

Senior Moments

Celebrating the Gifts of Mature Christians

Summer 2021

Your Body in Christ

By Rev. Justin Panzer, President of the
Kansas District of the LCMS



1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ESV:

¹⁹ "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

God gave His Son to us with a body. It was a flesh-and-blood body just like we have. You see, God had to send His Son in the flesh so that He might fully identify Himself with us, take our place under the law, and fulfill that law perfectly in our stead. By His death and resurrection, Jesus has redeemed us in both body and soul. Now, through the gift of faith that's been showered upon us in Baptism, our bodies are the very temples of His Spirit.

I think that this begs the question, "What do you do with the body?" The body is not to be treated as one's own property or an object to be laid aside. The body belongs to the Lord, who knit it together, forming it in the bodies of our mothers. Christ Jesus will not have the body that belongs to Him rendered unclean, desecrated by fornication and enslaved by a fleshly union to one who is not your spouse. He would not have us live in bondage to another lord, because He Himself has made us His own (cf. the context of 1 Corinthians 6).

Instead, He has "purchased and won us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that we may be His own and live under Him in His

(Continued on page 2)

A Renewed Challenge

Older Adult Ministry Across the Kansas District

By Jim Bradshaw, Assistant
to the President for
Education and Youth, KS
District of the LCMS



The challenge of being old and of ministry with the elderly is to recapture the sense of meaning for living which God as Creator and Christ as Redeemer has in mind for all His people.

Our mission as the LCMS Kansas District is to:

- Affirm the unique worth of older persons.
- Equip older adults for ministry and provide opportunities that will enhance the quality of life for older adults.
- Identify, plan, design, develop, and distribute resources for older adults that will inspire life-long learning and abundant living.
- Function as a catalyst to bring about an awareness of the needs, contributions, and skills of older adults.

(Continued on page 6)



Your Body in Christ

(Continued from page 1)

kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness" (Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed).

Our bodies belong to the Lord. They have been redeemed with His own body and blood at Calvary. God the Holy Spirit has made our bodies to be His temple in the waters of Baptism now and for an eternity. We receive into our bodies His forgiveness, and He gives us His true body and blood in the unleavened bread and wine to eat and drink.

With our bodies filled with the "good gifts" of Christ, we must ask the question, "Now what? What am I to do with the body that the Lord has granted to me?" As we wait for the Christ to come, we have a purpose right now in this life. It is a purpose that each and every one of us can fulfill by the power of the Holy Spirit living and working in our lives. That purpose is simply this as Paul writes in verse 20: "glorify God in your body."

**Now what?
What am I to do
with the body that
the Lord has
granted to me?**

God's desire is that we live as His children, honoring Him with our words and living a life that gives Him all the praise and glory. It's glorifying Him by receiving His words in worship and Bible study. It's conducting our lives in a manner worthy of the Lord, which is our spiritual act of worship. It's being of service to Him as we serve our neighbors in love acting as His hands and feet.

Dear friends, no matter your age or ability, you are valuable in God's sight. You are His baptized child. He is going to use you in whatever way possible to share His Word and extend His Kingdom in your local context. What a privilege this is that God uses you in such ways to be His royal priests (1 Peter 2:9-10). How can you assist and use the gifts that He has given to you to glorify Him? What a blessing you are to Him and to your local LCMS congregation. I am thankful for your service, and I pray that your ministries will be abundantly blessed!



Saints Alive After 55

By Barb Geuy, Older Adult Ministry Committee Member and Chair of Saints Alive After 55

Saints Alive After 55—That’s a catchy title, don’t you think? What does this mean? It means that just because we Lutheran saints reach a certain age and become what is known as “senior citizens” in today’s vernacular, we don’t have to stop serving our Lord and Savior. There are many ways that we can be alive and active in our congregations and in our communities.

Saints Alive began over thirty years ago and, even though we now meet in Wichita at the Spiritual Life Center, the attendees first met on the Bethany campus in Lindsborg. The premise behind the event was to encourage older adults to continue their work for the Lord and not let their advancing years put them on the sidelines. Because of better medicine and healthier lifestyles, people live much longer. What is that saying? “Seventy is the new fifty.” Older adults have much to offer as a result of the wisdom they have gained from their experiences over the years. Lutheran Christians over 55 still have a purpose! It is important to emphasize that thought by gathering together to worship, grow in the Word, learn new ways to be productive, and enjoy fun and fellowship. Hence, Saints Alive After 55.

If you’ve never attended a Saints Alive event, you need to know that our program has always included special guest speakers, Bible study leaders, and interest sessions. Popular author and lecturer, Paul A. Meier, and Lutheran Hour speaker, Dr. Ken Klaus, have been two dynamic speakers in the past, to name just a couple. Bible study leaders always bless us with inspiring messages gleaned from the Scriptures, centered around a particular theme and Bible verse chosen for the event. Special interest sessions have included Lutheran Comfort Dogs, Orphan Grain Train, a look at hymns written by Martin Luther, and Haskell LIGHT Campus Ministry in Lawrence. No get-together is complete without mixers to get acquainted, singing, good food, lots of laughter, and entertainment of all kinds. We’ve heard choral groups, German polka bands, and guitar players, just to name a few. Fellowship time after each day’s session might include a rousing game of dominoes, cards, or board games. Sometimes people just sit down in small groups and visit. This get-together is like “old home week” or a family reunion, a

good opportunity to see fellow Lutherans from all over the state, make new friends, and enjoy time together.

Both the Kansas District Older Adult Ministry Committee and the Saints Alive committee are looking at more ways to reach out to older adults in each congregation and want to expand the events to include more areas of the state. A one-day event is being planned at Trinity in Shawnee Mission next spring and we plan to get something going in the western part of the state, also. Hopefully, by scheduling these one- or two-day get-togethers, we can reach more people, encouraging them to stay active in their congregations and showing them ways to do that very thing. Until our Lord calls us to Himself, we have a purpose here on earth to spread the Gospel and serve Him with the talents He has given us. Our regular Saints Alive event will still be held in Wichita. Because of the pandemic, we had to cancel our Saints Alive gathering in 2020 and 2021. However, we are excited to tell you that the Wichita Saints Alive After 55 will be up and running by the summer of 2022!



To God be the glory!



Older Adult Ministry

Within, Above, and Beyond the

By Rev. Cliff Winter, Older Adult Ministry Committee Member



People are people. We all live in the same world. God's grace is sufficient for all. Life in Christ is real life for all who believe. All true. Yet there is more to say. Each one of us is different. And there are various age groups among us. Those in various age groupings have particular gifts, needs, and challenges.

Right now, I'm considering what's unique about older adult Christians, the senior children of God, the "Chronologically Gifted ones," as a CPH devotional book calls them. Like all of God's children, older adult Christians live "within, above, and beyond" the "fray." The fray includes the commotions, conflicts, and even wars of life. We're not fighting against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). Most recently the fray of life includes the COVID virus, political shifts and skirmishes, a recent record-cold winter in Kansas, unique challenges to congregational life due mainly to the virus, and more. Older adults of our congregations and communities are frazzled within the fray. Some examples...

- Grandparents have yet to hold their latest grandchild.
- A lonely man missed all public notices for his age group to get the vaccine.
- A sad widow misses all her family's weekly Zoom meetings. No computer.
- Unconvinced that masks are beneficial, a 70-year-old now defiantly refuses to wear one.
- During three weeks of hospitalization, George received two visits from his pastor and died alone.
- Ivan's church attendance was perfect, but his funeral was graveside only. The family mourned Ivan's death and their absence from the Lord's House.

You, dear reader, can add to these scenarios, caused mainly by the virus. The rest of life's arrows exacerbate these problems. Living within the fray isn't easy. But Christians also live above the fray. Consider...

- Elizabeth watches her pastor lead worship online each Sunday and faithfully mails her tithe. She also sends care notes to those on the prayer list.

- One 60-year-old who lost his job now shops twice a week for three of his neighbors.
- Paula creates richly illustrated Lenten devotions and emails them to family and friends.
- Home-bound Fred has daily 9pm devotions with his daughter using Facetime.
- Edna made and keeps her vow not to criticize her children's strict rules not to gather in person.

These seniors are not just making lemonade out of lemons. They are mindful of the Spirit's promptings. They are vocation minded. They are "working while it is day" before the night comes (John 9:4). Outwardly, they may be wasting away, but inwardly they are renewed by God every day (2 Corinthians 4:16). In Christ, they live above the fray.

The Apostle Paul was likely in his early sixties when he died in Rome. A few years earlier he had written to the Philippians that, on the one hand, he had a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better than living here (Philippians 1:23). God's seniors are closer to that glory than most others. Some of them long to die, especially those in pain and with incurable illness. Some are apprehensive about death, and some have misgivings. Some struggle to hold on to the peace that Christ has forged between us and God while some are calm and content with that same peace (Ephesians 2:14-18). Some dread death. For all these, Christ is alive and ready to keep casting out fear. He welcomes all to Himself, welcomes all to live above the fray now and beyond the fray later.

The members of the Kansas District Older Adult Ministry Committee want to sensitize all of us to the God-given opportunities similar to those described above.

A Renewed Challenge

(Continued from page 1)

Lutheran churches have always demonstrated a deep concern for older adult ministry. To a great degree, however, it has been identified with the frail elderly who are home-bound or institutionalized. These days have presented the church with a new challenge.

Life expectancy in the United States continues to grow. In most of history, death has been seen as a partner not of the aged, but of infancy and childhood. To live to be old meant that one had cheated death. More people are living longer. How has longevity affected your congregation?

If we are to minister effectively with a growing generation of older adults, we must dispel some of the myths regarding the elderly and challenge them to Christian service in the church and the community. We are only touching the very tip of the iceberg! There are many factors which present exciting opportunities to enhance older adult ministry across the LCMS Kansas District.

The LCMS Kansas District Board of Directors established an Older Adult Ministry committee to assist in addressing these factors. We want to challenge your congregation to explore various ideas about older adult ministry and come to some common understandings about the possibilities of involving older adults in the life and mission of your congregation while not losing sight of the special needs that may exist.

To that end, let us hear from you. The Older Adult Ministry Committee wants to dialogue with you on how we might assist and support your local ministry with older adults. You are encouraged to submit the name of a member of your congregation who might serve in the critical role of liaison with the District Office as a Congregation Connector. Email that name and contact information (email) to Janet Powell at janet@kslcms.org.

We pray

God of Life, as our days on earth accumulate, we pray that we may learn to love the process of aging. Help us to know that You have brought us to this time, and it is You who are leading us to a time to come. Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Savior, in Whose name we pray. Amen.

**Send name and email address of
Congregation Connector to
Janet Powell at janet@kslcms.org.**

Getting Started

Enhanced Older Adult Ministry

In the first issue we talked about three areas of concentration in Older Adult Ministry. They are spiritual wellbeing, life issues, and health. In the following paragraphs I will explain a little more about each, offering thoughts on what has been beneficial to my congregation.

Spiritual Wellbeing



Kansas District pastors are very well equipped to lead us in our spiritual wellbeing. As your older adult ministry and church grow, you may find that a variety of Bible-centered classes are beneficial. All people do not grow spiritually the same way. Some enjoy and learn much from a large pastor driven class. We have a midweek class that is fortunate to average 60 people (pre-Covid). We also have many opportunities for people to study in smaller groups or individually, and some that are topic driven. One commonality is they each have a leader who is capable and interesting. Some resources for class leaders in many congregations are retired pastors, deacons, and retired teachers. Though we always encourage our active pastors to teach, as the program grows, they are sure to welcome assistance. The place and atmosphere of the classes are an important ingredient as well. A large class may need a sound system so attendees with hearing difficulty are comfortable. Also be cognizant of making it easy for wheelchair users and those needing other assistance. Often in smaller classes, a home or more intimate setting is ideal. Work with the leader and class members to determine themes for the classes. Publicize in a variety of venues the time, place, theme, and leader of your class. I think it helpful for someone to notice and make a record of who comes. It helps, when someone has been gone for a while, to check on them to see if they are having problems. These classes have a way of making and maintaining lasting friendships.

Life Issues



When I speak of life issues, I am referring to those things that come up in our lives when we interact with society. Examples could be estate planning, home security, social security, and available government services. Trinity has invited specialists in these fields to speak at special "senior series talks" and opened them up to our entire church and the community. Many churches can find people to lead these informational talks from their own congregations. Local police as well as city and county agencies are useful sources. Once again, make sure the place you will be meeting meets the needs of your attendees. Be sure to publicize the time place and topic well beforehand. A non-mandatory signup sheet helps with planning and with the commitment of those attending. Active one-on-one mentoring can help many with special needs. The Stephen Ministry program is also a wonderful program to assist those encountering challenging times.

Health



Dealing with the health of our members can be accomplished in differing ways. Individuals are not always open to have their health needs exposed. Some churches have taken advantage of parish nurses and special health events. It is good to actively encourage friends within our churches to regularly check on one another. This is often done without a formal program. When special circumstances arise, the pastor should be advised. Too often when a senior is experiencing a serious health event they do not want to "bother" the church or pastor. This interaction is an important part of a spiritual family. The power of prayer has been proven, is real, and is life enhancing. One-on-one check-ins with friends is paramount. I have found that organized "senior series talks" about general topics like Alzheimer's disease, the benefits of movement, or good dietary health can be helpful.

Each congregation is unique in their makeup and needs. Hopefully, these can be helpful to you. Next time we will talk about fellowship, food, and fun. Please email me with comments, Tom@tlcms.org.



*By Tom Perry, Kansas District
Older Adult Ministry Committee
Chairman and Senior Ministry
Leader of Trinity Lutheran Church*



Older Adult Ministry Resources

The following is a small list of resources that may be helpful when building an enhanced older adult ministry. As the year progresses, we will add more to the list. If you have recommendations or needs, please feel free to contact us.

ALOA

aloaserves.org

Adult Lutherans Organized for Action is a national Lutheran older adult organization with helpful resources.

Hope-Full Living

hopefulliving.org

This is a company which provides written devotions and resources.

Kansas District Website

kslcms.org/caring-ministry/older-adult-ministry

This is a webpage on the Kansas District website.

Older Adult Task Force Comprehensive Report

Find it at: kslcms.org/caring-ministry/older-adult-ministry

Tom Perry

Tom@TLCMS.org

Contact me with any questions, suggestions, or helpful tips.

Senior Moments

Celebrating the Gifts of Mature Christians

A publication of the Older Adult Ministry Committee of the
Kansas District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Produced and distributed by Trinity Lutheran Church
5601 West 62nd Street
Mission, KS 66202

Gretchen Hollman, Editor and Graphic Designer