



EncourAGING and Equipping Congregations for Older Adult Ministry

Intentional ministry by, with, and for adults in the second half of life

From Generation to Generation

September 2023

By Dr. Mary Manz Simon, ALOA Board

Area pastors recently asked an important question when meeting with Shirley Carpenter, former ALOA Board President and long-term older adult champion in the New Jersey District (LCMS). We thought it was worth sharing.

As a concerned grandparent, how do I talk to my children & grandchildren about their faith/spiritual life?

Many older adults whose grandchildren are not growing up with Jesus ask this same question. Two of our grandchildren are not yet baptized, so my response to Shirley's group of pastors had personal overtones.

The Bible offers numerous passages that answer this question, but my preference is Psalm 78:1-4:

My friends, I beg you to listen as I teach. I will give instruction and explain the mystery of what happened long ago.

These are things we learned from our ancestors, and we will tell them to the next generation.

We won't keep secret the glorious deeds and the mighty miracles of the LORD. (CEV)

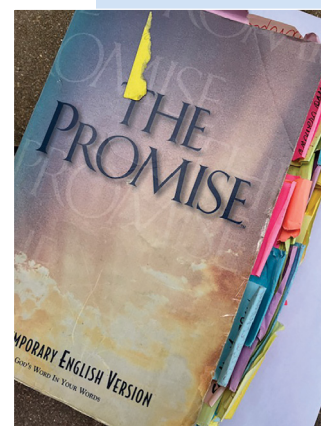
My response to Shirley shared how I apply that text in everyday life.

◆ Model Faith

The bookmark moves in my Bible. You can see that my favorite Bible (at right), a paperback CEV, is littered with post it notes sticking out everywhere! A grandchild sees how we respond to the plumber who names an outrageous fee. A grandchild watches when we let a shopper with one item go in front of the check-out line. Our lifetime Christianity – going to worship, saying mealtime prayers, etc. – attempts to mirror the words of the psalmist.

◆ Equip for Faith Growth

I vividly remember a situation with our daughter, Angie. As a child, she loved collecting different Bibles. By the time she packed



Continued on page 2

COVER STORY: From Generation to Generation

from page 1

for college, she had an entire row of various translations on her headboard. Yet when I went to help her pack for school, there were only two Bibles. When I asked what had happened to all those Bibles we bought she said, "I gave them away." At that moment, I thought, "At least I've done one thing right." Our children grew up knowing that we would buy them anything they found in a Christian bookstore. Although those retail outlets have mostly disappeared, that's how we ended up with a plastic Sword of the Spirit and many other pieces of holy hardware! But surrounding children with signs and symbols of our faith only reinforces the Holy Spirit's actions



that power us. Perhaps someday, a grandchild will even ask, "Why do you have a palm branch hanging on the living room wall?"

◆ Share your Faith Story

Our children and grandchildren grow up listening to us read books. We can so naturally transition into sharing our Faith Story. I printed out my ten-page Faith Story and gave it to our grandson, Josh, before his confirmation. Then we sat down and talked about it. Although fourteen-year-old boys think more about basketball than God, at least Josh has read and listened to my story. He knows faith in Jesus Christ is important to me. He has heard me speak passionately about what matters in life. I don't know if I 'got through' to Josh, but in November, before our next grandson, Nate, is confirmed, I will sit down with him. I pray God will use our time together.

We encourage you to share these ideas, and invite you to download a reprint to copy and distribute. You'll find it at aloaserves.org/key-resources/intergenerational/

◆ Be Available

Some use the descriptive term, "ministry of presence," which is characterized by having an open ear and open heart. Today's time-stressed parents don't always have time to "click

pause." At this point in life, we do that for ourselves,



so we can certainly do that for those whom we love. We have a message that matters.

◆ Pray

Although my mind tends to wander during prayer, when I pray about a character virtue for a grandson, the Holy Spirit keeps me focused. Being very specific and considering how the boys might encounter a certain virtue at their level of development, contributes to more effective petitions. I pray for our five grandsons by name. I ask God to support building a Christian value system. That's why topics like humility, judgment, wisdom and respect enter my prayers for the boys. Every petition ends with the same sentence: "Most of all, I pray that my grandson will know Jesus as His Savior." I also ask God to lead them to Christian wives, even though our youngest grandson is only seven years old! You can never start too early with prayer.

Connecting across generations is not always easy. Pathways are sometimes complicated, but we aren't alone on this journey. After all, when we look around, that's God's hand on our shoulder.

Recognizing a Job Well Done

By Deaconess Penny Cedel, ALOA Board

I recently had the pleasure of visiting Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Carrollton, Texas, to honor Pastor Ken Holdorf for his service on the ALOA Board of Directors.

We recognized Pastor Ken Holdorf as a wonderful example of living ALOA's mission! Besides his work as Senior Ministry Pastor at Prince of Peace, Ken has served as a key member of the ALOA Board for nine years and served on many different committees.

Ken has been a champion for older adult ministry, always willing to speak on behalf of ALOA and share his knowledge and resources. He enabled ALOA to build connections with numerous individuals and congregations by distributing his Senior Ministry manuals to anyone that asked for them. He has long been a go-to resource when someone calls with questions on how to start or how to improve senior ministry in their congregation, according to our office staff. Ken is also responsible for Prince of Peace's generous support of ALOA, through their budget as well as gifts from the LWML.

Dr. Mary Manz Simon (ALOA Board) shared that, "Pastor Holdorf funded initial ALOA videotaping through sales of his hand-carved wooden crosses and mangers. He became a tireless champion of the Faith Stories™ initiative, as experienced at Prince of Peace.

His commitment to ministry during these encore years has broadened the scope of ALOA ministry. Pastor Holdorf has provided an exemplary model of an older adult who lives out the words of the psalmist, "Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green." (NLT)

Ken asked that we thank his wife, Barbara, for her love and support through all his endeavors. We'd also like to thank the congregation at Prince of Peace for the support that allowed Ken to be as active in ALOA as he has been over the years.

The ALOA Board showed their appreciation with a gift card for word-working supplies (a love of Ken's). He responded that it would be put it to good use to make more crosses and other wood projects for God's people.

As older adults with broad life experiences, such as Ken, are living longer, productive lives, we now have more time to serve. Assessing gifts and talents in the post-retirement years leads to finding new ways to serve as leaders in our congregations.



Ken Holdorf

Saints Alive After 55 - Sixty older adults from the Sunflower State attended *Saints Alive After 55* in July. Held at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Salina, KS, it was hosted by the Older Adult Committee of the Kansas District, LCMS.

Pictured at right: Board member Tom Perry made a presentation on ALOA, including our video (see it at aloaserves.org). Board member Dr. Mary Manz Simon was the event keynoter, and spoke on *I Love to Tell the Story; Leaving a Legacy of Significance*.



Special Thanks to Congregation Partners

ALOA depends on the generous support of our partners. **Join these leaders** in the mission for meaningful **ministry by, with and for older adults** by making a donation today!

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
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ALOA is a Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the LCMS and an affiliated Social Ministry Organization of the ELCA.

Last Chance to Register! Ironwood Springs Lutherhostel October 2-6, 2023 Stewartville, Minnesota

Learning, worship, outdoor activities and fellowship at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch.

The Stones Cry Out: Archaeology & Spirituality in the Holy Land

- Drs. Mark
& Rhoda Schuler
Hear their insights and expertise as they reflect on their recent 3 month journey in Israel.



Faith Stories - Pastor Frank and Deaconess Jan Janzow explore God's transforming grace rescuing real people through stories, song and prayer.



Enjoy topics of local interest and optional outdoor activities, too. Try the zip line or the cornhole tournament, hiking and more. You'll stay in comfortable hotel-style rooms in the camp's Miracle Lodge.

Cost: incl. program, lodging and meals

\$660 per person – Double occupancy
\$710 per person – Single occupancy (limited)
\$400 per person – Commuter (no lodging or breakfast)

For information or to register, go to: aloaserves.org/events/ironwood-springs-lutherhostel/



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