

## **MODEL WORSHIP SERVICE FOR OLDER ADULT SUNDAY**

By Rev. Mike Fonfara

Church Leaders,

Please highlight Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup> in your calendars! On that date, the General Assembly asks all congregations to honor their older adult membership with activities celebrating these special Christians. Encourage the congregation's older adults to bring family, friends, and neighbors to this worship celebration. The 2014 Older Adult Sunday holds promise for a meaningful, creative, and fun event for everyone involved!

If May 4<sup>th</sup> is not convenient for recognizing older adult members, please choose another Sunday. The point of such a celebration is to honor older adults and encourage the membership to engage in Christian service with as much commitment as that of these amazing people.

Who is an older adult? This is a tough decision because many aging members are vital, vibrant, and very active in the total life of the congregation. Let the Session decide on the criteria. It is wise to recognize as many people as possible.

To make the day's celebration meaningful, creative, and fun, be sure to bring older adults into the planning process. With an age balanced planning committee, the congregation is off to a great start. Begin planning right now a successful May 4<sup>th</sup> worship hour. You will be glad you did.

Since worship is often the parish's highlight on any Sunday, Older Adult Sunday should be no different. A special worship service on May 4<sup>th</sup> need not present a problem. If you need some ideas, please study the following "simple church" model and adapt anything of interest to your congregation's familiar style. If possible, engage older adults as worship assistants.

Begin the morning by acknowledging the congregation's older adults worshippers by having elders, deacons, or youth group members place a modest corsage on women's wrists, a boutonniere on the gents' coat, or some other visible way of recognizing their presence.

Following the prelude, the pastor, a session member, or other church leader should explain that each year the General Assembly designates the first Sunday in May as Older Adult Sunday. Your congregation happily honors the older adults who bring so much joy and service to the parish.

**Call to Worship:**

Leader: Good morning, worshippers! God's Holy Spirit is in this place.  
Welcome the Holy Spirit into your hearts as we gather for worship.

*Cong. Response: With the power of the Holy Spirit guiding us, we worship God with joy and vigor.*

**Invocation** (Unison Reading):

*Creative God: Thank you for faith that draws us into vibrant and vital service in the name of Jesus Christ. Today, we recognize the tremendous witness of older adults. Their ministries demonstrate that Christian service lasts a lifetime. Inspire us through this worship service to join in ministry with the faithful of all ages as well as places to proclaim your glory while lifting high the name of Jesus. Also, allow us to have some fun in the sharing of our service. We pray for such ministries in Jesus' powerful name. Amen.*

**Hymn Suggestions:**

Here are some suggested hymns appropriate for the day: "Crown Him with Many Crowns," "All Things Bright and Beautiful," and "There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit."

**Prayer of Confession** (Unison Reading):

*Gracious God: You know everything. You know that we sincerely try to live sin-free lives. We are weak. In spite of our good intentions, we still sin in faith and morals. Forgive our foolish ways. In the name of Jesus, please redeem us. Thank you for your mercy! Amen.*

**Assurance of Pardon:**

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(1 John 1:9 RSV) Our sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus. Praise God for his mercy.

**Hymn:**

Here are some hymn suggestions: "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise," "Be Thou My Vision," and "God of Grace and God of Glory."

**Scripture Readings:**

Stuck for a Scripture reading? Here are some that you might consider: 2 Chronicles 10:8-17; Psalm 92:14; Luke 5:39; John 3:4-8; and 1 Peter 5:1-3. The New International Version was used in the selection of these passages.

**Choir Presentation**

**Sermon:** (Your choice of title)

**Prayer of Commitment** (Unison Reading):

*O God: You call us into all forms of Christian service regardless of our ages. You prepare us for the ministries that lie ahead. Our hearts are thrilled by the work we can do to further your kingdom. Thank you for calling us to faith's duties. Amen.*

**Special Moments:**

Here is an excellent spot in worship to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion as well as to recognize older adult congregational leaders, the oldest worshipper, congregational programs using the gifts of older adults, etc.

**Hymn:**

Here are some suggestions for a closing hymn: "The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want (Psalm 23)", "I've Got Peace Like a River," and "Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace."

**Benediction:**

Let us be bold and faithful as we re-enter the community of our homes and outside activities. Regardless of our age, let us serve God and Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit leads us into ministry opportunities. Remember, next week bring a friend to worship. Amen.

Finally, it would be fun to host a marvelous pot-luck meal after worship! With such a follow-up to the worship service, you cannot go wrong.

May God bless all congregations who celebrate the wonderful gift of older adults in their midst!

*Rev. Mike Fonfara, D.Min., serves God's cause as an honorably retired pastor in Tampa Bay Presbytery (Florida) providing spiritual direction, professional storytelling, Christian meditation training, and local studies into the Celtic and Native American cultures from which he comes. He is an experienced workshop leader and brings enthusiasm as well as vitality to the classroom. Mike has served on the POAMN's Executive Committee in various capacities, and also was a member of the Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors (ARMSS).*