



EncourAGING and Equipping Congregations for Older Adult Ministry

CELEBRATING
30
years of ministry

August 2022

Celebrate Life

This issue we share the thoughtful writing of Ward Tanneberg, an author, speaker and retired pastor from the Seattle area who also served as Executive Director of the CASA 50+ Network. This is a post from Ward's Perspective blog, which is all about living, learning and leading in life's "third age" (60+) as a follower of Jesus.

***"Do not cast me away when I am old ..."* Psalm 71:19**

By Ward Tanneberg

Some years ago, Dixie and I spent our Sunday afternoon in a neighborhood home with a gathering of older adults, the youngest probably in their 70s. With paper plates and plastic forks, we enjoyed Costco's finest turkey wraps, chips and ice cream bars, and dropped a few dollars in the basket to help with the cost. We were like 'Junior Highers' with girls at one large table, boys around smaller card tables, as we ate and caught up on life together.

Then we adjourned to the sitting room near a grand piano where Ron played, joined by Harry on the clarinet and



Dorothy on the violin. We sang the old hymns, interspersed with a couple of spontaneous 'specials,' and listened to comments about "how much more theology there is in these songs than the ones we tried to sing earlier today in church."

Then more singing.

Not tepid half-hearted singing, but lusty and robust, a full sound of God-praise in a room full of story-singers, all of whom were nearer the last verse and a final chorus of their own sacred hymn than one might think if you'd been there, listening, watching, experiencing them like we were.



Ward Tanneberg

***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.***

Continued on page 3



Hans Springer

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

Recently I read the following statement:

“When the elderly die, a library is lost, and volumes of wisdom and knowledge are gone.”

I suppose there is some truth to that statement. And yet as Christians we know that in the great resurrection when our bodies and souls are reunited, all wisdom and knowledge will be recreated in us. However, there is something we can all do to pass on some of our wisdom and knowledge. Several years ago, Dr. Mary Manz Simon of ALOA's board initiated Faith Stories, the sharing of our faith journey. You'll find information and examples on our website. Through Faith Stories, we can not only share some of our wisdom and knowledge, but more importantly leave a witness of our faith confession for our families. I would commend to you looking at this on ALOA's website.

I also want to remind you and encourage to consider joining ALOA for our Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel in early October. Marie and I are going to participate. You'll find the information on page 6.

Once again I want to remind you there is an envelope enclosed with this newsletter. Your gift returned to ALOA in this envelope helps to continue this ministry and is always greatly appreciated.

May the Lord grant you every blessing through these end of summer days.

COVER STORY

Celebrate Life.... from page 1

I sat close enough to Dorothy to be mesmerized by the graceful movement of her hands. There was a simple elegance about them, one hand guiding the bow, the other behaving as it had been taught to do for many years, fingers supple and long and dancing over strings with effortless grace, submissive to their master's will, having done this so many times in lonely rooms and crowded churches and even concert halls. Popular songs, classics, hymns. These hands, lined and spotted with age, had played them all before. Could she fiddle as well, I wondered?

Here they were again. Making music in a different world. A room in a house filled with elderly voices singing on key, off key, sometimes lacking in unison but always in one accord. Harry, who could still dream of hot notes on a Saturday night. Ron, who never missed a note on the pipe organ on Sunday mornings. And Dorothy.

Surrounded by these wonderful saints, we found something transcending. A feeling of joie de vivre, of zest and exuberant delight. Not just in them. In us, too. An unforgettable Sunday afternoon.

The celebration of life!

You have to love 49 year olds bemoaning the 'Big 5-0,' lurking like some Stephen King monster over their future. They tear up the unwelcome AARP card that arrived unsolicited in the mail, reminding them of the passing of years, of getting old. Spoken or unspoken, they know. It's "all downhill from here!"

But not with the ones gathered in this room. Slower of pace, still young at heart, these

Continued in next column

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Celebrating
1992
2022
Thirty Years!

Join us as we celebrate
30 years of ALOA!

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Cocktails at 5:30, dinner at 6:30 pm

The Godfrey Hotel
Tampa, Florida

\$35.00 per person

Space is limited. Make reservations online at aloaserves.org/ALOA-30
or call us at 800-930-2562

Hotel accommodations reserved for 30th Anniversary guests at a special rate
of \$139 plus tax. Reservation link at aloaserves.org/ALOA-30

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Your support helps us reach more individuals and congregations to encourage more older adult ministry. Use the enclosed envelope or donate online using the blue **Donate Now** button on our website.

More from Celebrate Life...

from page 2

are people with more mountains to climb and they are still climbing. A bit slower than before. Stopping more frequently to catch their breath. Needing a little extra help in the hardest places. Less pretentiousness. More open in delight.

They grace the room like Michelangelo masterpieces.

It is time for followers of Jesus everywhere to rethink attitudes about aging, about Life's Third Age. It is time for the Church to rethink what other meanings



may lay hidden in the term 'ancient-modern,' what future hopes are aroused when served well by memories past.

Go ahead. Ask some 'ancient-modern(s)' you've noticed lately at church if they'd like to join you for lunch. Ask questions. Listen to their stories. Be surprised.

Celebrate what life was like in days gone by and what it can be for you and them in days still ahead.

More from Ward

Ward Tanneberg publishes a *Perspectives* blog weekly. You can read more and join his mailing list at wardtanneberg.com/blog/

DROPOUTS COME BACK!

By Dr. Mary Manz Simon, ALOA Board

Fall has arrived. The calendar for older adult activities has been posted on the church website. Will your COVID dropouts return?

Use these 7 tips to reach those who haven't returned.

1. Highlight community.

Researchers indicate that attendance at small churches, those with pre-COVID worship attendance of less than 50, has been among the fastest to reach earlier levels. Older adults will be more likely to return if activities and events promise shared experiences.



2. Issue a personal invitation.

That traditional Sunday school outreach technique, "Each one, reach one," still works. In spite of the many ways to connect digitally, a non-digital invitation is still most effective.

3. Be alert to changes in life circumstances.

An unexpected health crisis or sudden change in life situation can be part of the aging process. Personally contacting a former attendee might reveal current needs in addition to opening new opportunities for ministry.

4. Cross-connect with in-person worship.

If missing churchgoers have returned to worship, schedule older adult events before or after worship. This "wrap around" approach makes a low stress way to "ease back," especially for older adults who must make a special effort to leave home.

5. Maximize connections with online worship.

Streaming worship has become a new "front door" to congregations. Include older adult activities in online communications with those who have embraced the digital church-going habit.

6. Honestly evaluate in-person events.

Make sure calendar functions are worth attending. Give people worthwhile reasons to participate. If events are merely a way to deliver information, substitute other means of communication.

7. Prayerfully do your best.

Not all drop-outs are rejecting you. Aging gracefully can overflow with challenges. Your older adult ministry just might not be top-of-mind.

On-Demand Webinars

Did you know that ALOA has an on-demand library of webinar topics? View webinars on your schedule, find associated resources and contact information for the presenter. More than 25 topics include how your congregation can better support those with dementia, telling your Faith Story, grandparenting, enriching your spirituality, end of life planning and more. Check them out at alواسerves.org/webinars

What would you like to see more of?

Do you have suggestions for topics or experts you'd like to see on a future webinar? Let us know! Send us a message using the contact us page on our website or send us an email at alواس4u@gmail.com.

Proclaiming God's Saving Power

I will keep on hoping for your help;
I will praise you more and more.
I will tell everyone about your righteousness.
All day long I will proclaim your saving power,
though I am not skilled with words.
I will praise your mighty deeds,
O Sovereign LORD.
I will tell everyone that you alone are just.
Psalm 71:14-16

The psalmist had trusted God from his childhood and had continually proclaimed the Lord's goodness to others. At his peak, his life was a shining example to others. But as he grew older, people began to plot against him. In his old age, he started to feel abandoned by God. So in this passionate prayer, he appeals to the Lord and places his hope in him. He prays that God would give him the chance to proclaim the Lord's saving power among his people once again.

As we face the sunset years, we recognize that God has been our constant help in the past. When physical strength wanes, we need God even more, and we realize he is still our constant help. We must never despair but continue to expect his help no matter how severe our limitations. Hope in him helps us to keep going and to keep serving him. (Life Application Study Bible; Tyndale)

Do you have that same desire to tell others of God's goodness to you? Recall God's protection and guidance in your life and let someone know how much God has helped you.

The One Year Daily Prayer, Bruce Barton (editor), ©2006. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers. All rights reserved.

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COMING SOON. REGISTER NOW!

Last Call to Attend!

Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel

October 3-7, 2022 near Stewartville, Minnesota

Join us for a week of learning, worship, outdoor activities and fellowship at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch near Stewartville, Minnesota.

Rev. David Buegler will share ***The Rest of the Story*** about the bible stories we think we know. He is a retired pastor who motivates through entertaining and inspirational



bible study. Pastor Frank and Deaconess Jan Janzow will once again lead devotions and music, exploring ***The Lost Parables of Luke***. The Janzows served Ascension Lutheran in Waukesha, Wis. for 37 years.



Each day will include a time of study, worship and music, along with topics of local interest and optional outdoor activities. Try the zip line or the cornhole

tournament, hiking and more. Lodging is in comfortable hotel-style rooms in the camp's Miracle Lodge.



Cost: \$600 per person/dbl occupancy includes program, lodging and meals. Commuters: \$375 per person (no lodging or breakfast). Find more information or register: aloaserves.org/events/ironwood-springs-lutherhostel/

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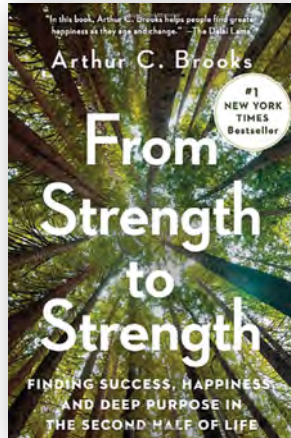
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Book Review: Get Happier As You Get Older

By Dr. Mary Manz Simon, ALOA Board

I rarely pick up books with a front cover endorsement by the Dalai Lama.

Although *From Strength to Strength: Finding Success, Happiness and Deep Purpose in the Second Half of Life* (Portfolio, 2022; hard, paper, audio, Kindle) somewhat predictably includes theology and eastern wisdom that don't match a Christian core, Harvard Professor Arthur C. Brooks offers five key insights we can apply selectively to older adulthood. A suggested application is included for each point:



Happiness is more than a feeling. Being happy combines three elements: enjoyment, satisfaction and purpose.

Lifestyle application: Adopting an uplifting attitude and shifting to a more positive perspective implies we can become happier as we age. I like that idea! Can I be happier today at 74 than I was five years ago? It's worth a try. *Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.* Psalm 37:4

After age 70, some people get happier; others get grumpier. Having early life success can make it harder to accept the contrast when life slows down during aging.

Lifestyle application: We can build on positives regardless of our age. How has God blessed me today? What's going well? Starting with strengths gets every day off with a head start. *A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.* Proverbs 17:22

Beginning in the 40s and 50s, "fluid intel-

ligence" decreases. That means we have more trouble focusing and solving problems. Simultaneously, "crystallized intelligence" (knowledge acquired through past experience) not only increases, but stays high through our 60s, 70s and beyond. During the aging process, we not only become wiser, but we know how to use that information.

Lifestyle application: We've acquired a vast amount of knowledge over the years. Dig deep. Uncovering information learned long ago can be reformatted for relevance today. *Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days.* Job 12:12

In the second half of life, don't merely add. Also subtract. Carry a bucket list but also have a reverse bucket list to eliminate the possessions, relationships and opinions that distract.

Lifestyle application: Letting go can help us cling more tightly to what matters. We have more time and emotional energy to invest in what's important. *Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.* Proverbs 4: 26-27

Happiness fuels love. Prioritize relationships that matter.

Lifestyle application: Walk away from relationships that add unnecessary stress. Healthy friendships are one of God's greatest blessings. *We love because he first loved us.* 1 John 4:19

You can find *From Strength to Strength* at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



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