

LEGACY PROJECT

By Helen Morrison

The Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church Legacy Project (Grosse Ile, MI) booklet was published December 2, 2012 titled, *The Wisdom of Our Cherished Mentors*. The booklet was a culmination of the Legacy Project, a program of the Adult Nurture Commission, summer and fall, 2012. The Commission is indebted to Karl Pillemer's book, *30 Lessons for Living: Tried and True Advice from the Wisest Americans*, for the idea for this project and some of the interview questions.

The cover of the booklet is decorated with a cornucopia, a horn of plenty. The cornucopia is filled to overflowing with fruits and vegetables, a symbol of abundant nourishment. It is truly representative of the words found in the booklet. The verse below the cornucopia is:

Happy are those who find wisdom and gain understanding. Proverbs 3:13

Within the pages are the wise, warm and sometimes witty comments of those who have lived long and experienced much. Their 80+ year lives, professional and personal, have taken them through good and bad times. They have learned what matters and what does not, what is wheat and what is chaff. We are the very fortunate recipients of their accumulated wisdom. Their words will enrich our hearts, our minds and sometimes our funny bone. Take in every shared idea, knowing that we are being well-fed and sustained into the future – 'plenty' at its most fulfilling.

INTRODUCTION: The Legacy Committee interviewed 45 members of Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church (GIPC), most in person, several by phone. They were all asked the following set of questions. The responses were gathered and then collated into the following pages. The booklet contains the responses to the questions, a demographic analysis of who makes up our cherished mentors' and a list of notable quotes from the interviews. Several people shared their creative writing and one shared a poem that has guided her life. At the end you will find a list of those who agreed to be interviewed and a list of the interview committee.

LEGACY PROJECT QUESTIONS:

- What would you say you know now about living a happy and successful life that you didn't know when you were twenty?
- Some people say that they have had difficult or stressful experiences but that they have learned important lessons from them. Is that true for you? Can you give examples of what you learned?
- As you look back over your life, do you see any 'turning points,' that is, a key event or experience that changed the course of your life or set you on a different tack?
- Have you learned any lessons regarding staying in good health?
- How has the church impacted your life? What are GIPC's strengths?
- What advice would you give to people about growing older?
- Any further thoughts you'd like people to know?

There you are...the What, Where, When, How, & Why...of doing your own Legacy Project. The interviewers were regular folks in the church and had occasion to really get to 'know' the older folks they worshipped with in a special way. The booklets were presented and the 'mentors' were recognized during a worship service.

I'll close with the note at the end of the booklet: We appreciate all our cherished mentors for the wealth of wisdom they share with us, and we cherish all the younger people in our midst who bring a wealth of new ideas to make us stronger and vibrant. Together we grow and flourish. Praise be to God.

I was most blessed to be among the 45 members (over 80) to be interviewed. I'm also pleased to have had so many (all ages) involved in this wonderful project. In a denomination in which the average age is 62 years of age...what a delight to have such a project - thanks to Karl Pillemer for his guidance - and he doesn't even know about it! As one who has been involved in Older Adult Ministry for more than 30 years, it is a delight for me to have my congregation produce such a wonderful 'legacy'!!

Helen Morrison, is an Elder and has served at all four levels of PCUSA. She was the 2014 Woman of Faith (Prophetic Woman). Helen is an organizing member of POAMN and Past President of POAMN (2011-2014). She currently serves Presbyterian Villages of Michigan Marketing, Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church Mission and Stewardship, and the York Connection (Older Adults).