

CENTER SAGE

A RESOURCE FOR LEADERS OF MID-LIFE AND OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES



DAVID YOUNG-WOLFE / RISER / GETTY IMAGES



WHO WILL HELP SHAPE OUR FUTURE?

BY RICHARD H. GENTZLER, JR., D.MIN.

“Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life” (Proverbs 16:31).

There are many forces involved in shaping the future of the United Methodist Church, not least of which is the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of prayer. As Christians, we believe that God transforms people’s lives and shapes our very institutions. In addition, changing technology, demographics, economics, politics,

globalization, and a myriad of other concerns play important roles in shaping our future.

But, who will shape our future? Of course, the obvious answer is God. God working in the lives of people both inside and outside the church will shape the future of our denomination. Besides the vision and energy of young people helping to bring about new and revitalized congregations, there is another group of people who play a significant role in helping to shape the future of the church: older adults.

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CENTER ON AGING & OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES

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Older adults? That's right, older adults can play an important role in helping to shape the future of the United Methodist Church. They do so by their presence, prayers, leadership, gifts, service, and witness. Here's how: According to 2008's U.S. Religious Landscape Study by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 55 percent of our church membership is fifty years of age or older (and nearly one-third are sixty-five years of age or older). Our denomination is blessed by having many members who are fifty years of age or older. It is a positive quality that so many people in the second half of life find meaning and purpose in and through their Christian faith and as members of the United Methodist Church. To quote my colleague and friend Reverend Paul R. Graves, "To focus only on young families at the expense of older adults is to create imbalanced institutional expectations; and it also denies younger persons the wisdom and perspective inherent

in elderhood."

With the many changes in aging and with the increasing numbers of older adults living healthier and longer lives, more people in the second half of life are engaged in ministry and service. Such service by so many mid-life and older adults has a tremendous impact on helping to build the kingdom of God. At mid-life and beyond, many adults are engaged in acts of "generativity" and altruistic endeavors, including mentoring young people; learning new ideas; and helping to convey tradition, values, and experience. Older adults are in positions of influence: serving as leaders, teachers, and mentors. They are engaged in outreach, service, and missions. And, if given a chance, they are able to share their faith stories and life journeys with others.

As many church treasurers already know, research from the U.S. Census Bureau also indicates that people in the second half of life give more financially to the

church than do other age groups. With growing numbers of members in the later years and with proportional giving, older adults can make a tremendous impact on helping eliminate poverty, engaging in ministry with the poor, and the revitalizing congregations.

The church needs the wisdom, experience, and faith that often abounds in older adults. Caring churches do not need reminding that, as people age, their faith is tested and refined through the frequent experience of loss. Such loss may be a result of illness and disability death of loved ones, and changes in social position and economic conditions. However, if congregations direct little attention to the faith needs of adults in their later years, older adults will gradually lose a sense of value and worth, which will in time dampen and diminish their faith development. Should this happen, many gifted and talented older adults will leave the church. When they need the

church most, it may not be there for them. And, as a result, some will gradually depart from the scene, not because of physical death, but because of spiritual death. Many will slip quietly out the back door, never to return again.

As I travel the country leading workshops and seminars, I hear calls to:

- recognize the place of older adult as active and engaged members in congregations;
- help older adults continue to learn and grow in Christian faith;
- value and respect the wis-

dom and faith experience of older members;

- recognize that older adults represent an opportunity for the church, not a problem.

“Healthy” churches treat older adults with dignity and love, and provide support for their life-long faith development and spiritual well-being. Such congregations respect the purpose, faith, and contributions of all their members, including their older members.

Who are the older adults in your church that are helping to shape the future of your congregation?

What are ways your congregation recognizes the important role older adults play in the future of your church?



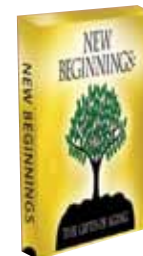
*The Reverend Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr. is director of the Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries for the General Board of Discipleship. He is author of numerous books and articles on mid-life and older adult ministries. His most recent book is titled **Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century: An Inquiry Approach** (Discipleship Resources, 2008).*

AGING AND MINISTRY



To order either of these resources or others:

Call toll-free: 1-800-972-0433
or visit www.UpperRoom.org/bookstore



Aging & Ministry in the 21st Century
By Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.
DR540 **\$13.00**

New Beginnings: The Gifts of Aging
By Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.
DVD – DR482 • VHS – DR483 **\$15.00**



LAY PASTORAL CARE GIVING

BY TIMOTHY M. FARABAUGH

At a meeting of the Alexandria Virginia District Council on Ministries a few years ago, discussion focused on the realization that most clergy in the district had no assistance in the area of pastoral care and felt overwhelmed by all of their responsibilities. Many clergy had cut back on their visitation with the homebound and, to some degree, with patients in hospitals. While a few churches used various training materials, including the Stephen Ministry material, most churches did not train laity in caring ministries. Several years earlier I had been trained by Ronald Sunderland, Ed. D. in his

program Equipping Laity for Ministry and had some knowledge of the Stephen Ministry program. The district superintendent encouraged me to put together a program that would assist local clergy in meeting the pastoral care needs of their congregations. I worked on this project for over a year and developed *Lay Pastoral Care Giving*.

This book provides a step-by-step program whereby laity are selected, trained, commissioned, and supervised by the pastor to assist in providing certain kinds of pastoral care. A difference between *Lay Pastoral Care Giving* and some other programs is that it is clergy led and driven. The pastor selects the potential caregiver, leads them through the initial weekend training, and then assigns them to visit

people in need. The selection of the potential lay pastoral caregiver is an essential component of this process. Clergy are encouraged to identify people who demonstrate caring, compassion, and good listening skills.

In the first training weekend, laypersons are instructed in how to make an appointment and how to use the pastoral tools of prayer, scripture, and Eucharist. They are trained in listening skills and in various types and levels of communication. In addition, laity are taught how to write a verbatim after each visit has concluded. Prayer for guidance and support; actively listening to the concerns voiced by those visited; and accurately communicating what transpired during the visit help the lay pastoral caregiver provide the best possible care to the parishioner.

After the initial training is complete, the program calls for commissioning of the lay pastoral caregivers to their new ministry within the congregation. The com-

missioning serves two purposes: It recognizes the lay pastoral caregivers who have been called to this special ministry, and it serves to acknowledge that these lay persons are now a part of the pastoral care team for the congregation. They are not a substitute for the pastor, but a support. They work to enhance the pastoral ministry. A sample commissioning service is found in the book.

Additional information is provided in *Lay Pastoral Care Giving* to help clergy lead monthly discussion meetings with pastoral caregivers. Presented throughout the book are various topics and questions, which are designed to

increase knowledge and to assist pastoral lay caregivers in becoming more effective in their roles.

As a result of the training, lay pastoral caregivers will feel comfortable in whatever setting the pastor assigns them. The support and feedback of the pastor to the verbatim lay pastoral caregivers submit will provide constant encouragement and advice that will help them improve their skills with every visit. In the end, the lay pastoral caregiver is given training and an opportunity to serve in a capacity that has not previously been open to them in many churches. The parishioners, those being served, now have an opportunity

to have their feelings heard and are able to voice their concerns. As a result, the clergy are more aware of what is happening in their congregation and are able to prioritize their visits based on need.

Lay Pastoral Care Giving is available through Upper Room Books – www.UpperRoom.org/bookstore



The Reverend Timothy M. Farabaugh is the chief operating officer of Vinson Hall Retirement Corporation in McLean, Virginia. The corporation is a Continuing Care Retirement Community providing services to residents in Independent Living apartments, Assisted Living apartments, a Health Care Center and a Memory Support facility. He is also an adjunct instructor at Wesley Theological Seminary in the Equipping Laity for Ministry program.

COMMITTEE NEWS
SUSANNE PAUL



Susanne Paul, President of Global Action on Aging and a consultant to the UM Committee on Older Adult Ministries, was invited by the UN's Department for Economic and Social Affairs to participate in sessions exploring the state of older persons' rights. The meeting was held in Bonn, Germany. Susanne and a group of selected world experts discussed national practices to protect older people's rights and to prevent discrimination,

neglect, abuse, and violence. In addition, participants identified innovative policy approaches that would enhance the rights of older persons as well as tools that would help build capacity in governments and organizations to assure full enjoyment of human rights by older persons. The group also focused on specific kinds of abuse and discrimination, particularly around caregiving of older persons.

OLDER ADULT MINISTRY COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA-NEVADA CONFERENCE RECEIVES SPECIAL RECOGNITION



Photo taken at the NICA Wingspread Program.
From left to right: Dr. Richard Gentzler, Pat Sanborn, Susan Harlan, Rev. Dr. Judith Pruess-Mellow, and Dr. Rita Chow (Executive Director, NICA)

The Older Adult Ministry Council of the California-Nevada Conference received special recognition by the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging (NICA) Wingspread Program for its “Best Practice Guide” and the “Coming Alive as You Age” workshops, which were sponsored by Senior New Ways. The event was held at the American Society on Aging (ASA) and National Council on Aging (NCOA) Joint Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, on May 15, 2009. Also present was Dr. Richard Gentzler, who was a featured keynote speaker for the event.

If you would like to receive information about this nationally acclaimed program from Senior New Ways, please contact Rev. Dr. Judith Pruess-Mellow at judithpm@seniornewways.org or visit the Web site at www.seniornewways.org.

OLDER ADULT PREFERENCE SURVEY

The United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries is surveying opinions related to the label “Older Adult” and we need your help.
Please take a moment to complete this brief survey. Thank you.

Being called by the phrase “older adult” is

POSITIVE | **NEGATIVE** | **DOESN'T MATTER TO ME** (circle one).

What phrases or names (such as “senior citizen”) have you heard substituted for “older adults”? Please write all you can think of here:

My preferred name or term to be called is:

My current age is:

Please send your response to the Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries,
PO Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003 or fax 615-340-7071
or send your responses by email to: tkline@gbod.org

OLDER ADULT MINISTRY GRANTS

BY SCOTT YOUNGBLOOD

In the spring issue of Center Sage you read that the United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries will be providing two kinds of grants related to older adult ministry during the 2009-2012 quadrennium. The two older adult ministry grants available are in the areas of Intergenerational Ministry and Caregiving Ministry.

The grants, which are part of the Comprehensive Plan for Older Adult Ministries for 2009-2012, will be available to local United Methodist congregations, districts, annual conferences, central conferences, and United Methodist-related institutions. All grant applications will be reviewed by the United Methodist Committee on Older Adult Ministries. The committee is also responsible for the selection process. As chair, I am excited about the possibility for ministry with these grants, and I can attest to the quality of grant applications the committee has received in past quadrenniums. The following procedures have been determined by the committee for this quadrennium (take note that the submission deadline for both grant application periods has been extended until January for each grant):

Intergenerational Ministry with older adults:

- August 2009
– Applications available, both in print form and on our Web site
- January 15, 2010
– Submission deadline
- Fall 2010
– Grants Funds are awarded

Caregiving Ministry with older adults:

- August 2010
– Applications available, both in print form and on our Web site
- January 15, 2011
– Submission deadline
- Fall 2011
– Grant Funds are awarded

The Intergenerational Ministry Grant Application form with procedures and criteria is available by contacting:

Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries
PO Box 340003
Nashville, TN 37203-0003
Telephone: 615-340-7177 or
toll free 877-899-2780 ext. 7177
E-mail: tkline@gbod.org

If you would like to be placed on a mailing list to receive the Caregiving Ministry application form (available August 2010), please contact Teri Kline at the address listed above.



Dr. Scott Youngblood
Chairperson,
UM Committee on
Older Adult Ministries

e-mail: office@trinityumcarlington.org



IN MEMORIAM: HERB BOWMAN

It is with great sadness that we report the death of our good friend Herb Bowman who died June 6, 2009 in Colorado. Herb was battling cancer for a number of years and died during a hospital procedure related to his treatment.

Herb, a retired school teacher, helped to start intentional older adult ministries in his local congregation at Littleton UMC. He was also instrumental in helping to initiate a Conference Council on Older Adult Ministries in the Rocky Mountain Conference.

At the time of his death, Herb was serving his second term as the Western Jurisdictional Representative on the UM Committee on Older Adult Ministries. Herb had been elected as the chair of the Grants Committee at the meeting in September 2008. Most recently, he participated with Dr. Richard Gentzler in leading a seminar on older adult ministries in Tucson, Arizona, in May, 2009.

Herb was a visionary for older adult ministries and a mentor for many leaders in the aging field. His expertise and wisdom will be greatly missed.

Herb is survived by his wife, Jeanette, and his children and grandchildren.



SLOWING DOWN AS A WAY OF HEALING THE EARTH FOR OURSELVES AND ALL THE CHILDREN

BY JUDITH PRUESS-MELLOW, PH.D., M.DIV.

Last fall I read an article by Bradford Plumer in Audubon magazine. The article, “A New Leaf,” was about climate change. Plumer wrote, “Climate scientists are increasingly worried that the clock is winding down, that unless the world very soon gets on a path to reducing its greenhouse-gas emissions by 50 percent or more below 1990 levels by mid-century, it may prove impossible to stop runaway warming. If that happened, millions would be at risk from heat waves, droughts, and floods; rising sea levels would swamp the coasts; whole ecosystems could be wiped out.”

In recent months, there have been many signs that our government will take steps that will enable the United States to take a lead role toward global cooperation on climate change. However, a government is only

as effective as the people in the country. It ultimately comes down to us, each of us, as to what we can do to curb greenhouse gases and slow down climate change. Slowing down climate change to ensure our children and grandchildren—all children and grandchildren—will have an abundant, joyous future is partially dependent on our slowing down our frenetic, materialistic, meat-oriented lifestyles and using fewer resources.

The climate change facts can scare us, and it is during such times that older adults in our society can be sources of wisdom and models. Seniors who went through the Great Depression generally know that the most important things in life aren't things. As it says in the old Quaker song, “Tis a gift to be simple,

tis a gift to be free, tis a gift to come down where you ought to be.” In this phrase, “coming down” means centering down and getting grounded—focusing on what is important. In order to do this, we must slow down, and sometimes just plain stop.

From Dr. David Kundtz’s wonderful book *Stopping: How To Be Still When You Have To Keep Going*, we learn about the “Gifts of Stopping” (1998).

Note: These are paraphrases of Kundtz’s work with some original thoughts of my own, especially the “God-talk.” I highly recommend this book.

1. Gift of Attentiveness. When we stop, we are able to pay attention. Being awake, remembering, and attentiveness are similar to mindfulness. The benefits of daily mindfulness in reducing stress and disease are widely documented. When we rush through our busy daily schedules, we have no time to think without distractions. There is a danger of putting last things first. When we are attentive, we gain knowledge of what is worthy in life. We are able to sense God’s ultimate control and power and to be at peace.

2. Gift of Relaxation. Henry David Thoreau said, “Health requires this aimless life. This life in the present.” With it, we can achieve mental and physical ease in our bodies, our dwellings, our country, and

our world. Human beings were not made to stay in a state of stress all the time. Fight or flight hormones are coursing through our veins under stress, and they do not go away on their own. They need to be balanced by a time of relaxation.

3. Gift of Solitude. This gift of being alone includes the gift of introspection. Solitude transforms us. When we come from a time of aloneness, we are different. The great spiritual leaders of history spent a great deal

of time withdrawn, stopped or slowed down. We all know how Jesus treasured his time alone to pray.

When we are alone, we must become comfortable with ourselves. We begin by looking into our souls and taking stock of who we are. If being alone is daunting, try it in small increments. Beware of other people regarding it as a rejection of them.

Help them understand that it is a breeding ground for deeper friendships or relationships.

4. Gift of Openness. This is the ability to receive the gifts the world has to offer and being satisfied with less. Sometimes less is more. We become like beginners with something to learn. Being a beginner has to do with being teachable, receptive, and nonjudgmental toward one’s self. Beginners become more effective listeners because they notice every aspect of what a

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person says and how they say it. When we think about becoming more open, let us consider how we can be more open to learning from those of other generations.

5. Gift of Boundaries. It is crucial for us to learn that we can care about one another without losing our boundaries. By clarifying our boundaries, we have the ability to become closer in healthy ways. In turn, the community benefits. During times in which we stop or slow down, we have time to remember who we are. Our self-identity is strengthened and clarified, which also benefits the community.

6. Gift of Embracing Our Shadows. Jung's definition of "Shadow" can be paraphrased as a pattern of perception that we all hold in our consciousness. This refers to the secret and often feared part of ourselves that we generally keep hidden or pretend does not exist. Jung's insight was to identify the Shadow as a positive force and a means to self-understanding. Embracing the Shadow means acknowledging that things are not just black and white. We are all the causes of what is wrong. Kundtz maintains that the Shadow can take different forms, including the illusion that we truly believe we are too busy to stop. When we slow down and stay quiet, we can also admit to fears that compel us to search for false security.

7. Gift of Purpose. This gift encourages us to step away from ourselves and to discover our unique roles in life. All of us should have as some of our purpose the healing of the earth for future generations. Purpose means knowing there is something far beyond us. The gift of purpose is especially realized during longer times of stopping or slowing down.

Now that we understand more about how the gifts of stopping and slowing down can greatly enhance our own lives and help heal the earth, How do we stop?

Kundtz describes three levels of stopping, which are based on lengths of time. He calls them Stillpoints, Stopovers, and Grinding Halts.

A Stillpoint is stopping quickly and doing nothing for just a moment. It is brief; usable anytime; usable all the time; usable many times a day; and usable at moments of stress. Stressful moments include when you are late, before an interview, or when you feel angry. Stillpoints help us count our blessings. Lloyd Young of Carpinteria, California, is teaching people breath prayer practices that include sitting with hospitalized or homebound persons for a few minutes and having them share how the silence was for them (*for more information on Lloyd Young's ministry, visit www.gbod.org/coa*).

A Stopover can range from several hours to several days. It is a "mini-vacation for the soul." It might be an afternoon, a day, or a weekend "away," whether you have really been away or not. When I have a

twenty-four hour retreat in my garage or a retreat center such as Mercy Center Burlingame or Auburn, I always try to journal. This process helps me reflect on how well I am doing on slowing down my frenetic life and putting first things first.

Grinding Halts probably happen only once or twice during one's life. They can last from a week to a month or more; need more planning, commitment, or resources; and typically happen at times of life transition. For me, it was quitting my job in 1992 and going to Pendle Hill Quaker Center for nine months to discern my calling to the ordained ministry.

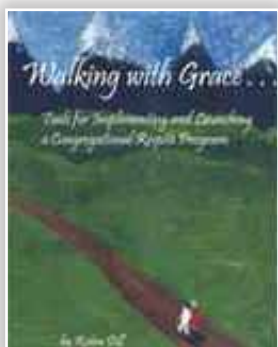
I believe that by living our lives fully and by slowing

down and savoring the blessings we have, we will help heal the earth with our good energy in body, mind, and spirit. This will also help ensure that the earth will still be in good shape for future generations. Indeed, this time in our lives is a key turning point in the life of earth and humanity. What an exhilarating and challenging time to be alive!



The Rev. Dr. Judith Pruess-Mellow is the Executive Director of Senior New Ways, 655 Magdalena Ave., Los Altos, CA 94024.

For more information see the website: www.seniornewways.org; or you may contact her by e-mail at judithpm@seniornewways.org or by phone at 650-209-1119.



\$24.95
(+\$5 shipping)

WALKING WITH GRACE:

TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND LAUNCHING A CONGREGATIONAL RESPITE PROGRAM

BY ROBIN DILL

Walking with Grace is a manual that will aid churches and faith based communities in the process of starting a Congregational Respite Program. It is filled with time proven details, ideas and activities to ensure the success of their program.

The author, Robin Dill, is the director of Grace Arbor, a faith based congregational respite program at First UMC in Lawrenceville, GA.

Publisher: IUniverse (March 17, 2009) ISBN-13: 978-1440130632

For more information or to obtain a copy of *Walking with Grace* you may contact Robin at rdill@fumclv.org or 770-963-0386 ext 126.



WELCOMING CHRIST TO CHRISTMAS: ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP AT A NURSING HOME

BY MARI ANN KUSMERTZ-CHELL

Cooler temperatures and shorter days signal the coming approach of Advent and the Christmas season. Plans are already being made for Advent music and children's Christmas plays, but one of the loneliest places on earth at Christmas is a nursing home or a skilled nursing facility. Facilities vary in their abilities to provide services for residents, and facilities with lower income residents often have the least amount of resources. Many nursing home residents may

also not be able to “go home” for the Christmas holidays for a variety of reasons. In any case, remaining residents are in need of a Christmas celebration not just by secular parties, but also by the church bringing the full meaning of the incarnation of Jesus and the hope of his coming to them.

Residents need to see the light of Christ shining as they live with difficult challenges, including aloneness, long-term illness, disability, limited mobility, and

the proximity of death. Many of these residents are longtime church attendees and servants of the church. For example, one resident at a nursing home served fifty years as a Sunday school teacher. Others are exploring faith for the first time. Into this opportunity the church is called to minister and “to visit the sick, to visit Christ” (Matthew 25:35, 43).

Although Christmas Eve can be a busy and hectic time for churches and pastors, holding a Christmas

Eve service at a local nursing home is easily done. It can be a blessing rather than a source of stress. Here is a simple process for creating a Christmas Eve service for a nursing home. The first step is planning. In September or early October, send a cordial letter to both the nursing home director and the activities director offering to provide a Christmas Eve service with punch and cookies. Here's a tip: Choose a nursing home that needs you. A good time to hold a service is 2:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, which avoids mealtimes, yet it is early enough to avoid conflict with church Christmas Eve services.

The next step in preparing a service is recruiting a team. Typically, you need a musician with a guitar or piano, or a person who can carry a tune, and someone to share a short message (preferably a pastor or lay speaker), scripture readers and someone who can organize the details. Do not give up just because your first choices

are unavailable. Think outside the box. One Christmas Eve, the local librarian served as the liturgist. He had a loud voice and excellent diction. He turned out to be one of the best scripture readers that I have ever heard.

Just before Thanksgiving, confirm your presence with the nursing home personnel, which will more-than-likely be the activities director. On the first Sunday in Advent, begin promoting your alternative Christmas Eve program, asking for families and adults in the congregation to join the team. The real blessing comes when the Christmas Eve service becomes a multigenerational family event. During the same week, provide postcard invitations to the activities director of the nursing home, which allows him or her to invite residents' families to the event.

The organizer gathers the names of individuals who are coming or providing cookies (without nuts). He or she will also verify the arrival time with the worship team leaders,

copy the words (large print), and finalize/print the order of worship for the team. Please note that bulletins are not necessary. Many residents have difficulty turning pages.

The essentials include keeping it simple; keeping it short (30 to 35 minutes), and being organized. For an investment of less than two hours on Christmas Eve, you will turn the holiday into what it is all about, which is welcoming the incarnated Christ to dwell amongst us in Spirit and in truth.

Mari Ann Kusmertz – Chell is a 2005 graduate of Methodist Theological School in Ohio and is a staff member of Shiloh UMC in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the West Ohio Conference. You may contact her by e-mail at mchell55@hotmail.com.

To view samples of the Christmas Eve Invocation, Christmas Eve Music, and the Christmas Eve Order of Worship/Bulletin, go to www.aging-umc.org.

R.A.P. (RETIRED ACTIVE PEOPLE)

BY SHIRLEY DADDARIO

If you have a passion for ministry and God is leading you, then something exciting is bound to happen. Two older adults had that passion. Hazel and Peg from West Grove UMC in Pennsylvania called their pastor, Mel Leaman, and set up a meeting to discuss their ideas. They wanted to talk about starting an older adult ministry in their church. Their goal was to reach all older adults, but not just the members of West Grove UMC. They wanted to reach out into the community. Their idea was to have monthly gatherings for all older adults in their community. They wanted no boundaries on who to reach, and an outreach with no limitations.

Their next step was to decide how they could draw older adults from all walks of life to their monthly gatherings. Hazel and Peg felt empowered from their skills and experiences in the working world. They knew they needed a vision statement in order to stay focused. They decided on “Fellowship, Fun, and Food” because it was short and

simple. After great thought R.A.P. emerged as their name, which stood for “Retired Active People.” Their organization was now official!

R.A.P. began advertising their ministry through word of mouth, just like Jesus did in ancient days. Jesus began with twelve people, and Hazel and Peg had twelve people at their first ministry gathering, which included a mix of church members and community people. The gathering began with a prayer and was followed by a meal. After the meal, a few announcements were made promoting future gatherings. Next, the attendees were entertained by musicians, speakers, or one of their fellow friends sharing about their adventurous travels.

Through the years, R.A.P. has invited a variety of interesting and informative speakers to their events. Speakers include historians, health officials, short-term missionaries, chiropractors, massage and reflexology experts, and many more. The speakers’ topics range from informative issues to just plain old fun. By remembering their vision statement, they stayed true to their purpose.

Today, the gatherings have grown to over eighty people. They still meet

at the church. The choir sets up the tables and chairs the previous night and everyone helps one another with transportation on the day of the gatherings.

R.A.P. now has a directory and a seven-person committee. Every person on the committee is an older adult who serves with their whole heart. Along with monthly gatherings, R.A.P. hosts an annual picnic and two outings each year to a nearby city for a dinner and a show.

Older adults in the community now have a safe and caring place. They feel respected by their peers. Ageism is not a concern. Many attendees from outside the church have come to other events at West Grove, or have come to worship at the church. West Grove UMC is a comfortable place for them, where they feel at ease walking through the doors.

It was as simple as two people having a passion for ministry and allowing God to take the lead. These were the two main ingredients needed to make this ministry such a huge success.



*Shirley Daddario
Pastor and
Adult Ministry Coordinator
West Grove UMC
West Grove, Pennsylvania*

OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 10, 2009

Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century

Sponsor: Tenn. Conference Council on Older Adult Ministries
 Keynote: Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.
 Location: First United Methodist Church, Murfreesboro, TN
 Contact: Bettye Lewis
 Phone: 615-329-1177
 Email: blewis@tnumc.org

SEPTEMBER 15-18, 2009

Exploring the Longevity Revolution

Sponsor: Natl. Fellowship of Assoc. Members & Local Pastors
 Presenter: Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.
 Location: Branson, MO
 Contact: Rev. Thomas Herring
 Phone: 615-794-9508
 Email: PastorJTH@bellsouth.net

OCTOBER 1-2, 2009

Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century

Sponsor: Virginia Conference Older Adult Council
 Presenter: Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.
 Location: Mt. Pisgah United Methodist Church, Midlothian, VA
 Contact: Martha Stokes
 Phone: 804-521-1154
 Email: marthastokes@vaumc.org

NOVEMBER 3-6, 2009

Aging from a Theological Perspective

Seminary Course: 2 credits (Equipping Lay Ministry)
 Sponsor: Wesley Theological Seminary
 Instructor: Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.
 Location: General Board of Discipleship, Nashville, TN
 Contact: Carole Lee, Wesley Theological Seminary
 Phone: 202-885-8720
 Email: clee@wesleyseminary.edu

JANUARY 29-30, 2010

Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century

Sponsor: Canterbury United Methodist Church
 Presenter: Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.
 Location: Canterbury United Methodist Church, Birmingham, AL
 Contact: Fran Gatch
 Phone: 205-874-1523
 Email: fran.gatch@canterburyumc.org

FEBRUARY 19, 2010

Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century

Sponsor: Trinity United Methodist Church
 Presenter: Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.
 Location: Trinity United Methodist Church, Gainesville, FL
 Contact: Rev. Brian Wittstruck
 Phone: 352-376-6615
 Email: bwittstruck@trinitygnv.org

FEBRUARY 26-28, 2010

Tapestry III: Maturing Spirituality

Sponsor: Florida Annual Conference
 Location: Life Enrichment Center
 Fruitland Park, FL
 Contact: Sara Kelly
 Phone: 407-814-1703
 Email: Bdd1032@aol.com



Primetimers Events

General Board of Global Ministries

OCTOBER 18-24, 2009

Life on the Bayou Teche: History, Culture, & UMCOR Sager Brown

Location: UMCOR-Sager Brown; Baldwin, LA

NOVEMBER 4-14, 2009

A Journey in Mission: Following Christ in Cambodia

Location: Cambodia Methodist Mission
 Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Primetimers Contact: Kim Lehmann

Phone: 877-882-4724

Email: primetimers@gbgm-umc.org

Website: www.primetimers.info



General Board of Discipleship of
The United Methodist Church
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If you are interested in submitting an article in Center Sage, please contact us for details no later than 14 November 2009.

Teri Kline, Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries
tkline@gbod.org toll-free 877-899-2780 ext. 7177

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I have an older adult event I want to publicize in Center Sage: _____

Please detach and mail to Teri Kline, Project Coordinator, Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries,
PO Box 340003, Nashville, TN 37203-0003 or fax to 615-340-7071.