Starting From Scratch – Older Adult Ministry 101
POAMN – 2015 Annual Conference – Albuquerque, NM
October 13-17, 2015
PRESBYTERIAN OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES (POAMN)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

2001 – Median Age of Presbyterian
58

2014 - The median age PC(USA) is
63
In PC(USA) for every worshiper between the ages of 15 and 25 there are more than six worshipers over the age of 65.

Why Older Adult Ministries?

The older adult population is growing three times faster than the rest of the American population. For that reason we need to be intentional about creating ministries by, with, and for middle adults, older adults, and senior-elder adults.
Recently the PC(USA) reported responses from 40,000 worshipers in a national study of Presbyterian Congregations stating almost half of their worshipers now are nearing retirement age.

In our connections with New Seniors and Older Adults, POAMN recognizes a new resolve to break down the stereotypes and create a new understanding of aging.

**America is Aging!**

The population shift is astounding as we move from a predominately young to an aging culture.

As we plunge into the 21st century, it would benefit us to study the demographics.

Where is the population heading?

Where do we need to focus our energies in ministry?
Of all those who have lived to age 65—in the history of the world—two-thirds are alive.

As life expectancy has increased (30 years in the past century), the age range of what most churches call older adults can now be 40 years or more.

Middle Adult, Older Adult, Senior-Elder Adult Ministry has become Intergenerational!

The *buzzword* in the churches today!
Today’s demographics and insights are compelling for clergy and lay leaders to consider:

Today over 14.5% percent of the U.S. population is age 65+.

Every hour, about 330 “baby boomers” are turning 65 and by 2030, the 65+ age group will comprise 20% of the population.
Develop your leadership!
“Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform, and Treasure”

**Where should you start?**

1). **Develop Leaders** – Bring together a small group of six to ten adults who are interested in OAM to begin the discussion; recruit leadership from within each age group.

2). **Conduct a survey** of Older Adults in your congregation, find your survey at [www.poamn.org](http://www.poamn.org).

3). **Utilize outside resources** that can help you develop successful middle adult, older adult, or senior adult connectional ministries. Conduct a demographic and service analysis of your community. Start with programs that are not already in place.

4). **Cultivate** a culture of prayer, patience, planning, people (volunteers), persistence, presence, and playfulness!
5). Plan two high-visibility events targeted for and promoted specifically for older adults in your church and/or community.

A high-visibility event is a church-sponsored activity that is designed to be of interest to all the adults you are trying to reach. Plan your event to include those inside and outside the faith community.

6). Survey the people who attend the event to learn more about their life interests and priorities.

From this information you will have the key to planning exciting, need-meeting opportunities for your new Middle Adult, Older Adult, Senior-Elder Adult ministry for years to come.
Keep in mind there are four ingredients that are usually common in ministry programs:

1) Service

2) Outreach / Assimilation

3) Christian Formation

4) Fellowship
Some creative churches are restructuring their adult educational ministry around these life-stages with staff, classes, support groups, and outreach targeting each life-stage.

Does your church have a system in place to track and nurture older adults at every life stage?

Is your church being intentional about finding new ways for older adults at every life stage to serve others?

Five Life Stages of Adulthood

**EMERGING ADULTS** 18–29 yrs.
**YOUNG ADULTS** 30–49 yrs.
**MIDDLE ADULTS** 50–69 yrs.
**OLDER/SENIOR ADULTS** 70–79 yrs.
**ELDER ADULTS** 80+ yrs.
Active Older Adults can take responsibility for their own learning and want their life experiences to be valued and integrated into this learning. Frailer Older Adults may not be able to be active participants in their congregations, but they do have a continuing need, and responsibility to learn and to teach. When planning for an OAM keep everyone in mind. Find ways to encourage and give them the opportunity to share their stories with the entire congregation. Seize the moment to reach out and explore, with our older members, ways to continue our life-long learning and faith development pilgrimage. Our Older Adults are a group of disciples that are an invaluable resource in the ministry of the church.
Two dramatic changes are occurring in today’s older-adult

1. The first change is that today’s middle and older adults, and our senior-elders are much different from their parents or grandparents in attitude and behavior.

1. The second change is the emergence of an entirely new generational slice of the pie within the traditional older adult population.

   Middle Adult/Boomers 55-72
   Older Adult/ Builders 73 and up
   Senior Adults/Elders 80+

   NOTE:
   These numbers are a guideline for planning purposes. I recommend that you use lifestyles, not age, as the determining factor in ministry with older adults.
**Boomers - Ages 55-72**
This is a time in life of growth and positive challenge, when people devote themselves more directly to their own interests and talents.

**Builders - Ages 73 and up**
This is a time of general physical slowing down, yet many with minds as sharp and quick as always.

**Elders - Ages 80++**
Those who live very long lives and possibly the wisest members of the community. Many have experienced some form of physical or cognitive slowing down. They might need our care, but we need their wisdom. As a society, we have the most to learn from this group, because they paved the path where we walk. We stand on the shoulders of giants!
According to statistics, the “Baby Boomer” generation is becoming the largest older adult population in world history.

Our older adults are living longer and want to maintain their active and productive lives.

As this unique generation of Baby Boomers age, and our congregations become grayer, attention is being drawn to both the reality of aging in general, and to the implications that aging will have on the importance of all generations within the church.
Within 10 years, the high-risk age 85+ population will increase by 40%, exacerbating a crisis in care giving and a rise in adult abuse.

A substantial percentage of leadership, gifts and services are provided by older adults, the fastest growing age group everywhere.

The unprecedented rapid growth of the older adult population nationwide, and worldwide, and the resultant challenges to the social and economic system, demands responses from the church.
Aging (maturation) is as much a spiritual growth process as it is a psychological and physical growth process.

A Successful Middle Adult, Older Adult, or Senior/Elder Adult Ministry includes:

- A shift in thinking, away from a ‘senior group’ mentality and toward a ‘maturing adult ministry’ mentality.

- ‘Speaks’ to everyday, real life issues, and to times of personal transition of maturing adults.

- An honor of diversity...of age, stage, personality, ethnicity, and spirituality.
Maturing adults need a new vision of aging that:

- Lifts them up
- Accents the positive purpose of later life,
- Connects them with God’s abundant grace.

The effects of aging encompass the emotional, physical, social, financial, and spiritual aspects of a person.
Effective Middle Adult, Older Adult, Senior-Elder Adult Ministry

• Use the talents of older adults that strengthen and revitalize both the church and community.

• Be diligent in including those left out of the mainstream because of age.

• Help people become skilled advocates on their own behalf.

• Provide opportunities for different generations to learn together and from each other.

• Be aware of and cooperate and/or partner with community efforts to meet older adults physical, social, spiritual, and economic needs.
Effective Middle Adult, Senior/Older Adult, or Elder Adult Ministry

• Support and encourage development of in-home care services, plus a wider range of housing options that reduce the need for institutional care.

• Minister to those in community nursing homes and encourage a more holistic approach for their needs.

• Develop partnerships between churches and community agencies saving time, money, and resources that might be wasted duplicating existing programs.

• Provide ongoing leadership training and development for staff and volunteers.
Be assured older adults and the so-called “new seniors” of today are anything but rocking chair bound.

All across the nation you will hear the demand for “productive, “creative,” “vital,” and “successful” aging.
Questions to Answer?

It is critical that we grasp the big picture of what faces us as more and more people live longer and longer.

How will this affect the church’s programming, facilities, outreach, and overall mission?

What are the demographics in your congregation?

What is the potential for ministry to older adults in your community?

What are the needs of the older adults in your congregation?

In your community?

Get excited about the potential!

In what ministries are older adults currently involved?

What ministries are geared to meet the needs of your older adults?

What are other congregations in your community doing to minister to older adults?

What are social service agencies in your community doing?

How can churches keep its youngest members involved and its oldest members connected?
In our roles as leaders, we are confronting ageism and the perception that the aging are mostly a burden on the church.

A common stereotype about older adults is that they are caretakers, not caregivers; resource consumers, rather than resource providers.

The truth, however, is that older adults represent considerable value to a local church. We must boldly address the moral issues related to caring for them, provide examples of successful programs and care-giving programs, and challenge the church to restore broken connections across the generations.
Older Adult Ministry

If you intend to involve and affect the wide range of people 50 to 85+ years of age, you must add more diversity and options for involvement.

*Rethinking church means rethinking how we reach out, invite and engage seniors.*
Older Adult Ministry Program Ideas

Adult Day Services
Advertise in Local Theatre & Senior Citizen Center
Alternative Worship
Older Adult Picnic
Art-Painting Classes
Caregiver Support Group
Caregiving/Care Teams
Children of Aging Parents
Classes/Activities
Clown Ministry
Coffee Connection
Day Trips
Exercise and Fitness
Extended Travel

An in-depth description for each of these activities can be found in the 2014 Older Adult Ministry Planning Guide on our website at www.poamn.org.
Flowers for Homebound/Retirement Centers
Foster Grandparents
Game Day
Garden Group
Helping Hands
House Sharing
Homebound Bible Study
Intergenerational Retreat
Life Review
Living History
Lunch Partners
Manna Thanksgiving Meal
Manna Meal Delivery
Mentoring
Movie Day
Multigenerational Study Groups Mutt Ministry
Nursing Home Sunday School Class or Circle Group
Older Adult Hand Bell Choir
Older Adult Newsletter or E-blast
Older Adult Sunday Recognition Service and/or Luncheon or Dinner

www.poamn.org
An in-depth description for each of these activities can be found in the 2014 Older Adult Ministry Planning Guide on our website at www.poamn.org.
Step out of your comfort zone to do some things differently.

This poster created interest and would draw people in.

Our leadership role was to share our excitement and enthusiasm through ....

Vision
Values
Results
Strengths
Shortcomings
Opportunities
Steps to Developing an Effective Middle Adult, Older Adult, and/or Senior-Elder Adult Program

**PRAY WEEKLY** as a group for wisdom in the development of the ministry.

**KNOW YOUR CONGREGATION** by gathering and interpreting information relevant to your congregation and community.

**DEFINE** the nature, scope, and extent of the ministry.

**SET GOALS** that are unique to your situation and that are achievable, measurable, understandable, specific, and realistic. Identify all possible approaches.

**DEVELOP A SIMPLE MISSION STATEMENT**, we need to know where we are going if we are to determine the best way to get there.

**COUNT THE COST**, building a OAM will cost time, money, and sacrifice.

**KNOW THE FACTS**, as you become aware of needs look for ways to respond.
Developing an Effective Middle Adult, Senior/Older Adult, and Elder Program cont.

**MAKE A PLAN**, Action Plans describe in detail what is to be done, by whom, when, how often, and at what cost.

**DEVELOP A DETAILED PROGRAM PLAN** and list the tasks to be performed and detail, when, how, and by whom.

**DETERMINE NEEDED RESOURCES** - human, physical, structural, equipment, financial, etc.

**DEVELOP A DETAILED BUDGET** and accounting procedure.

**DEVELOP THE EVALUATION** method and criteria.

**IMPLEMENT THE PLAN** recruit, train, and enlist paid and volunteer staff.

**EVALUATE THE PROGRAM** to determine the effectiveness of the program. When needed make changes or adjustment and plan for them.
Church Work

Pathway to a Thriving Encore Ministry

TOMORROW’S DREAM: “What Will Be”
Specific, Measurable, Actionable

Church Name: ________________

TODAY'S REALITY: “What Is”

Encore Generation Ministry Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path Step/Tactic</th>
<th>Desired Outcome</th>
<th>As Measured by…</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>Point Person</th>
<th>Completed by…</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Action Learning Plan for: _____________________________________________
**Pathway to a Thriving Encore Ministry**

**for:**

Grace Pres.

---

**TODAY’S REALITY: “What Is”**

- Encore ministry now under Adult Ministries
- Senior Pastor disconnected to Encore Generation
- Financial changes have led to drastic staff changes
- Over all church focus on children & young adult ministries

---

**ENCORE GENERATION MINISTRY ACTION PLAN**

**Action Learning Plan for:** Grace Presbyterian / Houston

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path Step/ Tactic</th>
<th>Desired Outcome</th>
<th>As Measured by...</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>Point Person</th>
<th>Completed by...</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Manna Cookbook</td>
<td>To equip members to prepare healthy meals, Congregational awareness of ministry</td>
<td>Books Sold</td>
<td>Cook Book Committee, assimilate recipes, scripture and rituals in book form</td>
<td>Ellen G.</td>
<td>May ’09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) “Food For Thought” (Service) Women of Wisdom Men of Measure</td>
<td>Weekly, bi-monthly, separate</td>
<td>Attendance/Participation by <em>n</em>. n.</td>
<td>Schedule facility, Identity Leaders, &amp; invite speaks</td>
<td>Encore Staff &amp; Identified Leaders</td>
<td>Sept. ’09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Establish recording Legacies</td>
<td>Living Legacies in place</td>
<td>Understanding &amp; interest in recording legacies</td>
<td>Get question packets, Identify &amp; train leaders</td>
<td>Beth, Craig &amp; Bryan Mann</td>
<td>March ’09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) “Third Place”</td>
<td>Place, neither work or home, to spend time together</td>
<td>Frequency of use</td>
<td>Establish a place, e.g., Library</td>
<td>Jane Petitt</td>
<td>Sept. ’09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nine Benefits of Establishing Ministry for Middle Adults, Older/Senior Adults, Elders

1. It expands the church’s existing ministry by reaching entire families, including grandparents and homebound seniors.

2. It shows the community that the church is a vital part of the community.

3. It builds overall church activity.

4. It increases worship attendance.

5. It instills Scriptural truth in the lives of seniors and helps them to face the challenges and changes in the process of aging.

6. It provides enriching experiences close to home.

7. It helps meet the need for senior care.

8. It provides an opportunity for middle adults, older adults, senior elders to serve.

9. It provides an opportunity for young adults to serve.
A MAGNIFICENT NEW OPPORTUNITY

Think, talk, and pray about the new opportunity your church may be facing. It is the opportunity of creative new ministry and outreach to the aging Boomers-Middle Adults, Older Adults, and our Senior-Elders.

Older adults are here; and more are coming each year.

While some senior adult ministries reflect a culture of bygone years, yours can be a model of invigorating new life and growth. More and more churches are realizing that the graying of America presents new possibilities to influence and reach adults who truly are receptive to the good news. Why not join the excitement?
In A Nutshell

- Prayer
- Patience
- Perseverance
- Purpose
- Planning
- Preparation
- Presentation
- Playfulness
Older Adult Resources
Resources

Introduction to Older Adult Ministry
Presbyterian Distribution Service:

- Older Adult Ministry-A Guide for the Presbytery Committee-
- Older Adult Ministry-A Guide for the Session and Congregation,
  Presbyterian Distribution Service PDS No. 70250-00-711-#70-250-00-711
- Older Adult Ministry-A Resource for Program Development-
  #21785429
- Older Adult Issue Series - series of 10 booklets
- Am, Win and Charles, Catch The Age Wave (Baker House, Grand Rapids Mich., 1993)
- Carlson, Dosia, Engaging In Ministry With Older Adults (An Alban Institute Publication, 1997)
- Gallagher, Dr. David P., Senior Adult Ministry In The 21st Century (Group Publishing/ISBN 0-7644-2452-1)
- McLeod, Beth Witrogen, And Thou Shalt Honor: The Caregivers Companion (Rodale/ISBN 1-57954-558-D)

Dychtwald, Ken, Age Wave (Putnam)
Dychtwald, Ken, Age Power (Putnam/ISBN 1-58542-043-3)
Michele Shultz Hendrix, Engaging “New Seniors” and Older Adults in the Life of the Church, Horizons, November 2011
Michele Hendrix is the acting President of Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN), a Caregiver Specialist, Master Trainer, and Class Leader for Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Working for over 25 years to advocate, educate, involve, and motivate individuals in the process of aging and self-care. Also to recognize the connections among church, health care, non-profit, community, state, federal, and local agencies while encouraging adults of all ages in managing their self-care, chronic conditions, respite, and caregiving roles. The focus of my work is on intergenerational, interfaith, and evidence-based programs for adults, health promotion, ministry programming and development, respite for caregivers, and fall prevention programs.

The Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN) is a network of people engaged in ministry with older adults. We are a network of leaders in Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods, Non-profits, Healthcare, Chaplains, Continuum of Care Facilities, and Ecumenical Partnerships. POAMN has worked since 1982 to promote the development of Older Adult Ministries and the value of such a ministry within PC(USA) and now across the denominations.

The mission of POAMN includes providing leadership for programmatic efforts of presbyteries and congregations through conducting events that educate presbytery representatives, pastors, staff, volunteers, chaplains, and others who work and serve with older adults. We do this by providing leadership development, continuing education, resources, and networking support for members and those who attend an annual conference, and Older Adult Ministry Certification in partnership with Columbia Theological Seminary for those involved in Older Adult Ministry. We have a unique role and an important challenge to address the issues of aging positively and to proactively meet the needs of our aging denomination, congregations, and nation.