
PRESBYTERY of DES MOINES
Older Adult Ministries (OAM) and Congregational Health Ministry
AUGUST '09 E-Newsletter

Time is short on sending registration and hotel reservations for the POAMN/ARMSS joint Conference in Tucson Sept. 29 - Oct. 2, 2009. The conference is centering on “**Joy for the Journey: Equipping the Saints**”, and is the **25th Anniversary Conference**. (Hotel reservations are needed by Aug. 29 to receive our \$99 rate!)

Workshops include: *Gifted for a Purpose: Pastor Paula Taylor*, *Forgotten Beloved: Rev. La Donna Scruggs*; *Worship in the World of Dementia: Rev. Tom Tickner & Ginny Nyhuis*; *Humor in the Bible: Rev. John Ahn*. Other interesting workshops are also offered, including how to start and continue OAM in the local settings.

Keynote speakers are Rev. Ann Hayman – *And the Laugh Shall Be First*, and Pastor Paula Taylor – *Joy for the Journey: Discovering a Lifetime of Purpose*.

Look at www.POAMN.org and then click on 'Upcoming Events' for further information.

The following is a report from the Indianola Trinity United Presbyterian Church Membership Director Geri Bartlett,

On Saturday, June 20, a few members of our Older Adult Ministry planning group attended a retreat on “Older Adult Ministry” held at Walnut Creek Hills United Methodist Church in West Des Moines. For the last year, a group of us have been meeting each month to discuss our need at Trinity United for an Older Adult Ministry. It was so enlightening and a very informational day for us. The main speaker for the day was **Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.** from Nashville, Tenn. Dr. Gentzler is the Director of the Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries.

One very profound thought I took away was, the three stages of retirement:

1. Active Phase (Go-Go) Older adults pursue a variety of interests, volunteer, extensive travel, and leisure activities.
2. Passive Phase (Slow-Go) Energy and health begin to ebb. Extensive travel is replaced with shorter visits to family and friends.
3. Final Phase (No-Go) Health problems may restrict mobility and home health care services or alternative housing may be sought.

It was the last stage that I felt the most focused on because when people become home bound and can no longer attend church it seems they are forgotten or drop out of importance. Some examples that Dr. Gentzler gave include:

- A church had a home bound person call in on Sunday morning during the worship hour and over the loud speaker read the scripture for the morning. He said there was not a dry eye in the congregation as they heard their friend's voice. It brought back memories of the days when she was at church. The sound of her voice was a wonderful experience for the congregation and for the home bound person. She felt she was a part of church that morning.
- Another church has set aside a Sunday afternoon once a month to physically bring the home bound members to church when it is quieter. This ministry is called the "Silver Link Ministry". It is a short 20-30 minute service to sing the old hymns, read scripture, have a short message, pray the Lord's prayer, and end with communion. When they leave they may not remember everything, but in that sacred space they are reconnected with a church family and able to worship and move towards healing and wholeness through the love of Jesus Christ.

As we continue to assess our needs here at Trinity, please pray that in due time we will be able to minister to most of our members in need and help them to have a better physical and spiritual quality of life.

In Christian Love, Geri Barlett

Gillian Eadie is an educator and baby boomer from New Zealand, working to help others push back against memory loss. Here is her recent tweet on Twitter (in 140 characters or less):

[gillian4memory](#): Researchers found memorizing long poems or newspaper articles makes metabolic changes in older adult brain structures - & memory improves!

Missy Buchanan is author of *Living with Purpose in a Worn-out Body: Spiritual Encouragement for Older Adults* (Upper Room) and Columnist, Aging Well, United Methodist Reporter at www.missybuchanan.com. Her recent blog post is on "How Older Adults are Intimidated by Young People." You can read it here at: <http://bit.ly/yqnwy>.