explore the life and home of one of Texas' most influential leaders, Jose Antonio Navarro - rancher, merchant, and one of only two native-born Texans to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence. www.visitcasanavarro.com

Missions of San Antonio – In addition to the Alamo, four other San Antonio missions form the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. They were established by Franciscan friars in the early 18th century. www.nps.gov/saan/index.htm

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There is an adventure around every corner! Explore the outdoors, listen to live music, venture to marvelous historical and heritage sites and museums, savor the taste of Texas barbecue or try Mexican, German, Asian, or Southwestern fare on the San Antonio River Walk the number one tourist attraction in Texas - www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com. No matter where you go or what you do, you're sure to find friendly faces and hospitality like you've never experienced before. So plan to have a great time in San Antonio and our Lone Star State!

PASTORAL CARE OF OLDER PERSONS

In May 2009, Cascade Presbytery held a workshop based on Rev. T. Ronald Vaughn's, *"Pastoral Care of Older Persons"*, which appeared in the book, *Dimensions of Older Adult Ministry: A Handbook* published by Witherspoon Press. This "Dimension" is presented here because it will help you work through the difficulties that folks experience in visiting church members in retirement facilities.

"I am extremely optimistic about the future. If the proper foundations can be laid, then the rising edifice of ministry will be an amazingly effective thing wherein all persons are organically connected and pastorally nurtured from the cradle to the grave. In our time, of God's providence, this excellence and competence is exceedingly possible. It is the nature of the church to make it real." (Rev. T. Ronald Vaughn)

INTRODUCTION As I write my "Dimension" I am only aware of the titles of my fellow author's "Dimensions". In a certain sense, each of our "Dimensions" is about the pastoral care of older adults. I will offer some independent reflections on the theme, based on my own background in both ministry and secular employment. The following will lean more toward theory and theology rather than individual or programmatic implementation.

AN UNFOLDING CHALLENGE It is one of the unacknowledged triumphs of the church that the last three decades have seen resource data in this field multiply exponentially. The dominant reason behind this is an ongoing search for implications from the increase in average life expectancy. What does the existence of a burgeoning population of elderly persons "speak" to the church? What, in turn, does the church "speak" to it?

In fits and starts the church has valiantly undertaken to address this reality, but has been only partially successful.

We do not yet have "all the answers." Indeed, we have likely not even asked the right questions. The health care field and the church have run in parallel lines.

In the health care field: The entire long-term care enterprise is of recent origin, having been created in America by Federal Medicare/Medicaid laws.

Many critics have noted that the resultant care model, now ensconced in law, is woefully flawed. Few would dispute that. Governmental oversight and bureaucracy have spawned an unfortunate stagnation and inertia. But the emergence of better ideas for care and service has been less than impressive. We all await the conceptual revolutions that will radically alter care for the frail and infirm elderly. We can hope these change agents are now on the horizon.

Meanwhile, in the church: Tentative steps have been taken in the awareness and pastoral care to this growing population. The church has worked very hard to come to terms with the interrelated complexities of humans. It has had to learn from other areas and disciplines. All the while attempting to articulate and define pastoral care models dealing with the whole person across their entire life span.

Because of low prioritizing of ministry to older adults, most denominations have not yet come to grips with the staggering significance of the demographic change and are, therefore, sadly deficient in effective response. Despite preliminary findings and uncertain boundaries, Christian churches must

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work together in this unfolding challenge. Surely these efforts will be blessed by the God of all phases of life.

CLERGY DISCOMFORT One of my early observations in a psychiatric hospital was the infrequency of area clergy visits to patients. There were, and are, many reasons for this and not all of them are indicators of a significant social phenomena. However, I later made the same discovery as a nursing home administrator. As a member of a ministerial association, I inquired further among my colleagues – many were quite willing to admit that it was difficult for them. Their expressed reasons were the typical listing one would expect.

My summarization would be this:

- a. Pastoral care for nursing home residents is difficult due to the concentration in one location of ill and infirm persons. Also, the long-term care setting suggests a terminus – a place “where people go to die.”
- b. Some of the same reasons are used for infrequent visits to psychiatric facilities: The overwhelming number of persons there with various diagnoses of severe mental illness. Most church workers are untrained to respond to the level of physical or mental illness found in these settings. And, wise practitioners know their limitations.

If a statistician could quantify all of the reasons given for lack of clergy visits. That list might still omit what I perceive to be a foundational ingredient for any discussion of pastoral care for older persons, namely, *“Many clergy struggle with older adult ministry due to extreme discomfort with the whole notion of human aging and ultimate demise.”*

Just as individuals experience discomfort, so do groups of individuals, so do congregations, and so do denominations. Are older adult ministries low denominational priorities due to value judgments based on these aversions?

I suggest an outline for more effective pastoral care of older persons.

AN OUTLINE OF PASTORAL CARE

One: An Accurate Self-Understanding:

- ◇ Practitioner’s development of personal comfort with aging.
- ◇ Ministry to and pastoral care of older persons is NOT confined to work among the frail and incapacitated.
- ◇ Sociological, political and even theological discussions of aging often turn on the notion of the observable deficiencies of the group (i.e., the three D’s – deficient, disease, and dysfunction).
- ◇ A cultural mindset pervades our culture that equates aging with lack, inability, need, (and, curiously) entitlement.

If we accept that cultural mindset, then we will define pastoral care as something we “do to” or “apply to” or “exert upon” the elderly person whether they are bedridden, or well, or youthfully active. I understand Christian theology to present a fundamentally different alternative!

Two: The Correct Theology of Aging:

- ◇ Although other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and medicine make major contributions ...
- ◇ The redeeming resource is the Christian tradition.

Pastoral care givers must tread very carefully here, and Christian theologians must be enjoined to do their best thinking at this crucial crossroad. Only theology can propose, even in the face of dying and death, a new life for the individual in a realm beyond time – a free gift from God.

“Our aging journey toward death is a conversation in which we can all relate and contribute, but most of us choose to fill our traveling years with conversation about the scenery.”

“Science and medicine provides the facts about death, our Christian faith provides a Mystery”

(Rev. Donovan Drake)

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Three: The Complete Model for Ministry, Jesus of Nazareth:

- ◇ The church asserts that the Jesus of Nazareth offers the most complete model for ministry.
- ◇ The Gospels must be studied and restudied for knowledge of this crucial material.

While we are nowhere commanded to be “little Jesuses,” we are instructed to model the use of our unique gifts and talents upon the life of the Son. My phrasing would be that pastoral care of any age group or individual person is based on the caregiver’s identification with and empathetic understanding of the other, modeled on the agapic ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

Four: The Most Suggestive Outlines for Definitions of Pastoral Care of Older Persons:

I suggest that Christian theology of aging combined with the observed ministry of Jesus may well yield effective outlines for pastoral care models:

- ◇ If we grasp some of the fundamental concepts in theology we can begin to faithfully keep the Apostle Paul’s command about a new attitude.
- ◇ New attitudes automatically lead to creative new action and activity.

Perhaps with a better-informed attitude we can likewise turn a salad luncheon or a trip to a theme park into genuine pastoral care in the name of Christ.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The age wave has created a new form of ministry and the church is still seeking to find its bearings. As a result many good things are happening, ideas are being used and discarded, and adjustments are being made. A significant factor is a pervasive discomfort with human aging and decline. This is an observation, not an indictment.

A suggested outline for pastoral care of older persons:

One: An accurate self-understanding

Two: The correct theology of aging

Three: The complete model for ministry, Jesus of Nazareth

Four: The most suggestive outlines for definitions of pastoral care of all persons.

I am extremely optimistic about the future. If the proper foundations can be laid, then the rising edifice of ministry will be an amazingly effective thing wherein all persons are organically connected and pastorally nurtured from the cradle to the grave. In our time, of God’s providence, this excellence and competence is exceedingly possible. It is the nature of the church to make it real.

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QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. This Dimension states that even “helping professionals” may have difficulty visiting in nursing homes or psychiatric hospitals. Is this difficult for you? Why? What is the hardest part?
2. You are a deacon in your church, and the Session has reorganized the ministry teams. They have asked deacons to visit members in nursing homes. You have never been to a nursing home and are petrified to visit a member there. What do you do? How do you begin?
3. Regardless of your age, how do you feel about getting older? Do you have fears? Name them. What excites you, or gives you joy about growing older?
4. Can you name a person of each genders who models the kind of person you would like to become? Why did you name these persons?
5. How can you “identify with” and “empathetically understand” older persons, particularly if you have watched their aging?
6. What biblical passages help you think of pastoral care among older adults? Consider your favorite stories or verses of Scripture that might teach about human aging or relate to older people.
7. The senior minister has asked you as the associate pastor to design two types of pastoral ministry for older adults. One for the active sixty-five to seventy-five year olds, and the other for the frailer seventy-five-year-olds and older. How would you begin? How would you find resources for both age groups? For those seventy-five and older?

AN OPEN LETTER ON OLDER ADULT VISITATION

Dear *PNN* readers,

During thirty-seven years of PC(U.S.A.) ministry, I have come to really enjoy visiting older adults. Most of my pastoral positions were in churches filled with these amazing and dedicated Christians. Home, retirement community, and hospital visitations were a very important part of my service over the years. I remember the time in Detroit when a shut-in, 106 year-old mother of a parishioner proclaimed, "My, you are a good lookin' man!" Home communion was especially sweet that day.

I believe that there are some visitation habits that enhanced my enjoyment of this pastoral duty. They are good for people of any age, but especially for visits with older adults:

1. **Am I healthy enough to visit?** (I never visit anyone, anywhere, if I have a fever, sore throat, or other ailment that I could pass on. No one needs exposure to a potentially uncomfortable or serious illness.)
2. **Why am I visiting?** (Different purposes for a visit mandate different demeanor, pastoral equipment, and dress.)
3. **When able, I telephone ahead and make an appointment for the visit.** (Older adults have busy schedules. I like to visit when they have no other time pressures.)
4. **During the time of the visit, I wear no intentional fragrances.** (Many people cannot tolerate fragrances. Soaps, shampoos, deodorants, and the like leave some odors. I try not to expose anyone I visit to some other intentional fragrance that might cause sneezing, headaches, or some other discomfort.)
5. **I am on time for the visit.** (This is basic courtesy and respect. Good manners are always appropriate. If I will be delayed, I telephone immediately and make other arrangements.)
6. **I always say a silent prayer before entering the house or room.** (I want the Holy Spirit to direct my thoughts and actions. In my visit, I
7. **I listen more than I talk.** (The parishioner is always the center of my attention. Compassionate listening serves as a special gift that I can bring to the conversation)
8. **Before leaving, I pray a short prayer asking a blessing upon the older adult as well as the home.** (A prayer brings a positive closure to the visit. This is appropriate and always appreciated.)
9. **I never promise to "visit again soon."** (Everyone's schedule is so hectic these days that it is unfair to make promises hard to keep. Still, I make a pencil appointment in my calendar at a future date that can be confirmed later.)

Well, there you have some of the habits that I have used over my decades as a pastor. I am retired now. That is why I have time to write letters to *PNN*. I would be interested in learning your habits of visitation for a greater article I could submit at a future date. Please e-mail me with your ideas.

May God bless you and your loved ones today and during all future days!

Rev. Mike Fonfara
POAMN Member and Advocate
mikefonfara@tampabay.rr.com



Growing old is inevitable,
but growing up is optional!

“GOOD50”: TEEN CREATES SEARCH ENGINE FOR HER GRANDFATHER

by Sunmee Huh

Richard Montgomery High School / Rockville, MD

Hi, my name is Sunmee Huh, and I am the creator of Good50.com. I'm a senior in high school. One day after school in 2009, I was over at my grandparents' house (they live pretty close to my school) and found my grandpa was having trouble using his default search engine. I thought he deserved a better experience with his computer, and after all he had gone through, it was unfair that he had to struggle with something most people my age don't think twice about. Thus, over last winter break my little sister, Dahlia, and I decided to create a new search engine that would be easy for him to use – and came up with the idea for Good50.

So what exactly *is* Good50? Well, it is a user-friendly search engine that is simple to use for people ages 50 and older, and those who have limited vision. Good50 has a larger search box so it is easy for you to input your search query. You can also enlarge the size of the text in your search results. Good50 is powered by Google, so you get the same results as you would with Google, but in a senior-friendly format.



(R-to-L) SUNMEE AND DAHLIA – With their Grandfather

I also noticed that my grandpa was having some trouble telling the difference between real and sponsored results. Therefore, we removed all advertisements from the top of the results to make

things less confusing – many older people are often misled, and click on ads instead of the real results.

Good50 is also health-friendly because of these features. Using a larger font is proven to reduce eye-strain and symptoms of Computer Vision Syndrome, which can include red or dry eyes, headaches, or even fatigue. In addition, we feature a high contrast version, ideal for those with limited vision and similar to low-vision technology suggested for patients by many doctors.

To me personally, an important reason for creating Good50 was to do what I can to help America's charities, which is why Good50 donates 50% of our total revenue every week. The money goes into a fund, which is released to a charity at a time deemed appropriate. Recently, we used the fund's contents to donate \$2,400 to the Salvation Army to help the Japanese earthquake and tsunami victims.

I sincerely hope Good50 can be of help to the families of POAMN, and wish everyone a happy experience with their computer.

A TIME TO RECEIVE

by Mark A. Johnson, PhD Austin, Texas

[Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the The Inspirer (Volume 6, Issue 2, Spring 2011), a publication of Cancer Connection of Austin, Texas. See www.TheCancerConnection.org.]

One of the special joys of turning 50 was getting my first colonoscopy. Although it was a nuisance, it was just a routine exam, after all. That the doctor would find anything seriously wrong never even crossed my mind. Actually, the preparation for the colonoscopy was the real nuisance; the procedure itself was pretty unremarkable because I was sedated.

When I woke up, I was alone. Before long, the curtains opened and my doctor walked in followed by my wife, Désirée. I could tell something was wrong before the doctor spoke a word because Désirée's eyes were wet and red from crying. I remember hearing the word “cancer” and having a rather un-

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emotional discussion about what the doctor knew, when we would know more, and what the next steps would be. I then got dressed, and we headed home. So much for my routine colonoscopy.

Now it was time for the phone calls. We called our parents, daughter, and pastor to let them know about my diagnosis. My pastor asked questions that I was unprepared for. Could he share my diagnosis with the elders and deacons? What about the prayer chain? I have always been a very private person. I am pretty careful about just how much of myself I reveal to others. My initial impulse was to share my diagnosis with very few people. Besides, I am not one who likes to appear vulnerable or scared. Would I really want others to know what I am feeling?

Over the next few days, the reality of having colon cancer began to sink in and along with it came my need for support. I called more of my close friends to talk with them about my diagnosis so that they would hear it first from me. As the number of people who knew about my cancer grew, so did my understanding of the tremendous support I had from the people around me. Despite my initial reservations about being open about my diagnosis, I was learning how much I valued and needed all the support I was receiving.

Of course, everybody wanted to stay informed. At first, we knew very little, just that I had colon cancer and that I had an appointment with a surgeon. But soon things would start happening quickly: my surgery, the pathology results, and my recovery. A friend, who is also a cancer survivor, suggested that we create a CaringBridge website to help keep our family and friends informed about my progress. As you might imagine, I was initially skeptical about the idea of creating a website. Letting friends and family know about my cancer diagnosis was one thing; putting that information out on the Internet was quite another!

I am very happy that I let Désirée create a CaringBridge website for me as I was preparing to go to the hospital for my surgery. CaringBridge allows authors to create websites with different levels of privacy settings to accommodate different prefer-

ences and needs, which made me feel better about putting my latest news on the Internet. An important benefit of having a CaringBridge website is its guest book, which is a place for visitors to write words of encouragement.

At first, I did not realize how important the words of encouragement in my guest book would be. I have read them and reread them. They have been a source of strength during this difficult time. I am amazed at how much support we have been receiving, and it has helped us so much. I look back and wonder why letting others know about my colon cancer was so hard for me. I think I am more comfortable supporting others than receiving support. Maybe I don't like knowing how much I need that support. Yet receiving the support of others has been a tremendous blessing. I cannot imagine going through this alone.

100 WAYS TO PRAY: A TWO-YEAR PRAYER JOURNEY AT UNITED TRINITY PARISH

by Pastor Dale O'Connell
United Trinity Parish in Humeston & LeRoy Iowa

The *100 Ways to Pray* just happened. Following worship one Sunday, Carla said, "Pastor, what are the 100 ways to pray to which you referred, and where can I find them?" This in response to a passing comment I made in the morning message.

Believing that prayer is a practice, I suggested to Carla that we introduce one new way to pray each week. This would encourage people to experiment with a number of ways to pray. As a teacher she thought that was a great idea. Thus began our wonderful two-year journey of *100 Ways to Pray*.

Since many in our parish are Methodist we introduced kneeling as way #2 to pray. We all knelt that day, a communion Sunday. Later in the service a long-time prayer warrior in the church gave tearful thanks that she could once again kneel for the sacrament. She'd missed it so.

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A few parents picked up extra bulletins each week to pass on to their curious adult children. For Patsy *100 Ways to Pray* proved to be an inviting way for her grown children to talk with her about the things of God in their lives. You can be sure that her children let us know how much they missed receiving the bulletins on those few Sundays when we did not post a new way to pray.

Tom, a farmer, reported his surprise and delight at how the practice of repeating the Lord's Prayer over and over at a rapid pace (way #1) helped him sleep at night, quieting in him an ever-streaming list of worries.

The Jewish Sacred Times Prayer (way #27) is becoming a favorite at church dinners. When we want a short inter-generational, mealtime prayer we use this one, saying in unison, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who brings forth bread from the earth." Or, the even shorter version, "Praise God who brings forth bread from the earth."

Prayer is fun! 100 ways are a lot of ways. We included some classic ways to pray, some childish ways, some creative ways, some obscure ways. We made up some of our own. They are all listed here just as they were printed in the bulletin, nothing fancy or professional: http://www.unitedtrinityparish.com/?page_id=217

We are more prayerful in our churches now. Many in the parish feel more assured in their conversations with God, however they pray. I'm thankful for *100 Ways to Pray*. It is a gift from God!

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

by Helen Morrison, Grosse Isle, Michigan

Last October at the POAMN Conference in Orlando, Florida, I was presented with the Legacy Award. The award is given for "exemplary work" on behalf of older adults. This lovely glass award reminds me of all those who, throughout my life, have modeled what life is all about. Including those many folks who attended the Older Adult Ministry (OAM) conferences held at Montreat, NC

that I remember doing for five years in a row both in the fall & the spring. As I learned from each of you I shared with others. Those experiences allowed me to travel to Lake Yale, Florida, and Fort Davis, Texas because folks there wanted to grow OAM. How nice is that?



HELEN
MORRISON –
Recipient of 2010
POAMN Legacy
Award

I've been involved in OAM at all levels of our denomination since 1980. At the local level that can be a group that meets periodically for social events to one that integrates all ages into most every area of church programs. Yes, there was a time (before reunion in 1983) that we had an Office on Aging in Atlanta...some of you may remember Tom Robb. Then we had the Office on Aging in Louisville with Miriam Dunson (Miriam received the POAMN Legacy Award in 2009). The Office was closed due to reduced funding. However, we have a glimmer of hope in POAMN that we can keep this topic that no one wants to talk about alive!! I believe POAMN has a role since it's formation in the early 1980's. Any thoughts? I'd be glad to hear from you. Email me at: helenm@ili.net

The demographics projected 20+ years ago have come to be... And, here we are: the average age of the Presbyterian (PCUSA) today is 60 years of age. We'll never find a "name" that suits this phenomena of aging... so let's "get a life" and move on. We need to keep the dialogue going about "what it means to be old" and help folks in the various periods of adjustment in our society. My mantra is: "keep on living, learning, leading and serving".

Thank you for the 2010 POAMN Legacy Award... it truly is an honor. To receive such an award from my peers who have taught me a great deal is indeed very special.

HIGH TEA

by Desri Gilmore

Central Presbyterian Church, Eugene, Oregon

"The Best and Most Beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, they must be felt with the heart."
(Helen Keller)

I have been a member of Central Presbyterian Church in Eugene for over 25 years, and during those years I have served on the Board of Deacons many times.

I have watched as dear friends have aged and have been forced to give up living in their homes, given up driving their cars, and given up much of their precious independence. And perhaps most painful of all, through no fault of their own have had to give up time spent with life-long friends. This last due to their now residing in different retirement villages, foster homes, or assisted living facilities. Sometimes even though living in the same facility, they still are unable to socialize together because of different levels of care. I'm telling you, it just breaks my heart to see these old friends go many years without ever seeing each other, and indeed they may never get to see each other again!

With this in mind I thought how lovely it would be to gather these friends together in a very special way so that they could fellowship together. Knowing that theirs was a generation of wearing little lace gloves, high-healed shoes and a hat with a veil, we wanted to entertain them in a manner that they were accustomed to entertaining their friends during the years when they resided in their own homes. So, the idea of putting on a High Tea was born.

We made plans to serve High Tea at three local retirement residences that housed members of our congregation: Cascade Manor (February 24th), Churchill Estates (March 10th), and Willamette Oaks Retirement Village (March 31st). And in each case a lovely formal invitation was sent out to folk we knew would love to be together – long-time friends from way back that had served together on the Board on Deacons, or taught Sunday School, or had served on Session. Older people – Saints if you will – who had served our church together in so many ways for many, many years. We wanted to honor them and let them know that although they

are no longer able physically to attend church they are not forgotten.

At each of these retirement residences we made arrangements for a designated room separate from the regular dining room. The setting for each High Tea was elegant and very special. We didn't care how much work it was. These folk served others for so many years; now it was our turn to serve them. Tables were covered with white linen tablecloths, and set to seat four. Linen napkins in napkin rings were provided. A nosegay was placed in the center of the table. The best dishes – English bone china and crystal stemware – were brought in from our individual homes. On each table was a pot of tea, a creamer and lump sugar with sugar tongs. A carafe of water was placed on each table and a small plate with thinly sliced lemons with little tongs. Shortly before our guests arrived a freshly cut, long-stemmed rose wrapped in tissue and tied with a ribbon was placed beside each plate.

Each of our guests was personally "escorted" to the High Tea at the arranged time. For some guests this meant being walked or wheeled to the High Tea by one of our Deacons. For others this meant that someone from our church came to their place of residence, got them from their room, and drove them over to the location of the High Tea. Nothing pleases an elderly lady as much as being personally escorted to tea by a handsome young man (like her retired son, or a 70-year old Deacon).

The menu was cucumber and crème cheese sandwiches (with the crusts cut off) hot tea, water, strawberry parfait, and petit fours. The fare was simple, but elegant. However it merely provided the setting for long-time friends to once again enjoy the pleasure of one another's company.



A REAL MAN'S BREAKFAST

by Roger Fearn, Elder

Central Presbyterian Church Eugene, Oregon

Central has been running a monthly Saturday morning men's breakfast for over three years. It has become a very important time for the men of the church to get together and tell our stories, with some great Christian fellowship. We advertise it as a "Real Man's Breakfast" – sausage, eggs, fried potatoes and fruit, but no quiche!

There is a very committed core group of guys that do the organizing of programs, planning the menu and call to remind everyone. Preparing the breakfast begins at 7:30 AM in the church kitchen. Breakfast itself is at 9:00 AM in Fellowship Hall.

The featured speaker usually starts at 9:45 AM in the church parlor and talks for 30-45 minutes.

Recent talks include:

- ◇ *My Military Duty During WW-II* (Stuart Rich – age 90)
- ◇ *To The Moon and Beyond: Mankind Explores the Cosmos* (Quentin Holmes – age 71)
- ◇ *My Spiritual Journey* (Alan Ang – age 54)

On occasion, a woman has showed up to listen to a particular presentation. That's fine. They are certainly welcome. However, we do ask that they not sit in the front row and knit! The older men really enjoy the social interactions, and it is a good excuse to get out of the house on a Saturday morning.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU THAT HAVE JOINED POAMN FOR 2011

Your membership fees support the continuation of the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network.

It is time to renew your membership or become a new member for 2011.

See page 12 for a membership application.

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Membership Type:

☐ \$30 Full ☐ \$20 Affiliate ☐ \$100 Institutional, Church & Judicatory Membership

To continue POAMN's ministry to older adults and those engaged in ministries for older adults, I would like to make an extra gift of \$ _____ to POAMN.

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