

Senior Moments

Celebrating the Gifts of Mature Christians

Winter 2023

The Gift of Aging

By Donald Zoller, Author and Member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Mission and Shawnee



One day a few months ago, I passed by my bathroom mirror. There, looking at me, was a reflection of an old man—at least to me he looked old. Staring at one another, the old man in the mirror

seemed to be speaking to me. At the time, I felt his words were not very flattering, “Don,” he said, “You’re old.”

Strange, I really didn’t feel old, even at 86. Apart from the usual scars of a well-worn life, I never considered myself old. But, upon closer reflection, I finally agreed with what I saw in the mirror. The simple truth is this: the hardest thing about getting old is recognizing you’re old. But even more challenging is accepting it.

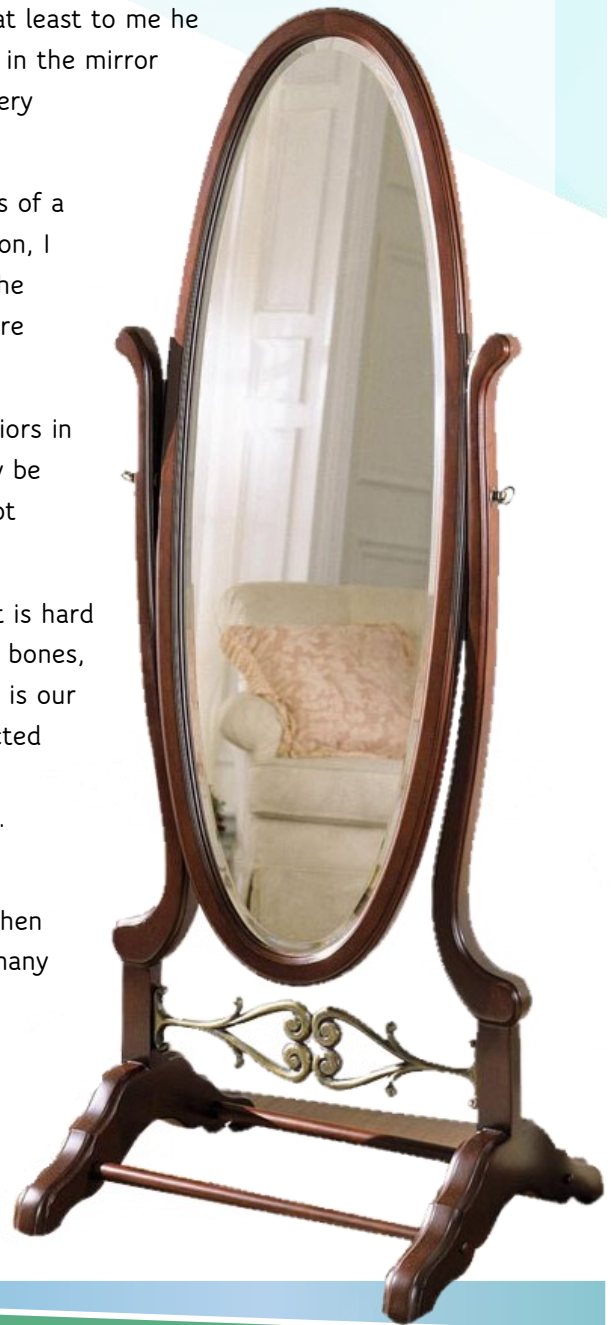
Much has been written about aging, particularly as the number of seniors in our population continues to increase and live longer. Although we may be surrounded by older people, accepting that we are also like them is not always easy.

Aging may come with a lot of denials and self-deluding excuses. But it is hard to ignore sagging and wrinkled skin that seems to hang loosely on our bones, skin that once enjoyed the tone and shape of our 20s or 30s. Neither is our balance what it used to be, and uncertain steps can make for unexpected falls. Our frequent scrapes, blood spots, and bruises often give the appearance of a war survivor. Hanging on to things is also a challenge.

Then there are those pesky packages that challenge our strength. You know, the ones that say, “tear here” on easy-to-open packages. Or, when we arrive in a room, we forget why we are there. These are a few of many clues that we are not as young as we once thought.

The unforgiving mirror tells the truth about where you are in life. Accepting what you see is the first step toward discovering and being at peace with this new phase of life. If you are not at peace with

(Continued on page 4)



Simplicity in a Complex World



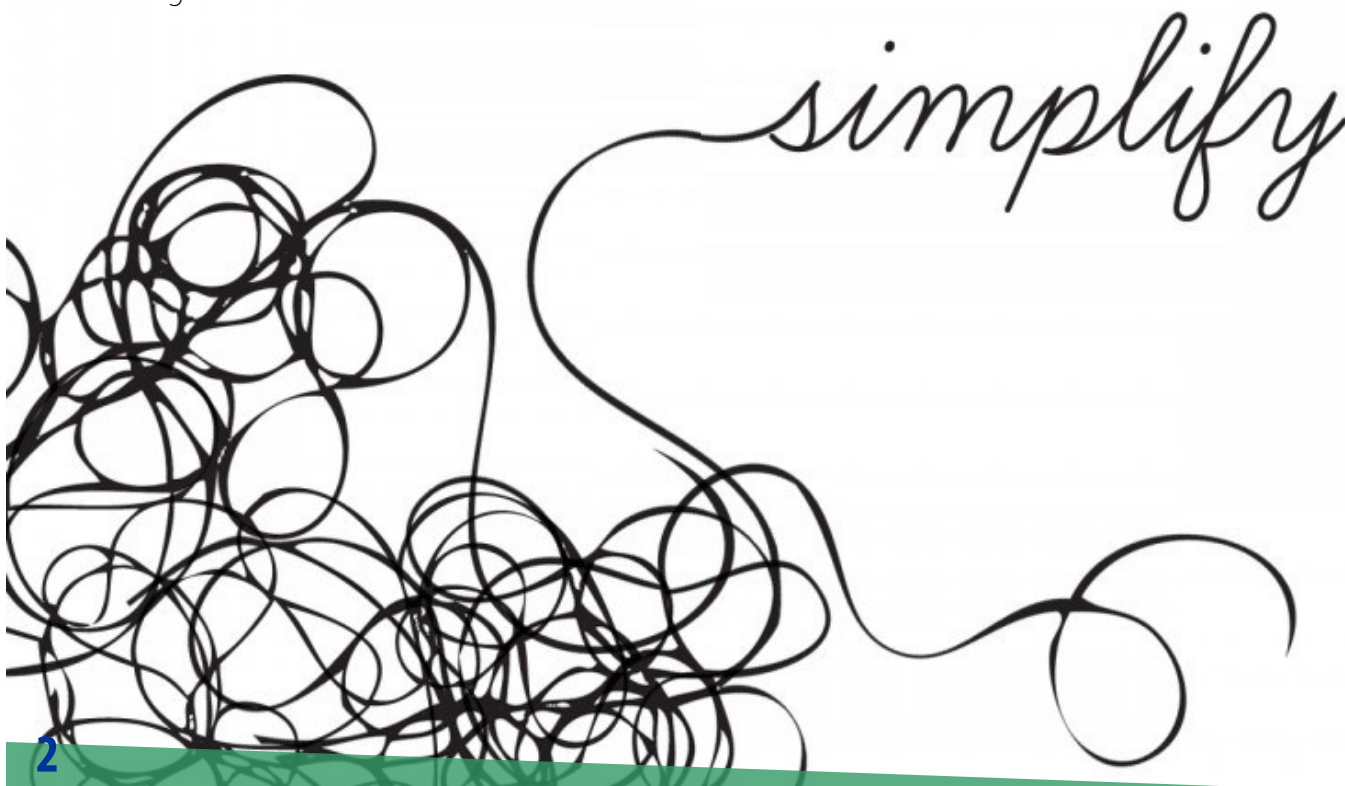
By Tom Perry, Kansas District Older Adult Ministry Committee Member

When I take time to think and marvel at the brilliance of God's creation, it can easily become overwhelming. I see the strength of the rivers, seas, and winds. I am struck by the majesty of the mountains, forests, and ever rolling plains. The beauty of a Kansas sunset and a walk along an ocean beach is breath taking. It is impossible to fathom the genius of God's creation of life and humanity. The gift of the world's resources and the ever-ongoing potential of their use is staggering. I give thanks for God's gift of human relationships and a close relationship with Him.

Retirement is a suitable time to reflect upon the stages of life through which I have traveled. There were the years of learning and getting comfortable with being a part of His world. There were stages when I questioned and rebelled against the norm and the desire to challenge values. There was the selfish stage when it was all about me. There was the time of putting my nose to the grindstone to provide for my family.

I find myself now in a more reflective time. I can see all the problems humanity has brought to a perfect world, and yet still see God's love and mercy shining through the darkness of doubt. I think when people try to impose their will into what is God's will, Satan thrives. When selfishness appears, trouble begins. Into this complex world we find simplicity of thought in the Bible. In Exodus God tells us that He is everything. He is "I Am." When we forget this, we walk down a troubling path. In the twelfth chapter of Mark, Jesus tells us that the greatest of the commandments is to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. Here, He is telling us how to live our lives.

I often wonder whether my actions are following these commands. I spend time wondering about how my family and granddaughters will remember me. I question whether I project in life the values I profess to believe. Am I leaving a legacy of faith they can remember and from which they can learn? Am I showing others the importance God has in my life? When I interact with others, does God's love reveal itself through me? Perhaps, this is something for us all to consider.



Connectors

By Cliff Winter, Chair, KS Dist. Older Adult Ministry Committee

Dear Congregational "Connectors" for Older Adult Ministry.....Happy New Year! May the Lord bless you and yours as He continues to come and fill our lives with pardon and peace, especially at this special time of year. May the light of Christ increase in your life.

At some point in the past, you agreed to be an advocate for older adult ministry in your congregation. Thank you!

You may recall the duties as 1) serve as catalysts and promoters of older adult ministry in your congregation, 2) download and distribute the "Senior Moments" quarterly newsletter, and 3) encourage attendance at the District-sponsored older adult gatherings.



The District's Older Adult Ministry is functioning well, just having met November 29 via Zoom. We heard plans for holding three older adult gatherings next summer (in central Kansas, the Kansas City area, and western Kansas). We rejoiced in approval of a mission grant for our activities. And the *Senior Moments* newsletter will continue, so watch for it.

A Suggestion: At this time of year, and especially because of the challenges to ministry during the Covid "attack," some pastors and other professional church workers are "beleaguered and beset" with many things. Ask these vital servants for what and for whom you can pray. If there is time, ask for a detail or two about these prayer concerns. Then jot them down and include them in your daily prayers.

A second idea: Pastors are making regular communion visits to the home-bound and others. Ask your pastor if he would allow you to come along for some of them. Let him think that over if he has some reservations. Tell him you could bring along some goodies or a little gift for those you visit. Perhaps your presence would increase a lonely person's happiness. Your communing with them symbolizes closeness with their other congregational members.

Thank you for your willing service. Blessings of peace and joy in Christ!

The Gift of Aging (continued from page 1)

what you see in the mirror, you will soon gravitate toward your recliner and watch TV for most of your waking hours. You can become cynical, angry, and difficult to be around. Perhaps, you know some people like that.

However, those who can accept what they see in the mirror and decide to remain active in body and mind as long as they are able, join a growing number of people who are “active seniors,” or better yet, “productive seniors.” You rarely find them at home unless they like gardening. Yes, they have the scars and bruises of life, physical afflictions, and the annoying problems of aging. Still, they are committed not to let those things get in the way of their golf games, swimming, workout at the gym, travel, or volunteer work.

This wonderful gift of aging is evident by being active, curious, flexible to change, and passionate about life as a senior. Yet, even active, productive seniors can miss the true gift of aging if their eternal future is uncertain and lacks an assured hope and peace. At some point, all earthbound activities do come to an end (Job 14:8).

However, some people decide not only to have an active life as an older senior but seek to enjoy the lasting gift of aging—the presence of Christ in their lives. They embrace this lasting gift by a lively and personal relationship with Him. Enjoying this relationship, they continue to learn to be thankful for everything, no matter what life has in store for them. They have heaven’s song in their hearts and upon their lips. Prayer becomes their breath of life and the Bible their daily comfort as they listen to God’s voice.

Out of the rich treasury of lifelong experience, they are happy to share this gift of aging with others, particularly with family. Oh, yes. They have learned to laugh, not only at themselves but at adversities, knowing God has everything under His control. This true gift of aging is something that wrinkles and sagging skin can never take away. Each day they smile at what they see in the mirror and are humbly thankful for God’s masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10).

*.. They still bear fruit in
old age; they are ever full
of sap and green.
—from Psalm 92:12-15*



Saints Alive after 55 2023 Gathering

Save the Date

Christ the King Lutheran Church

111 West Magnolia Road

Salina, Kansas

Theme: I Love to Tell the Story: Leaving a Faith Legacy - "What will I leave behind?" This legacy question becomes a recurring theme as we grow older. The question isn't "What is the meaning of my life?" but "How do I give my life more meaning?" Choosing intentional behaviors with a higher purpose helps older adults feel more connected, happier, and healthier. The presentations will include a focus on older adults as storytellers and introduce the concept of a spiritual autobiography.

Dr. Mary Manz Simon – Keynote Presenter

Rev. Mark Boxman – Bible Study Leader



Senior Moments - Quarterly Newsletter

Feedback Survey



By Jim Bradshaw, Assistant to the President for Education and Youth, Kansas District LCMS, and Advisor to the Older Adult Ministry Committee

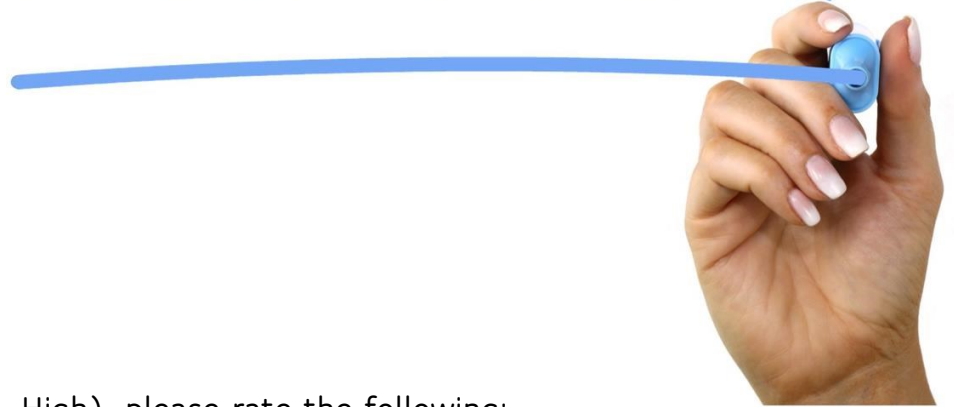
As part of a larger district-wide effort to encourage and help establish dedicated and enhanced ministry to older adults, the LCMS Kansas District Older Adult Committee has sponsored a quarterly newsletter, *Senior Moments*, to district congregations. *Senior Moments* has had articles written by district- and synod-wide leaders, encouraging the forming and maintaining of an effective Older Adult ministry. It has included examples of what is working in other congregations, tips on organization, and samples of programs that have been effective elsewhere. It also has featured a schedule of events taking place across the Kansas District and opportunities to become involved synod wide.

The quarterly *Senior Moments* newsletters are primarily distributed digitally to each Kansas congregation and pastor for circulation among their older adults. Congregations have been encouraged to print several copies locally and make them available to their older adults. *Senior Moments* first appeared in 2021 and was mailed out in hard copies to each congregation. Special thanks to Tom Perry, Gretchen Hollman, and the members at Trinity Lutheran Church, Mission-Shawnee, for spearheading this effort!

So, how are we doing? It's now time to hear from you. Please give us feedback on the value of this newsletter and its effectiveness. Please be candid. It will only take a few moments to complete the survey. For the online survey, visit <https://forms.gle/WY7ehBx3ZkXD5LVj8> or scan the code below. For the paper survey, please fill out the following page.



SURVEY



On a scale of 1-5 (1 = Low; 5 = High), please rate the following:

- _____ What is your level of interest in the LCMS Kansas District Older Adult Ministry newsletter?
- _____ How important to you is the quarterly LCMS Kansas District Older Adult Ministry newsletter sent by the association?
- _____ How satisfied are you with the layout of the newsletter?
- _____ How satisfied are you with the quality of the writing?
- _____ How satisfied are you with the overall content?
- _____ How satisfied are you with the timeliness of the information presented in the newsletter?
- _____ How satisfied are you with the practicality and helpfulness of the information presented in the newsletter?
- _____ How much do you agree or disagree that the issues covered are important to the older adult members of your congregation?
- _____ Do you feel the newsletter effectively provides information important to the overall needs of older adults?
- _____ Overall, how satisfied are you with the regular newsletter?

Should the newsletter continue? Yes or No

If yes, what (if any) information would you like to see included in the newsletter in the future?

Please add additional comments:

Please complete the survey and submit to: news@kslcms.org



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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