



# Adult Lutherans Organized for Action

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

## Share Your Best Practices

*Spring 2017*

*by Rev. Ken Holdorf, ALOA Board*

**There is a growing interest in** older adult ministry in congregations all across the U.S. We hear about many who are doing great ministry to and by senior adults. And great ministry can be simple. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Largo, FL celebrates milestones in the lives of older members, such as wedding anniversaries of 50, 60 and 70 years (yes, they have those) or 100th birthdays. Called to the baptismal fount, these individuals are blessed and prayed for by the entire congregation. This is not only a joyful practice, it also raises these older adults up as examples of faithfulness that, in turn, blesses all the generations witnessing it.

With each story like that of Prince of Peace, we continue to be thankful and encouraged that the Lord is working and that this ministry is growing. We also receive frequent requests for information and suggestions from those who are looking to initiate or enhance their senior adult ministry. With those two thoughts, ALOA wants to bridge the gap between congregations who are benefitting from some "Best

Practices" and those congregations looking for help and ideas on how to do so.



Our first step is to ask for your input. Whether you're an individual or part of a congregational group, send us one or more "Best Practices" that we can share with those looking for guidance.

The criterion for a "Best Practice" is not necessarily one that involves a lot of people. Rather, it's one that is making a difference in the lives of people in a congregation no matter the size.

Exactly what do we want to know? A brief overview is all we need.

1. Name one of the Best Practices of your congregation that involves ministry to and by senior adults.
2. Describe what this Best Practice accomplishes (in 2-3 sentences)

*Contin*

### ***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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## COVER STORY

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- Any suggestions for others who might want to try it in their congregation.

Please include the name of your congregation and location, so we may celebrate what God is doing in ministry to and by seniors. You will be providing a great service

to other congregations and to the growing ministry to and by seniors. **Thank you!**

### Send your information to us:

- email: [aloa4u@gmail.com](mailto:aloa4u@gmail.com)
- Go online: [aloaserves.org](http://aloaserves.org) & click on the Best Practices button
- mail: PO Box 4367, Clearwater, FL 33758

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Earl Alton  
ALOA President

### Betsi asked the usher her usual

Sunday morning question, "Is the seat in front of the pulpit reserved so I can tape today's sermon?" The answer is always "Yes!", and each week

Betsi makes a video and takes it to parishioners in assisted living. With her visit, she enables them to share in the life of their congregation through the sermon. This is one small, but vital example of a step a congregation can take toward **intentional senior ministry** that addresses concerns and interest of persons in the second half of life. While each congregation will have different responses for aging parishioners, small steps like this become part of an active senior ministry.

Appropriate, deliberate ministry by, with and for older adults in congregations has been the focus of ALOA for the past 25 years. With the aging Boomer generation, we now see a plethora of ar-



ticles which confirm the need for the work of ALOA. Every congregation has specific opportunities to address needs involved in the aging experience. ALOA has a variety of resources, such as those listed in our last newsletter, to assist with senior ministry.

The purpose of intentional senior ministry is to help persons continue to have the abundant life Jesus called for in John 10:10. Senior ministry in a congregation involves many facets, including fun...such as dinners, musicals, and fellowship. It also includes times of worship, prayer and study framed in ways helpful to seniors. Ken Holdorf's search for "Best Practices" (pg. 1) can help ALOA celebrate and spread the word about what works in your congregation.

Thank you to the many partners who have joined us in this ministry. If senior ministry is a new interest, please share your gifts of insight, suggestions, finances and prayers with us. The words of St. Paul from Romans 15 provides both a blessing and encouragement of the work of senior ministry:

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

## MAINTAIN MOMENTUM

By Mary Manz Simon, ALOA Board

**Congratulations! Your congregation** hosted a successful activity for older adults. Now, where do you go from here?

Sustaining momentum after a mountaintop event is a worthwhile challenge, because you can build on that success. After praising God for blessing your event, consider these steps toward continuing effective ministry:



**Assess what you did right.** Was the event scheduled during daytime hours? Did you offer transportation or food? As you acknowledge contributing factors, be aware that duplicating this effort might not achieve the same results.

**Re-state your purpose.** Know **why** you are doing what you are doing. Being reminded of the importance of ministry to older adults in your congregation will re-energize leaders and encourage members.

**Outline next steps.** Activities that build or strengthen individual relationships contribute to long-term engagement with your mission. The simplest idea: ask attendees to share one recent "high" and a recent "low" with those around them. If needed, use a 2-minute egg timer to insure a good pace of small group conversations.

**Communicate your platform.** Share how the recent success contributes to your long-term goals. Positioning this single step within the longer journey helps everyone focus forward.

**Be realistic.** Sustaining a high level of excitement might not be realistic, or even necessary to serve effectively. After all, it's exhausting to be enthusiastic! Consistent, compassionate caring for and about others is the most important element to maintain ministry momentum.

**Avoid the numbers game.** The number of participants is only one measure of success. If one person says, "This made my day!" your event was a complete success for that participant. Ministry begins by serving a single person.

### Eligible for Thrivent Choice® Dollars?

Make ALOA your organization of choice if you have Choice® Dollars. Go to [www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice/](http://www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice/) or call 1-800-847-4836 to make your Choice®.

### 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.

Shirley Carpenter - Board Chair  
Earl Alton - President  
Carol Murphy - Editor

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## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### SeniorFest

**At the Austin/Central Texas SeniorFest**, Dr. David Lose, President of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia presented *Why*



*Don't My Kids (and Grandkids) Go to Church? And What Can I Do About it?*, which was over-

whelmingly appreciated by 126 attendees. Workshops included everything from *Laughter Yoga* to *The Biblical Basis for the*



*Reformation*. Thanks to Redeemer, Austin for your hospitality.

**The North Texas SeniorFest** in the Dallas area had attendance of 90 people, half of whom were attending

a SeniorFest for the first time. Rev. Dr. Russel Vardell, a Luther Scholar, dressed up as Martin Luther to present *Luther for Today*. Attendees had a choice of 7 workshops and enjoyed a catered hot lunch. Thank you to Resurrection Lutheran Church for serving as great hosts for this event.

### ALOA Fest at Sea II

By Shirley Carpenter, ALOA Board Chair

Stepping onto the mammoth "Oasis of the Seas" transformed us into eager cruisers seeking sun and Son-filled days. We were not disappointed!

Shortly after the ship left Port Canaveral in Florida, the ALOA group of 60 people met



for a Welcome Aboard party with hearts and hopes that were high. With our

Above:  
Mission excursion

Right:  
Bible on the Beach



ALOA badges and lanyards, we were ready to witness to the 6000 passengers and 2000 crew. What a challenge!

Led by ALOA Florida Region's George Algozzina and Rev. Dick Hafer, the week was filled with worship, fellowship, prayers, singing, shopping opportunities and fun in the sun. How does Bible Study on the beach sound? Persons zip-lining over the blue water of a Haitian beach and God's Word in discussion right beside! Thanks Rev. Haupt.

We were educated and humored by presentations of our guest speaker, Rev. Dr. Terry Dittmer. (Yes, the former director of the National Youth Gathering LCMS is one of us...50+). He shared insights on the characteristics of the various generational groups in our culture, then inspired us with *As the People of God What Do We Do Now?* As if that wasn't enough, we were thrilled with the dueling pianos of Terry and George as we sang some of Terry's hymns and some old fashioned gospel favorites. It was breathtaking.

*Continued on next page*

### ALOA Fest at Sea...from page 4

In addition, some guests volunteered at a homeless shelter in Montego Bay, Falmouth, Jamaica. Others visited the "Cuidad De Angeles" orphanage and school in Cozumel, Mexico. Our hearts were stirred as we shared gifts with the children and received loving smiles and hearty thanks.

Eight days went by too quickly. Doesn't it seem that way when friends, fun, and faith-filled days are combined? Why not join us at an ALOA event and see what we are all about? It's Jesus!!!!



Rev. Dr. Terry Dittmer

**Look for ALOA at the Parish Nurse Conference in Mequon, WI on May 24 & 25!**

## COMING EVENTS

### Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel September 11-15, 2017



Our Upper Midwest Lutherhostel moves to Southern Minnesota this year,

to Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Stewartville. Lodging and activities will be at The camp's Miracle Lodge Retreat and Conference Center. Campsites, are an option, too, just yards away from the Lodge.

Rev. David Buegler will focus on the Reformation and how it continues to impact us today. Pastor Frank and Deaconess Jan Janzow will lead devotions and music with a Reformation theme. Informational sessions, outdoor activities and a service project are planned, too, with lively programs each evening.

Lodge rooms are currently filled, but there is still some availability for campers and commuter attendees. Please contact the ALOA office at 800-930-2562 or check our website [www.aloaserves.org/events/luther-hostels/](http://www.aloaserves.org/events/luther-hostels/)

[aloa4u@gmail.com](mailto:aloa4u@gmail.com)

### Reformation Trip November 11-20, 2017

We've rescheduled our Reformation Anniversary trip to include an unforgettable river cruise. The 10 day cruise and 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 our guest speaker. The trip includes stops where Martin Luther lived and preached, along with Wartburg Castle and other sites specific to the Reformation, plus historic sites in Amsterdam and Germany. The cost, which includes tour and



sightseeing, deluxe cruise accommodations with meals and amenities included, first class hotels, round-trip

international airfare, starts at \$3,398.00 from New York City. Only a few cabins are still available. Get a brochure or link to register on our website at [www.aloaserves.org/events/pilgrimages/](http://www.aloaserves.org/events/pilgrimages/)

[aloaserves.org](http://aloaserves.org)



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**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](http://ALOAserves.org). Let us know if you prefer to receive this newsletter by email, too.**

*A quarter century of service to Lutherans and their Congregations*

## A LOOK BACK

*This year we celebrate 25 years of encouraging and supporting older adult ministry in Lutheran congregations. In honor of one of ALOA's founders, **Rev. Karl E. Lutze**, the first Executive Director of our organization, we reprint an article he wrote, which was published in one of the early editions of our newsletter.*



### Attitudinal Adjustment, Please!

It's not uncommon to hear people say, "We have no younger people coming to church – just the older folks; our church is dying." Well, maybe – but only maybe.

There may indeed be fewer "younger prospects" living in the proximity of your church. But there surely are more older adults about than that diminishing group who belong to your congregation. An increasingly large number of these persons (ALOA calls them "people nearing or past 50") are "out there." And many of them do not attend any church

– or do so only rarely.

To these, too, the churches are called to communicate, "Our Lord cares about you, and WE care about you!" Unwittingly, by our programming, our style, and our preoccupiedness with a myriad of other busy-nesses, churches may be making just the opposite kind of statement. Or, at least, people may simply be getting a message we don't intend to send, as they perceive us saying we really don't care about them.

### Become a Sustainer

**Your monthly gift can help ALOA in a big way!** Just \$5 or \$10 enables ALOA to provide more programs and more resources to encourage adult ministry all across the county.

**And, it's easy!** Go to our website and click on the Join tab. Then, donate thru Network for Good or PayPal by clicking on the logo and using a credit card. Just check the recurring gift box to designate a monthly donation. You can cancel or change it at any time.



[aloa4u@gmail.com](mailto:aloa4u@gmail.com)



**June 4-7, 2017 – Concordia Univ, Chicago**  
**"Transition and Transcendence:**

**Transforming Aging through Spirituality"**

This conference attracts international researchers and scholars with expertise in aging, religion and spirituality, as well as clergy, laypeople and care partners. All are welcome to join in stimulating discussions, learning opportunities and meaningful connections. For more information and registration details, go to [www.7thinternationalconference.org](http://www.7thinternationalconference.org)

ALOA is a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the LCMS and an affiliated Social Ministry Organization of the ELCA.



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ALOA depends on the generous support of partner congregations and organizations. ***They are leaders*** in the mission for adult ministry!

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