

Model Worship Service For Older Adult Sunday

By Rev. Mike Fonfara

Will You Celebrate the Older Adults in Your Parish on May 3rd?

For most Christians, the worship service is the central part of their faith. It presents an opportunity to gather to enjoy the Trinity, embrace friendships, strengthen their faith, grow personally, and enrich important values. Presbyterians know how to worship!

Presbyterians know how to value their older adult members, too! They form the heart of our congregations. Their presence, wisdom, role modeling, resource sharing, and love for the PC(USA) sets the tone for other members.

Each year, the General Assembly schedules the first Sunday in May as a special Sunday to celebrate the joy of our older adult presence and participation. Older Adult Sunday is May 3rd this year. Are you getting ready for this special worship day?

To help congregations prepare for Older Adult Sunday, the following is presented to stimulate worship ideas, help preparation plans, secure resources needed for worship, and fill Sunday, May 3, 2015 worship with joyful praise of God as well as older adult ministries.

Preparation Phase

Here are some ideas you might find helpful.

1. Begin planning now!
2. Gain pastoral and Session support (and funds) to host the Older Adult Sunday focus on Sunday, May 3rd.
3. Recruit a group of motivated members to serve as the planning committee.
4. Have this planning committee choose preferred ways of recognizing older adults and their ministries on May 3rd.
 - a. coffee hour before worship, after worship, or both;
 - b. corsages for the ladies and a lapel flower for the men or other forms of recognition;
 - c. youth group members escort older adults to their pew seats;
 - d. recognize the oldest and longest members in worship;
 - e. provide transportation to and from home for older adults who do not drive; and
 - f. use your imagination to do the things that bring honor to God, say "thank you" to older adults, build fellowship among church participants, make for good worship, and allows people to enjoy the event.
5. Follow this old business adage. "Plan your work and work your plan!"

The point is made. Planning is crucial for any successful celebration.

Worship Resources

Pre-Worship Prayer:

God of All Days, we gather your presence to praise you and honor those among us who have longevity, experience, commitment, grace, and strong faith. Please join us in this celebration of Older Adult Sunday. Thank you for your love and gifts of blessed members. Amen.

Call to Gather: Psalm 42:1-4 (NIV)

¹As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God?

³My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

⁴These things I remember as I pour out my soul:

how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

Let us gather to worship God with joyful praise and festive hearts!

Hymn: (Since there are many hymnals used in PC(USA) congregations, choose a favorite one.)

Invocation and Prayer of Confession:

Almighty God: Look upon us as we join in worship and receive our praise. See the depth of our faith. Know how much we love you. Feel our pain over sins committed and Christian duties left undone. Please have mercy upon us in the name of Jesus. Receive our gratitude now and for all the days of our lives. Amen.

Scripture Text: Psalm 71: 14-18 (NIV)

¹Hasten, O God, to save me; come quickly, Lord, to help me.

²May those who want to take my life be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin be turned back in disgrace.

³May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!" turn back because of their shame.

⁴But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
"The LORD is great!"

Message

Hymn: (Like above, choose a congregational favorite.)

Recognizing Older Adults and Their Ministries

(Done as previously planned.)

Benediction:

Eternal God,

For the gift of this congregation, we thank you.

For the seasons of life, we thank you.

For the honored older adults in our midst, we thank you.

For all of us gathering together to fulfill Christ's mission, we thank you.

Eternal God, we leave with grateful hearts! Amen.

Older Adult Sunday, every first Sunday in May, presents you with an opportunity to recognize a great strength of your parish, those older adults who use their wisdom, energies, and resources to further Christ's mission. Begin planning now to make your congregation's Older Adult Sunday celebration an event that members of all ages will appreciate.

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).