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**PRESBYTERY of DES MOINES**  
**Older Adult Ministries (OAM) and Congregational Health Ministry**  
**January '10 E-Newsletter**

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**Free Senior Services Newsletter**

Presbytery General Presbyterian/Stated Clerk Rev. Phil Barrett clued me about a Lutheran Senior Services newsletter. It's sent out quarterly by hard copy and/or email. Contact [lsmith@lssmo.org](mailto:lsmith@lssmo.org) to subscribe at no cost!

The summer issue of the Lutheran Senior Services newsletter included an article from a guest columnist with reprinting permission given. The title is: *Go with what you have – Swap youth director for senior director*. The last paragraph states: Will a senior ministry help you grow? No one can say for certain. But two of the reasons people join a church today are to develop lasting relationships and to be active in ministry. As the word spreads about the marvelous outreach you have for seniors, you may be pleasantly surprised at the number of new members – even young families – who want to be a part of your ministry. Eventually you just might need a youth director. Cool idea, huh?

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**Recent Barna Group Research Report** – Men ages 50 and better, represent a large segment of Americans who are leaving church... because they want more of God in their life and feel that they cannot get what they need from their local churches.

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**Pastor's Testimony Gives Lessons for Older Adult Ministries**

The Rev. Dale O'Connell was asked to write about their church activities. His 'not much to tell', continuing to the bottom of his response about using modern technology gives churches of all sizes something to think about:

"Thanks for asking me to write about the Older Adult Ministries in the United Trinity Parish (Christian United Methodist Church of Humeston and LeRoy Presbyterian Church). As we are small churches in small communities we don't have much to tell. Most of "our ministry" is carried out as our members support Humeston community programs and Wayne County ecumenical ministries.

"The local Brevity Club in Humeston sponsors an 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party for the whole town, inviting anyone 80 years old or older as guests. It is a big deal with a really elegant luncheon and a top-notch program including live musical performances, a speaker, and various awards, recognitions, and presentations. Invitees include the live-at-home and those in care facilities. While it is a special treat for all, those just turning 80 and attending as guests for the first time glow with pride.

"The Presbyterian Women in LeRoy offer the community a Spring Fellowship Dinner, usually in April. It is a fabulous, farm-style, indoor potluck dinner. It is free to the community and draws many of the older adults in the area. It is a wonderful day of story-telling, re-connecting with friends, and remembering.

“Our towns are too small to have an everyday senior lunch, but we do have a our own local version of the senior lunch program, in Garden Grove on Wednesdays and in Humeston on Thursdays. On Thursdays, we do deliver to the homebound. I make these meals the #1 priority in my ministry, which is both satisfying for me and appreciated by the older adults. I sit with different ones each time. That way we get to know each other pretty well. Why is getting to know them important? They often tell me, “Pastor, I hope you are still here when I die. I know you will do a good job at my funeral.”

“I’m not a pastor who visits in homes often, but I do some home calls, especially with the older adults in the parish who do not attend the senior meals. People are more comfortable when they know their pastor. Small church ministry is relational ministry.

“In my ministry I visit each of the three area Care Centers at least monthly, more frequently as our members have need. In addition our parish provides services quarterly in the Corydon Care Center. This is coordinated through the Wayne County Ministerial Association.

“Another thing we do is go Christmas caroling in December (most years) on a hay wagon, visiting the older adults around town. They do look forward to the brief cheerful visit in the midst of their long winter days.

“And here is the most surprising Older Adult Ministry of all. It is a 21<sup>st</sup> Century ministry and just emerging. We’ve encouraged several retired families to purchase and use a Wii for exercise and marriage renewal. It works. Is Yoga next? Also, in the last four months, we’ve initiated an online social networking ministry, we thought to interest youth and young adults. Surprisingly our 70-year olds are the first to be joining us on Twitter, Facebook, and our parish blog. In fact, much of the table talk I am involved at the Garden Grove Senior lunches on Wednesdays is about these, both the content and the technological challenges.”

Dale O’Connell, Pastor [pastordale@iowatelecom.net](mailto:pastordale@iowatelecom.net)

United Trinity Parish, Humeston (& LeRoy), Iowa

**Blog:** <http://trinityparish.blogspot.com> – check out our ministry!

**Twitter:** ‘HumestonParish’ (church only) ‘DaleOconnell’ (church and personal)

**Facebook:** Please follow ‘Humeston-LeRoy United Trinity Parish’ group

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