



Strengthen Relationships by Staying Connected

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The New Normal

We are living in unusual times. Just six months ago, we were leaving our homes to go to work, to go to school, and to go to church. We were able to visit friends and family in the hospital and in senior residence facilities.

Thanks to the pandemic, we are now setting up special areas in our homes where we work and have school lessons. I am wondering how many of us have set up a special area or designated a space in our homes during these times for worship, reading scripture, and prayer.

And how many of us have discovered new ways to connect with friends and loved ones?



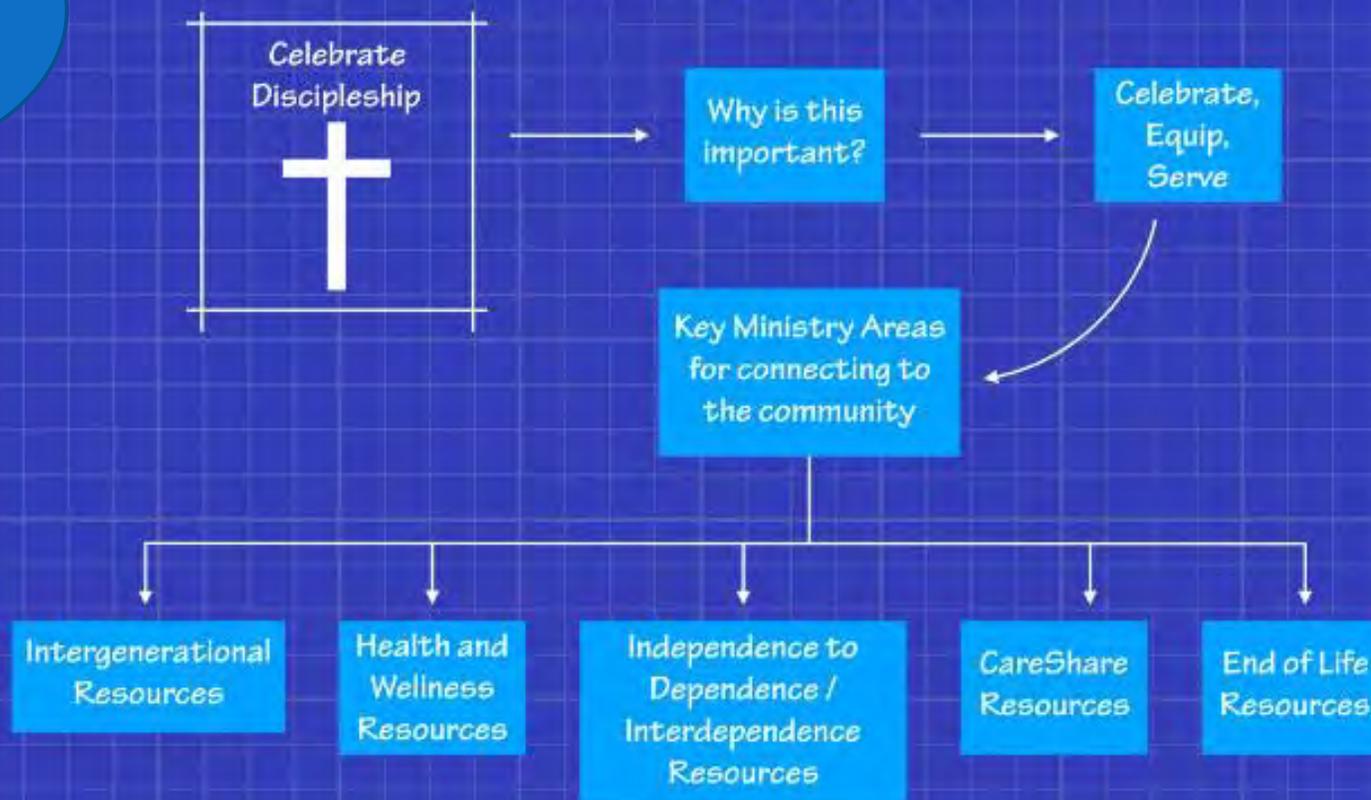
EncourAGING & Equipping Congregations for Older Adult Ministry



ALOA

In what ways
is this
happening
during 2020?

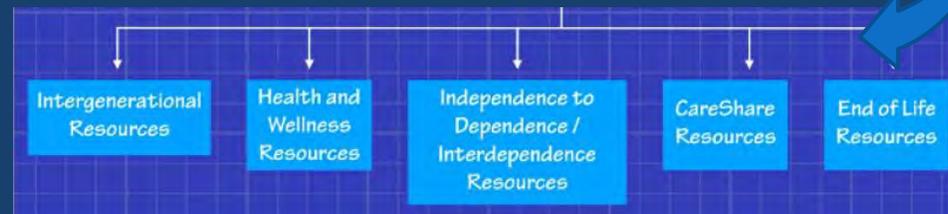
A Blueprint for Older Adult Ministry in a local Congregation



Congregational Help for Strengthening Older Adult Ministry

1. **Explore** the WHY. It is tempting to skip this step. Please don't! Spend time reminding yourself about the importance of the work, in God's eyes, and in the demographics of the community you are in. Don't ignore the elephant in the room!
2. **Affirm** Discipleship. A critical second step is to find ways to affirm Discipleship. There is no retirement from Discipleship! God's call comes early and it comes late. And what a congregation does on Sunday in worship can go a long way to affirming this. Check out two significant resources (Bless the Years, and Milestones Ministry). Show older adults, and the congregation as a whole, that Discipleship at every stage is important. Lift them up, bring them up front in worship, bless them and pray for them. And send them back into their world, and new stage of life with gusto!
3. **Explore** the the 5 Ministry Areas and Resources. The demographic of 65 and older is a large and very diverse group. A 'healthy' ministry with and for older adults can look very different from one congregation to the next. However, ALOA has identified 5 Ministry Areas that generally affect everyone and encourages you to give them a look. They provide excellent opportunities for significant ministry among your churches members and also significant opportunities for community connections because everyone experiences the need/challenge. We've attached excellent resources to each Ministry area so you can get right to work in a meaningful way.
4. **Select** your first area to tackle. You don't have to do it all. Starting with one and doing it well will build momentum. Pick an area with the highest need/best chance for success and give it your best shot.
5. **Repeat**. Keep looping back to the WHY! Let that motivate you to additional possibilities.

- Explore (Why)
- Affirm (Discipleship)
- Explore (5 Ministry areas)
- Select (What)
- Repeat (Back to Why)



In what ways is this happening during 2020?



- What are you doing where you are to reach out and connect with family and friends?
- What is your congregation doing to reach out to those who are in homes alone or in nursing homes?
- What new way can you challenge yourself to connect with others?

Masks, Social
Distancing,
Technology

Technical

- Challenges can be solved with the knowledge, skills, and tools already in hand
- Require change in one or two places

Finding ways to connect can be challenging!

Adaptive

- Challenges can be solved through experimentation, innovation, adjustments through the organization
- Requires changes of heart and mind

How are we adapting to our lives in 2020?

Graduation

Family
Vacation



First Year
of College

90th
Birthday



ALOA

There are some congregations meeting face to face and many who worship online. Even when there is an opportunity to attend worship in person, not everyone is participating due to fear or being cautious. There have been some very creative ways that faith formation has been introduced as staff and volunteers in congregations are thirsting to find ways to be the church in a new way. How has outreach been addressed and how are we connecting with those who are experiencing loneliness ?



ALOA

The church has been forced to move beyond the walls of the church building in unimaginable ways during the pandemic.



ALO A

Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, and Bible studies have been done by using a variety of online, cloud platforms for conferencing and webinars. Facebook Live has been another way we have experienced faith formation together. More and more groups are forming for faith-based discussion on social media. The church has moved beyond the walls of a building and into our homes.

Let's not focus on what we can't do at this time.

Let's focus on what we can!

- Encouraging one another and learning from one another is more important than ever.
- Having the ability to encourage faith talk in creative ways using the tools we now have at our fingertips and connecting with one another is important.



Given our new normal, I encourage us to take advantage of the situation by helping all ages engage in faith practices using creative ways as face to face or using technology.



Mountain
Highs and/or
Valley Lows



Caring
Conversations



Musical
Expression



Service



Scripture



Rituals and
Traditions



ALOHA

Milestones
faith practices.
Use what you
are familiar
with.

Strengthen Relationships by Staying Connected *(Through Faith Practices)*



Grows meaningful
and trusting
relationships.



Mountain
Highs and/or
Valley Lows



Caring
Conversations

Meaningful reflection
on our daily lives and
on biblical texts.

Strengthen Relationships by Staying Connected *(Through Faith Practices)*



ALOHA

Reading God's word serves as a foundation for practicing the presence of God.



Scripture



Rituals and Traditions

Prayer and Blessing. Recognizing those rituals that tie us together. Symbolic actions grounded in Christian Tradition.

Strengthen Relationships by Staying Connected *(Through Faith Practices)*



Music -
meaningful
- easier
online at
this time



Musical
Expression



Service

Service is staying in
touch. Taking the
action to strengthen
relationships.

OCTOBER 18, 2020
TWENTIETH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



God does great things through people.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 22:15-22	The question of paying taxes
Monday	Isaiah 45:1-7	Cyrus serves the Lord
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	The example of faith
Wednesday	Exodus 33:12-23	Moses' intercession
Thursday	Psalms 99	Our Lord is king
Friday	Isaiah 42:1-9	The Lord's servant
Saturday	Psalms 96:1-13	Sing a new song
Sunday	Matthew 22:34-46	Loving God and neighbor

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. **1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, use our gifts, our faith, our hope in you, to do labors of love for the sake of Jesus Christ and his reign on earth. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for how you provide for us and for the hands that have brought this food to us today. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who has chosen you in love, give you grace and peace. (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 4)



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OCTOBER 18, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Open Your Ears,
O Faithful People*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is something you have accomplished and are proud of?
- How can God use your efforts—your deeds—for others?
- Is it a surprise that God can use your efforts to accomplish God's will on earth? Explain.

DEVOTIONS

Read: Isaiah 45:1-7.

Cyrus is a Persian king. He is not part of God's chosen people through Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. Cyrus doesn't even know the God of Israel, and yet Cyrus does God's will by setting God's people free to return home from exile in Babylon. Isaiah lifts up the supreme power and authority of God's rule throughout the world. Besides the LORD, there is no god (v. 5). All that is, is God's. It is easy for us to forget that God can use others outside of the body of Christ to do God's will on earth. No wonder Psalm 96 commands all the earth to sing to the LORD (v. 1). In the midst of the tragedies that happen all too often around us, it is important to remember that we are a people of hope and trust in the God who holds all things together. The Apostle Paul wrote with thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' faith, love, and hope (1 Thessalonians 1:3). As a chosen people, Paul gladly affirms that they do God's work of love on earth through their "work of faith" and "steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 3). How does God's rule on earth give you hope and encourage you to act with love and faith?

Pray: God of power and might, we thank you for your glory that breathes hope and love into all corners of the earth through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE

God is the ruler of all of creation and we, God's servants, have responsibility to care for all that God has created. One of the greatest concerns for our world today is to care for the earth that is suffering under the weight of carbon emissions, overflowing landfills and polluted air and water. What can you do to reduce the waste that harms the earth?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Psalm 96 is a song of praise to God. It tells of the sea roaring, the creatures and fields rejoicing, and the trees singing. In what ways do you praise God through sounds and music? Sing a favorite Christian hymn. Think about what the words say about God. Then say: Sing a new song to the Lord! Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the Lord, sing and praise his name. (vv.1-2a)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org

Weekly
Milestones

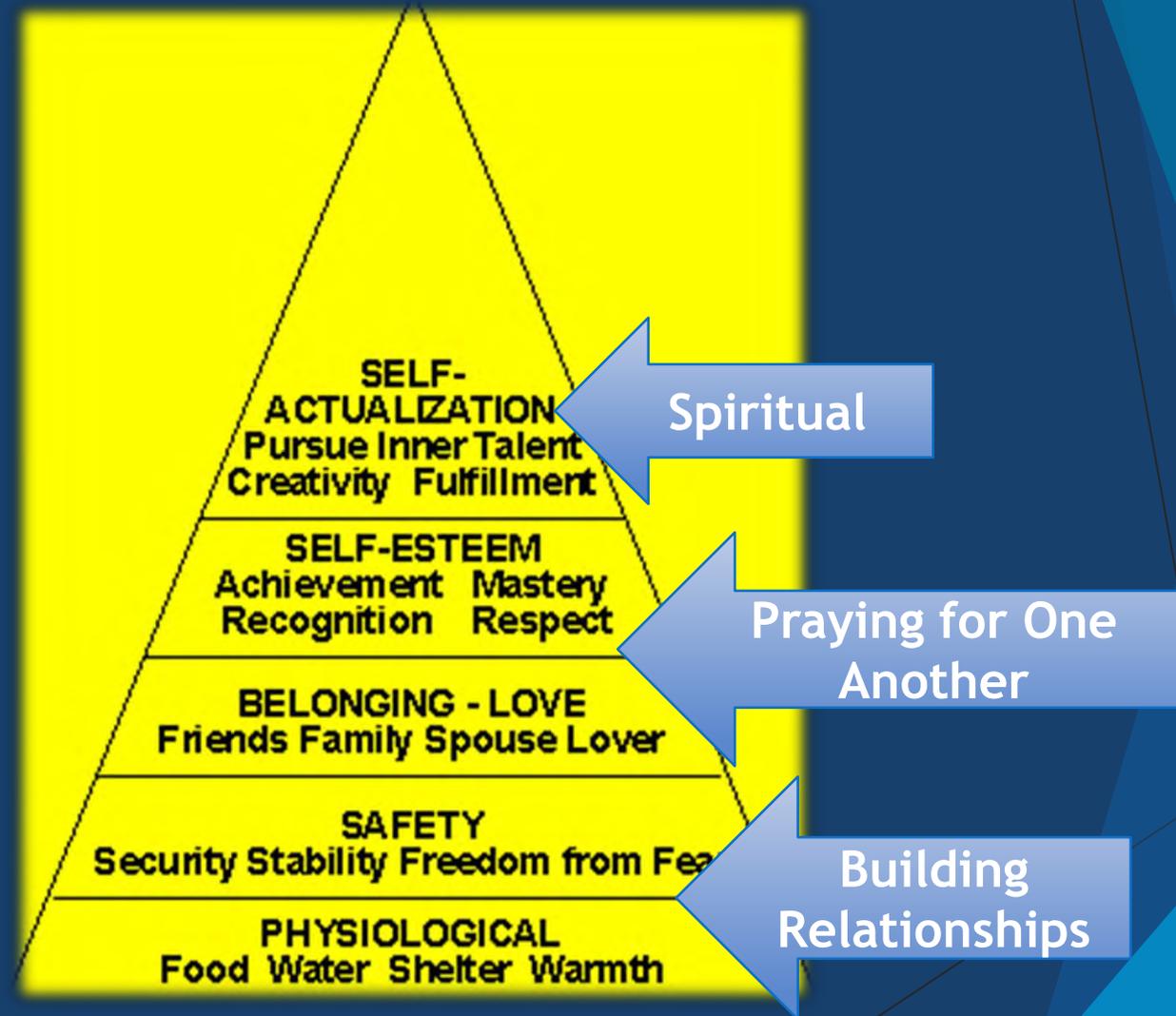
Scripture

Prayer



Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

What does this mean for us in a Pandemic setting?





ALO A

Examples and stories of what has been done in different areas to connect during the pandemic



Google





- Virtual Background
- Send Gifts
- Sing
- Game (kahoot.com)

Kahoot!

Kahoot.com

Questions (21)

[Show answers](#)

1 - Quiz

What was Dad/Grandpa's first job?



20 sec

2 - Quiz

What was the name of John/Dad's school in second grade?



30 sec

3 - Quiz

When was the first time John/Dad flew alone?



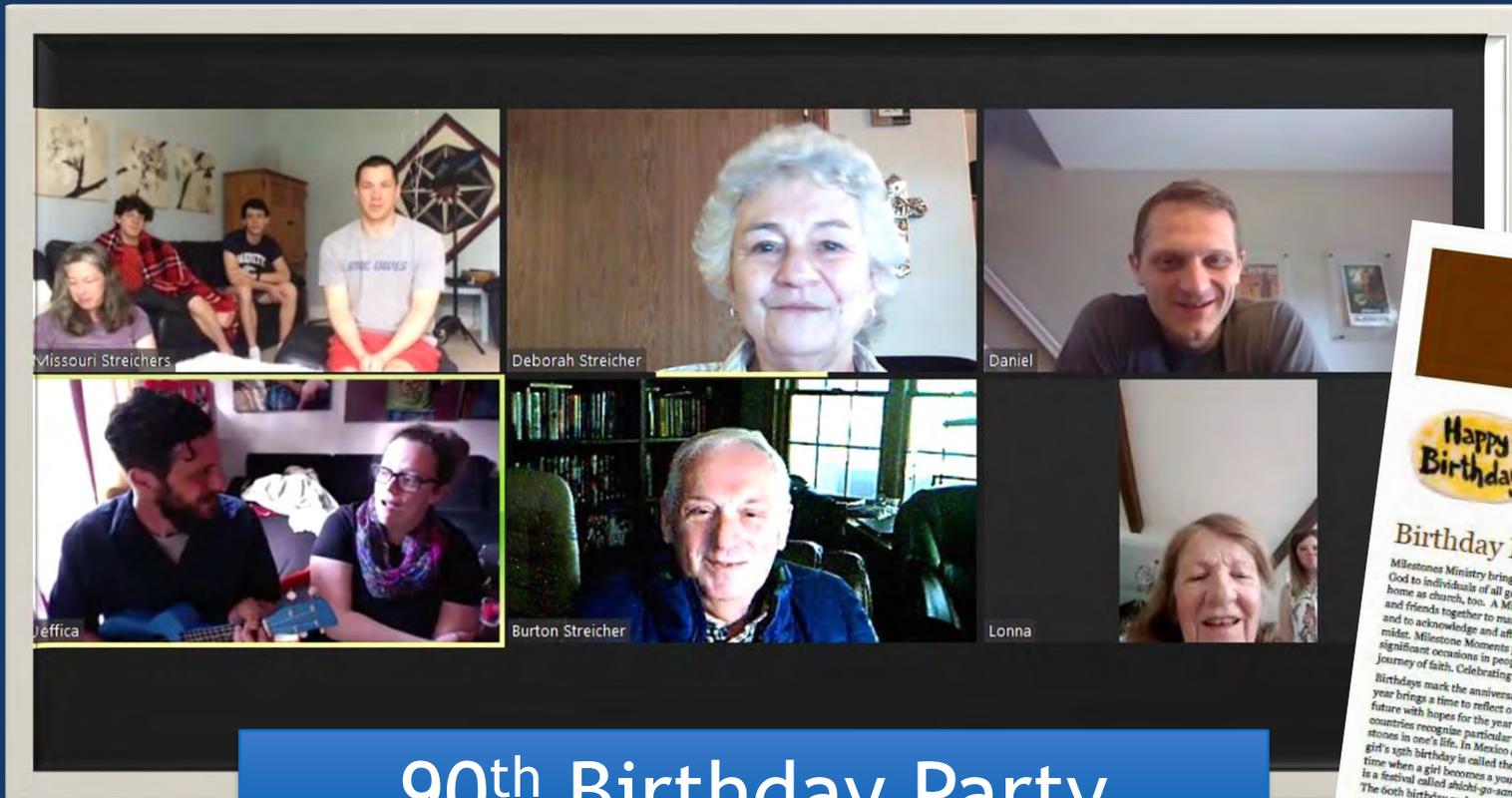
30 sec

4 - Quiz

Where did Dad/Grandpa get his Master's Degree?



30 sec



90th Birthday Party

- Hotspot Link
- Send Gifts
- Sing
- Virtual Card (American Greetings, 1,2,3)
- Blessing

Happy Birthday

Count your life by smiles, not tears. Count your age by friends, not years.

Birthday Milestone Moment

Milestones Ministry brings an awareness of the presence of God to individuals of all generations by recognizing the home as church, too. A Milestone Moment brings family and friends together to mark a special time in their lives and to acknowledge and affirm God's presence in their midst. Milestone Moments provide a model for connecting their significant occasions in people's lives with the ongoing Journey of faith. Celebrating a birthday is such an occasion, year brings a time to reflect on the past and look to the future with hopes for the year to come. Families and countries recognize particular birthday years as stepping stones in one's life. In Mexico and Latin America, a young girl's 15th birthday is called the quinceaños. It signals a time when a girl becomes a young woman. In Japan, there is a festival called shichi-go-san (7-5-3) for boys and girls. The 60th birthday and each decade after are also celebrated as special "ages" in one's life. In the United States, turning 16 means being able to drive and turning 18 or 21 is widely celebrated as entering adulthood. People often celebrate the decade birthdays like 30, 40, 50, and beyond. Family recipes and special birthday cakes adorned with candles are a custom for celebrating around the world.

Milestones Ministry uses a simple five stage structure so that the Milestone Moment will have a greater chance to take deeper root in one's lifelong faith formation.

Birthday Milestone Moment – Birthdays are a time to celebrate the life of someone who is special to you. Every year brings new hopes and dreams. Providing an opportunity to recognize God's presence in this moment is important. This Birthday Milestone Moment incorporates the five stage structure.

Naming – It is important to recognize a birthday. Whether the person is becoming a teen or turning 90, it is a time to celebrate and name this special occasion.

Equipping – This Milestone Moment encourages caring conversations that help create memories for all generations and honor the birthday person through scripture and prayer.

Blessing – Blessing the honored birthday person at this special time in their life provides memories for years to come.

Gifting – Giving a tangible gift like a framed picture, a birthday stone for gifting, or special gift to honor the occasion will be a visual reminder of this special day for the birthday person.

Reinforcing – It is a good idea to follow up after the Birthday Milestone Moment by sharing memories and having caring conversations during visits with the honored person in the future.

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Birthdays mark the anniversary of someone's birth. Each year brings a time to reflect on the past and look to the future with hopes for the year to come. Families and countries recognize particular birthday years as stepping stones in one's life. In Mexico and Latin America, a young girl's 15th birthday is called the *quinceaera*. It signals a time when a girl becomes a young woman. In Japan, there is a festival called *shichi-go-san* (3-5-7) for boys and girls. The 60th birthday and each decade after are also celebrated as special "ages" in one's life. In the United States, turning 16 means being able to drive and turning 18 or 21 is widely celebrated as entering adulthood. People often celebrate the decade birthdays like 30, 40, 50, and beyond. Family recipes and special birthday cakes adorned with candles are a custom for celebrating around the world.

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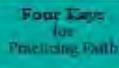
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hope, and love.



Caring Conversations

Process these thoughts and questions:

- **Birthday person:** Tell us some of the joys, challenges and blessings you have experienced.
- **Guests:** Tell a story about the birthday person.
- **Birthday person:** What hopes do you have for the future?
- **Guests:** What hopes do you have for the birthday person?



Devotions

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)

God is the creator of all life, including the gift of this day.

- Talk about how this day is a gift from God.
- How has the birthday person been a gift to you?

Pray: Dear God, today we especially thank you for the gift of (name), who is celebrating his/her birthday. We thank you for (name) and for your love for all through the gift of this day. May we respond with joy for the life of (name) and for the gift of life we all share together. In the name of Jesus Christ, your only Son born into the world that we may have life in his name. Amen.



Service

Think of an act of kindness that can be done for the birthday person or be done to honor the birthday person at some point within the next year and write it on slips of paper. Place the slips in a basket and gift them to the honored person.



Rituals and Traditions

Before the traditional birthday cake and opening of gifts, bless the birthday person. Surround the person and hold hands or lay hands on the honored person and bless them:

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord teach you to count each day so that you may gain a heart of wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)



<https://www.americangreetings.com/>

BIRTHDAY PERSONALIZED SMASHUPS™!

[View more smashups](#)



Dolly Parton Birthday Time Song
Ecard (Personalize Lyrics)



Folk Singin' Birthday (Personalized
Lyrics)



Donny Osmond - A Birthday Song
For You Ecard (Personalize Lyrics)



Michael Bolton Fun Birthday Song
Ecard (Personalize Lyrics)



Fur-Prise Birthday Video Ecard
(Personalize Lyrics)



Mariachi Birthday Video Ecard
(Personalize Lyrics)



Dot
Sabra
Joy

How did
this get
started?



Bible Study



Cumberland Area Joint VBS
Private group · 32 members

About Discussion Rooms Members Events Media

What's on your mind, Deborah?
Room Photo/Video

New Activity

This is a screenshot of a Facebook group page for 'Cumberland Area Joint VBS'. The cover image shows a scenic landscape with a stone railway bridge over a river, surrounded by mountains and autumn foliage. The page includes navigation tabs for 'About', 'Discussion', 'Rooms', 'Members', 'Events', and 'Media'. A comment from 'Deborah' is visible, along with options to create a 'Room' or post a 'Photo/Video'.



Week 5, Part 1 Rocky Railway Welcome!



A screenshot of a Zoom meeting grid. The top row shows three participants: Deborah Stretcher, Stacey Sanker, and Ryan's Phone. The bottom row shows two participants: Julie Courtney and Shannon Watkins. The Zoom logo is visible in the bottom right corner.





Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness, and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Seek medical care immediately if someone has emerging warning signs of COVID-19:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to walk or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This is not a list of possible symptoms. There will be more as we learn more about the virus.

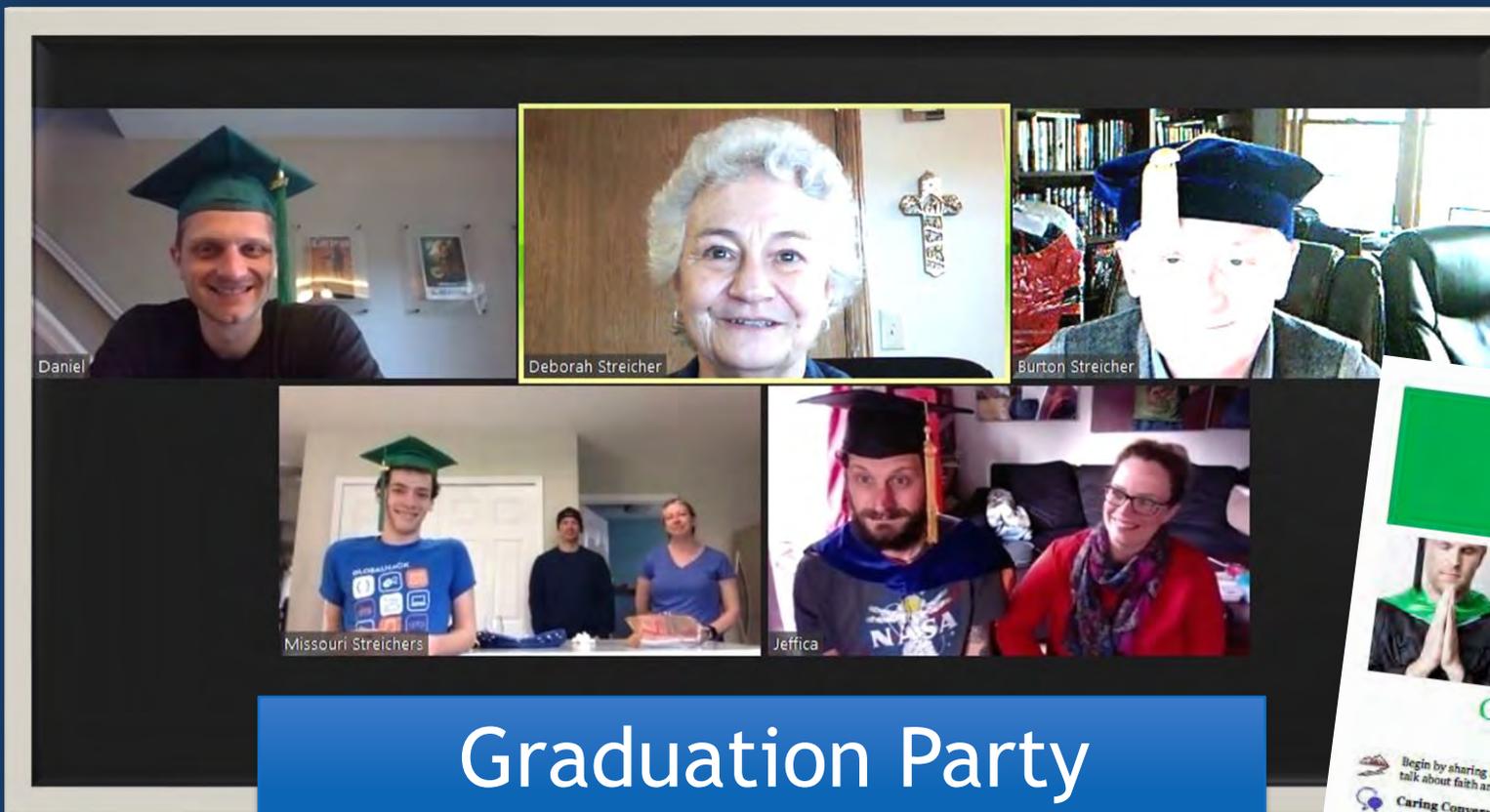
CDC

God Sightings at First Presbyterian

- Fresh Flowers
- Solo at church (pre-recorded)
- Sunrises
- Aird! Picture of Elizabeth
- Mom + Son running hand-in-hand

- Found the yellow cat
- Seeing the Comet!
- Seeing Friends ☺
- Rainbow!
- LIGHTNING STRIKE + PWR OUT

- Hearing the sermon today
- big black bear on the green hillside
- 3 fawns outside our gate!
- weather changes!



Graduation Party

- Caps
- Highs and Lows
- Send Gifts
- Video of Years
- Memories
- Prayer and Blessing

MILESTONES MINISTRY
www.milestonesministry.org

*"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."
- Eleanor Roosevelt*

Graduation Discussion Guide

Begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below to talk about faith and God's presence in this moment.

Caring Conversations
Complete these sentences:

- One of my earliest memories of faith and family is...
- When I'm 70 years old, one thing I hope to remember about this year is...
- In 10 years, I predict (graduate's name or "I") will be looking forward to...

Devotions
Read the following:
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105 (NRSV)

- Where will you be "walking" in the next year?
- What word in this reading jumps out to you when you think of the coming year? Explain.

Service
God's love is shown through acts of service. Consider what acts of service you can do with friends and/or roommates while away from home. If you are not moving away from home, in what ways could you help others in need through an act of service?

Rituals and Traditions
Invite each person on screen to light a candle where they are or show a candle digitally on the screen. Ask each person to say a short prayer for the graduate by completing one of these, "God I pray for..." or "God I am thankful for..." or "God, I hope..."

Pray together: God of creation, pour out your Spirit on _____ as he/she enters a new period of life and faith. Be with _____ as he/she begins new ventures knowing you have blessed him/her with hope and a future of success. Amen.

Conclude by all extending hands towards the screen for a blessing of the graduate:
May you know God's word gives light to you wherever you go.

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ALOHA

Shepherding Team

- Send each week
- Follow Up Call



Side 1

TAKING FAITH HOME CARD



Faith is formed through relationships

Scripture: John 1:39

He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Prayer: Lamb of God, thank you for reaching out to us through others and inviting us to come and see you. Amen.

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Side 2

TAKING FAITH HOME CARD

Conversation: Tell about a time when you were invited to someone's home. How did you feel when you were with them?

Service: Tell about a time when you invited someone to your home. Why did you invite them?

Blessing: May you be led to see and know Jesus. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be kind to you and bless you with peace.



Taking Faith Home Card Sample



Social Distancing Discussion Guide

 Begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below to talk about faith and God's presence in this moment.

Caring Conversations

Complete these sentences:

- Talk about your joys and challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Who have you connected with on the phone, email, or through social media?
- How do you think our lives will change after the social distancing mandate is lifted?
- How has God and your life of faith been a part of this time?

Devotions

Read the following: *Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:6-7 (NRSV)

Read this a couple of times. What word or phrase in the reading stands out to you? Talk about how God can give you comfort and hope during this time. What is it you want to give thanks and pray for these days?

Service

Talk or think about how you have served others during this social distancing time. How can you continue to care for others in your home, community, and world?

Rituals and Traditions

Light a candle. *Say: Jesus Christ is the light of the world. The light no darkness can overcome.*

Pray: Gracious God, be with all people and nations during this pandemic. Take away our anxiety that we may care for one another and live with peace and hope through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Close with this blessing: *May the peace of Christ bless you with hope and joy.*

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Coronavirus Conversations Discussion Guide

 Begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below to talk about faith and God's presence in this moment.

Caring Conversations

Discuss these thoughts and questions:

- What concerns you about the coronavirus pandemic?
- With restaurants, gyms, and theaters closed, how do you spend your time?
- When worship services are canceled, in what way can you worship in your home?

Devotions

Read the following:

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Matthew 6:25-30 (NRSV)

- What message do you hear in this reading related to the affect the coronavirus has had on our lives?
- How has the coronavirus impacted your faith life?

Service

There are many who are elderly or immune compromised. During this time of the coronavirus pandemic, it is important they stay at home and be quarantined from others. In what way can you help a neighbor who may be in need of food or supplies at this time?

Rituals and Traditions

Pray together: The Lord's Prayer.

Conclude by blessing one another:

May God take away your worries and fill you with peace through Christ our Lord.

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For Everything A Season



75 BLESSINGS FOR LIFE'S MILESTONES

By the Nilsen Family

Each ritual has a welcome, prayer, time for reflection, suggested ritual action such as lighting a candle or passing a blessing cup, and a closing blessing.

They can be done by families, other groups, or by someone alone. These accessible blessings help to transform ordinary moments in time and space into holy moments of timeless grace.

*“You are never too old to set a new goal
or dream a new dream.”*

C.S. Lewis



Debbie's Leadership Tips

Be Intentional



Set Expectations



Plan for
Accountability

In the context
and setting of
our changing
world.



- What are you doing where you are to reach out and connect with family and friends?
- What is your congregation doing to reach out to those who are in homes alone or in nursing homes?
- What new way can you challenge yourself to connect with others?

Final Thought

What impact will what we are learning now have on the future look and feel of older adult ministry?





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