Older Adult Ministries Certification Program 2014-2015

Overview: Older Adult Ministries Certification is a training program sponsored by the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN) of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It prepares individuals to engage in ministry with older adults in the contexts of faith community, family network, and community. This program provides a theological and biblical background as applied to the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of older adults. Participants may begin certification with any of the core courses as they are offered.

Certification Core Course One: Spiritual Formation for Older Adult Ministry (to be offered in conjunction with the October, 2014 Annual Conference of POAMN and again at the Annual Conference of APCE, in February, 2015)

Course Description
The last third of life death presents some life life’s great spiritual challenges. This course explores the journey of aging as a series of stable periods and transitions, each with spiritual, theological and ethical issues—aging and frailty, taking responsibility, finding meaning, being in relationships, leaving a legacy, facing diminishment and death.

Course objectives
Participants will:
- Describe their own theology of aging and its implications for ministry;
- Articulate key spiritual issues and ethical choices that elders typically face;
- Evaluate and use tools for spiritual assessment in older adulthood;
- Describe transitions and stable periods that mark and define older adult spiritual development;
- Understand the effect of gender, economics, and demographics for older adult spiritual lives;
- Develop and implement congregational strategies for spiritual growth in elders and in aging congregations;
- Use print and online resources for spiritual growth of older adults.

Course Instructor: Henry C. Simmons, PhD is Professor Emeritus of Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond VA, where he was Professor of Christian Education, with a specialization in Religion, Spirituality and Aging. Books he has co-authored include With God's Oldest Friends: Pastoral Visiting in the Nursing Home; Soulful Aging: Ministry through the Stages of Adulthood; A Journey Called Aging: Challenges and Opportunities in Older Adulthood and most recently Ecotheology and the Practice of Hope.
Certification Core Course Two:  Teaching for Transformation with Older Adults

Course Description

Teaching and learning methods unique to older adults are important factors in an effective older adult ministry. Participants will explore learning styles, effective teaching methods, and evaluation tools that lead to positive outcomes in learning environments.

Course Objectives

Participants will:

- Understand ways that older adults learn (learning styles, brain changes, social implications)
- Use at least three methods of Bible study and teaching methodology;
- Describe at least three approaches to biblical interpretation
- Understand how to practice ways to evaluate curriculum (professional and student-written)
- Experience of teaching and evaluation of teaching within the course (may be done in pairs depending on class size)

Course Instructor: Joyce MacKichan Walker is the Minister of Education at Nassau Presbyterian Church since her ordination in 2007. She served as the Director of Christian Education at Nassau for eighteen years prior to that date. Joyce’s undergraduate degree is from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. A 1979 graduate of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education (now Union Presbyterian Seminary) and a Certified Christian Educator since 1983, she serves the larger church as a keynote speaker and workshop leader, and as a teacher for PCUSA educator certification courses.

Certification Core Course Three:  Reformed Theological Answers to Questions of Middle/Older Adults

Course Description

Through study of scripture, Reformed creeds, and theological reflection, we will explore Reformed theological topics, with a particular focus on how these relate to middle-and older-adulthood: heaven; resurrection; realm of God’s rule; guilt and forgiveness; bereavement; the nature of body/soul; cremation vs. burial or donation of body to science; organ donation; medical ethics related to end-of-life issues; aging as God’s plan for human life; and the church as a caring and supporting community.
Course Objectives
Participants will:

- Complete pre-requisite readings prior to the on-campus class sessions;
- Articulate Reformed views/positions on the theological topics listed in the course description, particularly as these relate to middle-and-older adulthood;
- Prepare a six-hour, two hours per session adult education course, including complete lesson plans, on “This I Believe: Reformed Faith Affirmations for the Later Years.”

Course Instructor: **Rev. Marvin Simmers** is a retired PC(USA) minister. For 16 years he served as a local church pastor and Minister of Christian Education. He served for many years on the denominational staff of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the reunited PC(USA). His duties included developing adult curriculum, staffing APCE, developing church officer resources, and working with staff colleagues in Older Adult Ministry, Men's Ministry, Asian American, and African American Ministries.

OAM Certification Course Four: Physical and Mental Changes in Aging

Course Description

Aging is associated with many changes in physical and mental health. These changes vary according to age, gender, ethnicity/race, education, income, and access to health care, as well as nutrition, physical activity, and other health behaviors across the lifespan. This course will explore practical ways that our congregations, families, and caregivers can adapt and respond to these age-related changes to enhance wellbeing and quality of life among older people.

Course Objectives

Participants will:

- Complete pre-requisite readings
- Understand how the physical and mental systems of the body change in response to normal aging and disease processes
- Identify risk factors for declines in physical and mental health
- Discuss practical ways to prevent and manage age-related health conditions
- Explore ways congregations, families, and caregivers can respond to the changing health needs of people as they age
- Develop a presentation related to an aspect of physical and/or mental health to present or teach at their church
Course Instructor: Mary Ann Johnson, PhD, is a Professor of Foods and Nutrition and a Faculty of Gerontology, and she has been with the University of Georgia since 1983. She is a founding member of the Georgia Centenarian Study and an instructor of a graduate course in nutrition, health, and aging. Mary Ann works with the Georgia Division of Aging Services and the Northeast Georgia Area Agency on Aging to provide community-based nutrition, physical activity, and chronic disease self-management programs and to maintain a website about health for older adults and their families and caregivers (www.livewellagewell.info). Mary Ann is completing POAMN’s Older Adult Ministries Certification Program and she is an Elder with Covenant Presbyterian Church in Athens, GA.

Capstone Project for Older Adult Ministry Certification

Formulate a plan for a project to enhance the older adult experience in a community of interest. This does not involve actual implementation of the project.

Purpose and Description

The purpose of the capstone project is to integrate the knowledge and skills acquired in the Certification Program to address a particular issue or need. In doing so the participant will demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge and skills in a practical manner while addressing an area of personal interest.

The participant will work with a mentor/advisor who may or may not be a course instructor. The participant will prepare a proposal that will describe the issue to be addressed, identify and justify the need, review pertinent materials already available, suggest a methodology and expected outcome, and discuss related theory. The proposal will include a budget and an evaluation process should someone implement the project. The participant will be provided an opportunity to present the project proposal at a POAMN Conference. Project proposals deemed of sufficient quality and interest will be made available on the POAMN website.

Objectives:

- Provide an opportunity for the participant to apply his/her Certification education to explore, research, and experience an aging-related topic of special interest.
- Build the participant’s knowledge and confidence in the chosen subject.
- Give the participant experience in assembling an educational program or service related to issues of older adults.
- Provide an opportunity for the participant to present his/her project
- Benefit members of the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network and the organizations they represent.
- Create materials of interest to congregations, governing bodies, educators, clergy, retirement communities, and conferences.
Selection of a Project: The participant will select an aging-related topic of interest associated with ministry to or with older adults. An appropriate advisor will be assigned to assist in the selection and to supervise and evaluate the project. The possibilities are almost endless, but a general guideline includes physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects of aging. Please note that due to time and financial constraints the project is a plan, and does not involve actual implementation of the plan.

Study coordinator: Jan L. McGilliard, M.S. Adult Development & Aging, Virginia Tech, Coordinator of OAM Certification Program, POAMN


1. Registration for process (due with Course One fee) $100
2. Registration for Core Course One (due with process fee) $200
3. Registration for Core Course Two $200
4. Registration for Core Course Three $200
5. Registration for Core Course Four $200
6. Review Fee for Elective $100
7. Review Fee for Final Project $200

The Capstone Project may have costs associated with tuition or workshops; such choices and expenses are up to the individual and are in addition to that listed above.

All travel, room and board, and incidental costs connected with attendance at any conference or other site where Certification Courses may be offered is not included above and is the responsibility of the individual. Scholarships and other assistance may be available through your church, presbytery or other organization. Scholarships may be available assist participants attending the annual conference of POAMN.

These costs are accurate at the time of issuance. The fee schedule will not be increased during the certification process for any individual, but is subject to change for future enrollment.

4/14 by Jan McGilliard, Coordinator
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