

# 2021 PROGRAM IDEAS AND RESOURCES

POAMN'S TOUR GUIDE  
FOR CELEBRATING LONGEVITY







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Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network

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## lder Adult Ministries Tour Guide Introduction

By Patricia Baker, POAMN President

The Older Adult Ministries (OAM) Tour Guide is published in the spring of each year and suggests ministry program ideas and resources for the work of older adult ministry in small, medium, and large congregations in the PC(U.S.A.) and the ecumenical church community. The OAM Tour Guide provides a variety of models for ministry to develop, evaluate, and build up programs, services, and ministry opportunities to, for, and with older adults in a congregation or organization.

This valuable tool includes resources and ideas for planning an Older Adult Sunday Service. The PC(U.S.A.) has designated the first Sunday in May as the beginning of Older Adult Week (May 2, 2021). The Older Adult Sunday planning tools can also be used any Sunday. The theme for this year's model worship services is ***Celebrating Longevity Around the World***. You will find included in this guide, four different model worship services celebrating a variety of cultures. POAMN welcomes Mr. John Etheredge, Pastor Jose H. Lopez-Chapa, Rev. Deborah McEachran, and Rev. Keith O. Paige as our guest writers for the 2021 Older Adult Sunday model worship litanies. I pray you will be enriched by each of these culturally diverse model worship services.

The Older Adult Sunday worship service is one that truly celebrates the contributions that all aging adults have made and are currently making in the life of congregations or organizations. If one of this year's services doesn't meet your needs please visit [www.poamn.org](http://www.poamn.org) for past and archived Older Adult Sunday Services in the OAM Planning Guide publications.

Along with the annual guide, POAMN offers a variety of resources and educational opportunities to enhance or start an older adult ministry. Mark your calendars for the POAMN webinar series April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and May 7<sup>th</sup>. The theme of ***Celebrating Longevity Around the World*** will cover celebrating



Indigenous Nations, Hispanic Heritage and Korean Milestone Birthdays. For more information on this series and to register visit [www.poamn.org](http://www.poamn.org), Events section. Recordings of each webinar will be posted on the Events section of the POAMN website.

POAMN's Annual Conference will be held at Presbyterian Mo-Ranch Assembly in Hunt, TX from October 26-28, 2021. The theme for this year is based on Isaiah 46:4a "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you", and is titled ***Vibrant and Faithful Aging: Legacies Across Generations***. For more information on this conference and to register visit [www.poamn.org](http://www.poamn.org), Events section.

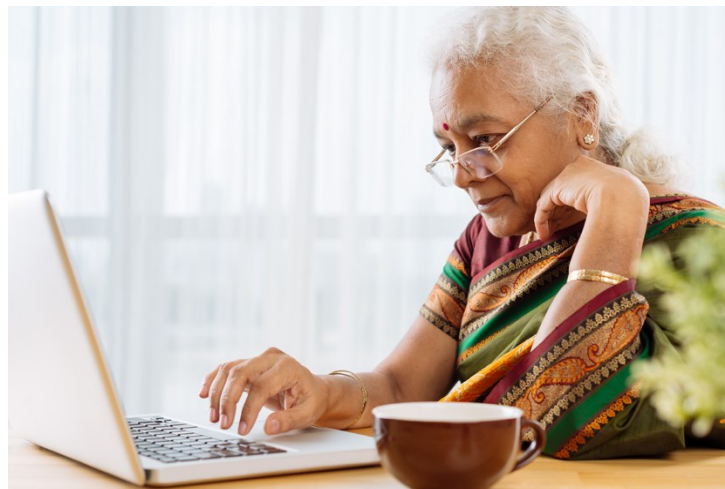


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Other great opportunities for learning include a partnership between POAMN and the Center for Lifelong Learning (CLL) at Columbia Theological Seminary. CLL offers a course of study in older adult ministries comprised of four core courses – *The Process of Aging and Implications for Ministry*, *Teaching for Transformation with Older Adults*, *Theological Reflection in Older Adulthood*, and *Spiritual Formation and Older Adults*. Individuals who complete these four courses and an additional Capstone Project will earn a Certificate in Older Adult Ministry. For more information on the certificate program visit [www.poamn.org](http://www.poamn.org), OAM Courses section.



I hope you will find the contents of this Tour Guide to be helpful as you explore the many articles and incorporate the Older Adult Sunday materials. This guide is made possible through the support and sponsorship of our ministry partners. Their contributions make it possible for this valuable tool to be offered each year. These organizations are listed on pages 46-48. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for future OAM Tour Guides, please contact Rev. Doug Kurtz at [dkurtz@uam.org](mailto:dkurtz@uam.org). We'd love to partner with you!



**Patricia Baker** is serving her first term as POAMN President but has been involved with POAMN since it's inception in the early 1980's. Her career in the field of aging and caregiving spans 5 decades working in public, private, and faith positions. Her love is doing older adult ministry and working with family caregivers. She retired from her government job in the summer of 2018 and is now tithing her time at her local church as the commissioned Director of Older Adult and Caregiver Ministries. She also facilitates three caregiver support groups and is staying active at the local, regional, state and national level serving on boards and as an advisor.  
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## Linking Youth to Homebound Program

By Dotty Ostella

In 2016, after living with her daughter for three years, Eleanor passed away at the age of 100. During those three years, Eleanor hadn't received any visits from fellow church members, no written correspondence other than a yearly stewardship letter, and no phone calls from the pastor or any other church member. It wasn't any single person's fault – the church was seeking new leadership following the retirement of their long-time minister and everyone was doing their best to keep the church running smoothly as a search for a church leader continued, but unfortunately, this meant outreach to the more senior and homebound members of the congregation fell by the wayside.

Four years later, under the leadership of Eleanor's daughter Dotty, the revitalized Board of Deacons at the First Presbyterian Church of Verona developed an inspired outreach program that hoped to keep the homebound involved in the life of the church.

The program, named "Linking Youth to Homebound" (LYTH) is quite simple: once a month, with the written permission of the parent(s), a willing child/youth in the Christian Education program is interviewed. The initial interview questions seek very basic background such as what town the child lives in, how many brothers, sisters, and/or pets they have, their favorite sport, and their year in school. The interviewee then chooses a number from one to fifty. Each number corresponds to a thought-provoking question designed originally by Parents Magazine to facilitate conversation with children. Here are some samples:



1. What do you like daydreaming about?
2. What makes you happy?
3. What have your friends been up to?
4. If you could do anything right now, what would you do?
5. What do you look forward to when you wake up?
6. Do you ever think about renaming the colors of your crayons?
7. What character makes you laugh the most?
8. If you opened a store, what would you sell?
9. What's your Superhero name and what powers do you have?
10. You're at the beach. What's the first thing you do?
11. If you could grow anything in the yard, what would it be?
12. What makes you feel brave?
13. What makes you feel loved?
14. How do you show people you care?



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15. What does it feel like when I hug you?
16. If your stuffed animals could talk, what would they say?
17. If you could give \$100 to a charity, which would you choose?
18. How would you design a treehouse?
19. What do you enjoy giving people?
20. Did you smile or laugh extra today?
21. If you wrote a book, what would it be about?
22. If you drew everything that came to your head, what would you be drawing right now?
23. If you designed clothes, what would they look like?
24. How do you best like helping others?
25. Pretend you're a chef, and tell me about your restaurant. What foods do you serve?
26. What do you think you're going to dream about tonight?
27. What makes you feel thankful?
28. Where would you like to travel? How would you get there?
29. What sounds do you like?
30. If you made a cave in the woods, what would be inside it?
31. If you could ask a wild animal any question, what would you ask?
32. You're outside for a whole day: what would you do?
33. What makes the best fort?
34. What makes you feel energized?
35. If you were in a play, what would your character be like?
36. How do you think animals communicate?
37. What are some of the best things about nature?
38. You're a photographer for a day, what would you take pictures of?
39. What's a memory that makes you happy?
40. What bugs you?
41. Describe a great day. What are you doing that makes it special?
42. What animal would make a great driver?
43. What makes your friends so awesome?
44. What makes you so awesome?
45. Do you have any inventions in your brain?
46. Do you think it'd be fun to learn another language?
47. What are three things you want to do this summer?
48. If you could make up a new holiday, what would it be?
49. What makes someone smart?
50. If you had friends all over the world, how would you keep in touch?

(Parents Magazine)



After choosing and answering three questions, the final question is asked: "If you had one thing you could tell the person who is reading this, what would it be?" The answers are often sweet,



thoughtful, and many times, humorous (think Art Linkletter - "Kids Say the Darndest Things").

The interviewer concludes the session by taking a picture of the participant. A one-page document is created containing the picture and the answers to all the questions. Parents are asked to review the page before it is mailed to the church's homebound recipients.

In addition to the mailing, a bulletin board inside the church meant specifically for LYTH displays the one-page interview for a month until the next interview appears. This component is especially encouraging to the child as they are often delighted by the attention received by other congregation members who take the time to read the posted interview.

While fairly easy to implement, there are a few things to consider when starting a similar program of your own. The safety and comfort level of the child is always the most important thing to keep in mind, so always get parental permission, have a second adult in the room while interviewing, and have a parental review of the interview before it becomes public. (In our experience, some parents have chosen to remove their child's last name from the document.) At no point should any child feel pressured to participate in an activity that makes them feel uncomfortable or vulnerable in a bad way. However, we have found that most of those who are invited to participate open up when they find out they are being celebrated in a way that brings joy to others who aren't able to be physically present in the church with them. As the old adage goes, "The Church is not a building. The Church is not a steeple. The church is not a resting place. The church is the people!"

***Dotty Ostella*** has been a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Verona in New Jersey for 30 years. In that time, she has served as a Deacon, Ruling Elder, choir member and at-large member on several committees. Currently, she serves as a co-moderator of the Deacons and is seeking to re-energize the board with a mission of church and community outreach. While she has found joy in the many ministries within her congregation, her passion goes beyond the church walls and its people, to the four-legged members of God's creation. She and her corgi son Jay are active members of Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Inc. where, as a team, they visit hospitals, nursing homes and hospice homecare patients to provide love and comfort and help relieve loneliness and boredom.





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# Ghana Model Worship Service

By John Etheredge

## WHY I MOVED TO AFRICA AS AN OLDER ADULT.

My story started back in 1989. My wife and I were in lay pastor training class. We heard the call to go to Africa. We were still running our own business and felt very strongly about heading the call. We knew it would not be an overnight decision. We prayed about it and did a lot of talking. We decided we would make the move after retirement, since we were very close to that time. In 1992 my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. That put a hold on going as we knew she would not get the same treatment there as she would in the US. She dealt with it for twenty-five years. She went home to be with the Lord 2017.

May 2018, I was teaching Sunday School and the topic was. "How Does The Holy Spirit Work In The Church Today." About mid-way through the lesson, as clear as I would talk to a friend, the Holy Spirit said to me. "It's time for you to go." I kept talking and about ten minutes later, He said, "John, it's time for you to go to Africa." I said I hear you loud and clear. I shared with the class what had just happened and said that is how the Holy Spirit works in the church today.

I went into the sanctuary for worship and there was a couple with a minute for mission giving us a report about the orphanage they operate in Africa, as our church support them. I said, "I hear you Lord." The closing song was "Here I am Lord Send Me." I was blown away and left church early as it was more than I could stand.

Monday morning I was on the phone talking to Mission Agency in Louisville asking the question, "How do I get to Africa." One year later I arrived in Ghana, West Africa as a Long Term Volunteer, working with the EP Church, Ghana. I am not licensed to do anything but love people. I volunteer to make repairs to tables, chairs and desks at several of the schools operated by the church. I serve as a tutor to at-risk young children who do not go to school or are about to be expelled from school.

I also work with older adults, I serve as a informal counselor helping them to deal with life issues in their older age. Most of these people are left alone as the children work to provide a income for the family. The average age in this group is about 78 years old. I worship with them every Sunday morning. I conduct a Bible Study with them on Thursday afternoon. Half of our time is spent discussing the Bible and the other half is playing Bible games that help them learn about individuals in the Bible. Once a month I have someone come and talk to them about health issues or banking and savings concerns. I planted



tomato seeds and gave each adult a tomato plant to take home and plant. We plan in the spring to have some outings such as picnics in the park, going to a monkey zoo and a water fall. I am instituting a “buddy system” to group several adults together and they will stay in contact with each other and if there is a need someone from the group will contact the church staff.

If your health would allow you to venture outside into the world, I would say it is a life changing experience to go out into the world (somewhere) and do your thing whatever it is. I have committed two years in Ghana and I am trying to decide if I might not make this my permanent home. My job will be encouraging folks in the US to consider mission work. It would be my pleasure to answer any question you have.

## CALL TO WORSHIP ESIUAH ABCBCA

## WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS ALILIKPOWO/

## OPENING PRAYER AKPR GBEDSDORA

The God of all creation, we give you thanks, honor and praise for who you are and what you have done for us. As we come together today for worship, we know all things come from you and we thank you. Let us give our thanks and praise to the creator, let us pray individually with one voice, 1. thank God for life, 2. thank God for family, 3. thank God for our church, 4. thank God for our home, 5. thank God for His son, 6. thank God for the Holy Spirit, and 7. ask God to forgive us our sins. Father you have heard our cry for help, we ask all these things in the name of Jesus. Amen.



## SONG HAJIJI                      HOLY, HOLY, HOLY KCKCE, KCKCE, KCKCE

Kckce, Kckce, Kckce, Mawu reusega tac  
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty

Icdi kanya hadzidzi aca gbcwo  
Early in the morning my song shall rise to thee

Kckce, Kckce, Kckce, Menuvetc la  
Holy, Holy, Holy merciful and mighty  
Mawu dekatc, miasubc wo daa  
God in three person blessed Trinity.



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## SCRIPTURE LESSONS MAWUYA KPUPUI

FIRST READING                      Ecclesiastes 4: 8-12  
NUXEXU GBANTC

SECOND READING                  1 Corinthian 1: 9-10  
NUXEXCLE GBANTC

THIRD READING                  John 17: 20-23  
NUXEXCAL GBANTC



**SERMON**                      FELLOWSHIPING WITH BELIEVERS  
**MAUNNYGA**

**SONG**                      PASS ME NOT, O GENTLE SAVIOR  
**HAJIJI**                      MLCEBS LA MIAFE AKPEDADA

Megata Njunye O, xcla Se nye lidodo  
Pass me not, O gentle Savior  
Ne edze bubvwo gbc la, Meganlcm beo

Hear my humble cry, While on others Thou art calling.  
Xcla Xcla, se nye lidodo  
Do not pass me by.  
Ne edze bubuwo gbc la

**OFFERTORY**  
**HUJORJOR**

**APOSTLE'S CREED**  
**GAWU LA MFELE**

**SONG**                      HOW GREAT THOU ART  
**HAJIJI**                      KEKELI ENYA WO AWU

Yesu Kristo, va kpc mia dzi, Me si kpe  
O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Tsc wo' Gbcgbc kckce na mi!nya miedca  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made  
'ye nazzc ngc kpl wo' nya, kckce wo'  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder  
Ne nafua agbems la mf! lcltc gedc'  
The power throughout the universal displayed.



## CLOSING PRAYER NULOWNU GBEDSDORA

Our Father, our time together today was to give you all the honor and praise. As we leave this place, go with us to continue worshipping you. May we find peace that passes all understanding be with us in all we do and say for the glory of your name. We pray the prayer your son taught us.

## BENEDICATION KAFUKAFUA

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*Please note: There are accent marks to some of the letters we do not have in English. There are some words in English that there are not words for in EWE, so it is as close as I can get. You have a general idea of what it would look like.*



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# Uncharted Journey

By Beth Lindsay Templeton

Talking about an Uncharted Journey seems to be appropriate for where we are now. There's been a transition at the White House. We have been in pandemic mode for months and we do not know how much longer this will go on. We've had floods, wildfires, hurricanes, and tornadoes in 2020. Churches are "doing church" in a different way. We definitely feel we are on an uncharted journey.

When I first began thinking about the idea of uncharted journeys, I was wrestling with the challenges of getting older. I began reading and having discussions with all kinds of people. What I learned showed up in my ninth book, titled *Uncharted Journey*. I am so grateful for God putting these new lessons in front of me because they have been invaluable to me, especially this year.



So now, we'll begin with this story from Chaim Potok. Asher is talking with his father in the book *My Name is Asher*. Asher, an artist, says, "And I drew, too, the way my father once looked at a bird lying on its side against the curb near our house. It was Shabbos and we were on our way back from the synagogue.

"Is it dead, Papa?" I was six and could not bring myself to look at it.

"Yes," I heard him say in a sad and distant way.

"Why did it die?"

"Everything that lives must die."

"Everything?"

"Yes."

"And me?"

"Yes," he said. Then he added in Yiddish, "But may it be only after you live a long and good life, my Asher."

I couldn't grasp it. I forced myself to look at the bird. Everything alive would one day be as still as that bird?

"Why?" I asked.

"That's the way the Ribbono Shel Olom made his world, Asher."

"Why?"

"So life would be precious, Asher. Something that is yours forever is never precious." <sup>[1]</sup>

Life is about loss. We experience all kinds of losses. When we're children, we lose beloved pets,

shoes, and the belief that our parents know everything. As we get older, we lose family members, pets, and friends to death; we lose our athletic abilities...if we ever had any. We lose our ability to get together with extended family over the holidays because of COVID and the need to socially distance. We don't want to acknowledge that loss is part of life. Our culture encourages us to grieve quickly and to "get over" losses we experience. Something that is a significant loss to us, possibly losing a beloved piece of jewelry that has sentimental significance, seems trite to others. But loss is real for us. All kinds of losses. Big ones. Little ones. But loss is still loss. Even our Lord Jesus Christ experienced the loss of dependable followers who could stay awake with him and support him at his trial. He lost his life.

Life is also about letting go. As a kid, we finally let go of our security blanket that we were so attached to. As a teenager, we let go of our hope that a certain someone would ask us out, and we'd live happily ever after. At a certain point in our lives, we let go of our dream to write the great American novel, to be a star on Broadway, to be the perfect spouse, son, daughter, sister, brother, or grandparent. We let go of our expectations that life will always be sunny and trouble-free. We let go of our ambitions that burned in our core when we were twenty. Hopefully, we let go of our false images of ourselves.



Lot's wife couldn't let go (Genesis 19). She had to turn back to the old life, her old way of being, her old form of security, her old friends, and her old home. She could not let go and turned into a pillar of salt. Sometimes some of us, too, turn to pillars of salt when we refuse to let go. Celebrities are prime examples of this refusal to let go. When we see photos of some who've been famous for years, if not decades, we may not even recognize them because they've had so much cosmetic surgery.

We are being challenged to let go of how church used to be, of how school used to be, of how dining out used to be.

These kinds of letting go remind me of Paul's instruction for us when he wrote in Ephesians (4:22-24): "You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God..."

Can we let go of our attachment to what other people think about us? What would our world be like if we could let go of our rigid interpretations of religion, race, politics, and personal spirituality? How wonderful would it be to let go of our negative emotions, some of those feelings we've been lugging around for years? And how different would our personal and communal world be if we didn't feel the need to judge others?



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Can we let go? Shall we become a new creation, as we move through 2021, or shall we become a pillar of salt?

And life is about growth. Other terms for framing our growth opportunities, our new birth might be reappraising, reawakening, rediscovering, and renewing. The growth that can happen after loss, in whatever form that loss takes, can allow us to become something new. We might become that person we were before we learned to accommodate to all the people around us: parents, friends, teachers, pastors, bosses, and neighbors. We can grow into the person whom God is creating us to be.

This growth is not always so easy, as Paul so beautifully reminds us in his words written to the church in Rome: "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5: 1-5).

Let's face it, life has suffering laced into it all along our journey. We know about suffering...the pain of loss, the challenges of letting go. We experience physical suffering in our own bodies. We suffer when we notice what is going on in the world. We suffer because people we love die or suffer themselves. We suffer because long-held dreams disintegrate. We suffer. There is no doubt about that.

But Paul suggests that our suffering is actually a gift from God because suffering produces endurance. Do you believe that to be true? When you think about some of the suffering you have experienced in your life, do you believe that it made you stronger? Can you endure other sufferings better because of what you have already been through?



My oldest friend died several years ago from breast cancer, a six-year journey for her. She experienced all the feelings that one does when fighting a terminal illness. And yet, I watched her deal with past traumas and unresolved issues that had plagued her throughout her adulthood. She experienced an internal healing of her soul even while her body was losing the battle. She died in peace. She had learned to endure and to live even while dying. She was not cured but she was healed. She taught me much about the art and practice of dying.

So, Paul says that suffering leads to endurance and endurance produces character. Do you believe this? How many books have you read or movies have you watched where the protagonist deals with some traumatic experience only to emerge at the end stronger and with



more wisdom, and yes, more character than when the story began? Do you think the disciples developed more character after processing all the events of their walk with Jesus, including his crucifixion and resurrection? As a person of faith, you, too, are a disciple of Jesus, and so the same promises are yours...that suffering leads to endurance which produces character.

Paul goes even further. He says that character produces hope.

Hope, what a wonderful word. During this time of pandemic and many other unknowns, don't we cherish hope? Wouldn't we rather embrace hope than despair? Don't we want to find people to be in our lives now who help nourish our hope, our sense of adventure in this stage of our lives? As Christians aren't we ambassadors of hope because of the reality of Jesus Christ in our lives?



But hope is sometimes hidden from us. Our dreams for ourselves, our family, our church, our country, or our faith fall apart. We can't do things the way we used to. We are anxious about what the future holds for us. We believe that no one will love us when we become freer as the person God means for us to be rather than the person others expect us to be. We wonder what the church will look like next year or even 20 years from now. We live in the past or fear the future rather than live in the present with all its gifts, suffering, joy, endurance, frustration, character, love, fear, and hope. Without hope we give up - we lose our will to fight, to trust, to live.

This journey of loss, letting go, and growth is all part of the plan God created for us human beings. We are born, we live, we die. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we know that life has even more to offer. We can embrace our uncharted journeys because God is with us. Praise be to God!

<sup>[1]</sup> From Chaim Potok, *My Name is Asher* quoted in *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*, edited by Rueben P. Job and Norman Shawchuck, (pp 92-93).

**Beth Lindsay Templeton** is among other things a writer, poverty advocate, workshop/retreat/small group leader, Presbyterian Church U.S.A. minister, daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, friend, neighbor, reader, crafter, and porch sitter. She lives in Greenville, SC. ([beth@oewo.org](mailto:beth@oewo.org))





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# Loneliness and Belonging

by Rev. Kathy Dale McNair

Loneliness is on the rise in America, in part due to the social isolation imposed on us by the global pandemic. It is putting a strain on our emotional and mental health.

The CDC reports that loneliness is becoming an epidemic in the older adult population. Nearly one fourth of adults aged 65 and older are considered to be socially isolated. Loneliness can shorten one's life and affect the quality of life. A sense of belonging can enrich one's life and add more years to one's life than might otherwise be expected.



Loneliness is a natural part of the human condition. Some emotions that are associated with loneliness are sadness, loss, grief, and anxiety. Other factors contributing to loneliness that are specific to older adults are loss of a spouse, loss of a job, living alone, fewer meaningful connections, limited resources, limited transportation, and compromised health.

Emotions that surface in response to any of these situations can create stress and build up pressure. Unrelieved grief over disappointments and losses can open the door where loneliness can move in. Protracted loneliness might turn into despair, and despair might turn into depression. When depression sets in, it can become a more serious mental health condition and professional help may be needed to restore emotional or mental health.

The opposite of loneliness is belonging. Belonging eases the ache we feel in our heart when we feel lonely. Belonging can be found in the close connection of family or friends, in a work setting, on a sports team, even when we feel allegiance to a nation. Belonging can be found in fellowship, worship, and common activities in a faith community. People sometimes refer to "my church family" or "my church home." These references indicate a feeling of belonging.

The church is uniquely positioned to cultivate a sense of belonging in others. Community is a natural part of a church's culture. Enjoying fellowship brings people together in a friendly way. Having activities to share gives a person meaning. Having others to relate to warms one's heart and refreshes the soul.

Members of a church can learn how to approach others as a companion. In so doing, the person



they are relating to may feel that their burden is lighter, and their spirit is being restored.

Your faith community may want to address the issue of loneliness and intentionally focus on helping people know that they belong. Knowing how to come alongside someone who may be feeling lonely can help relieve their suffering and renew their sense of connecting to others.

## Here are a few Companionship skills that you can learn:

- Approaching someone who may be suffering from loneliness requires a delicate, sensitive first contact. Learn how to approach another with careful introductions and gentle inquiries.
- Use reflective listening to discover feelings and themes in the conversations between the two of you.
- Be open to a person's spiritual story - listen for words of faith, hope and love.
- Honor their feelings and experiences.
- Understand the meaning of empathy, sympathy, and compassion.
- Be willing to faithfully walk with this person over time.

These skills are drawn from the **Companionship Workshop** which offers skills on listening, companionship, relationship building and boundaries.

Another course that helps equip people who want to become a companion is **Restoring Wholeness: Spiritual Support for Mental Health**. This course helps individuals understand themselves better so they can better understand the person they are companioning. The topics in the course are:

- loneliness and belonging
- loss and meaning
- grief and growth
- anxiety and peace
- depression and vitality

Exploring these topics helps each person understand how these emotions can challenge and ultimately contribute to a sense of wholeness. When you understand yourself well, loneliness diminishes. Then you can feel like you belong.

Quaker author, Parker Palmer, says "Wholeness does not mean perfection: it means embracing brokenness as an integral part of life." This concept helps people understand that loneliness and other rough patches in life are an important part of the whole. Having someone who is a companion helps both people look at challenges with fresh eyes.



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The pastoral care team, social workers, chaplains, and deacons in a faith community will benefit greatly from these courses. Lay people will also benefit. The more people who are skilled, the more people there are to reach out to someone who may want a companion. Becoming a companion strengthens one's faith and the belief that God has a purpose for us all.

Fred Rogers of the TV program, Mr. Rogers Neighborhood, once said, "In a crisis, look to the helpers." The helpers are often quiet and effective responders to a difficult situation. Equipping members of your faith community to be helpers in any setting can avert crises and strengthen the weave of your faith community's fabric.

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References:

**Pathways2promise.org**

<https://www.thecompanionshipmovement.org/>

The purpose of **Companionship Training** is to develop the capacity of congregations and communities to support recovery and wellness. This happens by growing the ability to share the journey of emotional healing with one another. Companionship develops as one person responds to the suffering of another by helping to support healing and wellness. We practice companionship by walking alongside someone, sitting on a park bench, talking at a meal program or in a shelter, welcoming a person to your house of worship.

**Faith Hope & Good Mental Health**

<https://www.faithhopegoodmentalhealth.org/>

The **Restoring Wholeness: Spiritual Support for Mental Health** course explores challenging and restorative emotions. Spiritual practices are woven throughout the sessions to provide comfort and inspiration, to anchor walking through difficult times with another. The group of participants grow as they share with one another. Understanding one's own struggles helps participants be more comfortable being with others who may be living with mental health challenge.

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Both programs are Zoom friendly. Every congregation should have a person who understands Zoom, someone who can help or give instructions to those who might need help so they can participate in these or any Zoom program.

***Rev. Kathy Dale McNair** is a specialized minister in the PCUSA focusing on mental health. She is the founder of **Faith, Hope & Good Mental Health** ministry. She is also a consultant to churches wanting to start mental health ministries.*

***Restoring Wholeness** is their new curriculum which helps people understand themselves and see how their emotions promote good mental health or can lead to mental health challenges. This curriculum addresses the strain everyone is feeling due to COVID. It is adapted for Zoom. For more information, go to: [www.fhgmh.org](http://www.fhgmh.org).*



## Musical Morphine

Easing pain, yours and others, with music.  
Tips from a therapeutic musician.

By Robin Russell Gaiser, MA, CMP

“My father was dying.

On a whim I brought my guitar to the hospital and sang and played for him. He was drugged but still in severe pain, confused, disoriented. But I noticed something curious happening each time I offered him music.

His hands, wrinkled and blotchy, his taught knuckles clutching the bed railings, loosened their grip. His shoulders and chest, held rigidly in place against his discomfort, now relaxed. And his wispy breathing deepened and slowed.

I saw his contorted face yield to a soft expression and his eyes close as he descended into a restful, welcome sleep. On occasion, he sang with me, smiling with the recognition of so many tunes he had taught me.

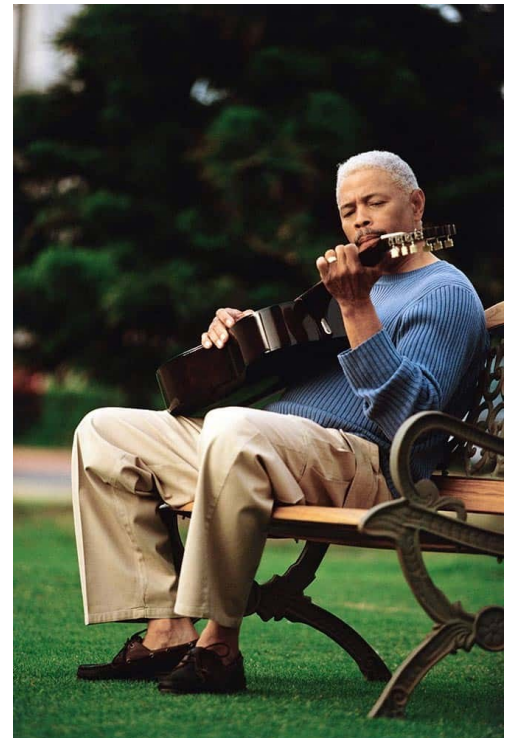
Did he respond because I was his daughter, because I knew his favorite music?

Probably.

But there was something more.”

Thus begins my first book, *MUSICAL MORPHINE: Transforming Pain One Note at a Time* (Pisgah Press; 2016), and my first noteworthy experience with music and its profound effects on the human body - and the mind and the spirit; something I knew to be true over sixteen years of employment and volunteering as a Certified Music Practitioner.

A year after my father’s death, which coincided with my husband’s and my retirement from the Fairfax County School system in Northern Virginia, a program for certification as a therapeutic musician literally dropped in my lap. After two and a half years of study with Music for Healing and Transition, Inc. ([MHTP.org](http://MHTP.org)), which included eighty five hours of classes, assigned reading, exams, practicum and internship, I pinned on my CMP badge and began working at a new twelve-bed Hospice and an eighty-eight bed rehabilitation and nursing facility.







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My training and my God-given musical gifts for memorization and improvisation, plus years of singing and playing multiple instruments, as well as a deep faith rooted in prayer, proved to be the right mix for offering live, one-on-one acoustic bedside or chairside music to critically and chronically ill, elderly, and dying persons in the settings mentioned above as well as hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living and memory care units, and private homes.

“Music Heals” is the motto of MHTP. The body is a mesh of receptors that respond to music, which is pure vibration. Bones, fluids, skin, organs vibrate to music. Lower pitched music vibrates more slowly while higher pitched music vibrates much faster. Additionally, we know that the human heart, which influences respiration, will match the rhythm in music. This is known as the *entrainment principle*.

For your own self-care or the care of others with music, using merely pitch and rhythm as the starting point, you can tailor the listening or playing or singing of music to the situation that presents itself. In general, lower pitched music with a slow beat can evoke relaxation, sleep, deep breathing, release of emotions. Conversely, higher pitched music with a fast beat can rev up, stimulate, energize, encourage movement.

For persons with dementia, familiar music with recognizable melody and lyrics and a steady rhythm ( 4/4 or 3/4 ) in any key, often evokes recall, singing or playing, personal stories, presence. Perhaps, you have had the privilege of witnessing this phenomena. It never ceases to bring me much-needed joy in settings where life (and my work) can be difficult.



Anxiety, stress, and pain beg for a different approach. Low-pitched, harmonious, repetitive music is a good beginning, but the miracle is in the rhythm...or lack of it. The suspension of rhythm resulting in a seamless flow of melodious music can float us above these maladies.

With the actively dying we are often mistaken when we think they would like to hear familiar music, their favorites. If they ask for it, of course comply. But remember, dying is about letting go of this world and moving on to the next. We read that it is hard work. A classically non-responsive dying person is better-served with music with no recognizable rhythm, melody or lyrics to allow them to let go of the here and now, to allow their hearts to beat irregularly (no entrainment), their minds to wander out and away, and their spirits to see the light, to see God.

There are so many variables within the basic principles presented above. In fact, my opening story of my father is one such variation. He was dying, but I sang and played familiar music with a steady beat and recognizable melody and lyrics. But it worked.

There are so many other teachings and demonstrations on this subject. (I had hoped to present them to you in person at your conference, which was the pre-pandemic plan). Elements like volume, timbre, instrumentation, interval, mode, resonance; how to musically work with depression; the response, besides that of the patient, of family, friends, staff when music is present; humming, toning and chanting.

Certainly, we practice our faith with the goal of a better world. I pray the sprinkling of insight offered above from my small corner of this world, will assist you with your own pursuit of wellness and that of others. (Don't forget prayers for assistance).

To that end, I leave you with a favorite quote of mine from the *Boston Globe*. "As a universal language, music's calming gifts of peace, hope and encouragement can open a healing space for people dealing with the difficulties and mysteries of life and death."



**Robin Russell Gaiser, MA, CMP**, holds a BA in English from The College of William and Mary, an MA in psychology from Marymount University, and a certificate in therapeutic music from Music for Healing and Transition, Inc. Besides being a vocalist and multi-instrumentalist nearly all her life, Robin is also the author of two books, *MUSICAL MORPHINE: Transforming Pain One Note at a Time* (Pisgah Press; 2016), and *OPEN FOR LUNCH* (Pisgah Press; 2018), as well as short stories and short vignettes. In addition, Robin is a folk artist who creates genre pieces reflecting Southern Appalachian culture. Robin and her husband of fifty-one years, live in Asheville, NC. They enjoy three grown children and three young grandchildren. They are members of Grace Covenant Presbyterian

Church in Asheville. You may enjoy learning more on Robin's website, [www.robingaiser.com](http://www.robingaiser.com). She welcomes your contact via her website or email, [robingaiser@gmail.com](mailto:robingaiser@gmail.com), or by cell phone, 828-301-4532.



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## Liturgia Para el Día del Señor

### Llamamiento a la Adoración

*Salmo 100:4-5*

Vengan a sus puertas, entren en su templo,  
cantando himnos de alabanza y gratitud; ¡Denle  
gracias, bendigan su nombre!

**Porque el Señor es bueno; su amor es eterno  
y su fidelidad no tiene fin.**

**Himno – ¡Santo! ¡Santo! ¡Santo! Señor  
omnipotente | Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God  
Almighty! (Glory to God, #1)**

### Oración de Adoración

Dios trino, al reconocer tu grandeza y tu  
presencia en nuestras vidas, no podemos  
hacer otra cosa que no sea darte loor y cantar  
alabanzas a tu nombre. Alabado seas, Dios  
creador, que nos das la vida y que sostienes  
al mundo con tu amor. Bendecido seas, nuestro  
Señor Jesucristo que pagaste nuestra deuda  
y nos diste salvación. Glorificado seas, Espíritu  
Santo, que nos consuelas y nos haces sentir  
tu presencia en todo lo que hacemos y decimos.  
Nuestra adoración sincera será siempre para  
Aquel cuya gracia es inquebrantable  
e inmensurable. A Dios sea la gloria por todos  
los siglos. **Amén.**

### Confesión y Perdón

*1 Juan 1:8–9*

Si decimos que no tenemos pecado,  
nos engañamos a nosotros mismos,  
y la verdad no está en nosotros.  
Si confesamos nuestros pecados,  
Dios es justo para perdonar nuestros pecados,  
y limpiarnos de toda maldad.  
Con confianza en la misericordia de Dios,  
confesemos nuestros pecados.

## Service for the Lord's Day

### Opening Sentences

*Psalm 100:4-5*

Enter the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving and  
the courts of God with praise;

Give thanks and bless God's holy name!

**For the Lord is good; God's love is eternal,  
and God's faithfulness has no end.**

**Hymn – ¡Santo! ¡Santo! ¡Santo! Señor  
omnipotente | Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God  
Almighty! (Glory to God, #1)**

### Gathering Prayer

Triune God, knowing your greatness and your  
presence in our lives, we praise you and sing  
to your holy name. Praise be to you, God our  
creator, for you give us life and sustain this world  
with your love. Blessed are you, our Lord Jesus  
Christ, for you redeem us from our sins and give  
us salvation. Glory to you, Holy Spirit, for you  
console us and make your presence known  
in all we say and do. Our sincere praise will  
always be for the One whose grace is unfailing  
and immeasurable. To God be the glory now and  
forever.

**Amen.**

### Confession and Pardon

*1 John 1:8–9*

If we say we have no sin,  
we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us.

But when we confess our sins, God who is  
faithful and just will forgive us our sins  
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Trusting in God's grace,  
let us confess our sin.



## *Salmo 51*

Por tu amor, oh Dios, ten compasión de nosotros; por tu gran ternura, borra nuestras culpas.

**En tu inmenso amor y misericordia, perdónanos, oh Dios.**

Reconocemos que hemos sido rebeldes, nuestros pecados no se borran de nuestra mente.

**En tu inmenso amor y misericordia, perdónanos, oh Dios.**

Contra ti hemos pecado, y sólo contra ti, haciendo lo malo, lo que tú condenas.

**En tu inmenso amor y misericordia, perdónanos, oh Dios.**

Oh Dios, ¡pon en nosotros un corazón limpio!  
¡Danos un espíritu nuevo y fiel!

**Por Jesucristo, nuestro Señor. Amén.**

## *2 Corintios 5:17*

Cualquiera que está en Cristo nueva criatura es; el pasado ha quedado atrás; todo vuelve a ser puro y nuevo.

Amigas y amigos, crean en las buenas nuevas del evangelio:

**En Jesucristo hemos recibido el perdón por nuestros pecados.**

Porque Dios nos ha perdonado en Cristo, compartamos señales de reconciliación y de paz.

La paz de Cristo sea con ustedes.

**Y también contigo.**

## *Psalm 51*

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions.

**In your abundant love and mercy, forgive us, O God.**

For we know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us.

**In your abundant love and mercy, forgive us, O God.**

Against you, you alone, have we sinned, and done what is evil in your sight.

**In your abundant love and mercy, forgive us, O God.**

Create in us a clean heart, O God!

Place a new and right spirit within us!

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## *2 Corinthians 5:17*

Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.

The past is left behind;

everything has become fresh and new.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us share signs of reconciliation and peace.

The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**







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### Oración de Iluminación

Dios Santo, por el poder de tu Espíritu, revélanos hoy tu voluntad a través de tu palabra leída y proclamada. Ayúdanos a entender tu obra creadora, redentora y consoladora, y condúcenos al mundo, en la abundancia de tu Espíritu, a proclamar, bautizar y enseñar en el nombre de Jesucristo nuestro Señor. Amén.

### Lectura Bíblica

1 Pedro 5:1-3 | Nueva Versión Internacional

<sup>1</sup> A los ancianos que están entre ustedes, yo, que soy anciano como ellos, testigo de los sufrimientos de Cristo y participe con ellos de la gloria que se ha de revelar, les ruego esto: <sup>2</sup> cuiden como pastores el rebaño de Dios que está a su cargo, no por obligación ni por ambición de dinero, sino con afán de servir, como Dios quiere. <sup>3</sup> No sean tiranos con los que están a su cuidado, sino sean ejemplos para el rebaño.

Esto es palabra de Dios.

**Te alabamos, Señor.**

### Devocional

Cuando era chico, me encantaba ir a visitar a mi *Abuelita Concha* en su casita en México. Visitar a mi abuelita significaba que tenía la oportunidad de ver a mis tíos y primos, significaba ver a nuestro equipo de fútbol favorito en la televisión, ¡y también significaba comer comida auténtica y realmente increíble! Me encantaba la comida de mi abuelita, ¡era la mejor! Una cosa que siempre me pareció extraña, sin embargo, fue que mi abuelita pasaba mucho tiempo barriendo su porche y limpiando los pisos en su casa. Incluso cuando envejecía y su artritis hacía difícil moverse, mi abuelita continuó barriendo y trapeando.

### Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, by the power of your Spirit, reveal your will to us today through your word, read and proclaimed. Help us to understand your creative, redemptive, and consoling work, and lead us into the world, filled with your Spirit, to proclaim, baptize, and teach in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Scripture

1 Peter 5:1-3 | New International Version

<sup>1</sup> To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: <sup>2</sup> Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

The word of God.

**We praise you, O Lord.**

### Devotional

When I was little, I loved going to visit my Abuelita Concha at her house in Mexico. Visiting my grandmother meant that I got to see a lot of my cousins, it meant watching our favorite soccer team on tv, and it meant eating some really amazing food! I loved my grandmother's cooking, it was the best! One thing that I always found odd though, was that my grandmother spent a lot of time sweeping her porch and mopping the tile floors in her house. Even as she got older and her arthritis made it difficult to move, my grandmother would constantly sweep and mop.



Como un chiquito, no lo entendí. ¿Por qué pasó tanto tiempo haciendo eso? ¿No debería estar descansando, levantando sus pies? Pero ahora como un adulto, como un padre, veo que había muchos motivos por qué mi abuelita pasó tanto tiempo barriendo y trapeando. Mi abuelita pasó mucho tiempo limpiando porque, bueno, cuando tienes piso de azulejos y una gran familia, los pisos recogen una gran cantidad de suciedad! Pero más que eso, mi abuelita barrió y trapó como una muestra de amor y hospitalidad para nosotros, su rebaño. Ella no lo hizo por obligación, ni por dinero ni ambición, sino lo hizo como una forma de servirnos, y lo más importante, como una manera de mostrarnos amor. Ella fue un ejemplo para todos sus hijos y nietos, a veces sin saberlo! Cuando era adolescente y comenzaba en mi primer trabajo, una de mis tareas era trapear los pisos de la cocina al final de la noche. No necesitaba mucha capacitación y muy a menudo mostraba a los nuevos trabajadores cómo barrer y trapear adecuadamente. Resulta que aprendí cómo, por ver a mi abuela barriendo y trapeando todos esos años. Nuestra lección de las escrituras de 1 Pedro nos recuerda la importancia de cómo la edad y la sabiduría nos ayudan a cuidar mejor uno a otro. Cuando somos jóvenes, muchas veces no podemos ver o entender completamente el significado de las cosas y vemos las cosas con una ingenuidad en particular. Con la edad y la experiencia viene la sabiduría, el tipo de sabiduría que nos ayuda a cuidar al rebaño de Dios. Doy gracias a Dios por mi abuelita y su amoroso cuidado, y por todos los que me han pastoreado en este camino de fe, porque su fe y amor perdurables me han mostrado el amor de Dios. Gracias a Dios. Amén.

As a young child, I didn't understand it. Why did she spend so much time doing that? Shouldn't she be resting, kicking her feet up? But now as an adult, as a parent, I see that there were many reasons why my grandmother spent so much time sweeping and mopping. My grandmother spent a lot of time mopping because, well, when you have tile floor and a big family, the floors collect a lot of dirt! But more than that, my grandmother swept and mopped as a show of love and hospitality for us, her flock. She didn't do it out of obligation, or for money or ambition, but rather, she did it as a way of serving us, and more importantly, as a way to show us love. She was an example for all of her kids and grandkids, sometimes without even knowing it! When I was a teenager and started at my first job, one of my tasks was to mop the kitchen floors at the end of the night. I didn't need much training and quite often I would show new workers how to properly sweep and mop. As it turns out, I learned how - from watching my grandmother all those years. Our scripture lesson from 1 Peter reminds us of the importance of how age and wisdom help us to take better care of others. When we are young, we often can't see or don't fully understand the significance of things and see things with a particular naivety. With age and experience comes wisdom, the type of wisdom that helps us care for God's flock. I thank God for my grandmother and her loving care, and for all those who have shepherded me along the way on this journey of faith, for their enduring faith and love have shown me God's love. Thanks be to God. Amen.





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### Oraciones de Intercesión

Dios de paz, venimos ante ti dando gracias por el regalo de este día y por la luz y la promesa que ofreces al mundo. Oramos por la paz para este planeta tan lleno de problemas. En donde haya personas que se miren unas a otras con rencor y odio en sus corazones, enséñanos maneras de reconciliar nuestras diferencias. En donde haya familias separadas por el enojo y las frustraciones, danos el conocimiento del amor que sobrepasa la desilusión y la rebelión. En donde haya naciones separadas por luchas internas o amargura en contra de sus vecinos, enséñanos nuevas maneras de vivir en paz y armonía. En donde haya personas que luchen consigo mismas, concédeles tu paz que sobrepasa todo entendimiento humano. En donde haya señales y semillas de paz, por más pequeñas que éstas sean, ayúdanos a celebrar su presencia, a estimular su desarrollo y brindarles cuidado, y a regocijarnos en su crecimiento. En el nombre de Cristo, el Príncipe de Paz, oramos.

### El Padre Nuestro

Con la certeza de ser hijos e hijas de Dios, oramos:

Padre nuestro que estás en los cielos, santificado sea tu nombre. Venga tu reino. Hágase tu voluntad, como en el cielo, así también en la tierra. El pan nuestro de cada día, dánoslo hoy. Y perdónanos nuestras deudas como también perdonamos a nuestros deudores. Y no nos dejes caer en tentación, mas líbranos del mal; porque tuyo es el reino, el poder, y la gloria, por todos los siglos. Amén.

### Prayers of Intercession

God of peace, we come before you giving thanks for the gift of this day and for the light and promise you offer to the world. We pray for peace for this planet so filled with problems. Where people look at one another with bitterness and hate in their hearts, teach us ways to reconcile our differences. Where families are separated by anger and frustration, give us love that overcomes disillusion and rebellion. Where nations fight internally or with one another, teach us to live in peace and harmony. Where individuals are overcome with problems, give them your peace that surpasses human understanding. Where there are signs and seeds of peace, tiny though they may be, help us to celebrate their presence, nurture them with vigilance, and rejoice in their growth. In the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, we pray.

### Lord's Prayer

And now, with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.



**Himno - Tú Has Venido a la Orilla | Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore (Glory to God, #721)**

## Bendición y Comisión

2 Corintios 13:13

La gracia del Señor Jesucristo, el amor de Dios, y la comunión del Espíritu Santo sean con todo el pueblo de Dios ahora y siempre. **¡Aleluya!**

Hermanos y hermanas, manténganse alertas y firmes en la fe. Tengan valor y firmeza. Todo lo que hagan, háganlo con amor. Animen a quienes están desanimados, ayuden a quienes están débiles, y tengan paciencia con todo el mundo. **Demos gracias a Dios.**

*Estas ayudas se preparan siguiendo el orden del servicio o culto del día del Señor cómo es presentado en el Book of Common Worship © 2018 Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville KY.*

## **Comunidad Presbiteriana La Trinidad (CPT)**

is a worshipping community serving the Hispanic community in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. CPT serves, organizes and supports Hispanic families of Anne Arundel County who have just arrived in the United States by providing a range of services currently not provided in the community. CPT has a garden project which offers community members an opportunity to grow healthy, organic food to supplement their food resources as well as provide an outlet to share with the greater community.

**Pastor Jose H. Lopez-Chapa** is the current pastor of CPT. Pastor Lopez-Chapa is a native Texan, of direct Mexican descent. Pastor Lopez-Chapa is married with two young children, Noah and Clara. Pastor Lopez-Chapa has been serving CPT since September 2019.

**Hymn - Tú Has Venido a la Orilla | Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore (Glory to God, #721)**

## Blessing and Charge

2 Corinthians 13:13

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and always. Alleluia!

Brothers and sisters, keep alert and stand firm in the faith. Be courageous and strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Strengthen the faint of heart, support those who are weak, and have patience with everyone. **Thanks be to God.**

*These liturgical helps are prepared by the Office of Spanish Language Resources of the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, Louisville, KY.*





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# Using COVID to Re-Generate Love

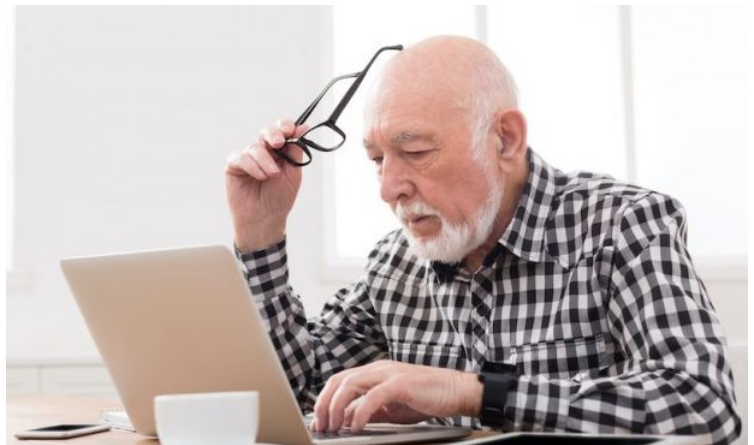
“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love”  
1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV)

*In the following article, former POAMN Vice President, Chris Pomfret, offers a perspective for discussion groups within a Church to explore, be it physically or virtually.*

No matter how old we are and how much wisdom we have gained from our lives thus far, 2020 taught, or starkly reminded, all of us is that we can't take anything for granted. The things that we thought were “always there”, such as visiting grandchildren whenever we wanted, or spending time with loved ones every day in retirement homes, were suddenly snatched from us now more than a year ago. And, understandably, all of us have reacted to these unforeseen and imposed changes in different ways. Often, children are more resilient to these changes than we imagine (I think of Cold War sheltering under school desks or hiding in closets from active shooters, and how the children just “do it”) but, for us older humans, our hearts hurt for having to see our infants go through such experiences. Similarly, but at the other end of the scale, our hearts hurt for seniors in memory care units who perhaps don't understand why their grown children are not visiting or are struggling to adapt to a radically different routine in their retirement home.

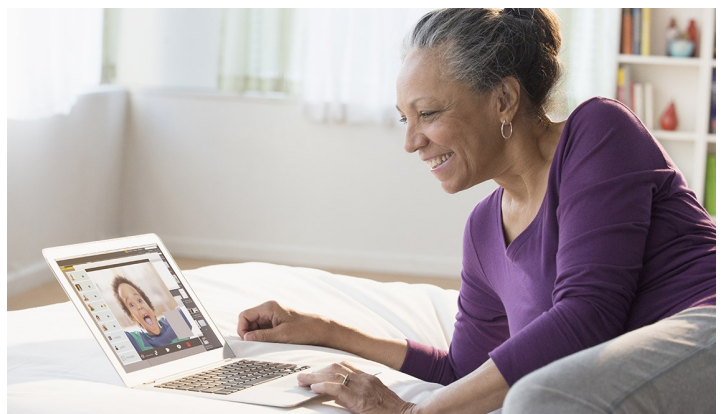
How do we all cope with these sudden disruptions in our life? We have been, I believe, affected in several ways by the upheaval. First there are the physical changes to our daily life, such as the change in routines, the loss of hitting the fitness center several times a week or going to the library, or meeting friends for coffee every Wednesday. The chaos also messes with our mental state; we struggle to remember what day of the week it is, or have to face the challenge of adapting to working from home, with no break-in/familiarization period? Finally, there is the emotional impact; we each have reacted in our own and vastly different ways to the myriad of sudden changes that we've all experienced. We are processing the uncertainty as to when or if *the world*, not just our nation, will return to the normal we once knew. There is a plethora of things circling in our minds, whether we know it or not, such as our job security or the sudden fragility of our retirement income, or whether a visit to the hairdresser will ever become the pleasurable experience it once was. So much that we took for granted, because it was always there and “normal”, was confiscated from us and the enormity of scale of this confiscation has deeply impacted us, and our loved ones, in so many ways, some of them perhaps that we don't yet feel. How many of you have noticed a difference in your dream patterns since the pandemic?

I heard several people earlier in the year say that they have been dreaming more vividly and strangely, and that is still true for me. While as a technical person it's fascinating for me to wonder and explore why, it also is an example of how our mental and emotional states are being impacted, whether we know it or not.



It is basic human nature to survive, especially in times of adversity or unusual circumstances but, for those of us in our Third Thirties, I'd like to proffer a perspective to help us thrive and, in so doing, help others to do likewise. Aside from our jobs and financial aspects, I would suggest that most of our worries and energies revolve around concern for our loved ones as well as ourselves. And the key word in the last sentence is love. Perhaps focusing on love as the key to getting through this indeterminate period of time is our rock. Fortunately, we are old enough to remember how to write letters and cards, so this can become the "re-newed" way of sending love to our parents or friends in retirement homes. A staff member will read the letter to your loved ones and get them to talk about the pictures that you enclosed; it's not the perfect solution but, in times of adversity we adapt and devise new "80%" solutions. For our children and grandchildren, we are forced to discover and unearth a new aspect of love that we've perhaps not used in the past. Family discussions about the innumerable issues that have upturned our lives in 2020 can become a new way of bonding. Deep, meaningful conversations where we express our heartfelt concerns will ensue, focused on the new common world enemy. For some families, this bonding will perhaps be a new and impactful element because, pre-COVID, everyone was busy running in many different directions whereas, now, the sports, work travel, human interaction with friends after school and countless other frenetic activities have evaporated. And, from this new family dynamic, strength within the family will likely increase and relationships will grow in ways not previously experienced. I am reminded of the adage that, so often, there is goodness hidden within adversity. The challenge for us all is to find the goodness and nurture it. If we let love predominate and be at the center of all that we do during this pandemic, then love will certainly endure and be our mental, physical and emotional savior, for ourselves and our loved ones. And, for those of us in our Third Thirties, we are called to lead this love-based initiative because we have a greater experience of life thus far and the wisdom to know how to do it. Moreover, what a lasting legacy we will leave for our younger family members.

COVID has unwittingly brought us an opportunity, and a reminder, to show how love can be the bedrock in everything we do, whether life is normal or not. As a result, we and our loved ones will hopefully gain a new and permanent perspective on what's really important in life and not take everything we have around us (people, health, things...) for granted. So, each morning as we wake up and reach into our virtual popcorn bucket of remaining days and pick one out, we can not only gratefully embrace the day but also contemplate how we can use plain and simple love to help our fellow humans get through these unprecedented times.



**Chris Pomfret** is an active member of POAMN since 2014 and founded "The Third Thirty", an initiative which promotes insights for aging wisely, gracefully and spiritually. He is a 2018 graduate of the POAMN Certification Course in Older Adult Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary and lives in New Orleans.





CELEBRATING LONGEVITY  
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# You Are Not Alone, Speakers Bring Messages of Hope and Healing to Blowing Rock Congregation

By Rev. Russ Kerr & Anne Tarbutton

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. Where can I go from your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?*  
Psalm 139 vs. 1-2, 7

In March 2020 (as we are sure you are aware) churches moved from bustling houses of worship to meeting primarily online through Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube platforms. Pastors scrambled to learn video production and editing while congregation members rushed to learn how to get on Zoom. All for what we thought would be two weeks. Then one month. Then until Easter. Then maybe Christmas. But if your church is like ours, we continue to worship and study scripture primarily in an online format hopeful for the day we can return to our historic stone sanctuary to safely be with one another.



While still stunned, our Congregational Care Committee in conjunction with the Christian Education and Visiting Scholars committees worked together to create opportunities outside of worship to study scripture, hear from various speakers, and pray for one another.

From this was born in October 2020 a five-week, one hour (9:30-10:30 a.m.), Sunday Morning Scholar series based on the book, *Being Mortal...Medicine and What Matters in the End*, by Atul Gawande. As it turns out, it was a “COVID blessing” to be able to invite speakers from all over the southeast and US from their homes into each of ours to hear about a subject that is sometimes hard to talk about: death and dying. The speakers included:

- Dr. Farr A. Curlin, Josiah C. Trent Professor Medical Humanities in the Trent Center for Bioethics, Humanities and History of Medicine; Co-Director of the Theology, Medicine and Culture Initiative at Duke Divinity School, and Senior Fellow in Duke’s Kenan Institute for Ethics.
- Rev. Melanie Childers, Director of Pastoral Care at Watauga Medical Center in Boone, NC.
- Dr. Dale Hamrick, Geriatrician.
- Pat Baker, President of POAMN, Older Adult Ministries and Caregiving.
- Rumple Memorial Church’s Pastor Kathy Beach, Associate Pastor Russ Kerr, & Congregational Care Committee Members shared about their own personal experiences with end-of-life care.

This study sparked meaningful discussion among speakers and participants. The idea for the series came as a response from congregation members curious about caring for elderly parents (or a close

family member), spouses, and themselves at the end of life. Each week approximately fifty members attended the series via Zoom. The link to the class remained the same week-to-week to make it easy for people to log on. After the discussion, the pastors hosted a brief “coffee and catch up” on the same Zoom link before the 11am service premiered on Facebook and Youtube. Additionally, resources were offered to participants in the discussion including the [PBS Frontline Documentary](#), study info from each speaker, and book discussion questions from UNC.

Lastly, Rumple’s Congregational Care Committee was inspired from this series to create an original artwork (by church member Debbie Brenner) notecard *You Are Not Alone* to share with church members, community organizations such as the local hospital, area agency on aging, and hospice. Our intention with this project was to shine a little light in our corner of this world while keeping those around us healthy and safe.



It is our hope that in sharing these practical ideas for ministry in the time of COVID with POAMN that you will take or use this same or a similar model to your own congregation and that it will be helpful to you in your own ministry. You are each a blessing!

**Rev. Russ Kerr** serves as the Associate Pastor at Rumple Memorial in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. In his free time he enjoys hiking and reading.

**Deacon Annie Tarbutton** serves as a Co-Chair for the Congregational Care Committee at Rumple. In her free time she enjoys spending time with family and young grandsons, traveling in her Airstream with dogs, international travel cruising (pre and post COVID), and kayaking.





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# Questions for Grandparents to Ask Grandchildren to Get to Know Them Better During this Coronavirus Pandemic

Created by Lillian R. Rhudy, May 2020

(This was originally written for us to use on the telephone to get to know our 6 grandchildren better)

NAME OF GRANDCHILD \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_

| #   | QUESTIONS                                                                    | Answers | Date |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------|
| 1.  | What is your biggest dream?                                                  |         |      |
| 2.  | What fascinates you the most?                                                |         |      |
| 3.  | What makes you laugh?                                                        |         |      |
| 4.  | What do you like most about your paternal (or maternal) grandparents?        |         |      |
| 5.  | What is your favorite thing to do in your spare time?                        |         |      |
| 6.  | What is your favorite song?                                                  |         |      |
| 7.  | Which grandparent do you have the most in common?                            |         |      |
| 8.  | What things contribute to this idea?                                         |         |      |
| 9.  | What is your favorite time of day?                                           |         |      |
| 10. | What is your favorite animal?                                                |         |      |
| 11. | What is your worst habit?                                                    |         |      |
| 12. | What makes you the happiest?                                                 |         |      |
| 13. | What makes you feel the safest?                                              |         |      |
| 14. | What is your favorite food that Granana (or Grandpa) cooks or bakes for you. |         |      |
| 15. | What frightens you the most?                                                 |         |      |
| 16. | What would you change about your grandparents?                               |         |      |
| 17. | What is your favorite food, snack, meal?                                     |         |      |
| 18. | What is your favorite book?                                                  |         |      |
| 19. | What is your favorite color?                                                 |         |      |



|     |                                                                                                                        |  |  |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| 20. | What is one thing you would change if you had a magic wand?                                                            |  |  |
| 21. | What is your favorite gift from us?                                                                                    |  |  |
| 22. | What do you like most about this quarantine?                                                                           |  |  |
| 23. | What is the hardest thing you have ever had to do?                                                                     |  |  |
| 24. | What name do you like to be called?                                                                                    |  |  |
| 25. | Which parent are you the most alike and how?                                                                           |  |  |
| 26. | What do you like best about coming to visit us?                                                                        |  |  |
| 27. | What do you want to be when you grow up?                                                                               |  |  |
| 28. | What is the goofiest thing we have ever done?                                                                          |  |  |
| 29. | What do you worry about?                                                                                               |  |  |
| 30. | What is a “little white lie”?                                                                                          |  |  |
| 31. | What do you like most about you?                                                                                       |  |  |
| 32. | If you could go back in time and talk with any family member you have heard your parents mention who would it be? Why? |  |  |
| 33. | What is forgiveness?                                                                                                   |  |  |
| 34. | If you could live in a different period in US history what would it be?                                                |  |  |
| 35. | How do you describe Faith? God?                                                                                        |  |  |
| 36. | What is unconditional love?                                                                                            |  |  |
| 37. | What makes you angry?                                                                                                  |  |  |
| 38. | What do you value most each day in this COVID-19 time in which we are living?                                          |  |  |
| 39. | Do you like to be a leader or a follower?                                                                              |  |  |
| 40. | Are you an introvert and an extrovert?                                                                                 |  |  |
| 41. | What do you like most about being on a team?                                                                           |  |  |
| 42. | Is there something you would like for your grandparents to leave you in their will? If so what?                        |  |  |
| 43. | What is the most valuable thing you own?                                                                               |  |  |
| 44. | What is an example of honesty?                                                                                         |  |  |
| 45. | If you could be any age for a week what would it be?                                                                   |  |  |
| 46. | How do you think the rules your parents tell you they had growing up differ from the ones they have for you?           |  |  |
| 47. | Is empathy the same as sympathy?                                                                                       |  |  |
| 48. | How do you describe a friend?                                                                                          |  |  |
| 49. | What extended family tradition have you enjoyed most up to this time in your life?                                     |  |  |
| 50. | What thing do you like most about your grandparents?                                                                   |  |  |

**Lillian Rhudy, MSW, LCSW, and her husband, Ralph, have been married for 52 years and are the parents of three children and 6 grandchildren. She has been a member of Second Presbyterian Church in Richmond, VA for over 20 years, serving as a deacon both at Second and previously at Tuckahoe Presbyterian. Lillian is currently serving POAMN as Co-Chair of the Conference Planning Committee.**





CELEBRATING LONGEVITY  
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## Multicultural Prayer Service

This prayer service reflects the diversity of Hunting Ridge Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, Maryland. All hymns are found in the *Glory to God* hymnal. Try singing the global music in its original language!

Prepared by **Rev. Deborah McEachran**, Pastor of Hunting Ridge Presbyterian Church since 2011. The congregation is intentionally inter-cultural, made up of members who are Americans of African descent, Americans of Caucasian descent, and first-generation immigrant families from Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Haiti, Dominican Republic and the US. The congregation is also host to a Spanish speaking congregation and a congregation with members from Myanmar, with whom Christian Education for children is shared.

### We Come to Prayer

Hymn 388: Come All You People

Zimbabwe

### We Hear the Word in Spanish and English

Psalm 133 (Spanish)

¡Vean qué bueno y agradable es  
que los hermanos vivan unidos! Es como el buen perfume  
que corre por la cabeza de los sacerdotes  
y baja por su barba  
hasta el cuello de su ropaje.  
Es como el rocío del monte Hermón,  
que cae sobre los montes de Sión.  
Allí es donde el Señor envía  
la bendición de una larga vida en.

Psalm 133 (English)

Look at how good and pleasing it is  
when families live together as one!  
It is like expensive oil poured over the head,  
running down onto the beard - Aaron's beard! -  
which extended over the collar of his robes.  
It is like the dew on Mount Hermon  
streaming down onto the mountains of Zion,  
because it is there that the LORD has commanded the blessing:  
everlasting life.



### We Praise the Lord

Hymn 328: Praise God, All You Nations *Da n'se*

Ghana



## We Hear the Word in English and French

1 Timothy 2:1-6a (English)

First of all, then, I ask that requests, prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving be made for all people. Pray for kings and everyone who is in authority so that we can live a quiet and peaceful life in complete godliness and dignity. This is right and it pleases God our savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. There is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, the human Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a payment to set all people free.

1 Timothée 2:1-6a (French)

Je recommande en tout premier lieu que l'on adresse à Dieu des demandes, des prières, des supplications et des remerciements pour tous les hommes. <sup>2</sup> Que l'on prie pour les rois et pour tous ceux qui sont au pouvoir, afin que nous puissions mener, à l'abri de toute violence et dans la paix, une vie qui exprime, dans tous ses aspects, notre piété et qui commande le respect. <sup>3</sup> Voilà ce qui est bien devant Dieu, notre Sauveur, ce qu'il approuve. <sup>4</sup> Car il veut que tous les hommes soient sauvés et parviennent à la connaissance de la vérité. <sup>5</sup> En effet, il y a un seul Dieu, et de même aussi un seul médiateur entre Dieu et les hommes, un homme: Jésus-Christ.

<sup>6</sup> Il a offert sa vie en rançon pour tous.

## We Pray for Others

Take time to name aloud individuals, groups or situations in need of healing, hope and wholeness (*shalom*). Use as a response after each prayer: **Lord of us all, bring *shalom*.**

## We Respond in Faith

Hymn 66: Every Time I Feel the Spirit

African American spiritual

## We Bless One Another in English and Swahili

*(offer the blessing below in either language to those around you)*

2 Thessalonians 3:16 (English)

May the Lord of peace himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

Book of 2 Wathesalonike (Kiswahili)

Sasa, Bwana wa amani mwenyewe awapeni amani nyakati zote na kwa njia zote.

Bwana na awe nanyi nyote.

## We Go Out With Hope

Hymn 765: Song of Hope *Canto de esperanza*

Argentina

**Rev. McEachran** has served as an Associate Pastor in Hickory, NC, as an interim in Union Mills/Rutherfordton, NC, as a Hispanic Ministry Coordinator for Western North Carolina Presbytery, and as a pastor of a small congregation in Jacksonville, NJ. She is a wife, mother and grandmother to (almost!) four grandchildren.



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# Caregiver's Nutrition and Health

by Dr. Mary Ann Johnson

Caregivers often neglect their own health and nutrition needs while caring for their loved ones. Also, it can be easy for the faith community to forget the many long weeks, months, and years that some of our members spend caring for others. Here are a few ideas to help caregivers, with a special emphasis on nutrition and health.

Ask pastors, congregational care teams, or others “in the know” if there are members serving in caregiving roles and if they might have any special needs. Think about how you might help these caregivers with your special gifts. Are you a good cook? Can you follow a shopping list, so you could pick up groceries? Could you provide some respite care for the care-recipient, so that the caregiver can go to their doctor appointments or attend an exercise class or other health-enhancing activity?



Arrange to contact the caregivers and offer assistance. Ask if there are specific needs and see if there are other members who might be willing to help. Sometimes by offering specific assistance, the caregiver might be more willing to accept offers of help. Make it simple for your congregation to volunteer by posting a note in the weekly or monthly congregational newsletter and by using an online system for scheduling such as the “Sign Up Genius” at [www.signupgenius.com/](http://www.signupgenius.com/). It will take only a few minutes to set up and will be well worth the effort for organizers and volunteers.

Preparing healthy meals can be challenging for caregivers, because they are stretched for time and are often exhausted. And the stress of caregiving might lead to eating too much or too little. A simple meal for a care-giver can include a two to four ounce portion of meat, poultry or fish, some hot vegetables prepared on the stove top or in the microwave, a side of something starchy such as quick cooking rice, fruit for dessert, and some milk or yogurt. A sandwich with meat and cheese that is cooked on the indoor grill (e.g., Foreman Grill) with a side salad and fresh fruit or yogurt is also a quick and delicious meal. There are several good tasting “frozen” meals, too, when caregivers are just not up to cooking. Frozen meals have a range of calorie levels, so look for the 300 to 400 calorie range when trying to keep weight constant and look for higher calorie levels when experiencing unwanted weight loss. Unless specifically requested, help caregivers eat healthy by avoiding bringing chips, candy, cookies, cakes, pies and other salty or sweet snacks to their home. Here is a shopping list to help stock the pantry with healthy and easy to prepare foods. This list can be readily customized to the caregiver’s favorite foods and specific needs.

## Shopping List for Caregivers

For **meat, poultry, and fish**, include single portions that can be easily cooked on the stovetop, microwave, or grill, as well as one or two pound packages of chicken, beef, or pork that can be cooked ahead of time and frozen to eat later:

- ☐ Turkey burgers, frozen
- ☐ Tilapia or chicken, frozen single serving
- ☐ Chicken, beef, or pork, one or two pound package
- ☐ Lunch meat, low-fat, pre-sliced
- ☐ canned tuna or salmon.

## Vegetables:

- ☐ Fresh tomato to put on salads or sandwiches
- ☐ Fresh salad greens, pre-washed, for salads and sandwiches
- ☐ Carrots, baby, for crunchy snack or side dish
- ☐ Frozen vegetables, individual vegetables or mixed vegetables in many varieties
- ☐ Fresh potatoes to make a quick microwaved potato
- ☐ Tomato juice, low - or reduced sodium.

## Fruit:

- ☐ Bananas
- ☐ Grapes, red or green
- ☐ Apples
- ☐ Other fresh fruit in season, such as cantaloupe
- ☐ Canned fruit in light syrup or own juice
- ☐ Frozen fruit, especially berries to put on cereal or in yogurt
- ☐ Orange juice or other favorite juice.



## Bread, cereal, rice, pasta:

- ☐ Whole grain bread as a loaf, bagels, English muffins for variety; freeze whatever can't be used in 1 week
- ☐ Cereals, oatmeal, or ready to eat, specify favorite kinds
- ☐ Brown rice, quick cooking variety
- ☐ Flavored rice that is quick cooking on the stovetop or microwave
- ☐ Whole grain pasta, make enough for two or three meals
- ☐ Pastas that are quick cooking on the stovetop or microwave.





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## Dairy and eggs:

- \_\_\_ Eggs, dozen, these are a good source of protein a few days each week
- \_\_\_ Milk, one-half gallon, check date for freshness, 1% or skim
- \_\_\_ Cheese, pre-sliced, for quick sandwiches, 6 or 8-ounce package
- \_\_\_ Yogurt, single servings or 32 ounces; 120 or less calories per serving.

## Miscellaneous:

- \_\_\_ Margarine
- \_\_\_ Jam or jelly, low-sugar if needed to keep calories low or for diabetes
- \_\_\_ Oil, canola or olive that is heart healthy
- \_\_\_ Salad dressing
- \_\_\_ Pepper or salt
- \_\_\_ Other herbs to flavor food such as cinnamon for oatmeal or toast, Italian mix, chipotle or other mix to give sandwiches, meats, salads, rice and other side dishes a quick flavor boost.



**Mary Ann Johnson, PhD**, is the Jean Sundell Tinstman Professor of Nutrition; and Chair, Department of Nutrition and Health Sciences, College of Education and Human Sciences, University of Nebraska Lincoln. Mary Ann's academic career at the University of Georgia focuses on research and outreach in aging, nutrition and chronic disease self-management, as well as on training for students and health professionals in food and nutrition policies to ensure that communities and individuals of all ages have access to affordable, safe and wholesome foods.





## Spirituality in Our Third Thirty

By Chris Pomfret

**AIM:** Provide a lesson plan for Church Educators to explore Spirituality with their congregants, especially Older Adults.

**MOTIVATION:** For older adults, finding one's spirituality and/or being aware of it from within oneself, is crucial to wellbeing and longevity as one progresses through one's senior years.

**BENEFITS:** The activity is relevant to the entire church congregation and provides a means to bring together all ages for a communal intergenerational activity that would help bridge generational gaps. Younger generations need to be made/kept aware of what their parents and grandparents are experiencing as they age.

### NOTE FOR WORKSHOP LEADERS

This material is part of a series of 12 sessions on "The Third Thirty", addressing how to deal with the challenges of aging so that we are best prepared, as comfortable as possible with the realities, and make this phase of our life the best it can possibly be. The material was developed as part of the OAM Certificate Course sponsored by POAMN under the auspices of the Lifelong Learning Center at Columbia Theological Seminary, GA. More details about "The Third Thirty" and the complete curriculum can be obtained from the creator of "The Third Thirty", Chris Pomfret, at [cjpomfret1954@gmail.com](mailto:cjpomfret1954@gmail.com)

### LESSON PLAN

**SETTING:** That of a typical Bible Study Group; informal, convivial, sitting around a large table (or in cozy chairs in a lounge setting) so that everyone can see each other. Coffee and/or food available.

**OPENING (2 minutes):** Start the meeting with a short prayer. Example: Merciful God, we are only too aware of our diminishing abilities as we journey through our Third Thirty of life but we are often not aware of facets that grow within us as we age. Lord, help us to recognize, feel, use and cultivate our spirituality, the elixir of our later life, the source of contentment, happiness, peace and, most importantly, the means by which we can continue to do your work for the rest of our lives. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen

**INTRODUCTIONS AND SCENE SETTING (10 minutes):** Pass out copies or have on display the Third Thirty chart (attached) depicting how our spirituality grows when other facets (mental and physical) are diminishing. Explain that spirituality is one of those "abstract" words for which a rigid definition is hard to pin down. We all sort of know what it is but, when asked, we can be stuck for words to describe it. Ask the group to think about what spirituality means to them and ask them to be ready to talk about it later. Even the dictionary struggles. Pass a copy of the definitions to each participant and then go round the room asking participants in turn to read the next one on the list.



### **MAIN PART:**

1. **(10-15 minutes)** Ask the group, “**WHAT DOES SPIRITUALITY MEAN TO YOU?**” Participants can shout out at random (usually better than going round the room and putting everyone on the spot) Capture all the responses on a whiteboard. Look at the possible groupings of words. Which words were familiar/expected? Were there any that were unexpected/unusual?
2. **(10-15 minutes)** Ask the group, “**IS SPIRITUALITY DEPENDENT ON A STRONG FAITH?**” If there is initial reticence to answer, the leader can perhaps offer a perspective that it is *not* dependent on a strong faith and look for push-back or people’s empathy with such a perspective.
3. **(10 minutes)** Now look at some bible verses (attached); there might be others that you want to include. Ask the group whether any of these help the group to better understand spirituality? Why?

**SUMMARY: (15 minutes).** Suggest that we’ve witnessed several different ways of explaining spirituality and that it’s perhaps an even more mysterious word than we realized prior to the discussion! The input from participants during the discussion will likely feed into the following two ways (“elemental” and “human /physiological”) of breaking down Spirituality. However, this proposed framework can also be adjusted by leaders “on the fly” depending what’s been specifically expressed by participants.

### **An “elemental” breakdown of spirituality might be:**

- Being at Peace with our mortality
- Practicing Forgiveness
- Effective Mentorship
- Leaving a Legacy
- Harvesting our Lives
- Appreciating/Valuing Life

### **From a human/physiological perspective, spirituality could be broken down as follows:**

#### **CONTEMPLATIVE/MENTAL**

- **Gratitude:** *inward* recognition of the world in which we live: the awe, wonder, mystique of it all.
- **Mindfulness:** an awareness of the present, people, and the situation that we find ourselves in at any time.
- **Peace:** with our thoughts and beliefs and the finite nature of our life and our ultimate death.
- **Realism:** acceptance of who we are: our age, condition, blemishes, strengths.

#### **OVERT ACTION/PHYSICAL**

- **Appreciation:** *outward* gratitude to others who do good acts, as well as to our earthly surroundings.
- **Generosity:** giving forward, giving back and giving to.
- **Openness:** listening to others and hearing differing views to our own.
- **Respect:** showing civility, acceptance, compassion.
- **Love:** to include forgiveness of self and others and showing friendship to strangers and friends alike.





## **CLOSING: (2 mins)**

Ask a member of the group to offer a closing prayer or, if there are no volunteers, a suggested prayer is: “Good and gracious God, through our participation in today’s discussion, You have revealed so much to us that we didn’t see within ourselves and in your world. Help us to be permanently mindful of our spirituality, to feel its presence within us throughout our daily lives and to practice simple actions, mental, physical and emotional, to make our lives and those of others the best they can be”.

## **ADDITIONAL MATERIAL**

### **THIRD THIRTY CHART**

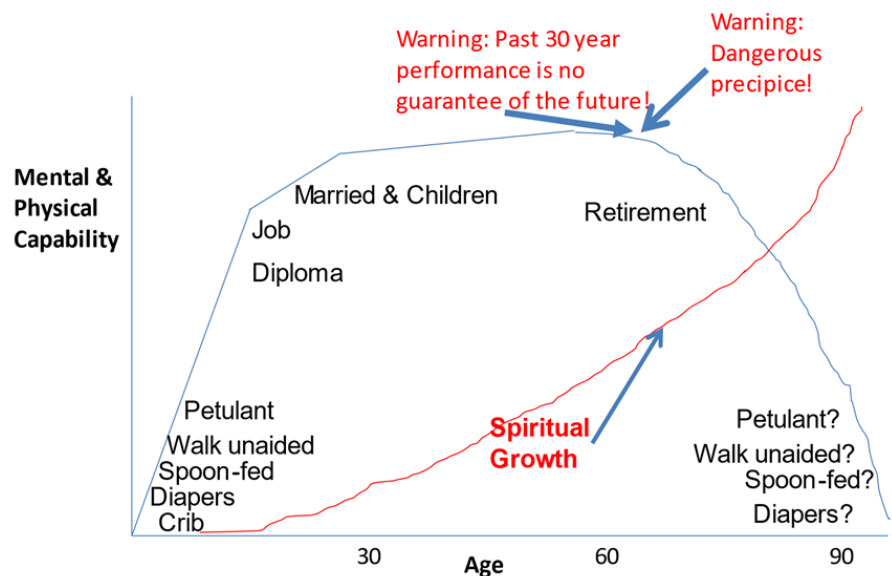
Our life can be looked at in simple terms as 3 phases. In the first phase, we rapidly develop, mentally and physically, whereas in the second phase, we typically utilize and build upon those developments and put our abilities to good use in work, family and recreation. The final phase (our Third Thirty) is in essence a reverse of our first thirty so we can realistically expect to see a large number of similarities to the first, with the exception that we have lived a full life, have gathered life experiences and wisdom that we don’t have when we are young. Despite our understandable

reluctances to see our aging as something to look forward to, we nonetheless do ourselves a great favor, and also our loved ones, if we can face the realities of growing older and be at peace with those realities, which will be different for us all. This is where spirituality is our best asset and has been growing within us, all through our lives, whether we know it or not. This “good news” (the upward spiritual growth curve) came from the Rev. Dr. Nancy Copeland-Payton who gave the keynote speech at POAMN’s 2014 conference. Dr. Nancy Copeland-Payton is a spiritual director and ordained clergywoman in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She is author of *The Losses of Our Lives: The Sacred Gifts of Renewal in Everyday Loss*. A pastor, hospital chaplain and physician who practiced medicine for twenty years, she now leads retreats at church centers, monasteries and with church groups to help people explore their experiences of loss.

### **SOME RELEVANT BIBLE VERSES:**

**Galatians 5:22-23** (ESV or English Standard Version) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things, there is no law.

## **Third Thirty & our Life in one Chart**







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**Psalm 1:1-3** (ESV or English Standard Version) Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

**1 Cor 4:1** (GNV or Geneva Version) You should think of us as Christ's servants who have been put in charge of God's secret truths.

**1 Cor 12:5** (GNV or Geneva Version) There are many ways of serving, but the same God is served. There are different abilities to perform service but the same God gives ability to each of us. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

**Psalm 92:12-15** (GNV or Geneva version) The righteous will flourish like palm trees; they will grow like the cedars of Lebanon. They are like trees planted in the house of The Lord, that flourish in the temple of our God, that still bear fruit in old age and are always green and strong. (A layman's translation)

**2 Cor 4:16** (GNV or Geneva Version) For this reason, we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed, day after day.

#### SUGGESTED COMPONENTS OF SPIRITUALITY.

- **Physical:** maintaining a level of healthy physical activity from which the other 2 components are fed
- **Mental:** Consciously positive, and confident that things in life happen for a reason
- **Emotional:** How you feel about yourself, life, the world, the country. Finding a positive meaningful frame of mind.

#### THE KEY INGREDIENTS FOR COMPLETE SPIRITUALITY CONTEMPLATIVE/MENTAL

- **Gratitude:** *inward* recognition of the world in which we live: the awe, wonder, mystique of it all
- **Mindfulness:** an awareness of the present, people, and the situation that we find ourselves in at any time
- **Peace:** with our thoughts and beliefs and the finite nature of our life and our ultimate death
- **Realism:** acceptance of who we are: our age, condition, blemishes, strengths

#### OVERT ACTION/PHYSICAL

- **Appreciation:** *outward* gratitude to others who do good acts, as well as to our earthly surroundings
- **Generosity:** giving forward, giving back and giving to
- **Openness:** listening to others and hearing differing views to our own
- **Respect:** showing civility, acceptance, compassion
- **Love:** to include forgiveness of self and others and showing friendship to strangers and friends alike

*Chris Pomfret has been an active member of POAMN since 2014 and founded "The Third Thirty", an initiative which promotes insights for aging wisely, gracefully and spiritually. He is a 2018 graduate of the POAMN Certification Course in Older Adult Ministry from Columbia Theological Seminary and currently lives in New Orleans.*



# Virtual Hug vs Human Contact?

Truly the struggle of this time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most of us have developed a new love for technology. This virtual romance includes Facebook, Skype, Zoom, Twitter, and Parler, to name a few, plus, of course email and texting. These are the things that have kept us connected for months. The things that most of us take for granted. Though technology has enabled us to proudly state that the “building may be closed, but our church is open,” we never forget that human contact has been a key partner in sharing Christ’s love with those who are not tech savvy. Its importance should not be downplayed or taken for granted.

Our little Presbyterian church in Cleveland, Georgia, is blessed to be ahead of the technology curve. More than a year before the pandemic struck, the Northeast Georgia Presbytery introduced us to John Fong, who helped our church set up a professional Facebook program. It included prerecording or livestreaming of Sunday services. During this same timeframe, our church was searching for a new Pastor and our Session encouraged upgrading the church website to more truly represent who we are - both to candidates and to potential worshippers. Thus, we were more prepared than some other area churches for the shutdown of in-person worship.

We are also blessed to have some church members who are on top of technology and have kept the church presence in members’ lives during the shutdown. Our new Pastor came on board right before the pandemic was in full thrall. Fortunately, she has been able to reach out to the congregation with weekly online devotions and Bible study. Our PW has sponsored a weekly Prayer Meeting via Zoom, which has helped us catch-up and stay connected. That being said, think for a minute if you did not have or want or understand how to use the Internet?

At last report, more than half of our church membership is 71 and over. Many are technology challenged. They depend on children or grandchildren or friends to help them navigate the mysteries of something as basic as email or direct deposit. Hard to believe what your life would be like if you fell into that category, and how would you reach out? Telephone, ☒. Letters, ☒. Suppose you needed something right away but couldn’t leave your home? Who would you turn to? Many of our congregation are caregivers to aging or seriously ill loved ones, who are widows or widowers, or homebound due to fear of the COVID-19 disease.

I’m part of the older half of our congregation. However, I’m still in the workforce. Recently I started a job which could require me to work a late-night shift. This meant driving home at 11:00 pm, in the dark, on winding, Georgia Mountain roads. Suppose I broke down? Sure, I have AAA, but waiting in the dark at the side of the road is a scary prospect. It occurred to me that my Deacon and church friend is basically an insomniac. I knew that I could call her if I had car trouble late at night. Not to pick me up but to provide a reassuring and comforting lifeline while I waited. That’s the kind of personal connection I’m talking about and I’m sure there are other Deacons and church family members who would volunteer in a minute to be “an FPC friend on call.”

At this time our church does not have a formal Older Adult Ministry (OAM), although FPC Pastor Burnetta Armour plans to become certified in the program. Throughout shutdowns, online worship



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and so many other disconnects from normal life, our Diaconate and Pastor have stepped up into that role. They have provided human contact, a lifeline to our older (and not so older) church family. They send cards, not just for birthdays, but to let someone know that they are thought of and missed. They regularly check in with their flock by phone. Deacons know their flock well and become concerned if calls go unanswered. They'll follow-up to assure all is OK. Hot meals have been delivered, groceries purchased, drives to the Doctor's office offered. That friendly voice on the phone makes all the difference in the world to someone who feels alone and forgotten.

Remember the toilet paper shortage? As if anyone could forget. Nothing says someone cares like the delivery of that desperately needed commodity to your front door when you can't leave the house. On one occasion I know of, a Deacon actually went to three different stores to find and then deliver TP to someone who was homebound. Another time, a different Deacon stopped by Dairy Queen and picked up Blizzards and drove 20 minutes to share them with a church friend and recent widow. "I don't know what I would have done without her," the friend told me. "Just having her here to sit with me meant the world."

An informal "porch ministry" has evolved during this time. Deacons and our Pastor put on masks, socially distance, and safely visit with church members and their families on the front porches of homes throughout the area and neighboring counties. They pray together, share life experiences, and provide comfort just by being together.

As we regather and hopefully put the pandemic behind us, these practices will still continue. While FPC may have an OAM in the future, right now our Deacons and our Pastor will keep on doing what comes naturally, bridging the gap between virtual hugs and human contact, truly the struggle of this time. Our team will do it with caring and compassion. They are the good Samaritans. Their mission, sharing Christ's love.

*This article is a collaborative effort of a team from First Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, GA. Contributors: Pastor Burnetta Armour; Diaconate Moderator Kim Ciriello; Deacon Adele Page; and Communications Elder Jean Kelly who put everyone's stories together and added a few of her own.*



**Pat Baker, President of POAMN, and Champion for Dementia Friends Georgia, presented a Dementia Friends information session at First Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, GA.**





## Older Adult Ministry Worship Service

### Call To Worship

**Hymn:** When I Survey The Wondrous Cross

### A Litany: Adapted From I Corinthians 13

L: If I know all the latest dance moves of the new generation and have not love;  
P: **I'm only a wanna be young person with neither the experience nor the ability to fit in**  
L: If I have great experience and a desire to teach others and have not love;  
P: **I'm only a big mouth windbag trying to tell everyone else what to do.**  
L: If I have great history with experiences of many years and have not love;  
P: **I'm only a grouchy curmudgeon telling insignificant stories to justify my past actions.**  
L: If I have great wisdom earned though years of suffering and have not love;  
P: **I'm only an arrogant critic making myself feel better by making others feel worse.**

**All: Love is patient and kind. Love does not keep a record of wrongs committed over the years. Love is not weighed down by the hurts of the past. Love never fails even with the passage of time. Trends and fashions will fade away, new gadgets will become old, even the strength of youth itself will pass away, but love endures forever. Of faith, hope and love, only love is the greatest. AMEN**

### Prayer:

O God, You have brought us "through many dangers toils and snares." You have brought us through baptisms, weddings, funerals, divorces, accidents and illnesses. We have seen so many of our dearest friends either leave the neighborhood or leave this world. We have seen younger, smarter, stronger people pass from time into eternity, and yet we are still here. We have survived by Your Grace and Mercy. God of all knowledge, we know that You do things for a reason. Please reveal to us the work that You would have us to do. So that when our time on this earth shall end, we will be at peace from doing Your Will. Through Jesus Christ, God of All Time. AMEN

### Hymn: Amazing Grace

### The Word:

Deuteronomy 6:20-25  
I Corinthians 13:8-13







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## The Sermon: **The Passing of the Gift**

The Book of Deuteronomy is Moses farewell address to the people before they cross into the Promised Land. The Israelites had been given many rules and laws to aid them on their journey especially in their conquest of the land. But Moses is trying to give them more than just laws without purpose. He begins to tell the history that brought them to this point; the story of his life. The Lord's Blessing would add both historical context and definitive purpose to their remembered laws. In a similar way we as older adults are called to pass on what we know to these younger generations. But, like with Moses, rules and laws are not enough. We are called to share our personal experiences that gave our precepts meaning as well as the joys inherent in following them. We have received gifts through our years of walking with The Lord. Now, it is time to share them.

Corinthians takes us to the Apostle Paul who has advanced in years. When he was young (as with many of us) his thoughts were the thoughts of youth, but as he aged his thoughts changed. He evolved from being a man of much knowledge to one of much faithfulness. The experiences of his years taught him what was most important in life. In our text, he shares a list of things that many in his church community thought were great: prophecy, tongues, teaching and others. All of these were meaningless without the gift of love. That was the main lesson, the main gift that he could pass on to such a divided church! It is also a lesson that we as older adults can pass on to our younger generations.

## The Offering:

Choose one gift from this list and discuss how this fits you with your family and/or friends. Secondly, choose a gift that you would like to work on so that you can be better at it. Share that as well with family or friends.

Gifts:

|          |              |               |         |          |           |
|----------|--------------|---------------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Loving   | Kindness     | Patience      | Faith   | Joy      | Comfort   |
| Healing  | Listening    | Caring        | Prayer  | Singing  | Talking   |
| Playing  | Working      | Building      | Helping | Creating | Teaching  |
| Planning | Supporting   | Giving        | Leading | Learning | Analyzing |
| Sensing  | Interpreting | Collaborating |         |          |           |

**Closing Hymn:** How Clear Is Our Vocation Lord

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## Benediction:

Go forth into the world bringing the wisdom of your years, the strength of your patience, the advice of your experiences, the joy of your victories and the lessons of your failures. Go and help a generation struggling in the haze of despair showing them not just the light of learning, but the peace that comes from lessons learned. Go in peace, serve The Lord. Thanks Be To God!

**Rev. Keith O. Paige** is currently the pastor of Cherry Hill Community Presbyterian Church in Baltimore Maryland. He is a native of Portsmouth Virginia and a graduate of Manor High School in that area. He is also a graduate of Averett University in Danville, VA and Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey. He worked as a Chaplain Resident at Maryview Medical Center in Portsmouth and a Campus Ministry Intern at Texas Southern University in Houston Texas. He was pastor of Grace Hope Presbyterian Church in Louisville Kentucky for 8 years and has been pastor of his current congregation for the past 20 years.



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