



Adult Lutherans Organized for Action

An inter-Lutheran ministry by, with, and for adults age 50 and older

Throughout All Generations

Summer 2017

God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.'"

**"This is my name forever,
the name you shall call me
from generation to generation."**

Exodus 3:15

by Rev. Dr. Terry Dittmer

God's expectations are clear. God expects one generation to pass on the good news of God's grace and providence to succeeding generations.

Truth is, that testimony can be shared old to young and young to old. It's what we can call "intergenerational." Intergenerational means the generations mix with each other. **Every church is "multigenerational"** meaning more than one generation is on the membership roles. **But not every church is intergenerational** meaning the generations don't mix. Churches have a tendency to segment people into groups, e.g. youth group, ladies aid, children's church, etc. These groups aren't necessarily bad, and often do important work. The question is whether the generations also have opportunity to mix with each other.

There are six generations populating the earth today. These six are also members of our churches. By name with approximate dates and a few characteristics, they are:



- **The Greatest Generation**, born 1901-1924 - team workers, institution builders, they won WWII. In number they're rapidly declining.
- **The Silent Generation**, born 1925-1945 - consensus builders, are not risk takers, cooperative team players
- **Baby Boomers**, born 1946-1964 - known for taking up causes, some arrogance, narcissistic and moralistic
- **Generation X**, born 1964-1982 - edgy, hands on, get it done, survivors
- **Millennials**, born 1982-2000 - liberal, diverse, tolerant and broke

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ALOA's purpose:

Equipping persons in the second half of life as disciples of Jesus Christ for their service to family, church, community and world.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Earl Alton
ALOA President

Intergenerational.

The theme of this issue of our newsletter reflects the sharing of ideas, experiences and attitudes between persons of differing generations. This provides conversation and learning between

ALOA members, the over 50 persons and persons younger.

Descriptions of sharing life legacies, especially spiritual ones, are throughout Scripture such as Psalm 71:17 and 18:

"O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me until I proclaim your might to all generations to come."

This is an inspiring reminder of a person's spiritual journey.

The recognition of human change over years points to the vigor and confidence of youth and the experience and thoughtfulness of others. The acceptance of the youth and wisdom along this human path is important to ALOA members. This is evidenced in videos from Pastor Ken Holdorf and Dr. Mary Manz Simon, who have involved youth in this project. Comments from participants reflect changes in understanding of life passages and illustrates one facet of legacy.

Intergenerational activities vary, as Dr. Dittmer points out in his article, and may also provide a legacy involving the Gospel proclamation in Word and Sacrament. As we come together in worship and in support

of our churches, we are passing along a legacy proclaiming God's wondrous love for us and our response to others.

I suggest an important legacy of ALOA involves ways persons live out the mentoring life of Christ. It involves what may be the difficult statement of how God's spirit moves in each of our lives, those moments of comfort in disaster, of joy in events, in compassion for others. Our legacy includes the expression of experiences we have in prayer, in scripture, in meditation and in worship. Seniors can affirm the need for humble recognition of God's love over a lifetime. Stories can be told reflecting how God's love was a support during difficult times encouraging patience in meeting the normal vicissitudes of life. This is the intergenerational legacy – the certainty of God's Spirit through Christ moving from generation to generation.

About ALOA

ALOA is the first and remains the only inter-Lutheran organization presently focused on ministries for persons 50 years of age and older. ALOA is committed to encouraging and supporting adult ministry in Lutheran congregations and through events which foster intellectual, social and spiritual growth.

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COVER STORY

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- **Plurals**, born 2001 to the present - honest, passionate, fearless, whimsical, even more diverse and tolerant.

It may be challenging to imagine these generations mixing it up, but that is our goal. Intergenerational ministry strives to bring generations together. Here are 12 ideas to get you started. They aren't necessarily new ideas. But they may be new to your church's generations, especially the younger ones

1. Introduce yourself. Shake hands. Regardless of your generation, help people get to know you.
2. Use names you know. Name tags can be handy, but actually knowing is best. If "Grandma Schmidt" says good morning to five-year-old Tommy by name and she's not mad, Tommy will be impressed (and possibly stop running through the church on Sunday morning). Tommy should use Mrs. Schmidt's name, too.



3. Hold regular church potlucks. Notice what different generations bring. (Younger generations may tend to bring a variety of ethnic foods). Encourage people to sit with folks they don't know. Consider assigning tables occasionally.
4. Game and puzzle nights make nice intergenerational events. Older adults can pass card playing skills to younger kids. Youth can tutor video gaming with adults. Everybody loves board games.
5. At any event, provide easy community building activities, such as a list of ques-

tions that everybody answers, e.g. favorite candy bar, favorite hymn, last movie seen in a theater. It's an innocent way to get people talking.

6. Hold service events and plan so any age can participate together. Younger children can help clean and plant a church garden. Even kids can dust pews and communion rails.
7. Plan a church liturgy that explains what we do and why. This one's good for kids and anyone who doesn't understand the liturgy. Use a variety of readers for the epistle lesson, the Psalm, etc.
8. Include members of any age in a church band. Include them in talent shows.
9. Organize an intergenerational Bible Study with small groups made up of multiple generations. (Younger kids should number no fewer than two in a group). It is often surprising how similar topics, issues, feelings and insights there are between generations.
10. Always recognize people by name for things they have done

or accomplished, e.g. school achievements, honors received, retirements, and other rites of passage.

11. Develop a mentoring plan that puts children, youth and adults in a prayer and encouragement relationship.
12. Include multiple generations on intra-church athletic teams. Be sure to include intergenerational cheerleaders.

The goal is to mix things up, to introduce members to each other and to build the church community. There are rich blessings in store when that happens.

BEHIND THE CAMERA

By Mary Manz Simon, ALOA Board

Intergenerational is one of the few seven syllable (Count them!) words I can spell and pronounce. After partnering with



At top: Video class
Above & below: Students
work with Dr. Simon

students and staff at Prince of Peace Christian School in Carrollton, Texas, I was reminded that many blessings can be reflected in that 17 letter word. For the second consecutive year, teacher Nick Weiss and his video students taped, edited and produced a video series for ALOA. The 11 new videos are brief clips that introduce a topic and invite a conversation. We now have [19 video resources you can view on the video page of our website](#).

This spring, the video project took on an added dimension: in addition to classroom work, the students left campus to talk with groups of older adults. They introduced ALOA and personally interacted with seniors. As a result, the educational impact went beyond skill development to disrupt stereotyped thinking about older adults. Some of their pre-and post-learning responses follow.

When I joined ALOA, I never expected that an organization serving older adults could impact teens, but that's exactly what continues to happen through this video project.



ALOA might begin with seniors, but when ministry becomes intergenerational, the impact multiples. That happened in Texas, but can also happen in your congregation. After all, when young and old come together, we see God in action.

Student A:

Before: Is it hard for seniors to stop doing things they used to do? Does life ever get boring, just sitting and watching?

After: I found out I was completely wrong! Many seniors do the same activities that I do. That blew my mind!

Student B:

Before: I feel that they don't want to be around other people that much.

After: They want to be a part of our community. I realized they are just older people (who) want to still be young and go explore.

Student C:

Before: I have the stereotypical image in my head of a grumpy mean old guy. I hope I can change that image after this project.

After: I learned that they are really patient sometimes and won't yell at you. I guess I am glad that we did this project to get me more comfortable around older adults.

Student D:

Before: To me, seniors are kind of old fashioned and hard to connect with. I also think that they (may) have good advice, because they've made mistakes and learned from them.

After: My perception on senior adults' lives changed dramatically. I never thought about the fact that they could be depressed or lonely. This project has made me cherish my family more, and it has given me the opportunity to talk to my grandma a lot more.

Your Help Needed to Reach Thrivent Challenge Grant Goal

The Thrivent Financial Foundation has generously offered ALOA a two-to-one Challenge Grant that will increase funding for older adult ministry. Your help is needed to help us reach our goal and receive the full grant amount.



How does it work? If ALOA raises \$50,000 on or before Dec. 31, 2017, the Thrivent Foundation will award a \$25,000 grant to ALOA. This opportunity is part of a foundation program designed to assist

Lutheran organizations in achieving economic security and sustainability.

Won't you help us reach our \$50,000 goal? Send your donation using the enclosed envelope or donate online by clicking on the blue **Donate Now** button at aloaserves.org

Participation is open to all, not just Thrivent members. We appreciate the generous support of Thrivent Financial and the Thrivent Financial Foundation in making this opportunity available to ALOA.

Thank you!

COMING EVENTS

Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel September 11-15, 2017

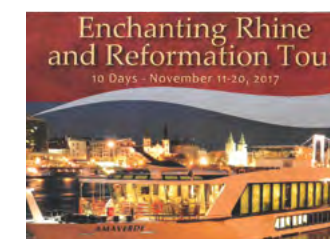


Our Upper Midwest Lutherhostel moves to Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Stewartville,

MN, with a Reformation themed program. Rev. David Buegler leads our spiritual topic, Pastor Frank and Deaconess Jan Janzow lead devotions and music.

Reformation Trip November 11-20, 2017

This 10 day cruise and land tour encompasses sites so important to Luther's life and ministry plus the charm of a luxurious Rhine River cruise ship. Rev. Keith Loesch will be guest speaker. Travel with ALOA



for special worship, bible study and fellowship activities. Contact Educational Opportunities Tours directly for cabin availability and price: 800-247-0017. Get a brochure at www.aloaserves.org/events/pilgrimages/

Create & Connect November 13-15, 2017

Identify your God-given gifts to find passion & purpose for the second half of life. Join FL Region facilitators at Luther Springs Camp & Conference Center near Gainesville, FL. Stay in the comfort of motel-style rooms. More information at www.aloaserves.org/fla/florida-region-events/create-connect/

ALOA Fest February 2, 2018 - Tampa, FL February 3, 2018 - Venice, FL

Mark you calendar for these one-day events with a Mardi Gras theme. Inspiring speakers, music & workshops. More information on our website as it becomes available.



Intergenerational Inspiration

Don't automatically picture grandparents and grandchildren when you think of intergenerational ministry. Prince of Peace Lutheran in Carrollton, Texas, invited all of the members who have celebrated 50 plus years of marriage to a special sit-down candlelight dinner prepared and served by a group of 15 Boomers. This intergenerational event was a great display of the Boomer generation honoring and serving the 50+

years of marriage for these older adults. 32 couples attended as they celebrated their 50+ milestone. What a great example of intergenerational ministry!



Above: Couples honored for 50+ years of marriage



Left: Dinner prepared & served by next generation

ALOA is a member-supported ministry. Everything we do is made possible through your faithful giving. We are grateful for the support of the following individuals for donations received April - July, 2017:

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GENERATIONS OF FAITH

By Marty Richards, ALOA Board

- Pair a young person with an older person to be greeter teams at worship
- Have high school & college age students assist elders with technology problems (smartphone, iPads, and other devices) after church one Sunday a month
- Develop an intergenerational Vacation Bible School
- Take people of various ages going on missions trips

These were just a few ideas offered in a workshop on nurturing spiritual abundance between generations at June's 7th International Conference on Ageing and Spirituality held at Concordia University Chicago.

Workshop leaders Jan McGillard and Mary Ann Stripling emphasized the biblical foundations undergirding intergenerational ministry using Psalm 100:5 *"For the Lord is good, and His steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."* They stressed that each age group brings gifts, and can serve and be served by those of another generation. An awareness of the particular gifts in a congregation provides a foundation for intergenerational ministries.

The presenters stressed understanding the spiritual strengths, motivations and needs

of all generations. This gives a framework for finding creative ministry ideas for mutual benefit. ➤ One need of older adults might be to tell their faith story; a younger person might want to learn about the past as they ponder their future. Pairing them in a confirmation class can benefit both. ➤ Those in the boomer generation may be strongly service oriented. Pairing them with the millennial generation, who are often adept at bringing groups together, might lead to service projects and outreach such as working on a Habitat build together. ➤ A desire to leave a legacy of positive values might mesh nicely with a younger person in need of a positive role model in their life.



As congregations consider needs of all generations and programming (worship, spiritual growth, education/study and mission outreach), they can intentionally build in opportunities for persons of many generations to share in ministry. Creative and workable ideas develop when a careful consideration of the needs and gifts of all are considered.

Want to hear about valuable resources or keep up on ALOA news and events? It's as easy as sending us your email address. Or, sign up on our website: aloaserves.org. Let us know if you prefer to receive this newsletter by email, too.



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