

Senior Moments

Celebrating the Gifts of Mature Christians

Spring 2022

Open the Treasure



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

There were two churches, each with a hidden treasure. The first church's treasure was amassed over many years. They kept the treasure safe and hidden, so that it would continue to be with them for many years to come. As time went by that

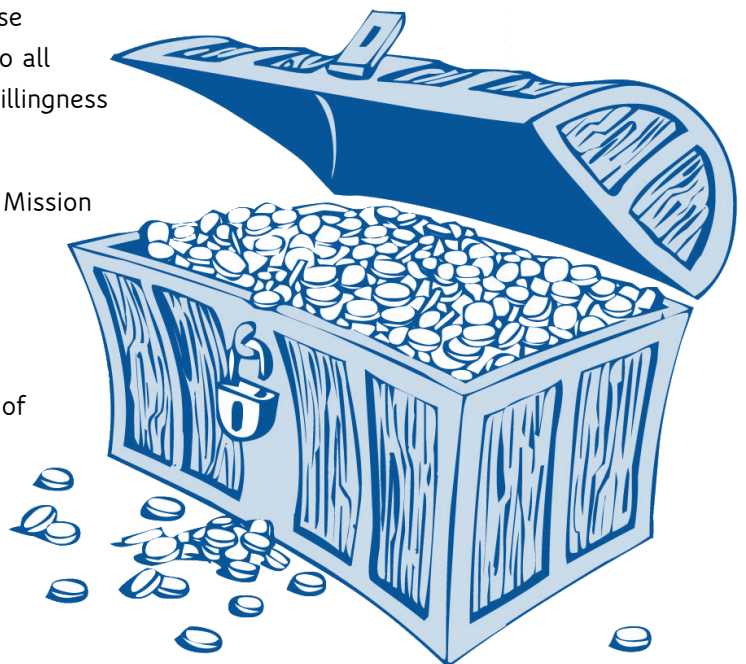
secure treasure became forgotten and unused. The treasure was still there but its full potential was not realized.

The second church also amassed a great treasure over many years. They put their treasure out for all to see. They opened the lid of the treasure chest and invited all to partake in its value. As the treasure was used, more treasure was added. As the treasure grew so did the people of the church.

The above illustration points to a choice congregations have when ministering with and for older adults. They can be cherished by being set aside and cared for, or they can be cherished by being a readily used tool in God's kingdom. Often a congregation will look to their senior members with love and want to make them comfortable. This is admirable and needed. If congregations stop there, however, they miss out on a wealth of love, experience and expertise collected for decades. The life experience older adults have gained is waiting to be harnessed and used. Most churches try hard and do an excellent job of spiritual care. They also do what they can to assist in making everyday life easier for their senior members. A wise church will also try to find ways to incorporate seniors into all aspects of church life. They have so much to give and a willingness (albeit sometimes hidden) to give it.

Approximately seven years ago Trinity Lutheran located in Mission and Shawnee, Kansas made the decision to work with an already highly active senior group and support them by developing an enhanced Senior Ministry. One of our lay deacons was hired part-time to develop and oversee this ministry. Working with other staff members and members of the congregation, we continued existing opportunities and developed new ones. People retirement age and older are involved in all parts of Trinity's ministry. It is especially

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Older Adult Ministry Symposium

Trinity Lutheran Church in Mission and Shawnee, with help and support from the Kansas District, is sponsoring an Older Adult Symposium on May 14 at the Trinity Mission Campus at 5601 W. 62nd Street in Mission, Kansas. The

purpose of the symposium is to encourage older adults to be active in their congregations by using their God-given gifts. The featured speakers are Dr. Richard Bimler, author of 17 books and editor of Hope-Full Living, and Jim Bradshaw, Assistant to

the President of the Kansas District for Education and Youth. Dr. Bimler will speak to the tidal wave of retirees and how they are positive assets to our congregations and God's kingdom. Jim Bradshaw will speak about the growing numbers entering our congregations and the need to keep them actively involved as well as enhancing or creating specific ministries for and with older adults. Following their remarks will be a discussion with both speakers and moderated by Tom Perry, Senior Ministry Leader at Trinity. Your questions and input are welcome and encouraged. A simple lunch will be provided, and we will also use that time to give an easy example of a service project. The symposium will begin at 9am and we expect it to be over about 1pm.

Older Adult Ministry has been a focus of the Kansas District for the last three years. Many events have been planned for 2022 and we are continuing the Older Adult newsletter throughout the year. Representatives from ALOA and the Kansas District Older Adult Committee will be there to answer any questions. We encourage you to send staff members and to offer it to all interested members of your church. The cost is only \$10.00 per person and includes lunch. Enclosed with this letter is a tri-fold brochure and registration form. We encourage you to make as many copies as you wish and make them available to your congregation. If you would like an electronic copy to send to those interested, please contact Tom Perry at Tom@tlcms.org. I hope to see you there.



The senior-citizen population is growing three times faster than the rest of the American population.



According to the Census Bureau, the elderly population will double by the year 2050.



By 2050, 1 in 5 will be over the age of 65.

**Group registrations
are encouraged!**



Older Adult Ministry Symposium – May 14, 2022



Registration Form

Date

Name

Church you are representing

City and state of church

Cell Phone

Email Address

Address

City

State.

ZIP Code

Job Title or Volunteer Position with Church

Dietary requirements/Allergies

Comments/Questions

Please mail completed form to Trinity Lutheran Church with \$10 registration fee.

Alternatively, you may fill out this form electronically at
<https://tlcms.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/99/responses/new>



Calling All Saints Alive after 55

Ready... Set...

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

Finally, after a two year hiatus due to concerns regarding Covid, we have the green light to proceed with our July Saints Alive event in Wichita. For those of you who have never attended this get-together and don't understand what all the excitement is about, let me give you a little background information.

Saints Alive After 55 was given birth 34 years ago as a means to bring together Senior Lutherans in the Kansas District for a time of Faith-lifting moments, Food, Fun, and Fellowship. Over the years, a pattern was set and continues to bring the following: a Guest Speaker to stimulate and encourage us to keep serving our Lord in new and creative ways; A Bible study leader to draw us to a deeper understanding of Scripture and what is expected of us as maturing Christians; Interest sessions that give us information about topics related to aging or other ministries within our Lutheran Church, such as Orphan Grain Train or Comfort Dogs; Songs that bring joy and uplift our hearts; Time for fellowship, games, and laughter as we renew old friendships and make new ones; and, of course, no Lutheran get-together would be complete without delicious Food! The first events were held at Bethany College in Lindsborg. Attendees stayed in the dorms and all events were held on the campus. This continued for many years until it was no longer feasible to host the event in Lindsborg and the venue was moved to The Spiritual Life Center in Wichita, where it has been held ever since. This place has been perfect for our needs. The building is all on the ground floor, so there are no stairs to create a hazard for walkers or wheelchairs. The rooms are lovely and each one has its own private bathroom, complete with a large shower that includes safety bars and a bench. The meals that are served are excellent and are a definite highlight of the event. People that have attended Saints Alive After 55 return again and again and I would say that the biggest draw is the fellowship with other Lutheran Christians around the state. The amazing speakers are always enjoyed, but seeing family and friends that live too far away for frequent visits is the defining factor. It truly feels like a family reunion and the constant visiting and camaraderie is infectious!

Here is a brief rundown of the event planned for July 18-19, 2022. We will begin with registration from 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. on Monday and move right into our first Bible study, led by Pastor Dan Myers. At Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wichita, he is the Associate Pastor, with an emphasis on Adult Education and Family Ministry. He is also well-known as an exceptional Bible study leader. You will not want to miss what he has to say as he leads us through a better understanding of Scripture. Following a get-acquainted break and time for some singing, we continue with our first presentation from our highly recommended Keynote Speaker, Mark Schoepp. Mark has worn many hats over the years including that of a DCE, a member of a family ministry and entertainment troupe, Director of Congregation Engagement with

Go!



Saints Alive Event
July 18-19, 2022
Wichita

Wheat Ridge Ministries, and past Executive Director of ALOA, Adult Lutherans Organized for Action. Today, he and his wife, Becky, focus their attention on family members as caregivers at any stage of life. I have no doubt he will capture our interest and give us much food for thought in his presentations. A fun fact is that Pastor Myers and Mark are cousins, so that should bring another joyful dynamic to our time together. After a break for lunch, we will settle in for our second Bible study session and two interesting Insight Sessions. They will give us more info about the Kansas District Adult Committee and its purpose regarding senior congregation members and the Lutheran Early Response Team that rushes to help in times of disaster. Dinner follows our afternoon program and we continue with another message from our speaker, Mark, before we conclude the evening with more fellowship, fun, and games. Tuesday morning, after breakfast, we will hear from Pastor Myers and Mark Schoepp once more. Our time comes to a close with devotions by Pastor Myers and our final tasty meal at the center.

Words alone cannot begin to convey the spiritual uplift and the pure joy of coming together with other Lutheran brothers and sisters at this event. I can only encourage you Saints Alive After 55 to join us at The Spiritual Life Center in Wichita on July 17-18 for a truly wonderful experience!



Open the Treasure (continued from page 1)

exciting to see the way our older folks and younger people come together to help and assist each other. The interplay between generations benefits each age group and advances the work of the church.

Trinity's preschool has been eager to make cards and presents for our senior members, especially around Christmas and the holidays. Several seniors enjoy reading children's books to the kids as well as coming in and telling them stories about their lives. These past pandemic laden years have made personal interaction a challenge and our older adults look forward to resuming their fellowship. Sunday school age kids also can interact with older adults. A favorite activity we all look forward to is the few minutes of one-on-one mentoring before Sunday school. This is an activity that has been going on for years in which an adult and child are paired up and talk about their lives as children of God. When the students go through confirmation instruction they again are paired up with a mentor. Every week during Lent the two ages spend approximately 40 minutes talking about their lives and their faith. Often long-lasting friendships are made. Every Easter a special brunch is provided by our youth group. They provide wonderful casseroles and serve them to the congregation. In the past when confirmation classes were kicking off, the older adults provided a pot-luck picnic for the students and their families.

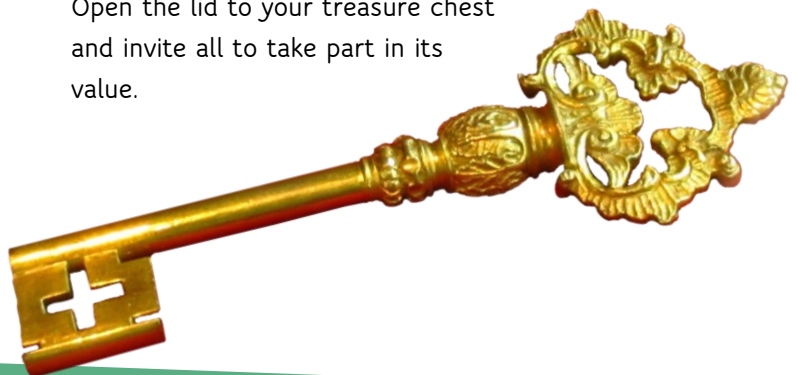
The past two years have been challenging for older adult ministry. We have had to adapt to staying at home, masking, and social distancing. For a group of people who enjoy fraternal relationships with others, the isolation can be saddening. We have had to learn new skills with technology which has enabled us to see and hear each other and participate in Bible study, even though we cannot give out hugs. It was fun to see how one of our 16-year-old boys teamed up with a ninety-year-old member on a woodworking project for the youth lounge. We try to encourage this mentoring and friendship making because both receive so much from intergenerational interaction. The project was beautiful, and the friendship was heartwarming. A special effort was made this year to identify and use the gifts God

gave to seniors in writing. We have shared poetry and prose with the congregation on our website and the development of an Advent devotional.

It appears that normality is returning and now we can get together and enjoy each other's company, we can again take part in multiple Bible classes throughout the week and host monthly seminars and talks that all may attend. They deal on topics in three different areas: spiritual well-being, health, and life issues. Experts are brought in from the community or the congregation to give a better understanding of specific topics. As an example of this our church organist spoke about how our church organ was made, the innerworkings of the instrument, and the many different sounds it can produce. This was attended by a variety of age groups. We also look forward to coming together again for senior ministry meals and congregation wide meals. We usually provide four or five meals per year at no cost. They are normally around the holidays, and always at Oktoberfest! Our group is instrumental in hosting congregational meals.

The older adults of Trinity are active in all aspects of our church life. They serve on committees, serve as office holders, assist with worship, volunteer in the church office, run charity drives, teach Bible classes, and call on the homebound. It is hoped that by continuing their lives as blessed children of God, they are reliable tools that God uses repeatedly. There is no higher honor or privilege than to be a useful servant.

Trinity is just one of several congregations that put an intentional emphasis upon older adult ministry. If your congregation would like to know more about the ministry with, to, and for older adults the Kansas District Older Adult committee would like to assist you. Open the lid to your treasure chest and invite all to take part in its value.



Service Idea:

Easter Baskets

A good and useful way to pull an older adult community together is through acts of service. Older adults have been doing acts of service for their church and community for most of their lives. It is usually an enjoyable time where people can come together for a worthy cause and have fun while doing it. There are many that have been popular and helpful, and many can be started with a little bit of imagination. I will give you an example of a favorite that my church does every year.

We fill Easter baskets that we deliver to our members who are not able to get out of the house very well. We try to get people from the entire congregation to be involved. Approximately a month before Easter we ask the church to donate items that homebound members might appreciate. Members leave an assortment of goodies to put in the baskets. We of course collect candy, as well as an assortment of greeting cards, stamps, slipper socks, lap throws, hand cream, books, handmade curios, sanitizers, tissues, and the list goes on. A couple of weeks before Easter we invite our seniors to lunch where they fill the baskets. We are fortunate to be able to buy the baskets from our friendly Lutheran thrift store, which ensures a competitive price and helps another venue that services the community.

A special component to the whole project is that we then have as many members as we can, deliver the baskets to the homebound. By doing it this way there is interaction between members, and often new friendships are formed. Our Pastors think it is one of the more enjoyable projects we do every year. When they make their regular visits the Easter baskets are a fun topic for conversation. This year we filled thirty baskets at a total cost of \$30.00. It proves to be a fun event which benefits everyone. If you have questions on the Easter baskets or would like other ideas drop me an email at Tom@tlcms.com.

He is Risen!





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.

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.

What Is a Connector?

Our Kansas District Older Adult Ministry Committee is seeking a lay person from each congregation:

1) to advocate for older adult activities in their own congregation, 2) to receive and distribute this newsletter in their congregation, and 3) to publicize the annual Saints Alive gatherings.

We call these important people "Connectors." Their "connections" with their congregation's seniors, pastors, church staff, and with the District's gatherings and communications will glorify God as fellowship, service, and education for and by seniors flourish.

Tell your pastor you'll serve as a "Connector." Then inform Pastor Cliff Winter of your commitment at cliffwinter@yahoo.com.

**Send name and email address of
Congregation Connector to
CliffWinter@yahoo.com.**

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