

# **OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT**



Kansas District  
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod  
November 2019



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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

In June of 2018 the Kansas District Convention passed a resolution to appoint a task force charged to examine strategies in support of congregation-based ministries directed towards Older Adults. This task force is to create a report to District congregations which includes resources needed to implement older adult ministry. The report is to be submitted within one year of the formation of the committee. President Lange appointed the task force in December of 2018 and the first meeting was held in late January 2019. The report is compiled in ten sections with the intention of making study of and consideration of further action easier.

The task force asked Pastor Cliff Winter to write a definition of what we term Older Adult Ministry. After listening to our discussion and some personal discernment he came up with a full description. The full description can be found in the Reports and Document section of this report. A working definition is as follows. Primarily, “Older Adult Ministry” is the same as ministry to, for and with all ages. Secondly, and of particular interest to this task force, “Older Adult Ministry” means serving, and enabling, and equipping both church members and non-members in regard to their needs and opportunities within their unique vocations as older adults.

For background and a compelling argument for a specific ministry for older adults please see Pastor Dennis Fangmeyer’s report on Implications for Smaller and Rural congregations. As he states churches are faced with one of the greatest challenges in history. There is a coming “age tsunami.” It can be argued that the youth movement of the late 20th century needs to consider the thought that “the future belongs to the old.”

The following report is an effort to share what we have found, how we came upon this information and recommendations as to how to move forward.

# DISTRICT RESOLUTION

v Resolution 18-04-09

(Overtures 18-04-08, 18-04-09)

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*To Study and Recommend Strategies in the Advancement of Congregation-based Older Adult Ministries in the Kansas District LCMS*

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WHEREAS, the Kansas District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is blessed by congregational membership of active saints, age 65 and beyond, comprising 25% of its total membership, with that percentage increasing daily; and,

WHEREAS, older adults today are generally healthier and have an increasing amount of time and treasure; and,

WHEREAS, older adults, as God's children, are seeking opportunities to make a significant impact upon the lives of others in the name of Jesus Christ; and,

WHEREAS, older adults are to be looked upon as a special blessing God gives to the church to be actively used in the mission of the church; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Kansas District President be charged to appoint a task force to examine strategies in support of congregation-based ministries with older adults; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the appointed task force offer their report to District congregations, including resources needed to implement enhanced older adult ministry within one year following the appointment of the task force.

# CHARGE BY PRESIDENT LANGE

December 6, 2018

Dear Tom,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I am now in the process of appointing individuals across the LCMS Kansas District to serve on various task forces. I am nominating you to serve on the Older Adult Ministry Task Force. You are being considered for appointment because of your personal skills, interest, and leadership, as an individual.

Please review the attached 2018 District Convention Resolution for this task force. If you would consider accepting this appointment, some additional information that may be helpful follows:

1. Length of service – the triennium concluding June 2021.
2. Meetings – Attend and participate, in general, a minimum of 2 annual half-day meetings at the District Office in Topeka. Note: The initial meeting date will be established after the first of the year. Meetings will be held at the Lutheran District Office (1000 SW 10th Ave., Topeka). Your travel mileage for meetings will be reimbursed and lunch will be provided.
3. Provide leadership, wisdom, and creativity that address the charge of the task force.

I am very excited about the opportunities ahead for the advancement of the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ through the work of this task force.

I join you as you prayerfully consider this service to the church at-large. Confirmation of the acceptance of this appointment may be directed to my administrative assistant, Tami Lierz, at [tami@kslcms.org](mailto:tami@kslcms.org) or 785.357.4441 x 200 by Friday, December 21, 2018.

Cordially,



# COMPOSITION OF OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE

In December of 2018 President Lange appointed the Older Adult Task Force. Jim Bradshaw has served as the District's representative. The members included Rev. Dennis Fangmeyer (St. John's/Nashville and Trinity/Medicine Lodge), Rev. Cliff Winter(retired/Wichita), Grace Dahlke (Redeemer/Hutchinson), Barb Geuy (Redeemer/Hutchinson), Betty Amey(retired teacher/Bel Aire), and Tom Perry (Trinity/Mission-Shawnee) chairman.

Those serving on the task force represented a good cross section and sampling of churches in the Kansas District. Both genders were represented, members were from different geographical areas of the state, and members came from both smaller and larger congregations. The task force worked well together, and each member felt free to add their unique perspective to the discussions. Jim Bradshaw was a great source of leadership and organization.



# GATHERING OF INFORMATION

At the first meeting, in January 2019, of this task force there was a discussion of the “charge” and an explanation of the chain of events that led to it. Upon the conclusion of a comprehensive discussion of our purpose and mutual agreement of the importance of older adult ministry, we deemed it essential that we ask the Pastors of our congregations how they could best be served and assisted. We wrote a survey and emailed it to all the pastors of the Kansas District. Special effort was made to make the survey short but inclusive so that our busy pastors would not feel overburdened. It was designed to take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. We submitted the survey to the pastors and after a few weeks sent a reminder to those who had not responded. The final response was approximately 42%. Though we would have preferred a higher response rate, we understand that 42% on a survey is generally pretty good. We reviewed the responses at our April meeting, and found that it was a fair representation of the District. After much discussion we determined that the response we received was enough to proceed. We also wanted input from congregations and older adults who had not responded. The decision was made to write a preliminary report and present it to the Saints Alive After 55 gathering as well as sending a copy to each congregation in Kansas. Additional comments received would be added to the mix of information needed for this report.

The content of the responses of the survey were discussed at length. There were many helpful comments and information gleaned. A summary of the results can be found in the reports section under Summary of the Results of the Older Adult Task Force Survey. We will share in the conclusion and recommendation sections more of what we found, but, two things in particular were revealed. Many, if not most, were not familiar with the idea of Older Adult ministry and had no special person or group responsible for serving and challenging older adults. We found that it is helpful to consider three subgroups divided not by age but by circumstance. The three are (1) people approaching retirement, (2) retired and active, and (3) retired with limitations. Though the age range is long (50yrs.-100+yrs.), people will move in and out of the groups as their health changes, their living environment changes, and their emotional state changes.

Most of the congregations felt they were doing a good job offering regular Bible study, and they were generally pleased with the participation of older adults in worship services. The Pastor’s highest priorities were emotional and relational care as well as keeping the church property assessable.

Three areas they looked for additional support was with emotional, relational, and vocational issues.

# STRATEGIES

Many of our congregations are involved in some unique and helpful activities. Many need help and a place to start. There seems to be three main focuses to address.

The focus our congregations are most comfortable addressing is spiritual welfare. We do a good job with Bible study for older adults. There seems to be a desire for more studies aimed at and for seniors and material written in large print. Many of our people have been studying scripture for decades and are ready for a challenge. A knowledgeable and effective teacher is of utmost importance. There are some congregations in our District who have weekday classes that draw an average of sixty people. This leads to friendships and a desire to do more. An outgrowth of these classes is the desire to do something that can have a significant impact on the lives of others. This leads to service projects, charitable acts, worship assistants, homebound visitation, and volunteering.

Another focus area is helping older adults deal with common life issues. There is a great need for vocational support or reinforcing their calling as a child of God at their stage in life. Retired people possess a wealth of gifts which they can share with others. It could take the form of talks about life issues such as wills, trusts, social security, housing options etc. Many can use the experience of experts who can be brought in for talks.

Education in the field of health issues is a third focus. The health of older adults is a very fluid thing. New issues seem to pop up all the time. Talks about how to deal with certain issues is very beneficial. Talks about Alzheimer's, the benefit of movement, prevention techniques are just a few. End of life concerns need to be addressed for both those near the end and those with loved ones at that stage.

Meals and intergenerational activities are always welcome. Friendship and bonding are done over meals. It is best to have the meals serve an additional purpose. God's work can and is fun especially if done with a well-cooked Brat.

Better participation occurs when the environment is conducive to easy access and movement. Having the church facility wheelchair and walker friendly is a must. Other helpful fixes can come with audio and sound equipment. Few things are as frustrating than not being able to understand what is being said.

These are just a few of the strategies possible. This brings us to the most important piece of the puzzle. It is necessary that a staff or lay person/persons be responsible for older adult ministry. The influx of people pre-retirement and beyond is exploding. The opportunity to fulfill our calling as God's children is at our doorstep. There is no age limit to be an active member of God's family. The things we can do change but opportunities for being a source of significant influence to others are there. We need people willing to lead these ministries.

# RESOURCES

## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The interest in gerontology and ministry to people of preretirement age and beyond is growing around the country. There are several resource avenues in which have offered assistance.

Concordia University Chicago has a Center for Gerontology. They are in the early stages of developing the Specialist in Aging Ministries Program. While working on a “think tank” with them they offered their help to the Kansas District.

Adult Lutherans Organized for Action (ALOA) has recently focused much of its ministry to helping individual congregation with ministry to older adults. In conversations with their executive director Mark Schoepp he has expressed an eagerness to help.

Dr. Richard Bimler has been a national advocate for older adults for many years. He and Dr. Charlie Meuller Sr. Write a monthly electronic blog/newsletter dealing with older adult issues. When speaking several times with Rich he has mentioned his interest and offered support.

There are congregations in our district that are offering enhanced ministry to older adults. They are willing to share what they have done and the challenges they have experienced.

## RESOURCES NEEDED

We believe it is essential that at the individual level and the district level that a designated person or group of people (clergy or lay) be tasked with the responsibility of Older Adult Ministry. Direction, resources and suggestions should flow from the district to our individual congregations

There should be an easy avenue for communication and sharing of information among our congregations and their members. Modern technology offers great opportunities through the electronic media. A website which is older adult specific could be available with information, calendars and updates for all to see. If it was in the form of an all older adult site, it could double as a great outreach tool to the unchurched.

Another needed resource is funding. Most of the ideas come with very little cost. There will be funding necessary for administrative endeavors. This cost is difficult to determine. If a website were to become a reality the cost and benefit would be more substantial. Perhaps there are private avenues for funding.

# SUPPORTING REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

## WHAT IS OLDER ADULT MINISTRY?

by Pastor Cliff Winter May 15, 2019

**Primarily, “Older Adult Ministry” is the same as ministry to, for, and with all ages.** It includes preaching and teaching and pastoral care. It is Word and Sacrament ministry. It includes stewardship, evangelism, education, worship, administration, and all other aspects of the Christian life.

Secondarily, and of particular interest to this task force, “Older Adult Ministry” means serving, enabling, and equipping both church members and non-members in regard to their needs and opportunities within their unique vocation as older adults.

Generally, we are focused on adults age 50 and above. In these times of increased longevity, we focus on adults between the ages of 50 and 100.

For further consideration and reflection, note the following regarding older adults.

1. They are both female and male.
2. They are both in and out of the work force.
3. Some are not-yet-retired, some retired, and some will never retire.
4. They are persons of wide-ranging economic resources...or lack thereof.
5. They include the physically healthy and active, the inactive, the disabled, the impaired, and the immobile and/or bed ridden.
6. Some older adults are single, some married, some are widows and widowers.
7. There are “active” and “inactive” older adult church members.
8. Older adults live at home, are at home with home health care, reside in independent senior housing, live with their children, or reside in nursing homes, Alzheimer’s units, long-term-care facilities, and hospice homes.
9. Older adults may have children or be childless.
10. They have varying levels of civic concern and identify with a variety of political parties or issues.
  
11. Older adults’ Biblical knowledge ranges from little to a lot.
12. They are, as a group, living longer.

13. Some are professionals, some skilled laborers, and some provide or did provide unique services.
14. Their formal educations range widely.
15. Some are life-long Lutherans, others are from other Christian denominational backgrounds, some from other religious backgrounds, and some from none of the above.
16. Their ethnic and racial profiles vary.
17. ....and more.

In short, older adults are a major segment of society displaying many of the same characteristics of society in general.

Older adults also display numerous characteristics unique to their age group.

Effective ministry recognizes these realities and seeks to serve older adults through the church with Jesus, the Bread of life.

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*SOLI DEO GLORIA*

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# OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE KANSAS DISTRICT PASTORS SURVEY

In response to Kansas District Convention Resolution 2018-04-09 – “To Study and Recommend Strategies in the Advancement of Congregation-based Older Adult Ministries in the Kansas District LCMS,” Kansas District President Rev. Peter K. Lange recently appointed a task force to address this resolution.

The charge of the task force is two-fold:

- Examine strategies in support of congregation-based ministries with older adults; and,
- Offer their report to District congregations, including resources needed to implement enhanced older adult ministry within one year following the appointment of the task force.

The six-member task force met for their initial meeting on Tuesday, January 29. The task force determined that direct input from our Pastors is critical. The brief survey below is designed to move this project forward. Therefore, we would appreciate ten minutes of your time to assess current needs and ideas for enhancing this ministry.

For definition purposes, we wish to address older adult ministry as people approaching retirement - age 50 and above. We invite you to reflect on the needs of those in these stages of life and encourage you to share comments following each question.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this brief assessment. We would greatly appreciate your response to this survey by Friday, March 15. Thank you for your time!

Tom Perry - LCMS Kansas District Older Adult Task Force, Chair  
Mission, Kansas  
Tom@tlcms.org

# GOOGLE SURVEY

Question 1: Do you have a committee, staff member or point person who is responsible for older adult ministry?

- Yes
- No

Comments:

Question 2: How are you currently engaging older adults in ministry? (Check all that apply)

- Worship assistance
- Regular Bible Study
- Educational events (classes, small groups)
- Volunteer opportunities
- Charitable Acts
- Field Trips
- Intergenerational activities
- Mission work

Comments:

Question 3: Besides spiritual needs (having regular access to Word and Sacrament), which of the following needs MUST your congregation address with older adults? (Check all that apply)

- Physical - addressing health concerns
- Vocational - reinforce their calling at their stage in life
- Emotional - coping with loss and life transitions
- Intellectual - resources that promote life-long learning
- Financial - tools that provide stability
- Relational - connecting with others

Comments:

Question 4: Besides spiritual needs, which need of older adults (see needs list in question #3) is your congregation BEST addressing?

Comments:

Question 5: Which need of older adults (see list of needs in question #3) might your congregation seek MOST support and/or resourcing?

Comments:

Question 6: What resources would be of greatest assistance to you in ministering to older adults?

Comments:

The name and contact information of a designated lay person or staff member who might serve as a liaison for additional follow up by the Older Adult Ministry Task Force.

Name:

Email:



# SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE SURVEY

There were 58 responses to the survey. Participants were asked to mark their top three responses to each question and then to add any helpful ideas or needs. There were many good comments. This is only a summary. The full survey results will be available upon request.

## **Does your congregation have someone responsible for older adult ministry?**

Committee Member-5 No one responsible-25 Other-5 Point Person-6 Staff-17

## **Who is responsible?** (Summary of comments)

Responses included the pastor, elders, volunteers, family ministry leader, members looking out for each other and combinations of these groups. Several reported that the older adults are part of the regular life of the congregation with no one specifically in charge of “older adult ministry.”

Participants were asked to mark the responses that applied to each of the following questions and then to add any helpful ideas or needs.

## **How are congregations engaging older adults in ministry?**

Regular Bible study – 51

Worship assistance – 46

Volunteer opportunities – 36

Educational events (classes, small groups) – 25

Intergenerational activities - 25

Charitable acts - 25

Mission work – 15

Field trips – 6

Other – 8

## **Comments:**

Activities included Bible studies at retirement centers, in homes, and at churches, sewing groups, quilters, senior game days, potlucks, bunco, bingo, braille ministry, serving homeless meals, mission awareness, trips to Mission Central, “Sampson” show in Branson, road trip to AIG Creation Museum. Pastors and assistants took communion to shut-ins. Members were paired with shut-ins to visit. Seniors are engaged in all aspects of ministry. One pastor mentioned giving special recognition in worship called honoring the years.

**Besides spiritual needs, please check the THREE highest priorities for your congregation to address with older adults.**

Emotional - coping with loss and life transitions – 42  
Relational – connecting with others – 40  
Church property – ensuring that all facilities are accessible – 26  
Physical – addressing health concerns – 25  
Vocational – reinforce their calling at their stage in life – 23  
Intellectual – resources that promote life-long learning – 9  
Financial – materials and references that offer financial information – 4

**Besides spiritual needs, which need of older adults is your congregation BEST addressing?**

Relational – 20  
Church property – 18  
Emotional – 10  
Intellectual – 5  
Physical – 2  
Vocational – 2  
Financial – 1

Comments: Ways congregations are meeting these needs:

Facility meets ADA requirements, Bible study groups meet, parish health committee, monthly “Golden Eagle” meetings, speakers, group meals, volunteer opportunities, gifts of fruit baskets and/or flowers, cards for birthdays and other occasions, pairing confirmands with a senior pal

**For which need of older adults might your congregation MOST seek support and/or resources?**

Vocational – reinforce their calling at their stage in life – 14  
Relational – connecting with others – 10  
Emotional – coping with loss and life transitions – 7  
Intellectual – resources that offer financial information – 5  
Financial – materials and references that offer financial information – 5  
Physical – addressing health concerns – 5  
Other needs – 4  
Church property – ensuring that all facilities are accessible – 3

Comments: Needs included resources to assist the caregiver, those in the sandwich generation, those adults confined to home. The webinars available in the past were helpful. A need was expressed for Bible studies that particularly address the needs of the realities of old age, nursing homes, assistant

living etc. It was suggested that we should focus on teaching families to care for one another. Resources are needed to address Alzheimer's, aging parents, and nursing homes.

**What resources would be of greatest assistance to you in ministering to older adults?**

Some ideas suggested were as follows:

- Materials that recognize the opportunities God still has for them,
- Resources to assist parish nurses in home visits,
- Ways to encourage intergenerational activities,
- Evaluation of Hospice care resources,
- Audio and large print material
- Identification of community resources,
- High quality materials for education,
- Program ideas for groups,
- Visitation ideas for people in addition to the pastor,
- Resources on planning for the ending years,
- Bible studies targeting older adults,
- Ideas for mentoring younger members,
- Resources that encourage sharing of faith with children and grandchildren.

# KANSAS DISTRICT OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE

## IMPLICATIONS FOR OLD ADULT MINISTRY FOR SMALLER AND RURAL CONGREGATIONS

*Pastor Dennis L. Fangmeyer May 9, 2019*

### BACKGROUND

Most churches are following a course that will miss one of the greatest social challenges and greatest opportunities in history: the coming age tsunami. Like one who has never lived in tornado alley and is unaware of the implications of a coming tornado, most congregations still seem to assume that “the future of the church is its youth.” We are now 19 years into the twenty-first century, and the more accurate description for the church may well be: “The future belongs to the old.”

We know them as the children of the 60s. There was a time they said you couldn’t trust anyone over 30 ... until they turned 30. Until the Millennials were born, they were the largest generation in America’s history with over 76 million live births.

They are the Baby Boomers, or the Boomers, as they are typically called today. On January 1, 2011, the first Boomer turned 65. In fact, on that day, 10,000 of them turned 65. And that pace of aging will continue until 2030, when every Boomer is 65 or older.

The implications for congregations are staggering. This generation is not of the mindset of previous aging generations. According to a Pew Research study, the typical Boomer does not believe old age begins until age 72. And the typical Boomers feel nine years younger than their chronological age.

There are very few churches that will not feel the impact of retiring Boomers, and the statistics are mind-boggling:

- The senior-citizen population is growing three times faster than the rest of the American population.
- U.S. citizens over age 65 outnumber the entire population of Canada.
- Of all those who have lived to age 65—in the history of the world—two-thirds are alive today.

Our country is rapidly aging. Many social scientists believe this population shift will produce the most significant social revolution in American history. “It is going to be of a significance that matches the dawn of the industrial age or the invention of the microchip,” says Ken Dychtwald, researcher and gerontologist.

If your church is concerned with presenting a relevant Christian message to your community, this “age tsunami” presents a stimulating challenge, and that is especially true for the rural small congregation.

I serve two such congregations and based on their 2018 demographic report submitted to the synod, one congregation's membership has 55% of its members 50 years of age and older, while the other has 51%. Even though the number of members over the age of 50 is significant, most of those from 50 – 75 are still actively working since they are either ranchers or farmers with limited time for the normal church activities one thinks of for a person in that age range. Yet, there is still a need to be able to minister to these people in a meaningful way.

Another element that adds to the high percentage of “older adults” is the fact that many of the younger members upon graduating from high school will leave for college and most of them will never return since there is a lack of industry to support their return.

What further adds to the disappearance of the younger people is that there is only so much ground available for agricultural efforts. A section (640 acres) of tillable ground once comfortably supported a family, but today that same family would need close to ten times that amount of land to be successful. When the parent decides to retire there is no one in the family to take over the family farm, so the parent keeps working the ground in hopes that one day one of the children will return to become active in the family business and eventually take over.

With these situations in mind, we consider how a rural small congregation can minister to the older members.

## **HOW TO INVOLVE OR KEEP THE OLDER MEMBERS INVOLVED IN THE CONGREGATION**

**Facilities:** Older adults need easily accessible, comfortable, well-lit meeting space

with good temperature control. These rooms should be close to the church's sanctuary, as well as large, accessible restrooms. Ramps, railings and bright lights are assets. The church also needs to provide close-in, reserved parking places for seniors near the meeting rooms and the sanctuary. Be sure parking lots and walkways are well lit. Also, during bad weather provide assistance for those who need help in navigating stairs and slippery walkways.

Many of the rural churches are 60 years or older, some are even over 100 years, which means entering and exiting the building can be problematic since many of the structures are raised above ground level with as many as fifteen to twenty steps to gain entrance. To overcome this barrier and to provide opportunities for older adults to remain active in church life you may want to consider ADA compliant ramps, chair lifts or elevators to make it easier for an older adult or anyone with limited mobility to enter and exit.

Restrooms are another consideration, since the older we become the more frequent our trips to use them. Restrooms should be close to the areas where groups gather. In one of the churches I serve the restrooms at one time were located in another building at least 100 feet from the sanctuary. Needless to say, planning for many older members was critical. The other issue with older restrooms is they are not wheelchair accessible and lack the handrails that are necessary.

Facilities also need to be well lighted for the older members. It seems the older we become the harder it is to see the bulletin or Bible study handouts. Even the LSB hymnal can be an issue with the manila colored pages requiring additional lighting to make it easier to read with older eyes.

Once facilities are easily accessible and usable you can consider older adult activities that you may already be doing or can incorporate into your church's ministry.

## **ACTIVITIES CURRENTLY IN PLACE OR TO CONSIDER**

- Regular attendance, as health permits, in church and Bible study. If that is not possible due to age or disability audio and video recordings can be useful. We currently provide audio recordings for both congregations, and video recordings of the service at one of them. Typical distribution is about twelve per week. Some members when traveling appreciate the sermons emailed to them. It allows them to still feel connected.
- Regularly scheduled daytime meals, Bible studies and game times (weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.). One congregation has a pitch-in Sunday meal every week to meet the needs of those with no immediate family in the area.
- Older Adult music groups: choirs, small groups, hand bells. One congregation provides quarterly music recitals that are open to the community. Several organists are eager to perform, and many choirs and soloists enjoy providing uplifting music for the older member's enjoyment.
- Full-service bulletins are provided for those that find holding the hymnal to be too demanding and large and extra-large print service folders are also available for those with vision problems.
- Good quality assisted hearing devices are also important to have for the older adults who were raised around noisy farm equipment, or in the case of Boomers, loud music from their younger days that has robbed them of their hearing.
- Low-impact exercise programs such as "walking", either inside the church facilities or around the community.
- Older Handy Person: They can often use skills to assist with church repairs or helping others in need of home or basic car maintenance.
- Regular prayer and Bible study groups, men and women meeting separately to pray,
- Prayer Chain: Many rural churches have one. If there is a death, an accident, or serious illness in the church or community that information is quickly passed throughout the congregation.
- Men's and Women's special ministry and mission projects, such as Lutheran Laymen's League, Men's Club, Dorcas Society, Women of the Church, or LWML.
- Encouraging older members to have personal ministries such as adopting a college student, or volunteering as a tutor in a local elementary school.
- Senior women's groups, who quilt, sew, knit or crochet for a particular project or needy group.
- A church service each year honoring older adults and talking about their importance to the church is another way to help them recognize their importance and that they are a vital member of the congregation.
- End of life planning: Work with the members, both young and old, to put together the information they want passed on to their families. Also, they are encouraged to put together the type of service they would like. Attached is a copy of the document both congregations provide to members.

There are several other areas where older members can be actively involved. They can be encouraged to help with Sunday School classes, either as a teacher or just being there to assist with the younger

children. They can also find they are useful in helping with Vacation Bible School by providing snacks or just being there as spiritual and moral support when many other adults are working and the younger members may feel overwhelmed with all the children, many who are not members and have little or no understanding of Christ and His love for them. The reality is that the church cannot afford to ignore the “hidden treasure” older adults represent for the mission of the church.

## CONCLUSION

In describing the human condition, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, 16-17: “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. ... So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”

Many older adults have lived these words, through the losses they have faced, through illness and disease, and in the uncertainties of simple survival. And yet many are more likely to express contentment than younger, more active people in the prime of health.

Maybe by seeking ways to help older adults be more involved in the work of the church and by listening to their stories, or just being in their presence, we can benefit from their wisdom. At the same time while the “outer nature is wasting away” for many older adults their inner nature is being renewed daily. All who walk with them in this journey can glimpse the “eternal weight of glory” that awaits us all.

# SAMPLE DOCUMENTS FOR CONGREGATIONAL USE

## ADVANCE FUNERAL PLANNING

### Sparing the family

It is unfortunate that, at the very time God calls us home to be with Him that are family and loved ones often see it as a tragedy with many decisions and arrangements to be made. By preparing now for that inevitable time, you can make it easier on your family.

The purpose of this document, which has been adapted from the Larrison's Family Guide to Funeral Planning is to help you make those preparations. If you record the information asked, this document will be very helpful to your family in making your funeral arrangements.

Be sure and notify your family or friends that this document contains your wishes and information that they will need. You may desire to leave a copy in the church office to assist the pastor in preparing for your funeral. He can also make it available to the mortuary at the proper time.

### TO MY FAMILY

It is my wish that you be spared unnecessary expense, anxiety and inconvenience at the time of my death. In this document you will find information which I have recorded as a plan that represents arrangements I have made in advance, hoping in this way to relieve you at the time God has called me to my heavenly home.

I have taken this step in a spirit of love, feeling that you would be burdened by greater distress if these decisions were left for you to make with no indication of my wishes.

Though these arrangements may not be legally binding, I trust they will help to avoid confusion that might arise because of doubts or omissions. It is my sincere hope that the arrangements are in keeping with your wishes.

Date:

Signature:

### Personal Remarks

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These documents should be kept in a place where they will be immediately available at the time of death. **Do not keep them in a Safe Deposit Box.**



## VITAL STATISTICS

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
FIRST MIDDLE LAST

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET CITY STATE

Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY STATE

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_ Church

Baptismal Verse \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_ Church

Confirmation Verse \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Education - Highest Grade Completed (0-12) \_\_\_\_\_ College (1-4, 5+) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Usual Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Industry or Business \_\_\_\_\_

Year residence established in this community \_\_\_\_\_

If Veteran, name of war \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of service and rank \_\_\_\_\_ Service

Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: Married [ ] Single [ ] Divorced [ ] Widow(er) [ ]

Name of Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

If Wife, give Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birthplace of Spouse \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY STATE

Place of Marriage \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY STATE

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_ Church

Next of Kin to Notify: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME CITY STATE

*Some of this prior information will be necessary for the preparation of a death certificate. The Funeral Director will record it and have certified copies made. You will probably need six or more copies.*

### Important Note:

Copies of this page along with the next two pages should be provided to the Church and to the Funeral Home. A confidential file will be opened in your name at the church with this information.

**Memorial Instructions:** The first thing following my death is to make arrangements with my Pastor and the Funeral Director. The following arrangements are in accordance with my wishes: Funeral Home \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

### FUNERAL

Type of Service ☐ traditional ☐ graveside  
☐ limited ☐ direct cremation  
☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Casket ☐ cloth wood ☐ metal sealer ☐  
exposed wood ☐ metal  
☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Viewing (a) ☐ yes ☐ no (visitation)  
(b) ☐ open casket ☐ closed casket  
(c) ☐ traditional (evening and morning visitation) ☐ evening  
and/or morning visitation only

Clothing ☐ my own ☐ new \_\_\_\_\_

Hair Dresser \_\_\_\_\_

Obituary ☐ yes ☐ no  
What newspaper(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Church (a) ☐ yes ☐ no  
Services (b) ☐ Church ☐ Funeral Chapel  
(c) ☐ Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) ☐ Organist \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Vocalist \_\_\_\_\_  
(e) ☐ Hymns \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Sermon Text \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Flowers only ☐ Memorials only ☐ Flower and Memorials

Memorials to: \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships – Churches over the years (listed in order) \_\_\_\_\_

Clubs, Socials, Etc. \_\_\_\_\_

### CASKET BEARERS

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### BURIAL

The cemetery charges an interment fee. The funeral home will cash advance this item for you if you desire.

Type of Burial ☐ ground internment ☐ mausoleum  
☐ tomb ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery Name \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ own ☐ do not own  
Lot # \_\_\_\_\_

Vault ☐ yes (required at St. John) ☐ no

Do you have a monument ☐ yes ☐ no

## Hymns for Funerals

<b>Hymns</b>	<b>TLH</b>	<b>LW</b>	<b>LSB</b>
<i>A Pilgrim and a Stranger</i>	586		
<i>Abide with Me</i>	552	490	878
<i>All Men Living Are but Mortal</i>	601		
<i>All Praise to God Who Reigns</i>	19		
<i>Amazing Grace</i>		509	744
<i>Asleep in Jesus! Blessed Sleep</i>	587		
<i>At the Lamb's High Feast</i>		126	633
<i>Awake My Heart with Gladness</i>	192	128	467
<i>Be Still My Soul</i>	651	510	771/752
<i>Beautiful Savior</i>	657	507	537
<i>Behold A Host, Arrayed in White</i>	656	192	676
<i>By All Your Saints in Warfare</i>		193	517
<i>By All Your Saints in Warfare</i>		194	518
<i>Christ Is Arisen</i>	187	124	459
<i>Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands</i>	195	123	458
<i>Christ the Lord Is Risen Today</i>	193	142	469
<i>Christ the Lord Is Risen Today</i>	191	137	463
<i>Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice</i>	387	353	556
<i>Entrust Your Days and Burdens</i>		427	754
<i>For All the Saints</i>	463	191	677/855
<i>For All the (Your) Saints, O Lord</i>	468	195	
<i>For Me to Live Is Jesus</i>	597	267	742
<i>God Moves in a Mysterious Way</i>	514	426	765
<i>Good Christian Friends, Rejoice</i>		129	475
<i>Hail Thee, Festival Day</i>		125	489
<i>He's Risen, He's Risen</i>	198	138	480
<i>How Great Thou Art</i>		519	801
<i>I Am Content! My Jesus</i>	196	145	468
<i>I Fall Asleep in Jesus' Wounds</i>	585		
<i>I Know of a Sleep in Jesus' Name</i>	592		
<i>I Know That My Redeemer Lives</i>	200	264	461
<i>I Would Not Live Always</i>	588		
<i>If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee</i>	518		
<i>If You but Trust in God to Guide Thee</i>		420	750
<i>I'm but a Stranger Here</i>	660	515	748
<i>In the Midst of Earthly Life</i>	590		
<i>In the Very Midst of Life</i>		265	755
<i>It Is Not Death to Die</i>	602		
<i>Jerusalem, My Happy Home</i>	618	307	673
<i>Jesus Christ Is Risen Today</i>	199	127	457
<i>Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense</i>	206	266	741
<i>Jesus, I Live to Thee</i>	591		
<i>Jesus Lead Thou On</i>	410	386	
<i>Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won</i>	201	139	490
<i>Jesus Savior, Pilot Me</i>	649	513	715

<b>Hymns</b>	<b>TLH</b>	<b>LW</b>	<b>LSB</b>
<i>Just as I Am</i>	388	359	570
<i>Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me</i>	512		722
<i>Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart</i>	429	413	708
<i>My Course Is Run</i>	599		
<i>My Faith Looks Up to Thee</i>	394		702
<i>My Faith Looks Trustingly</i>	378		
<i>Nearer, My God, to Thee</i>	533	514	
<i>Now All the Vault of Heaven</i>		131	465
<i>O Lord, My God I Cry to Thee</i>	600		
<i>O Sons and Daughters</i>	208	130	470/471
<i>Oh, How Blest Are Ye (You)</i>	589	268	679
<i>Rejoice My Heart, Be Glad</i>	535	424	737
<i>Salvation unto Us Has Come</i>	377	355	555
<i>Sent Forth by God's Blessing</i>		247	643
<i>Tender Shepherd, Thou Hast</i>	595	269	
<i>This Body in the Grave We Lay</i>	596		759
<i>The Day of Resurrection</i>	205	133	478
<i>The God of Abraham Praise</i>	40	450	798
<i>The King of Love, My Shepherd</i>	431	412	709
<i>The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want</i>	436	416	710
<i>The Lord's My Shepherd, Leading</i>	417		
<i>The Strife Is O'er the Battle</i>	210	143	464
<i>The Will of God Is Always</i>	517	425	758
<i>This Joyful Eastertide</i>		140	482
<i>What a Friend We Have</i>	457	516	770
<i>What God Ordains Is Always</i>	521	422	760
<i>When I Suffer Pain</i>		423	
<i>When in the Hour of Deepest</i>	522	428	615
<i>When My Last Hour Is Close</i>	594		
<i>Who Knows When Death May</i>	598		
<i>Why Do We Mourn Departing</i>	593		
<i>With High Delight Let Us Unite</i>		134	483

### **Organ Music**

*Air on a G String*, Johann Sebastian Bach

*Jesus Lead Thou On*, Johann Sebastian Bach

*Jesu, Joy of Man 's Desiring*, Johann Sebastian Bach

*Largo*, G. F. Handel

*O World, I Now Must Leave Thee*, Johannes Brahms

## Writing Your Obituary

An obituary may be printed and/or read. If it is read in the Funeral Service, it may occur before the Invocation or in connection with the Sermon. Several options are provided below. They must be adapted according to circumstance and may be expanded to include additional information, such as the church and location of the deceased's Baptism and Confirmation. When published, the place of burial may also be included.

### Example 1

Our Savior Jesus Christ has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Let us remember with thanksgiving what Gad has done through His servant name.

Full name was given life by his/her creator and was born on date, the child of name of father and name of mother. On date, he/she received the gift of Holy Baptism and became a child of God. On date, he/she publicly confessed his/her faith and was confirmed. He/She received the precious gift of the Lord's life-giving body and blood. On date, he/she received the gift of a beloved companion in his/her spouse, name of spouse. He/She was blessed with the gift of children (a child), name(s) of child(ren). God blessed name's life with many special people as he/she served God in his/her vocations at home, church, work, and in the community. Finally, on date God blessed name with a holy death and took him/her home to rest in the arms of Jesus to await the resurrection of the dead.

The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord. We give thanks to God our Father through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for our brother/sister name.

### Example 2

Our Savior Jesus Christ has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Let us remember with thanksgiving what God has done through His servant name.

Full name, son/daughter of name of father and name of mother was born in location on date. He/She was baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit on date. He/She confessed his/her baptismal faith in the rite of Confirmation on date and was admitted to the altar to receive the medicine of immortality, Christ's life-giving body and blood. Name was joined together in holy matrimony to name of spouse on date. On date, name, at the age of \_\_\_\_ years, fell asleep in Jesus. He/She is survived by \_\_\_\_\_. He/She is predeceased by \_\_\_\_\_. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

The Lord gives and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord. We give thanks to God our Father through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for our brother/sister name.

### Example 3

Our Savior Jesus Christ has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Let us remember with thanksgiving what God has done through His servant name.



## SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Special Requests (you might note here the “little” things which could make a big difference ... clothing, jewelry, glasses, flowers, etc.).

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### Relatives & Friends to Be Notified

[illegible]

(M) Mother; (F) Father; (H) Husband; (W) Wife; (S) Son; (D) Daughter; (GF) Grandfather; (GM) Grandmother;  
(B) Brother; (SR) Sister; (U) Uncle; (A) Aunt; (C) Cousin; (FR) Friend; (I) In-laws; (CO) Company; (O) Organization

## Documents and Personal Papers

### Bank Accounts

Name of Bank	Type of Account
--------------	-----------------

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**ATTORNEY**\_\_\_\_\_

### Safe Deposit Box

Location\_\_\_\_\_

Location of keys for box\_\_\_\_\_

### Location of the Following

Birth Certificate\_\_\_\_\_

Children's Birth Certificate(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Marriage Certificate\_\_\_\_\_

Deeds and Titles\_\_\_\_\_

Mortgages and Notes\_\_\_\_\_

Last Will and Testament\_\_\_\_\_

Military Discharge\_\_\_\_\_

Income Tax Records\_\_\_\_\_

Other Documents\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Funeral Service Contract

This insured plan normally guarantees an entire funeral including the casket

My policy number is \_\_\_\_\_

The face amount is \_\_\_\_\_

Date I took this policy out \_\_\_\_\_

The contract should spell out the merchandise and services that have been purchased.

### Insurance Instructions

I have purchased the following insurance policies for the reasons set forth:

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Reason Purchased \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Reason Purchased \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Reason Purchased \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Policy # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Reason Purchased \_\_\_\_\_

## Social Security Instructions

Location of nearest Social Security office is:

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

To facilitate receiving Social Security benefits you will need the following when you contact the Social Security office:

1. Our marriage certificate
2. Our children's birth certificates
3. Proof of widow's age if 62 or older
4. My social security number
5. Total wages paid on W-2 form or schedule "C" for preceding year
6. Death certificate

Social Security pays a lump sum death benefit only to surviving spouse or children under 16. The amount will be determined by past earnings.

It usually requires about three (3) months for a widow to start obtaining Social Security benefits. Your life insurance agent can be most helpful in coordinating social security benefits, insurance benefits, and any Veteran's benefits.

## Veteran's Benefits

Location of nearest Social Security office is:

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

To facilitate receiving Veteran's Benefits, you will need the following when you contact the Veteran's Administration Office:

1. A copy of my Death Certificate
2. Proof of Widowhood – Proof of our marriage should be established by one of the following kinds of evidence, in this order of preference.
  - a. A properly certified copy of the public or church record of our marriage
  - b. Affidavit of clergyman or magistrate who performed the ceremony
  - c. Original marriage certificate
  - d. Affidavits of at least two eyewitnesses to the ceremony
3. Proof of Termination of Marriage – The termination of all marriages contracted by either of us should be substantiated by certified copies of the final decrees of divorce or annulments, or by proof of death.

Proof of Age and Relationship of Child(ren) – To establish the fact of the birth of each child, you should supply a birth certificate or a properly certified copy of the church record of birth or baptism showing the date and the names of the parents.

A Veteran is generally entitled to the following benefits, which the funeral home will normally secure for you:

1. Burial Flag
2. Headstone or Grave Marker

Apply to any Veteran's Administration Office and inquire there about any additional benefits to which you may be entitled. *Note: Please enclose discharge papers when available.*

## **Everyone Should Have A Will**

Upon death, everything you own is in your estate. Whether your possessions are large or small, you should consider making a will. It will save probate and administration costs. Consult your attorney and have him explain the laws as they exist today. Once it is made, your will should be kept up to date.

I     ☐ do                      ☐ do not                      have a will.

### **Important Note:**

Pages 2-5 are to be copied and given to the church. You should also mail a copy of these same pages to the Funeral Home that you plan to use for your burial. The Funeral Home will also want a copy of the cemetery deed or document indicating where you will be buried.)

A confidential file at the church will be opened in your name with this information. The church's desire is to provide a service that helps you share the Gospel with your family and loved ones at the time of your death.

# IMPLICATIONS FOR LARGER CONGREGATIONS

## IMPLICATIONS OF OLDER ADULT MINISTRY LARGER CONGREGATIONS

*Grace Dahlke, Barbra Geuy, Tom Perry*

The adult memberships of our congregations are growing! The congregations that are increasing membership are drawing heavily from adults who are nearing retirement and the ages beyond. God's children in this age group have honed their skills and spiritual gifts and have valuable insight of the Church, its history, its successes and challenges. Most are looking for ways to continue to make a significant impact upon the lives of others. Significance to a child of God is trying to lead the life Jesus showed us how to live. With the great increase of this demographic group our congregations must find ways to enhance the active participation of older adults in all aspects of church life.

Two of our congregations that have had some success with ministry focused on older adults have shared some of their experiences. They are Our Redeemer/Hutchinson (Grace Dahlke and Barbra Geuy) and Trinity /Mission & Shawnee (Tom Perry.) In these churches, the older adult membership is growing. They either have people or part-time staff that have the responsibility of enhancing the ministry of older adults.

All three of us concur that it is important to make the church facility "senior friendly." Making sure that canes, wheelchairs railings, easy door opening, large print material for worship, etcetera, are assessable for those that need them. One church is in the process of designating a convenient room for their benefit. Weekday Bible class is a popular staple at Trinity and other congregations. The Bible class is led by a semi-retired Pastor and has a weekly average of over sixty members. Bible class at Trinity's Shawnee campus is intergenerational and also attracts a good number of members. These classes become ways for our members to become close to each other and our church. This has the effect of generating volunteer and care opportunities. At Our Savior they spend time in finding ways for members of all ages to work together. They are mentors and they sponsor all church events. Being an active part of an active congregation is important to older adults. This includes active inclusion in worship as well as greeting and fellowship.

Our older adults can and do play an important role in the care of the hospitalized and homebound. They make calls to these members regularly, offering friendship, a caring smile and a listening ear. Especially in a large congregation this can ease the time crunch for our pastors. Though they do not replace the work of our pastors, it adds to the overall ministry they receive.

Taking care of our older members when sickness, infirmity, mobility, life issues and end of life issues is at hand, is still an important part of this ministry. It is an important part of the ministry to all our members. Older adult ministry should be thought of as an asset-based ministry and not a liability-

based ministry. In many if not most cases the health, resources, and viabilities of older adults is the highest it has ever been. It is necessary that if we wish to be good stewards of God's church, special care and direction must be offered. Older adults can serve as the life blood of our congregations.

## **KS DISTRICT OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE**

*Grace Dahlke*

The adult memberships in our congregations is growing! We need to somehow find a way to get our older adults, who are still very capable, involved in leadership and also in activities in our churches.

When approaching our adult membership, we often hear, "I've done it all – now let the younger ones do it."

Our present congregation has a membership of 845 on the roll and yet our average church attendance is at 215. Our present Adult Committee numbers 15 adult members. When forming this committee, I asked only couples to serve and that has worked out well. I asked for a commitment of one year, but then to continue for as long as they cared to stay. Three of the men who were very active have passed on, but their wives have remained on this committee. Our purpose was to make sure we were equipped with canes, wheelchairs, railings to support the needs of older people, easy door openings, large print material for worship services, hearing devices or other necessities for the older membership. We also have the responsibility of hosting the annual congregational Christmas party/dinner and the annual Bless the Year's Sunday with a guest speaker. This was designated as a Sunday to honor our older members. It has now been changed to honor members of all ages because many of our younger people did not attend, thinking it was just meant for older members.

In a larger congregation it is often difficult to become acquainted with others. Older and younger adults need to mentor to one another, socially and Spiritually. We have a group called Keenagers, for our older members, that meets monthly, enjoying meals together, programs and other activities and yet we only reach about 25 of our adult members.

Our older adults need to be personally asked to participate on Church Boards and Committees. They need to also be included on the Church Counsel as leaders and policy makers in their church. This will only happen if a special effort is made so they will feel needed and wanted! How can this be done?

Perhaps small groups of 6 or 8 could be formed as a "meet each other socially" situation. The group participants could be changed monthly or more, so more people are involved and get to know one another in a special way. If they know each other in this way, they will also be ready to serve the Lord together in a special capacity within the congregation.

Having Sunday morning greeters is great but let's also include our older adults in this way. Then, too, a possibility of name tags may work, using an older adult group to organize this. Let's remember to also give our older members some necessary responsibilities. They are important members of God's Kingdom and need to be made to recognize this importance.

## **KS DISTRICT OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE**

*Barbra Geny*

I certainly agree with all of the ideas that Grace presented. I feel that senior members should be involved in many of the ways that younger members share their time and talents. For instance, serving on a Sunday morning as greeters, readers, and ushers shouldn't be limited to younger members. Another way for seniors to be involved includes landscape work and extra upkeep around the church. We have people who are retired who like to keep the courtyard looking lovely with colorful flowers and bushes and who mow the lawn. Some of our retired members come to the church to change light bulbs or do minor repairs here and there. I think it's important for our retirees to serve on the church council; they have so much knowledge and experience to share. I would like to see more mentoring going on between the older members and the younger ones. Table parents in our youth club program are a good start. Perhaps older folks could be paired up with new members to help them get acquainted and feel welcome and introduce and invite them to participate in different service opportunities in the church. Grace and I talked about the possibility of getting small groups of seniors together in the church to meet for fellowship in the afternoon once a month and toss around ideas for opportunities to serve. I know of one congregation that has a small group of two or three that get together once a month and make visits to others in the congregation that may be housebound or dealing with health issues. This would be above and beyond the ones who go out once a month and take communion to shut ins. Also, active seniors could make themselves available to take people to doctor appointments or shopping or even run errands for those who can't get out. We have an Early Learning Center in our congregation and there have been senior volunteers who have given their time to help out when needed, especially in the swaddlers' room. There is always a need for people in the nursery on a Sunday morning. Perhaps, there are grandmothers/grandfathers that would love to spend time with the little ones during the worship service. All that being said, the only way that Grace and I could see to involve more seniors would be to personally ask them to join these activities. It seems that when requests are made in print to become involved, many people don't respond. They need to have that personal invitation.

I hope these ideas will be helpful. I'm sure when we get together again, others on the committee will be able to add some more ways to involve our senior members.

# MEETING MINUTES

## KANSAS DISTRICT OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE MINUTES JANUARY 29, 2019

The initial meeting of the Older Adult Task Force met at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, Kansas at 1:00 on January 29th. In attendance were Jim Bradshaw from the Kansas District office, Rev. Dennis Fangmeyer, Rev. Cliff Winter, Grace Dahlke, Barb Geuy, Betty Amey (minutes), and Tom Perry (chairman). Lois Winter attended as a guest.

Jim Bradshaw opened the meeting with a devotion based on Psalm 71:5, 9. We have trusted in the Lord from childhood and ask not to be set aside in old age.

Tom opened the business portion of the meeting by reviewing the resolution passed by the Kansas District in Convention 2018. We reviewed the documents Tom provided regarding aging and church ministries.

We went around the table and each of us introduced ourselves telling about our LCMS experience and our hopes for the task force.

We discussed the charge of the task force which is to examine strategies to support congregation-based ministries with older adults and then to offer a report to District congregations.

Discussion followed on how to proceed with our charge. We agreed that to be successful, the willing involvement and endorsement of congregational Pastors was needed. We decided to gather information on what was being done at the present time in our congregations, we would develop a very simple survey and encourage all District Pastors to participate. We will first offer the survey through placement on the internet then follow up with a written form for those not responding. We will plan to meet April 9th in Hutchinson to tabulate and interpret the surveys.

We talked about using the current Circuit structure for communication with our Pastors. We also will encourage a lay member or staff person to be a point person with each congregation. Time was spent attempting to identify an age identification. It was decided that “50+” served as a suitable title. We then spent time on what should be included in the survey. Tom is to take the discussion notes and form a draft for the task force to review.

Possible questions.	What are your needs for members age 50 – 90?
	How are you challenging 50+ members to ministry?
	What are you doing now that works well?
	What intergenerational activities are you currently engaged in?
	What would you like to try or see happen?

What are your dreams with respect to older adults?

Do you have a point person or committee responsible for member 50+?

The survey is to be put on the web, and we will check with the circuits in March as to progress.

Next meeting April 9 in Hutchinson at 1:00 p.m.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

Minutes were taken by Betty and written and distributed via email by Tom.



## **KANSAS DISTRICT OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE MINUTES**

### **APRIL 9, 2019**

The Older Adult Task Force met at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, KS at 1:10 p.m. on April 9, 2019. In attendance were Jim Bradshaw from the Kansas District office, Rev. Dennis Fangmeyer, Ref. Cliff Winter, Grace Dahlke, Barb Geuy, Betty Amey (minutes), and Tom Perry, chairman.

Tom began the meeting with a devotion from Rich Bimler's book Joyfully Aging. Among the readings was a section on the three R's of Aging, Remembering, Refraining, and Rejoicing, with the addition of a fourth R, the Resurrection.

We reviewed our charge as a task force from the Kansas District. We then reviewed the responses from the survey we had sent to the Kansas District pastors. We had received responses from 42% of the pastors.

One response of special interest was "What does older adult ministry mean?" Our discussion elicited several conclusions. Many of our congregations are made up of older adults, ages 50 and above. Needs of smaller and rural congregations may differ from larger and urban congregations with more resources. We are addressing the needs of people from ages 50 – 100+. How do we address these differing needs? We also looked at considering three subgroups of older adults as follows:

1. People approaching retirement
2. People retired and active
3. People retired with limitations.

To answer the question of "What does older adult ministry mean?", we concluded the following:

1. Older adult ministry is the same as ministry for all ages, preaching and teaching, Word and sacrament, stewardship and evangelism etc.
2. Older adult ministry means serving and enabling members and non-members in the areas of need and opportunity unique to their vocation as older adults.

The question was raised as whether we have enough responses with 42% responding to the survey. To be sure that we have heard from all who wish to respond, we will submit a preliminary plan and report to Saints Alive at 55 in July and to the congregations of the Kansas District and then ask, "What else do you have to tell us?" The report will then be finalized and presented to the District Board of Directors in October.

The Report shall include the following:

1. Our original charge
2. Composition of the committee and meeting history
3. How we obtained our information
4. What we gained from the survey
5. What our recommendations are for action.

To write the report we will divide the responsibilities as follows:

Pastor Winter: What is Older Adult Ministry?

Betty: Summary of survey

Pastor Fangmeyer: Implications for smaller & rural congregations

Barb and Grace: Implications for larger, urban, and suburban congregations

Tom and Jim: Final editing of preliminary report

These should be emailed to Tom and Jim by May 15. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, July 2, at 1:00 p.m. at Our Redeemer in Hutchinson. Jim closed the meeting with prayer.

## **OLDER ADULT TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES JULY 2, 2019**

Members Present: Rev. Dennis Fangmeyer, Rev. Cliff Winer, Grace Dahlke, Barb Geuy, Betty Amey, and Jim Bradshaw, district representative. Lois Winter and Butch Amey were guests.

Barb provided refreshments.

Devotions were led by Jim based on Ps 136, “O, give thanks until Lord, For He is good,” and following.

The next steps for the report were discussed as follows:

- Present the report for discussion and feedback at Saints Alive at Fifty-five on July 21.

- Provide an information table at the October 7-10 Church Workers Conference at Bethany/Overland Park.

- Present the report to the Board of directors/Topeka (tentative) on November 1-2.

- Distribute the report to the congregations.

The committee thanks Jim and Tom Perry (chairman) for all of their work in preparing the summarized report.

We read through the report as a basis for discussion. Minor corrections and additions were made. Cliff had additional grammar and syntax suggestions that would be considered later.

Additions under resources: Kansas congregations with a Stephen Ministry program serve predominately older adults with regular one-on-one supervised caregiving. [www.stephenministries.org](http://www.stephenministries.org). Parish nurses were also added as a resource.

More time was spent in reviewing and editing the Conclusions and Recommendations.

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at breakfast on Monday, July 22 at Saints Alive to recap.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m. with the Lord’s prayer.

Minutes recorded by Betty Amey

# CONCLUSIONS

If we as a church wish to fulfill our calling as loving Children of God, we need to recognize that a giant opportunity has been offered us. As the flood of people turning 65 increases, we must do all we can to minister to older adults and to help them fulfill their personal calling to live a life of significance. A life of significance is found in being part of a community following Jesus. The Spirit wishes us to act and we must do so.

The time is right to go to work. The nation recognizes the need for attention to older adults. Resources are readily available, and we believe identifying and empowering leaders who will advocate for older adult ministry in congregations and communities, is the next step. Following are necessary steps and recommendations.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Elevate the importance of Older Adult Ministry in the Kansas District and implement strategies with church workers and congregations.
2. Form a standing committee to carry-out the necessary functions related to Older Adult Ministry.
3. Designate a staff person in the Kansas District with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of Older Adult Ministry.
4. Strengthen and enhance the Saints Alive After 55 retreat under the guidance of the standing committee.
5. Create a communication system to promote Older Adult Ministry in the Kansas District.
6. Allocate appropriate funding to support Older Adult Ministry in the Kansas District.

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