



# EncourAGING and Equipping Congregations for Older Adult Ministry

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

May 2021

## Forever Learners Build Resilience for Aging

**We have become a society of lifelong learners over the last three decades.** Our longer, healthier lives, along with increased access to ideas and information, have enabled older adults to enrich their later years with learning.



Recognizing this in the development of ALOA's **Congregational Centers for Vital and Resilient Aging** project, Education is planned to be a key component of our **Older Adult Ministry Toolkit**. This Toolkit is being designed to introduce congregations to tools and trusted resources to guide or strengthen their ministries for the older adults in their midst.

### Why?

Learning not only enriches our lives, but is also a powerful and vital component of empowered aging. Research has shown that an active

mind is key to overall health, as well as spiritual and emotional wellness.

Educational programs that address the needs of older adults can help improve brain health, fight social isolation and increase overall mental well-being.

In a congregation setting, educational programs not only offer older adult members occasions for learning and social interaction, but these programs also provide an excellent opportunity for outreach and to address the needs of older adults in the community.

### How?

We're formulating a practical blueprint for programs within congregations which can address the issues faced by older adults and empower them to age with confidence.

A simple asset mapping tool will be included to help congregations



*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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**CHANGE AHEAD ...**

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15 "...We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."



Hans Springer

This is the continuing message of Easter. We shall be changed. In these times we might say that the pandemic has already changed our lives, and as the pandemic fades, we will see other new

changes. But the ultimate change will happen at the last trumpet when our triumphant resurrection occurs.

As you and I grow older we certainly are aware that there is always "change ahead." ALOA has been on the forefront for 30 years to make us and the church aware of the changes ahead that we face as older adults. As ALOA continues to organize for action by encouraging and equipping congregations, I want to remind you how important your support is as ALOA continues serve in helping congregations reach out in ministry to the individual members in each congregation.

I have said it before: There is an envelope in each newsletter we share. I encourage you to use it to send your gift of support for ALOA.

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

...Forever Learners, continued from page 1 identify community organizations that can be partners for educational programming. Community partners can be excellent resources for programs in congregations on:

- Physical topics like brain health or fall prevention
- Social issues such as end-of-life planning and communication between generations
- Help with challenges of aging such as depression and attitude/coping skills

Resource listings of community organizations and topics to consider will be included.

In addition, the Toolkit will offer information to bolster a congregation facilitator's ability to engage and build relationships among older adult participants.

A congregational engagement program will provide resources to help plan and execute successful group presentations.



Easy-to-use tools, such as a customizable presentation template, planning guides, promotional materials and evaluation vehicles will be included to provide lay leaders with the ability to optimize the benefits among participants and the congregation alike.

Watch for information in the months to come as components of the Older Adult Ministry Toolkit become available online. We're excited about this new resource for older adult ministry, and thankful for the support of the Lutheran Services for Elderly Endowment of the ELCA for this project.

# BEST PRACTICES: ADULT FAITH FORMATION

In the article, *Best Practices in Adult Faith Formation*, John Roberto and Cathy Minkiewicz provide a framework for effective adult faith formation drawing on studies and the expanding variety of learning programs and activities available for what they describe as **continual learners**. What follows is a summary of their premise and the best practices they identified.

Adult faith formation has tremendous benefits for the faith growth of individual adults and for the congregation as a whole. Research has shown that, "Effective adult Christian education programs are associated not only with greater faith maturity, but also with greater loyalty to congregation and denomination." (Effective Christian Education Study; Search Institute)

Adults learn in structured educational settings, but also in the very life and rhythm of the parish. And although congregations may make adult faith formation a priority, many find it difficult to put this priority into practice. What is offered for adults is often the weakest link in what a congregation offers for faith formation, despite the selection of resources currently available.

## Best Practices include:

**1 Pay attention to what is going on in the lives of adults and listen very carefully to what adults are talking about.** A blend of biblical knowledge with a focus on major life issues older adults face strengthens any adult faith formation offering. Multiple ways of discovery, be it surveys, focus groups or interviews, serve to gather

data, but the truest picture is often best discovered by way



of the shared life of the congregation. An emphasis on life events along with current events, social or moral issues can be important influencers.

## **2 Target the times of transitions and change in the lives of adults.**

Retirement, lifestyle changes due to aging, declines in health or physical well-being and loss of a loved one are all opportunities for faith formation that leads to deepening of understanding and of faith.

## **3 Center adult faith formation on spiritual growth processes in the lives of adults.**

Life experiences offer the most meaningful occasions for spiritual insight. As adults grow in their spiritual life, they are increasingly drawn to participate. Adults are hungry to grow in their relationship with God, so faith sharing groups or Bible study are often the most popular.

**4 Connect with the motivations and interests of adults.** A key factor is that adults are motivated to learn when they have input into how and what they are learning, and when they see personal benefits. They appreciate settings that

*Continued on page 4*

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ALOA**

Your support helps us 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.

## BEST PRACTICES

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are interactive and communal, and when sensitivity is shown to their preferences on time and program length.

### **5 Guide adult faith formation programming with learning goals and measure the outcomes of programs.**

A clear set of expectations and criteria for success guides the congregations who are most successful in their programming.

**6 Utilize a variety of program models to address the diversity of adult backgrounds, faith maturity, interests and learning needs.** What matters most is how effectively things are done and not the range of offerings. What's suited to the specific needs of the congregation and the adults in it is paramount. Models include:

- Independent Learning – Congregations can guide adults in finding the best individual learning format
- Small vs Large Group Learning
- Spiritual Formation – Retreats, mentoring or prayer groups are examples
- Study-Action Projects – Study/service or preparation (study or workshop) followed by ministry or leadership role
- Online Learning

**7 Design adult faith formation using a variety of learning methods that respect differing learning styles of adults.** Adults bring relevant religious knowledge and life experiences to any program. Provide them with the opportunity to build on their knowledge, as well as to learn from each other. Effective learning styles range from exploration and analysis to reflective observation and all the way to hands-on learning. Incorporate activities that prove to be thought-provoking as well as

## Upcoming Webinars

Register for these webinars and see our archive at [aloaserves.org/webinars/](http://aloaserves.org/webinars/)

#### **Thursday, June 17, 2021 – Noon ET Grandparents in Mission**

How do grandparents see their role spiritually? How can we pass on our faith and influence the spiritual life of our grandchildren? Rev. Dr. Peter Meier of the Florida-Georgia District LCMS joins us to share resources and mission opportunities for grandparents.

#### **Thursday, August 19, 2021 – Noon ET Fall Prevention**

Gerontologist Dr. Lydia Manning joins us to share the latest advances in fall prevention technology and how simple changes in our lifestyle and the addition of this technology can help protect us from one of the fastest rising factors for risk of serious injury or death in the U.S.

those that have real life application.

**8 Create hospitable learning environments and seek to build relationships among adults.** Create a sense of community that encourages learning from each other. A welcoming environment with food available is often conducive to bringing adults together.

**9 Effective adult faith formation requires leadership in a variety of roles: pastors, a faith formation leadership team and teachers.**

- Pastors who are committed and involved
- Congregations with a coordinator and leadership team that plans, implements and coordinates adult faith formation
- Teachers of adults who are people of mature faith and serve as “facilitators of learning.”

# LUTHERHOSTEL IN THE FALL

## Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel

October 4-8, 2021

Many of us are ready to relax, recharge and reconnect after the isolation of the past year. The same program originally planned for 2020 will now take place this



October. We will welcome Ben & Jennifer Freudenburg to our Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel to lead a study of *Life in the Later Years*, helping us to better impart God's love and grace to future generations. The Freudenburgs serve at Concordia Center for the Family in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where Ben is Executive Director. Pastor Frank and Deaconess Jan Janzow will lead devotions and music with a focus on *Kingdom Living: A Fresh Look at the Lord's Prayer*. The Janzows served at Ascension Lutheran in Waukesha, Wisconsin for 37 years, and have been popular leaders with

Lutherhostel participants in recent years for inspiring worship & music.

Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Stewartville, Minnesota has developed appropriate measures to safely host this week of learning, worship, outdoor activities and fellowship.

In addition to study, music and devotions, the program includes topics of local interest and optional outdoor activities. Take a trip on the zip line or enjoy the cornhole tournament, hiking and more. Lodging is

in comfortable hotel-style rooms in the camp's Miracle Lodge.



**Cost:** \$575 per person/dbl occupancy includes program, lodging and meals.

Lodge in your camper: \$525 per person.

Commuters: \$350 per person (no lodging or breakfast). For more information or to register, go to [aloaserves.org/events/ironwood-springs-lutherhostel/](https://aloaserves.org/events/ironwood-springs-lutherhostel/)



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](https://aloaserves.org). Let us know if you prefer to receive this newsletter only by email, too.



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

### Do you shop on Amazon?

Each purchase can benefit ALOA if you shop through **amazon smile**

Log into Amazon using [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and designate Adult Lutherans Organized for Action as your charity. Amazon will donate .5% of each purchase you make to ALOA... and there's no cost to you!

## New Ideas in Faith Stories™

There are many ways to share Faith Stories, be it via a video recording, written word or opportunities



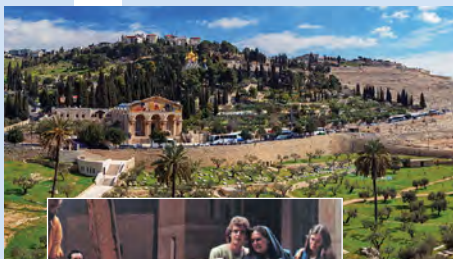
to share verbally. Ward Tanneberg recently wrote about the *Tuesdays at Two* group where he lives in Washington State. It's a concept that can be easily adapted to any congregation or community. Ward willingly shared the idea in a recorded interview that you can view at [aloaserves.org/faith-stories/](http://aloaserves.org/faith-stories/)

Have you experienced another way of sharing Faith Stories in your congregation, group or family? Share it with us! We'd like to add it to our website to inspire others. Use the contact us form on our *website* or send to [aloa4u@gmail.com](mailto:aloa4u@gmail.com)

### Holy Land & Passion Play Trip

June 18-30, 2022

ALOA Board member Rev. Dr. David Maack will lead a trip to the Holy Land, followed by



travel to Germany for the Passion Play. The 13-day trip will include sites from Bethlehem to Jerusalem and to the Dead



Sea Scrolls, then on to Innsbruck, Salzburg and Oberammergau. Cost from \$4,998 per person/dbl occupancy from Newark. Contact [dmaack@lutheranmissionsociety.org](mailto:dmaack@lutheranmissionsociety.org) for more information and a complete brochure.

## COMING IN NOVEMBER

### 3 Continents Tour & Cruise

November 18 – 28, 2021

#### Walk in the footsteps of early Christians on an 11-day Tour of 3 Continents + an Aegean Cruise

Enjoy first class hotels and luxury cruise ship accommodations as you travel between Greece, Egypt, Israel and Turkey. Take in historic sites in Ancient Athens, Cairo, Jerusalem, Gethsemane and Bethlehem, Cyprus, Ephesus and Corinth.



**Cost:** \$4,872 per person/double occupancy from Tampa. Includes round-trip airfare, tours & sightseeing, lodging, selected meals; cruise lodging in outside cabin, plus meals and beverages.

Find more information, videos and how to register our website. Go to [aloaserves.org/events/3-continents-tour-cruise/](http://aloaserves.org/events/3-continents-tour-cruise/)

**Questions?** Call 800-930-2562 or email George Algozzina at [georgea@aloaserves.org](mailto:georgea@aloaserves.org)

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Support older adult ministry by making **ALOA** your organization of choice!

- Go to [www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice/](http://www.thrivent.com/thriventchoice/)
- Or, call 1-800-847-4836

# COMING IN 2022

## Experience Italy & the Oberammergau Passion Play

September 20 - 30, 2022



### Join us for an 11-day tour of Italy that's followed by a chance to experience the renowned Oberammergau Passion Play.

We'll take in Christian Rome, Vatican City, the tomb of Paul and the Sistine Chapel. Then, travel to Assisi, Florence, Padua and Venice to marvel at cathedrals and the masterworks of Michelangelo & Giotto. Finally, it's off to Bavaria for the remarkable Oberammergau Passion Play.

**Cost:** \$4,872 per person/double occupancy from Tampa. Includes airfare, lodging, two meals daily, transfers and tours, along with tickets to experience the 2022 Passion Play.

**Early Bird Savings: Save \$100** with a \$500 deposit received by Sept. 21, 2021.

Find information, videos and how to register under the Events tab on our website.

**Questions?** Call us or email George Algozzina at [georgea@aloaserves.org](mailto:georgea@aloaserves.org)

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We are grateful to donors from March, 2021 thru May 15, 2021

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This news-  
letter is a  
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with and for older adults by making a donation today!

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