



EncourAGING and Equipping Congregations for Older Adult Ministry

An inter-Lutheran ministry by, with, and for adults age 65 and up

New Colors, Revised Logo, Sharpened Focus, Same Mission & Purpose

March 2019

You'll notice this ALOA newsletter has a different look.

We've refreshed our approach to our original mission and we wanted to invite people to take a fresh look at ALOA and at older adult ministry.

Our logo has a new look, but keeps the "two hands up in praise, two hands down in service." That's a good way to focus our own lives, and certainly to focus a ministry like ALOA or a congregation. Most importantly, we've kept the three words front and center that ALOA has used from the very beginning: **Celebrate, Equip and**

Serve. Read more on that on page 3 of this issue.

Originally, ALOA's mission centered around preparing for the demographic shift that forward-looking leaders saw coming. Our purpose has always been to help the church

at large prepare for huge increases in the number of older adults around us. Now that the "age wave" has most definitely arrived, we are sharpening our focus towards local congregations. That is where the action is and still where multiple generations gather on a weekly basis.



Our aim is to give specific help in five areas of ministry that can impact most older adults in and around a congregation. You'll find details on those ministry areas on page 5 of this issue, and much more on our newly revamped website.

***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.***

And if you are reading this, we hope you'll help us grow our impact to a

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE




Earl Alton
ALOA President

"Lift up your hearts" is the familiar line in the liturgical presentation of Communion, and it is a statement of hope and faith for each person. The ministry of ALOA is to provide focus and resources for congregations in order to help parishioners meet their concerns in the latter years of life. My experience has been that the concerns of life after age 65 are somewhat different but no less intense than earlier times. My desire is that ALOA, through its work with congregations and church structure, point to ways that will help people realize that their faith does lift up their hearts.

My term as President of ALOA now comes to an end. Through the years, I have witnessed the faithful work of many, especially persons on the ALOA Board. Many persons have been supporting ALOA with time, finances, ideas, energy and prayer. The addition of new members to our Board and Executive Director Mark Schoepp point to a continued strong presence helping congregations focus on senior ministry. It has been a privilege for me to work with these friends in ALOA. I wish you and ALOA Godspeed as we work together to encourage and strengthen senior ministry throughout the Lutheran church.

Give to ALOA when you shop Amazon.
Go to smile.amazon.com & designate your charity as Adult Lutherans Organized for Action. Amazon will donate .5% of your purchase amount to ALOA... at no cost to you!



COVER STORY

...continued from page 1

truly national scale. The best advertising is "word of mouth." We hope you are excited about the direction we are taking and will pass it on. We'll need your help in growing our connections.

We believe there are exciting days ahead for ALOA, and for the church. We thank you in advance for your partnership in this important work.

Changing the Way People Think - & Act

Changing the way people think and act it not easy to do. ALOA has had a clear vision of its mission right from the start. That mission is tied directly to, if not the future of the church, and certainly to the health of the church - engaging the growing population of older adults. Many (most?) churches are viewing the graying of our pews as an unfortunate circumstance with the solution found only in "attracting youth."

ALOA is not advocating ignoring young people, of course. However, we do want to lift up, shout about and emphasize that one of the ripest fields for harvest in the name of Jesus is among older adults. And there are two subgroups:

- a) connected but "checked out"
- b) unconnected and hungry

And both groups will respond to purpose and meaning. Simon Sinek has a popular talk about "Knowing Your Why." ALOA has known its "Why" from the beginning. Keep reading to learn more about what we are doing about it, and how you can be a significant part of the process.

Connecting People to ALOA

The best way to have influence on the way people think and act is to be in as direct a relationship as possible. You won't convince too many people from a distance. And, ALOA won't have much influence if the first thing we ask for is financial support. In fact, the first thing we'd like to do with new contacts is invest in them.

That's why we've added an incentive to sign up to be on ALOA's mailing list (email or USPS) by giving away a congregational consultation on older adult ministry. For most people that will be done through a Zoom video conference, but for one person/church per month, we will provide an on-site, full day consultation including an evening outreach event - all at ALOA's expense.

We view ourselves as a "National Organization," but our mailing list currently stands at

about 2000. That needs to grow by a factor of 10 if we are serious about having a national impact. **Yes, you read correctly - a list 10 times bigger!** That sounds daunting, perhaps even impossible. We will do our part to get the word out through all the "channels" available to us in the Districts and Synods, and other partner organizations. But your part is just as important. The best advertising is by word of mouth. Will you connect ALOA to your circle of friends and family? The best place to send them is to the sign-up link on our home page at aloeserves.org



Logo, Tag Line & Our Target

We have revitalized the logo we've had from the beginning of ALOA: two hands up in praise, and two hands down in service. And the three words in the logo have been around a long time as well, and serve as an excellent measure of a ministry.



Serve! In the end, we continue to be Christ's hands and feet in the world. We serve - and sometimes are served - at all stages of our life.

Our Tag line identifies our target: **EncourAGING and Equipping Congregations For Older Adult Ministry**

Celebrate! We celebrate who we are - forgiven saints, called to be life-long followers of Jesus. We affirm that individually, and the church affirms and celebrates that publicly.

Equip! We change and grow all along our life stages. Along the way we retool, recharge and reinvigorate ourselves by the power of God's Spirit. The church also needs to stay current, engaging all the generations in their sphere of influence.

Our completely revamped web site (aloeserves.org) is designed to serve as an excellent resource for congregational leaders to boost their efforts while working with and for older adults. While we build capacity, we will be targeting five geographic areas for some focused efforts, but every congregation will benefit from the information and resources on the website and our Facebook page, as well as through upcoming webinars.

IN THE WORDS OF... DAVID SOLBERG

A continuing series of interviews with veteran leaders in senior adult ministry.

By Mary Manz Simon, ALOA Board

Rev. David Solberg served on the ALOA Board and as Treasurer of the organization from 2007-2015. He has continued to serve ALOA by facilitating the leadership team of the Karl Lutze Visionary Leadership Fund.



David Solberg

You're known as a "money man" in ALOA, yet many of us steer clear of working with finances. How did you end up volunteering to work with money?

Solberg: Quite unexpectedly, ministry situations led to the leading, teaching and serving that prioritized giving and generosity as critical components in faithful discipleship. Invitation and hospitality is a way of connecting the dots of opportunity and response in stewardship, just as in faith and life.

Important also was the generosity and faithful stewardship of my parents. From them I learned and observed the importance of giving to the church and multiple causes and community needs.

Sustainability initiatives, for a non-profit like ALOA, frequently focus on money, but what other elements do you consider when crafting a strategic plan?

Solberg: Money is the critical fuel needed to propel mission. Karl Lutze and successive executive directors led ALOA and created a culture that invites, enables and motivates the fulfillment of mission.

Most effective programs understand that success is not achieved through happen-

stance but through a coordinated strategy. Inviting gifts with careful hospitality is important to program success. In summary, the mission, the plan and the leaders to execute the plan are essential to program success.

What are the most effective ideas that have been used to fund senior adult ministry on the congregational level?

Solberg: Many possibilities exist for success in adult ministry at the congregational level, including small groups, service activities with a specific time frame, study groups, writing and storytelling groups sharing life experiences, support groups, social occasions and more.

Cross-generational programs offer opportunity for service, relationship building and learning. Such programs allow young people familiar and comfortable with computers and technology to assist seniors in building expertise and confidence in the world of technology. This is a growing trend.

A wide variety of offerings and activities meeting the multiple interests of members within a congregation is also important. Recognition of the commitments, skills and abilities of both members and non-members is crucial. Incidents are frequently related where senior activities comprised of multiple varieties have been the point of entrance for many people into fuller participation in congregational life.

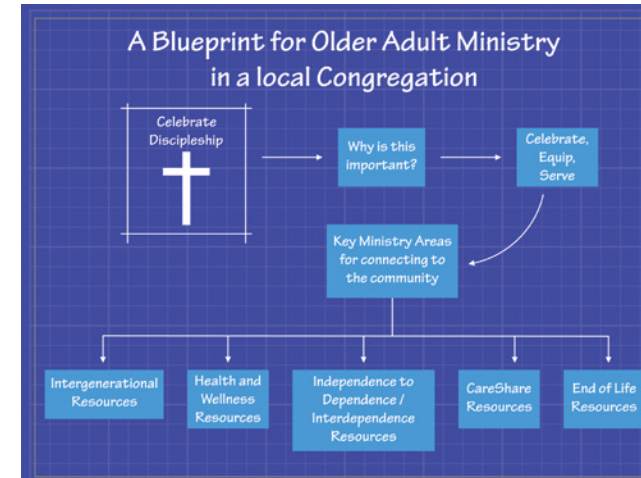
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Practical Possibilities in 5 Ministry Areas

In the end, what we offer people when they connect with us needs to be useful in the local setting. The demographic of 65 and older is a very large and diverse group, so a vibrant older adult ministry in two neighboring churches may look very different from one another.



ALOA suggests **Five Ministry Areas** that can serve as starting points, and which can also serve as excellent outreach opportunities since almost every older adult will pass through most, if not all of these areas.

Intergenerational — Scripture is clear: with age comes wisdom. In a society that "worships" youth, it is good for the church to bring the biblical perspective to bear. All generations benefit from significant time together, but being intentional is key.

Health and Wellness — This subject is important for any age, but it certainly can "come home to roost" if we have not been good stewards of our health. Look for: 1) opportunities to be proactive about personal health and 2) ways to help provide care and support when health declines.

Support ALOA

Your support helps ALOA provide more consultation & resources for older adult ministry. Use the enclosed envelope or click the blue *Donate Now* button on our website to donate online.

aloaserves.org

Independence to Interdependence — The time will come for all of us to decide on next steps as our needs grow. Too often, people make these decisions in crisis mode, when options are limited. There is a great opportunity here to help members and community neighbors alike approach this proactively.

CareSharing — ALOA encourages a more reciprocal view of the relationship between Caregiver and Care receiver. There is need for support for both, among church members and those in the community around us.

End of Life — How do we decide about the next medical step? What is important at the end of life for me and for my family? Talking about these issues before a crisis can reduce stress and help to focus on the real Hope we have in Jesus Christ.

You'll find a more in-depth look, along with an interactive copy of our blueprint for congregations, explanatory videos and key resources tied to each ministry area on our website aloaserves.org

Help Wanted



Facebook is an important tool. **We need help** in order to take full advantage of it.

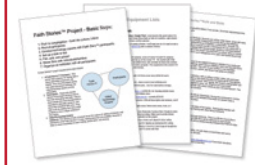
Are you well connected online? Do you currently use Facebook and post with some regularity? Are you willing to volunteer some time to help ALOA strengthen its online Facebook presence? Contact the office & start a conversation.

Resources are Critical

Getting access to relevant resources is important for congregations. It is fine for ALOA to suggest "key ministry areas," but we've taken the important next step and found some excellent resources in each area and made them easily available to you.

Check out the new ALOA home page (aloaserves.org) and scroll down to the bottom of the page to see the resource we

Featured Resource of the Week



FaithStories™ is a resource to help older adults produce a video testimony of their faith and life story. *Read more and check out our "how to" guide.*

are highlighting each week. No shortage of good options. And, we'd love to hear from you as well, if you've come across an excellent resource worth sharing.

Your faithful giving makes everything we do possible. We are grateful for the support of these individuals for donations received November, 2018 - February, 2019

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COMING EVENTS

Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel September 23-27, 2019

Reflect • Connect • Grow in Faith

This year's fall Lutherhostel will feature Rev. Dr. Paul Schwartzkopf presenting *God's Grace in Scripture and Stories*. Paul served in the Peace Corps prior to his many years of leading congregations in the Midwest and Pennsylvania. For many of those years, Paul has told original stories of grace in churches and other venues. Pastor Frank and Deaconess Jan Janzow will once again lead music and devotions, with this year's theme being *Anchor Your Life in Hope*.

Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Stewartville, Minnesota will again be the site for this week of learning, worship, outdoor activities and fellowship. The camp offers private hotel style rooms in their Miracle Lodge. In addition to our study and worship, we'll take advantage of the indoor and outdoor amenities the camp has to offer.

Cost:

\$575 per person/dbl occupancy includes program, lodging and meals. Camper sites are \$525 per person and some space is available for commuters for \$350 per person (no lodging or breakfast). For more information or to download a brochure and registration form, go to aloaserves.org/events/ironwood-springs-lutherhostel Or, if you'd like to register online, click the online registration link on our website or on the downloaded registration form.



Experience Italy & the Oberammergau Passion Play September 22 - October 2, 2020

Join ALOA on an 11-day tour of Italy, followed by the world famous Oberammergau Passion Play. This once-a-decade experience has been performed every 10 years since 1633 by the residents of a lovely Bavarian village.

The trip includes sights in Italy meaningful to many Christians, including Christian Rome, Vatican City and the tomb of the



Apostle Paul, the Sistine Chapel and treasured masterpieces of Michelangelo, Giotto and more.

Cost: \$4,722 per person/dbl occupancy from Tampa. Includes airfare, lodging, 2 meals daily, transfers and tours, along with guaranteed tickets to experience the 2020 Passion Play.

EARLY BIRD savings of \$100 if initial deposit of \$500 received by Sept. 22, 2019! For more information or to download a brochure, go to aloaserves.org/events/oberammergau-passion-play



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



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