



EncourAGING and Equipping Congregations for Older Adult Ministry

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

June 2019

Intergenerational Ministry

by Mark Schoepp, Executive Director

What comes to mind when you hear the word Intergenerational? Do you have a picture of where that happens and who is there? Does it happen often? Is the energy generated by the event or interaction strongly positive, negative or neutral? When was the last time you were part of an intergenerational event or interaction yourself? Did you enjoy the experience? Would you do it, or something like it, again? Where in the list of generations are you? Are all *intergenerational* experiences the same or are some just *multi-generational* and the generations just happen to be in the same place at the same time? How many generations are represented in your current extended family?

Lots of questions. It is worth thinking about the generations - and the times they come together. Let's start with naming the generations, starting with the oldest. We've seen and heard the names before:

- **The GI Generation:** Born 1901-1924 (age 95+) There are more

of these folks than you might think!

- **The Silent Generation:** Born 1925-1945 (now ages 74-94)
- **Baby Boomers:** Born 1946 – 1964 (now ages 55-73)
- **Generation X:** Born 1965-1976 (now ages 43-54)
- **Millennials or Gen Y:** Born 1977-1995 (now ages 24-42)
- **Gen Z, iGen, or Centennials:** Born 1996–?? (now under 23)



I remember rare times in our family when, around the same table, we had Great Grandparents, Grandparents, Parents and then the kids. The conversation was lively and one story would spark another one as the Great Grandparents spoke of a time the youngest two generations present knew nothing about.

Continued on page 2

ALO A's purpose: Equipping persons in the second half of life as disciples of Jesus Christ for their service to family, church, community and world.

In This Issue

Resources	3
Showing Up	4
Adult Ministry Days ..	5
Coming Events.....	6,7

...continued from page 1

It happened more than once that we got to the end of the evening and someone lamented: "Oh no! We forgot to start the recorder to catch all those stories!" I've never been in a room with more than four generations present, have you? It can happen - late nineties or older down to a toddler. Now that is a stretch of time!

The six generations listed outline the differences between the ages. As the culture changes, so do the experiences of growing up and living. All those experiences shape the generation, especially during their formative years. Are the generations interacting with each other? While the media might seem to emphasize the differences, there is good evidence (*Barna, Research Releases in Culture and Media*, March 12, 2019) to suggest that they ARE interacting: two-thirds of Americans say they have a close friend who is either 15 years older or younger than they are. And an April 9, 2015 article in *Aging Today* affirms the very strong



influence that Grandparents have on their family.

How about you and your family — and your church

family? Take a quick inventory of the times when meaningful conversations are happening across a generation or two or three. (Really give that list some thought!) There are probably more times that the genera-

tions are in the same space and time, but without much interaction. Did you come up with many regular opportunities for meaningful conversations between generations? I hope so! We think ALOA can be helpful in growing that list.



Our website (www.aloaserves.org) has some excellent resources to encourage and facilitate meaningful intergenerational interaction. Every generation has unique things to offer. It is worth noting what the Bible says about the powerful contributions of older adults to the community. Check out:

- Job 32:7
- Proverbs 20:29
- Proverbs 16:31
- Job 12:12

Clearly, wisdom, experience and understanding of older adults have long been valued. We encourage intentionality in sharing, with regular opportunities over time rather than a single flurry of activity that effectively disappears quickly.

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

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Intergenerational Resources

Here are some resources available on ALOA's website. Go to: aloaserves.org/key-resources/intergenerational/

1. **Faith Stories™** — a resource to help older adults work with a young person to produce a video testimony of their faith and life story. We've included some detailed "how-to" documents, so anyone can do it. This is useful for anyone who wants to make a permanent statement for the coming generations (imagine your Great, Great, Great Grandchildren watching and listening to you tell about the important things of your life!). It is also worth considering as a church project between the older adults and High School youth. You can see a sample of what it might look like on the "how-to" page. Powerful stuff! Clearly this is deeply meaningful to the person sharing. We can't help but think it will carry weight with the family members who hear it - whenever that is.
2. **Lessons I Learned In Life** by Rev Robert Zimmer — These are the lessons Bob wants to pass on to his family. They can be an excellent conversation starter between generations in your own family. The book contains 34 short lessons (usually a single page or so) in an easy-to-read format. A Study Guide is also available, with suggestions for congregational use. And Bob didn't stop with the book. He continues to write weekly notes (by email) to his extended family about

what is important to him. Are they listening? Good question. One thing for sure: if Bob doesn't write it, there is nothing to listen to! He has had Grand-kids tell him they are saving them all. Hooray!



3. **Short Format Videos** — There are variety of short videos (think 2-3 minutes) on intergenerational topics available for discussion starters for families, small groups and Bible Studies.
4. **Cross+Gen Life** — A website with a variety of resources for connecting the generations.

Additional websites to encourage and facilitate intergenerational conversation:

- FaithWellMT.com
- HomeGrownFaith.net
- a Facebook group: Birthing Cross+Gen Community

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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

Showing Up: *The Why*

At ALOA, we believe it's important to "show up" face-to-face, as often as possible, in order to EncourAGE and Equip Congregations for Older Adult Ministry. For a quick look at what we mean by EncourAGE and Equip, check out the *Blueprint for Congregational Ministry* link on our home page at aloaserves.org.

The thing is, *showing up* can look very different than it once did. Showing up used to mean a plane or car trip and a physical body in the room. These days, it can be that and much more. The gaming industry has shown us that virtual connections are every bit as strong as "real" ones. We once thought that relationships started through a computer game and existing over an internet connection were not *real* relationships. Studies now show that friends who've met only through a computer game can know each other well and genuinely care about one another. They might meet eventually, but when they do it will be more like old friends picking up after an absence than new friends introducing themselves to each other. So perhaps a better expression would be "virtual" vs "in person."

ALOA is now *showing up* electronically. It is a great way to share resources, and to have conversations and build relationships for strengthening ministry in local congregations. Best of all, it is an insanely cost effective way to do this! We currently have two main ways that can happen:

1. Webinars
2. Consultations/Conversations

For both of those we utilize the computer, tablet or phone with **Zoom** as the way we connect. Perhaps you're thinking or know someone who'd think or say, "That works for

them, but I'm pretty sure it won't for us." Reasons vary:

- "I have no idea what **Zoom** is"
- "I'm pretty sure it won't work on my computer"
- "You can't accomplish much that way"
- "I've never done it that way before!"

The only way to really know if it will work is to **try it**. The good folks at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Poway, CA were willing, and it took just one practice session to make sure the connections were working. Then, all of us had a conversation about Older Adult Ministry in a church and community setting. For what it's worth, everyone in the room at Mount Olive was over 70 (including the tech guy who set it up).

Here's what some participants had to say:

The Zoom presentation went very well, and created quite a bit of buzz. One of our LWML women was very enthusiastic, not just about the video presentation concept, but about the amazing things you are trying to accomplish.

Linda Koch, Mount Olive, Poway, CA

With just a bit of guidance, someone without technical experience should easily be able to establish the interface. The information shared in the presentation opened up a new avenue for me of spreading the Gospel. I hadn't considered reaching out to older adults to be a significant area that could be addressed.

Michael Kler, Mount Olive, Poway, CA



Showing Up: *The How*

Webinars

ALOA's plan is to hold up to two webinars per month, focused on providing resources to congregations for stronger, sustainable older adult ministry that equips disciples/stewards for faithful service to the end. We have two scheduled in June (June 12 & 18) and any number of people can take part. It is easy to sign up and participate. Go to our website to see scheduled webinar dates and topics: aloaserves.org/events/webinars/. The link for each session takes you to a sign-up page for that webinar. NOTE: If you are interested in the topic, but you can't participate at the scheduled time, sign up anyway! We'll keep you in the loop of how to access the recorded webinar and the accompanying files and links.

Consultations/Conversations

These are much more interactive than the webinar format and include far fewer people. We still use the Zoom platform, but as a video "meeting" so that everyone can see all the participants and join in conversations, similar to the experience in an "in person" meeting. This format enables ALOA to hold conversations about what is happening in local congregations and to offer suggestions and resources for taking intentional steps forward. To allow for the best interaction among participants, we are limiting these to no more than five or six congregations (9 or 10 people) at one time. It is an excellent and cost-effective way to have meaningful engagement without the time and money involved in travel. To find out more and sign up, go to aloaserves.org/events/webinars/ and scroll down to the consultation link.



Senior Ministry Days

by Mark Schoepp, Executive Director

Gatherings....Youth or Older Adult

They have similar purposes (spiritual growth, fellowship, educational opportunities and a sense of being part of a bigger picture), but the first is far more common than the second. Recently though, I experienced two Older Adult Gatherings that affirmed strong benefits for the participants.

Minnesota South District's S.A.G.E.S. (Saints Alive, Growing, Ever Serving) has an active planning committee that has hosted a two-day Older Adult Conference for more than 30 years. It's been a great success, with robust fellowship, opportunities for worship and bible study, and the chance to actively pursue the critical issues of those currently in this stage of life during workshops. A win for everybody!

New Jersey District recently developed Adult Ministry Days, which have been planned in two locations for District-wide participation. Last Fall was their first effort, with a second one this May. With these single-day events, participants still experienced the same dynamics: great fellowship, spiritual growth and educational opportunities focused on participant's unique life challenges. District President Rev. Dr. Steinbronn gave his full support with a strong presence at both locations. Hooray!

Events like this take time and energy to do well, but the rewards are rich. Perhaps you could start a conversation with someone about what it might look like for your District or Synod. If there is one of these near you, we'd love to hear about it.

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COMING EVENTS

Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel

September 23-27, 2019

There are a few rooms left for our September Lutherhostel, but don't wait: register today! Our main presenter, Rev. Dr. Paul Schwartzkopf, will bring us *God's Grace in Scripture and Stories*. Pastor Frank and Deaconess Jan Janzow will once again lead music and devotions, with this year's theme being *Anchor Your Life in Hope*.

Join us at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Stewartville,



Minnesota for a week of learning, worship, outdoor activities and fellowship. Stay in a private hotel style room 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 and commuter fees (no lodging or breakfast) available. For more information or to register, go to aloaserves.org/events/ironwood-springs-lutherhostel

Passion Play & Holy Land Trip June 18-30, 2020

Retrace the footsteps of Jesus in the Holy Land, then fly to Germany for the Passion Play. 13-day trip led by ALOA Board member Rev. Dr. David Maack. Contact dmaack@lutheranmissionsociety.org

COMING EVENTS

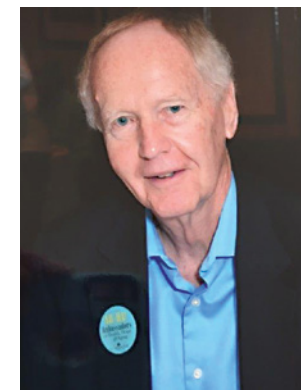


ALOFest at Sea

January 16-20, 2020

Cruise the Western Caribbean with ALOA! Enjoy 4 days aboard Royal Caribbean's Brilliance of the Seas with **guest speaker Dr. Rich Bimler**.

Take advantage of all the amenities and activities aboard ship and touring Cozumel. Plus inspiring and entertaining presentations by Dr. Rich Bimler during days at sea. Additional ALOA exclusive activities include:



- Socials
- Guest speaker
- "Beer & Hymns"
- Group Get-togethers
- Meet & Greet with Dr. Rich Bimler
- Worship • Devotions • Bible Studies

Cost: Prices start at \$399 per person/dbl occupancy from the convenient Port of Tampa, FL. For more information or to download a brochure and registration form, go to aloaserves.org/events/aloafest-at-sea-2020/ Or, if you'd like to register online, go to www.EO.travel/mytrip and enter Tour code: CC20 Date: 011620 Code: A ID: 48294

Questions? Call us or email George Algozzina at georgea@aloaserves.org

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.

The once-a-decade experience of the Passion Play has been performed since 1633 by the residents of this lovely Bavarian village of Oberammergau.

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, two meals daily, transfers and tours, along with 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

Questions? Call us or email George Algozzina at georgea@aloaserves.org



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