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**PRESBYTERY of DES MOINES**  
**Older Adult Ministries (OAM) and Congregational Health Ministry**  
**April 2010, Monthly E-Newsletter**

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**Reminder: May is Older Adult Ministries Month**

The first week of May is designated as Older Adult Ministries Week. There are many ways to observe this. Any month is a good month to get plans underway. In conjunction with your CE committee, OAM committee and other session committees, here are a few ideas to get this celebration underway.

- Build the entire worship service around the theme of celebration of aging for all ages.
- Create banners and posters and bulletin boards to announce the celebration.
- Pin a brightly colored ribbon on each older person, by their request as they arrive in church.
- Find the number of years in church membership (of any church) of each older adult in the congregation, and announce or publish this number as a collective heritage that has been received from older persons.
- Develop a bulletin board to be used through the year that focuses on older adults and their service opportunities, ministry of the church, etc.
- Use the bulletin board to honor older members of the congregation, highlighting their careers, interests and hobbies, involvement in the church and major achievements.
- Plan an educational campaign throughout the church school that focuses on aging for all ages. Include exercise, good nutrition, healthy handling of stress, non-violent behaviors, etc. – all of which could lead to a “good old age.”
- Start a graffiti board – have cards available to be used to write down one special joy that has come into your life since you turned 65.
- Plan a service for the “In Crowd” in their own home or some type of facility.
- Plan seminars on caregiving, spiritual autobiography, wills, death and dying, spiritual growth in the later years, retirement and pre-retirement...
- Have a goal of involving every person in your church in some type of ministry.
- This could be participating in a circle of prayer, or with prayer partners, making calls for the church, sending emails, and writing thank you notes for the church as well as many other ideas.

Older adults have the same need to be needed as do younger people, but perhaps it is even more intense, since they may have physical limitations that prevent some activities and involvement in their church life.

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**Presbytery meeting May 18, 2010**

The Presbytery's quarterly meeting will be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 4114 Allison Ave., Des Moines. Each church will receive information to fill out in regard to Outstanding Older Adult Awards. Your nominee should be a person (or group) who actively lives out his/her faith in service to the church and community. Send nominations to **Older Adult Ministries Task Force Moderator Darlene Shepherd**, [dshep@mahaska.org](mailto:dshep@mahaska.org) or 641-673-5793.

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**Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN) – Annual Conference** is October 12-16 in Orlando, Fla. Seize the moment with endless opportunities

for learning with the theme *Connecting the Generations: Models, Methods and Mentors in Ministry*. Watch for details on POAMN.org. Everyone in your church will benefit from the conference - older adults, CE Directors, Chaplains, Church staff, Teachers, Session members, Pastors, etc. Often, about half of those attending the conferences are pastors. Join POAMN today and make sure you are receiving the PNN – (POAMN Network News), which contains great resources and will keep you informed on what is happening in OAM across the country. Click onto [www.POAMN.org](http://www.POAMN.org) for details.

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### **Admission to a Nursing Facility**

A very important task regardless of long-term care insurance or finances - make an appointment at your local Human Services office as soon as possible. Should funds run out and Medicaid assistance necessary, you will need copies of your assets as of the first month of admission. That first month might be 5 years in the past at that time, and the information very difficult to accumulate.

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**Over 90% of American churches do not have a recognized (budgeted) ministry to the people in long-term care centers.** (*God Cares News 2009*)

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### **Visitation Committee is Important!**

From *Older Adult Ministry – A Guide for the Session and Congregation*, starting on page 37, there are suggestions for engaging the committees of the session. Worship, C.E. committee etc. – page 39 discusses Visitation Committees. To paraphrase nearly three pages: There are several reasons the traditional practice of the pastor dropping in for an afternoon visit with members of the congregation no longer works well (although at times such visits are still needed and appreciated).

However, the group in the congregation most in need of visitation in order to maintain a connection with the church are the homebound and in nursing facilities. The Visitation Committee (by any name) becomes the vital link to these members. One goal is to look for ways that each person can still be involved in the ministry of the church. Suggestions are given:

1. Plan a birthday party with cake, balloons, flowers, in their room or home - cards made by children.
  2. After the death in the family, offer a memorial service in the room of the homebound person.
  3. Visitation can be extended to un-churched older adults after a tragedy or traumatic event in their lives.
  4. Form a circle of prayer, or prayer partners.
  5. Organize writing thank-you notes for the church.
  6. (Editors addition:) Form telephone friendship circles.
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**A Book to Watch for:** *No Act of Love is Ever Wasted – The Spirituality of Caring for Persons with Dementia*. Authors are Jane Marie Thibault, Ph.D. and Richard L. Morgan, Ph.D. – both renowned Presbyterian authors and speakers.

This book is for anyone who provides care to persons with dementia - family members, friends, professional caregivers, and clergypersons. It includes information about types of dementia, suggestions for spiritual care of persons with dementia, reflection questions for individuals or groups, and helpful tips for leading support groups and worship services for persons with dementia.