

Resource Guide for Older Adult Ministries

ISSUE 68

2021 HOLIDAY

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Good Morning from Oregon,

The theme of this issue of *PNN* is *I am the vine, you are the branches...*

Three articles in this issue of *PNN* share insights on *I am the vine, you are the branches...*

- "President's Reflections" by Pat Baker
- "MEMO from Membership" by Linda Rauenbuehler
- "God Will Keep You" by Don Carlin

Other articles in this issue include:

- "POAMN 2021 National Conference" by Quentin Holmes
- "Remembering Helen Morrison, a Woman of Faith and a Good Friend" by Ilona Macek
- "2021 POAMN Annual Business Meeting" by Quentin Holmes
- "Living on a Remote Island During the COVID-19 Era" by Lynnette Wood
- "A Model for Respite Day/Weekend for Family Caregivers" by Pat Baker
- "2021 POAMN Legacy Award to Rev. Dennis Haines & Donna Haines" by Pat Baker
- "Retired Pastor's Corner" by Rev. Dennis J. Haines
- "A New Small Group Study Opportunity, "Cultivating Your Own Older Adult Ministry," by Steve Aschmann

PNN is your newsletter. We need you to send us short notes about things you have done or ideas that your group has found to work. The theme of our Winter issue will be "*In old age they still produce fruit...*" Deadline for manuscripts is January 15th, 2022. Many older adults are in our congregations. By the power of God, plus our faithfulness and our warmth, we can reach out.

Thanks be to God!

Quentin A. Holmes

Quentin A. Holmes / Marcola, OR



Jane & Quentin Holmes



POAMN President
Pat Baker with "Sassyfrass"

POAMN PRESIDENT'S REFLECTION

The John 15:5 passage from the Bible that starts out "I am the vine, you are the branches" is the theme for this Holiday edition of PNN. When I saw this theme during the season of Advent it took me to another passage of the Bible; the Jesse Tree tradition rooted in Isaiah 11:1. "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Jesse was the father of David, Israel's greatest king. He is the branch God promised would grow from Jesse's family tree.

The Jesse Tree is a way of preparing for Advent by journeying through the stories on Jesus's family tree. Each day of Advent, it is recommended that you read a Bible story about someone on Jesus's family tree and hang an ornament symbolizing the story on your Jesse Tree. When our children were small we'd always do a Jesse Tree counting down the days to the birth of Jesus. Our children could see how God prepared for Jesus to be born through many generations. Here is an example of a Jesse Tree and ornaments:

I recently was able to attend the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center Association/Presbyterian Youth Workers Association annual conference at Montreat, NC. The theme was "Sharing Our Stories." Being involved in that conference got me thinking about my "stories," and especially stories of my lineage. One of the keynoters at the conference was Natarsha Sanders and she challenged us to think about "Where God is in our stories?"

During the past two years, primarily COVID time, many people have taken the opportunity to search into their family trees. Our family is no exception. We've been tracing back my husband's family who came to North Carolina from Scotland in the early 1800's and eventually settled in Alabama. It is fascinating information that has sparked our curiosity about their stories. We assume God was in their story as several of his kinsmen were clergy but we don't know if they felt "called" by God to cross the oceans. Unfortunately, that information is now gone and can't be retrieved.



A Jesse Tree

I want to challenge each of you to think about your story and the stories of others and ask that all important question; Where is God in Our stories? Take time to listen to the older persons you come in contact with and ask them to tell you their stories. I know they will thank you for asking.

I believe I can speak for POAMN by saying that we pray that you and yours have a blessed Advent and Christmas season.

Pat Baker

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*The weather doesn't matter
If our hearts are all aglow;
It's almost time for Christmas
What fun if it should snow!*

(Hallie Huntington)



Linda Rauenbuehler
Membership Committee Chair

MEMO FROM MEMBERSHIP

“**I am the vine, you are the branches**” is the theme for this issue of the PNN. This verse is found in John 15:5. The verse continues, “If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing”. A main word that came to my mind, upon hearing this passage, is “connection.” As a branch cannot survive and produce fruit if it is not connected to the vine, Jesus tells us that we cannot produce fruit if we are not connected to Him. The fruit produced in us goes on to touch the lives of others, who then begin to grow fruit from their own lives.

In 2014, when I approached our pastor about doing more with the seniors in our church, my main objective was figuring out ways we could provide extra effort toward keeping our oldest people connected to the church. I wanted to keep them connected, even though many of them could no longer drive or attend services. At the time, I was just finishing up a six-year term on the Board of Deacons, the last four years as moderator. I knew this is what the Deacons do, but I wanted to do more for our seniors. By January of 2015, I was in a volunteer staff position as Director of Senior Ministry. In 2018, I began as paid staff and my title became Director of Congregational Care. Even though I now work with all ages, I continue to pay special attention to keeping our older members connected to the church.

As we are enjoying this wonderful Christmas season, the verse, “**I am the vine, you are the branches,**” takes on special meaning. I do not want to imagine how empty and meaningless the holiday season would be without being connected to Christ and then, in turn, being connected to fellow worshippers around us.

Membership Renewal for 2022

If you have not already done so, **now is the time to renew your membership for 2022**. An application for renewal is at the end of this newsletter, or you can print one off from our website at www.poamn.org and send it to our Treasurer, Chris Pomfret, with your check. You may also apply online using PayPal. As we are a 501 c (3) organization, additional gifts are graciously accepted and are tax-deductible. I am looking forward to seeing what 2022 brings for POAMN. Exciting opportunities are being planned to continue connecting people who have an interest in older adult ministry.

Certificate of Older Adult Ministry

POAMN collaborates with Columbia Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, on classes leading to a Certificate of Older Adult Ministry. Please check out this wonderful opportunity. Information can be obtained by going to Columbia Theological Seminary and looking under Lifelong Learning.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Rauenbuehler

POAMN Membership Chair

*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those
who bring good news ...
... who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings ...
Who celebrate with joy the birth of the Prince of Peace.”*

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

[Editor's NOTE: In the 1980's Helen Morrison served as one of the original "Older Adult Enablers" whose mission was to establish and support older adult ministry in 16 Synods. By 1991 their group had grown to more than 225 "enablers". Helen's passion for older adult ministry was infectious. She helped create what ended up being Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network, and later served as POAMN President from 2011-2014. Helen was a person of deep faith who pioneered the way for women to serve in leadership roles in the Presbyterian Church. She was my mentor.]



Helen Morrison

REMEMBERING HELEN MORRISON, A WOMAN OF FAITH AND A GOOD FRIEND

By Ilona Macek, Elder, Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church / Grosse Ile, MI

It is with heavy heart that we announce the November 8, 2021, passing of Helen Morrison, Presbyterian extraordinaire. Helen, who was part of the effort that created POAMN and who was a past-president of POAMN, was 94 at the time of her death. She was a 60-year member of Grosse Ile (Michigan) Presbyterian Church. Her accomplishments were many, and she remained an involved member of the community throughout her entire life.

Helen grew up in the south end of Dearborn, a Detroit suburb. She married young and had three sons; the family settled into life on an island on the Detroit River. As her boys completed college, she went back to school herself at University of Michigan-Dearborn and got a degree in sociology and psychology. Her husband's untimely death derailed their plan to open a career consulting business. The intent had been that Helen was to do the consulting and her husband would run the business side. Instead, Helen went on to be a life and career consultant for the rest of her days.

That did not limit her Presbyterian commitments. She was Sunday School superintendent at her church, an elder, part of education committees at the presbytery and synod. She was a representative of the Presbytery of Detroit at several General Assemblies and served at all four levels of PC(USA). Helen served on the Board of Presbyterian Villages for several years and was pivotal in organizing an Older Adult Ministry commission at Grosse Ile Presbyterian Church. Each one of these involvements was because she cared about people and she cared about her faith.

Helen's proudest moment came in 2014 at that year's General Assembly, when she was designated a "Prophetic Woman of Faith." That meant she was following the examples of prophets and apostles who came before her.

It was also a very appropriate way of describing Helen. Rev. Karl Travis, who nominated her for the award, said, "Helen, at 86, exhibits the two most obvious qualities of all prophets: a clear vision of righteousness accompanied by an unabashed willingness to share it."

That is a perfect description of Helen Morrison, one which makes it easy to understand why the loss of her is felt so keenly. The most we can hope for is to emulate the example she set as we thank God for having had her with us as long as we did.



"YORK GROUP" REPRESENTATIVES FROM GROSSE ILE, MI AT 2015 POAMN NATIONAL CONFERENCE
(Sue Hurst, Helen Morrison, and Kathy Rankin)

2021 POAMN NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Vibrant and Faithful Aging; Legacies Across Generations

by Quentin A. Holmes, Editor POAMN Network News

POAMN's 2021 National Conference was held virtually from Tuesday, Oct. 26th to Thursday, Oct. 28th, 2021. This article is the first in a two-part series that attempts to share both the substance and the spirit of this uplifting, inspiring, and informative conference. More than 100 people registered for this virtual conference.

A POAMN National Conference involves months of planning and coordination – an especially challenging task when the conference is held “virtually” due to COVID-19. Thank you, Conference Chairpersons Lillian Rhudy and Adrienne Knight and all of the dedicated planning committee members!

Day One of the Conference opened at 3:00pm on Tuesday, Oct. 26th with a warm welcome from POAMN President, Pat Baker. A leader in older adult ministries for more than thirty years, Pat is an inspiration to all who have a passion for ministering with, to, and for older adults. “POAMN’s mission is to educate, advocate, develop and share resources, and train leaders by raising awareness around issues facing those who serve older adults, and are older adults, all in a covenant relationship with the Mission Agency Board of the PC (USA).”

Tuesday’s Opening Worship was led by the team of Rev. Dennis Haines, HR, and his wife Donna from Independence, Missouri –he the minister, she the musician. Dennis was active in the Association of Retired Ministers, Spouses and Survivors (ARMSS) for over 15 years until ARMSS was merged with POAMN in 2016. In addition to being an excellent musician, Donna designed and sewed the banners for all five Joint POAMN/ARMSS Conferences. Dennis’ message centered on *Being in the Wilderness* (Ex 16:1-2) in conjunction with Jesus’ promise of peace for each of us (John14:27). The COVID-19 pandemic has turned our lives into a wilderness, but through it, God has deepened our individual faith and trust in Him.



Missy Buchanan

Keynote Speaker was Missy Buchanan from Rockwall, Texas. The title of her presentation on Tuesday was “**SEIZE THE SEASON: How older adults can use their later years to build a bridge to younger generations.**” Missy encouraged us to think beyond our grandchildren. Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) is the generation with the highest level of mental stress, experiences high levels of loneliness, and lives with the fear of missing out. The rise of social media has been accompanied by a decline in the building of lasting relationships. Older adults and youth being together in the same pew is O.K.; however, most likely, they are living in parallel universes. Youth are on social media, but what they are looking for is authenticity. Each of us, as older adults, should try to reach out to the youth in our congregation, initiate conversations, and take a genuine interest in their activities.

Positive outcomes of building bridges between the generations include:

- Older adults will be energized;
- Creation of a healthier church; less defensive; flow of ideas;
- Creation of lasting relationships that are positive for the well-being of younger and older generations;
- Fulfillment of God’s calling.

POAMN

Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network

2021 National Gathering
VIBRANT AND FAITHFUL AGING:
LEGACIES ACROSS GENERATIONS

MASTER VIEWGRAPH



Rev. Dennis Haines & Donna Haines

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Missy's closing remarks were to the effect that, "Seniors are survivors earmarked for a special assignment."

Rev. Jim Kirk led a **workshop** entitled "**Partnering with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance: Out of Chaos, Hope.**" PDA's mission is to focus on the long-term recovery of disaster-impacted communities. It provides training and disaster preparedness for presbyteries and synods. PDA works collaboratively with church partners and members of the Action by Churches Together internationally. It works nationally with other faith-based responders. PDA is usually not the first organization to arrive after a disaster strikes; however, they are often the last organization to leave. PDA provides a structure that enables people to effectively help others who have experienced a disaster. PDA's ability to be physically onsite was shut down during COVID-19. However, things are now beginning to open back up. PDA's bywords are, "Give, Act, and Pray." Accomplishments during 2020 included:

- \$6.5 million granted in 47 states and 56 countries;
- 476 grants totaling \$3.5 million for COVID-19 response in 125 presbyteries and 56 countries;
- 210 National Response Team members were virtually deployed to 52 presbyteries;
- 179 Presbyterian Women trained in Disaster Preparedness.

PDA's financial support comes mainly from the One Great Hour of Sharing Offerings. In addition, PDA is always looking for volunteers to help with their mission (see website: <https://pda.pcusa.org>)

In closing, Rev. Jim Kirk's cited the words of an old proverb,

"If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."

Tuesday closed out with **Fellowship Time**. Yes, people missed being together physically. However, being virtually able to be together—to see, and be seen, and to talk—with others who have a deep passion for ministering with, to, and for older adults was uplifting.

Day Two of the Conference opened at 11:30am on Wednesday, Oct. 27th. Missy Buchanan gave a **second Keynote Address**. The title was "**FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY: Impacting younger generations by taking action to create life-changing legacies.**" Missy began by reminding us, "Ageism is prejudice, discrimination, mocking, or stereotyping based on age." Then she encouraged us to raise our awareness to ageism:

- In our culture — Emphasis on staying youthful and healthy;
- In our community — Homeless who are old;
- In our church;
- In ourselves — Judging people by their physical appearance.

A good place to start is to determine ways you can continue your current programs to bring your generations together. Seek to make intergenerational community a core value of your congregation. She challenged us to consider a variety of questions beginning with "What if?" What if...:

- ... People 60 years and older invited a young family or a single person for lunch?
- ... People 60 years and older adopted a youth and came to cheer at their games?
- ... People 60 years and older wrote a note to the acolyte thanking them for participating in worship?
- ... An Adult Sunday School invited a youth to tell them "what is a typical day at school for you?"
- ... People 60 years and older read the books that middle school & high school students are required to read?
- ... Youth of the church interviewed older adults as part of their Youth Group:
 - What was the hardest thing you ever did?
 - Were you ever bullied?

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Near the end of her presentation, Missy read the poem, The Bridge Builder by Will Allen Dromgoole (1860-1934). The poem tells of an old man who builds a bridge that he will never use, but that may be helpful to youths who will pass this way later on. A healthy church is where young and old come together to learn from each other. She then asked each of us, in our hearts, to ponder the following statements:

- The world tells me that aging is my enemy, but God...
- I feel incapable of learning new things, but God...
- I feel I am too old to change. But God...

Then she closed by wrapping all of us up in a prayer that ended with the words, "...I am the one called by You into old age, let me strive to build intergenerational bridges."

A **workshop** entitled "**Remember Your Story**" was led by Rev. Dr. Richard L. Morgan. Age 94, Dr. Morgan spoke to us from his small room at Redstone Highlands Assisted Living facility in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. What a joy to have this sage, who has spent decades pioneering the way for older adults to be an active part of their local congregations, share his hard-won wisdom with us. Dr. Morgan began with the words, "Called, or not called, God is with you. Your life matters!" Then, he walked us through ways to capture our own life story in written or spoken words. He encouraged us to begin by sketching out a timeline of our life. "Every life story has its ups and downs, its celebrations and its crises – in the past, in the present, and in the future." And then he encouraged us to think about how God has been there with us not only through the good parts, but also through the difficult and really scary parts. "Your life story is an important part of your legacy." The Bible teaches us that old age is a blessing from God. Dr. Richard L. Morgan is a living example of how God is with us all the years of our life. His most recent book, Light of Setting Suns, (published in 2020 by Upper Room Books), provides a first-hand look at realities and mysteries at ninety years of life.



Dr. Richard I. Morgan
(In October 2013)

Rev. Kendra Oglesbee from Texas led a **workshop** entitled, "**Friendship: Medicine for the Soul.**" Using a seminar-like teaching style, Oglesbee engaged us in dispelling common myths about friendship and tuning into the important and life-giving benefits that friendships bring into our lives. "Friendship is not just for children and youth." "Isolation has long been recognized as the severest of penalties." Participants were invited to share their definition of the word "friend." Responses included phrases such as:

- A friend is someone who grows with you.
- A friend is someone with whom I can be myself.
- A friend is someone you like being with and someone you can trust.

The benefits of friendship include:

1. Provides constructive feedback;
2. Helps us define "normal";
3. Shapes our self-image;
4. Helps identify strengths and weaknesses;
5. Internalization of beliefs, attitudes, and values;
6. More open to ambiguity;
7. Co-dependent paradox;
8. Better able to seek support when needed;
9. Braver in facing the world and exploring.

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Each of us possess many traits. Some of these traits may or may not be known to us. Some of these traits may or may not be known to others. How a trait is known to ourselves and to others gives rise to four different categories:

- OPEN TRAITS are known to self and known to others;
- BLIND TRAITS are unknown to self but known to others;
- HIDDEN TRAITS are known to self but unknown to others;
- UNKNOWN TRAITS are unknown to self and unknown to others.

Some modern challenges to forming deep and lasting friendships are:

- Reduced ability to read body language and facial expressions;
- Reduced capacity to see another's perspective;
- No longer allow silence/space for people to think or process;
- Weakened conflict resolution skills;
- Difficulty differentiating between a positive or negative influence;
- Distorted sense of urgency.

Being more aware of these difficulties will help us be better at friendship.

Possible strategies for growth include:

- Saying "yes" to invitations;
- Extending an invitation;
- Doing the things we love to do;
- Trying something new;
- Looking for someone who needs a friend;
- Making space, being interruptible.

The four steps of making a friend are: (a) measured self-disclosure; (b) receptivity; (c) reciprocity; (d) trustworthiness. These same four steps get cycled through again and again and again by friends as their mutual relationship deepens and matures.

Human beings are hardwired for social interaction. Being a friend and having friends truly is "medicine for the soul!"

Mary McGuire led a **workshop** entitled "**Preserving One's Legacy through Photography.**" The first part of her workshop was an informative, illustrated history of photography. Then, after describing how, as a young child, she got hooked on taking pictures by using her grandmother's camera, McGuire shared her knowledge of how to capture life's important moments in pictures. Simply put, her philosophy of photography is:

- Life is like a camera. Focus on what is important. Capture the good times. Develop from the negatives.
- And, if things don't work out – take another shot!

Once we had a grasp of the basic ideas and techniques, she shared her own personal legacy using pictures taken throughout her lifetime, from early childhood to the present. This was very heartfelt, deeply personal, and extremely touching!

(To Be Continued in the next issue of PNN)

2021 POAMN ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

by Quentin A. Holmes, Editor POAMN Network News

The 2021 POAMN Annual Business Meeting was held virtually from 1:00PM – 2:00PM EDT on Thursday, October 28th, 2021, during our 2021 National Conference.

Key things that took place during this Annual Meeting were:

- POAMN President Pat Baker welcomed everyone and led us in an opening prayer.
- President Baker reported that POAMN is doing well at the age of 39 years! Pat presented her President's Update – i.e., a brief review of 2021. Then, she introduced Ginny Nyhuis and each of the members of POAMN Executive Committee (ExCOM).
- POAMN Secretary Rev. Nancy Rojas presented the minutes of our 2020 Annual Business Meeting. The minutes were approved.
- Stephanie Fritz from the Presbyterian Mission Agency / Presbyterian Church (USA) gave an update of the Christian Formation Collective. Through this relationship, POAMN is teamed effectively with five other organizations. The other organizations are APCE (Association of Presbyterian Church Educators), PYWA (Presbyterian Youth Workers Association), UKirk (Collegiate Ministries) and PCCCA (Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association). Each of the organizations, including POAMN, is entering into new mission partnership agreements that take seriously the work and mission of each. Project highlights this year include: The Webinar Series offered in May focusing on "Celebrating Longevity Around the World;" written resources called QuickSheets around the topic of mental health; coach-led cohorts exploring the basics of older adult ministries and intercultural considerations in older adult ministries; and technical and financial support for holding this online Annual Meeting.
- Pat Baker then recognized Lynne Trout, the outgoing POAMN Treasurer, and Lillian Rhudy, the outgoing POAMN Conference Chairperson for their dedicated and faithful service to POAMN in their respective roles.
- Nominations Chair Pepe Bowman presented the following slate into nomination to serve as officers of POAMN and members of the Executive Committee.



Lynne Trout



Lillian Rhudy

Ongoing Officers:

- **Nominating Committee Chair – Pepe Bowman / Fayetteville, GA**
- **Conference Co-Chair – Adrienne Knight / Baltimore, MD**

(NOTE: *We continue to search for a person to Co-Chair Conferences with Adrienne Knight.*)

Incoming Officers:

- **Treasurer – Chris Pomfret / New Orleans, LA**

The entire slate of nominees was elected unanimously.

- The new POAMN officers were then duly installed by President Pat Baker.
- Treasurer Chris Pomfret presented the POAMN Annual Financial Report. Thanks to the generosity of POAMN members and sponsors, POAMN currently is on sound financial ground.
- Outgoing Conference Chair Lillian Rhudy recognized the other members of her Conference Planning Team:

Steve Aschmann, Mark Baridon, Pat Baker, Mary Currie, Quentin Holmes, Adrienne Knight, Mary McGuire, Ginny Nyhuis, Chris Pomfret, Marjory Roth, and Cindy Wright.



Chris Pomfret

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Lillian then read the following quote, “*Alone we can do little,
Together we can do so much.*” (Helen Keller)

- Rev. Sarah Erickson / Columbia Theological Seminary reported on the Older Adult Ministry Certificate Course:
 - Prior focus: Completing four courses and Capstone; Resulted in a completion rate of about 25% in 2019-2020, 4 completions out of 18 eligible.
 - Effective 2021:
 - Level I Certificate if all four courses and projects completed
 - Level II Certificate if Capstone completed.
 - Tracking of participants will stop after 2 years if no additional activity
 - Online course delivery for all courses by Spring 2022
 - Grant received to review curriculum and support leadership development in 2021
(Will fund two retreats and work in between to complete review by Summer/Fall 2022.)
- Quentin Holmes, Editor of POAMN Network News, reported themes of upcoming issues of *PNN* will be:

PNN ISSUE	THEME	(DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL)
Holiday issue	<i>I am the vine, you are the branches...</i>	(December 15, 2021)
Winter issue	<i>In old age they still produce fruit...</i>	(January 15, 2022)
Spring issue	<i>The Saints among us...</i>	(April 15, 2022)
- Membership Chair Linda Rauenbuehler reported that in 2021 POAMN had 118 membership units comprised of 28 Organizational Memberships, 59 Individual Memberships, 21 Couple Memberships, and 10 Affiliate Memberships. As of October 28th, the 2022 POAMN Membership currently stands at: 6 Organizational Memberships, 53 Individual Memberships, 9 Couple Memberships, and 0 Affiliate Memberships. Linda closed her presentation with the words, “*We look forward to another productive and successful year of learning and serving the older adults who surround us.*”
- Rev. Dianna Wright gave an update on POAMN Communications. Currently, three people are taking turns –one month at a time– keeping the POAMN Website updated with timely information. In October, POAMN had a “reach” of 283 contacts within the USA, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and 9 other countries.
- POAMN Vice-President Steve Aschmann reported on upcoming Special Projects. **Cohorts! New Opportunities in Small Group Studies** – 2021 spring offerings were “Intercultural Considerations in Older Adult Ministry” and “Framing your Older Adult Ministry in a Post-COVID World.” Participants are active partners in learning, supporting, guiding, and resourcing these groups. In 2022, the cohort theme will be “Cultivating Your Own Older Adult Ministry.” The new cohort will be starting up in mid-February 2022, with registration becoming available in January 2022.
- Pat Baker announced that POAMN’s highest award, **The POAMN Legacy Award**, was being bestowed (virtually) on Rev. Dennis Haines & Donna Haines in recognition of their dedicated and faithful service over a period of several decades (See article *POAMN Legacy Award* on Pg. 15).
- Lillian Rhudy reported that when (and where) the 2022 POAMN National Conference will be held is still a discussion in process.
- President Pat Baker described how POAMN is “Moving Forward with Your Help.” Upcoming things include:
 - Creating a 2022 Older Adult Ministries Planning Guide;
 - Developing several “Quick Sheets” that provide access to resources on timely topics;
 - Eleven sponsors who have committed to providing support for five years to help underwrite the cost of publishing Older Adult Planning Guides each year;
 - POAMN’s Administrative Assistant, Ginny Nyhuis, is planning on retiring at the end of 2022.
- The 2021 Annual Meeting closed with Vice-President Steve Aschmann leading us in prayer.

LIVING ON A REMOTE ISLAND DURING THE COVID-19 ERA

by Lynnette Wood, Ph.d. | Orcas Island, Washington

[Editor's NOTE: Lynnette Wood is a retired remote sensing scientist who spent her career helping developing countries assess their resources and their needs in order to plan effectively for the future. She and husband, Dr. Kenneth Gibbs - a retired astronomer - now live on Orcas Island in Puget Sound.]

Where to begin? When asked to write about the long-term experience of living on an island during this seemingly never-ending pandemic, my first thought was: Where to begin?

So, I began by re-reading the first article I wrote for POAMN Network News. Published in the Spring of 2018, the article was entitled, "Understanding the Challenges of Aging Well in a Remote Location." What struck me in re-reading the article was how much has *not* changed. We still have limited health care facilities. One of the two health clinics that was open in 2018 has since merged with the other, so now we have only one clinic. There are still no hospitals, no specialized medical facilities, and no assisted living or similar facilities on the island; in addition, home health care services continue to be severely limited.



Location of Orcas Island in Washington State

The only hospitals capable of handling COVID patients are on the mainland. Needless to say, at the beginning of the pandemic there was a tangible fear about access to medical services, and almost everyone took the governor's shelter-in-place order very seriously and continued to do so for many months. Uptake of vaccinations has been high and the wearing of masks has been nearly universal.

It was exactly that fear, combined with the sudden isolation, which motivated the Orcas Senior Center's Buddy Check-In program, designed to check on seniors during the height of the shelter-in-place phase. Now, fully 18 months after its launch, the program is a mainstay of the center. The program is serving a need which was always there but that COVID brought to light.

In many ways, living on Orcas Island has been a microcosm of living in many places in the United States. The local real estate market went "crazy" as people from Seattle and other metropolitan areas purchased property - any property - in an effort to escape to what they perceived to be a "safe haven." Like most places, our case-count rose and fell and rose and fell, from a total of 10 cases in our County in March 2020, to a total of 414 as I write this in early December 2021 (out of a population of roughly 17,000). Fortunately - knock on wood - we have not yet had a COVID-related death.

As I look back on the last 18 months, I realize that we have settled into a "new normal," but it is one that has involved constant innovation and re-invention. As everywhere, in-person meetings were replaced by video meetings, and many people prefer those now because it cuts down travel time and meetings can be organized on the spur of the moment. At the senior center, we've gradually re-introduced in-person activities by limiting the size of the group, requiring masks, and hosting drive-through and drive-yourself outdoor events which allow people to more easily socially distance. We have started our own home delivery program to fill the gap in services not provided by others. And, we are finally, after years of delay, launching our long-awaited home maintenance and repair program that will allow people to more easily age in their own homes.

In other ways, living on Orcas Island has had some unique challenges. The impact has been greatest on local tourist-dependent businesses. Tourism constitutes a large portion of our local economy, and the COVID pandemic wreaked havoc on this industry. Many shops, restaurants, and coffee shops have gone out of business. Those still in business may offer only take-out or limit seating to a fraction of their capacity. The tourists who do visit can find themselves without a place to eat, as even the restaurants which are still open may not be able

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to seat all of them. Early in the pandemic, in particular, many people lost their jobs and had to move off the island as a result. Rising housing prices only compounded the problem, as homes being used as long-term rentals were sold by their owners who wanted to take advantage of the rapidly rising market prices.

Most tourists and residents alike are dependent on the ferry system to get on and off the island. However, COVID-related disruptions have made this mode of transportation unreliable. Early in the pandemic, older ferry workers were offered the option to take early retirement because they were considered at high risk for infection. Training and certifying new workers, who must be Coast Guard-certified, was slow, both because of lack of applicants and due to COVID-related restrictions placed on the training itself. Already struggling with staff shortages, a recent state-wide vaccination mandate resulted in an additional 121 ferry workers losing their jobs. For months, our island archipelago was serviced with just three boats, instead of the usual four, and all reservations were suspended. This meant arriving at the ferry landing ninety minutes to two hours early to assure a good chance of being on the next sailing. Since food and most other goods arrive by ferry, and solid waste is removed by ferry, such disruptions can have a much bigger effect than just the transport of people.



Storm damaged bridge to the eastern part of Orcas Island

For the most part, because we are isolated and we know it, the community drew together. The pandemic forced us to look at almost everything around us in new ways, particularly at how we can come out of this with a more equitable future. Issues like homelessness (yes, we have it) and social isolation have become more of a priority for us, as has the recognition of the need for better mental health and childcare services.



Foot bridge built by Orcas Island residents

The pandemic brought a recognition of these problems and many others, and our community has generously responded. Does money matter? Yes! Before COVID, oftentimes when I spoke to someone about the services offered by the senior center, they would say, "Oh. I thought you were just a building." I have not heard anyone say this in over a year. Instead, the center has been the grateful recipient of a number of generous donations and grants that are a direct result of the recognition of the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities - needs that were always there, but had gone unrecognized. These funds have allowed us to continue, and even expand, our services to the community in ways that were not possible before COVID. In this way we are very lucky - we fully appreciate that many rural communities lack local benefactors who are not only wealthy, but who are willing to invest some of their wealth back into their own communities.

Of course, it is impossible to predict the future. Looking back to the launch of Buddy Check-In, the fact that we told the new buddy volunteers that we expected their volunteering term to last about eight weeks demonstrates just how cloudy our crystal ball was. Our community has proven to be resilient, creative, and proactive during difficult times. Most recently, we experienced severe flooding after a period of the most intense rainfall here since 1935. A span of road connecting a large area on the east side of the island was washed out. What a surprise when - while many anticipated only boat and barge access to transport people and goods for weeks to come - the neighborhood constructed a temporary footbridge that allowed safe crossings by the very next day. As described by one resident, "It was an old-fashioned barn raising!" The footbridge was built and vehicles were organized on either side to transport people and goods to and fro. It was more than just a footbridge; it was a community lifeline and an example of the community resilience which has emerged since the pandemic began. Is it also symbolic of a bridge to a brighter future? Time will tell, of course, but I remain ever hopeful.

A MODEL FOR RESPITE DAY/WEEKEND FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

by Pat Baker / Lilburn, GA

I recently presented a workshop at the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Centers Association annual conference and wanted to share the content with you as an example of something that persons doing older adult ministry might consider. The premise was to encourage camp and conference centers to consider hosting family caregivers for a one to three day respite retreat. I'm including this information in the PNN hoping that you will look at camp and conference centers close to your church and share this information with them or ask them to host a retreat that you develop using these notes as a framework.

Just to be clear about whom I consider to be a caregiver, here is the definition:

*A **caregiver** - sometimes called an **informal caregiver** - is an unpaid individual (for example, a spouse, partner, family member, friend, or neighbor) involved in assisting others with activities of daily living and/or medical tasks. **Formal caregivers** are paid care providers providing care in one's home or in a care setting (day care, residential facility, long-term care facility).*

In the case of this model, I'm looking at informal caregivers, although I'm very much aware the formal caregivers also need respite.

Here are just a few facts and figures that backup the need for this type of event:

- *Approximately 39.8 million caregivers provide care to adults (aged 18+) with a disability or illness, or 16.6% of Americans.*
- *About 15.7 million adult family caregivers care for someone who has Alzheimer's disease or other dementia.*
- *Average age: 49.2 years old.*
- *48% of caregivers are 18-49 years old.*
- *34% of caregivers are 65+ years old.*

In my presentation I offered several possibilities for types of caregiver retreats camp and conference centers might consider.

A few ideas:

- *A Day Away- Day retreats- not overnight- participants come from a 50-mile radius.*
- *A Day Away with care-partner- separate program agendas- over 50 miles away*
- *2-Day retreats- overnight- caregivers only, participants come from over 100 miles away.*
- *2-Day retreats- overnight with care partner and programs together and separate. Can share a room for the comfort of both care partners.*
- *Weekend retreats- 2 nights away, possibility of bringing their care-partner, separate agendas, but they would be together at night.*
- *Weekend sibling/care team member retreats- 2 nights away with other family members or care team members to plan for the care of the loved one.*
- *Weekend retreats- 2 nights away by themselves- but in a community of other family caregivers.*

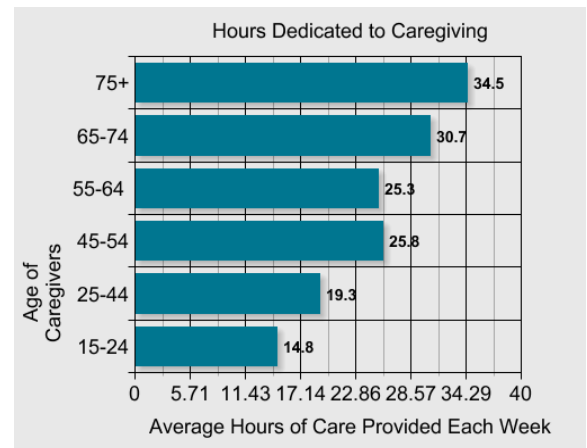
Expanding on these ideas, you might consider the following:

One Day retreats:

- *Mixes education along with times for relaxation, connection with other caregivers, and personal/spiritual reflection.*
- *Educational component includes identifying and managing stress, tips to prevent caregiver burnout, along with learning through connection with other caregivers and sharing experiences.*
- *Relaxation techniques in a peaceful environment.*

If care partner is along:

- *Depending on capabilities...should not mix...fun and restful activities depending on capacity.*
- *Planned busy project or group activity, having given the group some choices beforehand.*



Number of Hours Dedicated to Caregiving by Age of Family Caregiver

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2 Day retreats- over night

- *Planned to help caregivers relax and get inspired.*
- *Specific theme planned- "An exploration of caregiving and family relationships," "The caregiving journey: changing relationships," "Anger, intimacy and grief: a delicate balance," "Grief and loss: creating our caregiving future," "Identifying and managing stress."*
- *Massages, relation techniques, journal writing, hiking trails, and entertainment.*

2 Day retreats - over night with care partner

- *Same as without care partner but some separate activities, some together activities.*
- *Share accommodations with care partner and share morning and evening meals but lunch is separate. Creative lunches like picnics or special outings to restaurants.*
- **3 Day retreats** - *similar to two day retreats, just an extra day of programming and another overnight stay.*

Possible topics for programming:

- *Caregiving 101*
- *Caregiving roles and responsibilities*
- *Caregiver relaxation exercises*
- *Advanced illness: holding on and letting go*
- *A guide to taking care of yourself*
- *Caregiver depression: a silent health crisis*
- *Caregiving and illnesses like coronavirus: tips for caregivers*
- *Dementia, caregiving and controlling frustration*
- *Managing difficult behaviors*
- *A caregivers Bill of Rights*
- *Knowing when your loved one needs additional help*
- *Being care partners*

Resources to help you find programming:

- *Local Area Agency on Aging: covers every county in the US. 1-800-677-1116, Eldercare Locator, www.eldercare.acl.gov*
- *State Offices on Aging: www.usaging.org*
- *AARP: they have a great caregiver initiative and, if you are lucky, a caregiver specialist in your state. www.aarp.org*
- *Alzheimer's Association: national association with state offices in all states. A great resource for Alzheimer's and related dementias. www.alz.org 1-800-272-3900 will give you state office info.*
- *Heart Association: www.heart.org*
- *Local aging services, often run by counties. For and not-for-profit organizations and services for the aging population. Search for "aging services" in your county.*
- *Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, Dealing with Dementia, www.rosalynncarter.org*

Mrs. Rosalynn Carter has devoted much of her life to formal and informal caregivers to help them deal with the challenges they face every day. She is famous for saying the following, which continues to ring true in this day and age. I hope this respite model will be an inspiration to you and your ministry.

***"THERE ARE ONLY FOUR KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD:
THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CAREGIVERS,
THOSE WHO CURRENTLY ARE CAREGIVERS,
THOSE WHO WILL BE CAREGIVERS, AND
THOSE WHO WILL NEED A CAREGIVER."***

- Rosalynn Carter

Pat Baker, President of POAMN

Director of Older Adult and Caregiver Ministries, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Tucker, GA

[Editor's NOTE: This article was read during the virtual 2021 POAMN National Conference in October.]

2021 POAMN LEGACY AWARD TO REV. DENNIS HAINES & DONNA HAINES

by Pat Baker, POAMN President

The POAMN Legacy Award is given to individuals who have made a positive difference in the tenure of POAMN and ministry to, for, and with older adults. I'm delighted to be presenting this year's award to a couple - Dennis and Donna Haines - who have given years of selfless commitment and are great examples for all of us to follow. As you well know by now, they have been leading us in worship and song for the last couple of days. Now, let me tell you a bit about them and their lives prior to this conference.

Reverend Dennis Haines was ordained in 1966, serving churches in the New York area. He honorably retired from Missouri Union Presbytery in 2003. He is now a member of Heartland Presbytery. After his retirement, he did several interims and had temporary pastoral relationships in churches in Kansas and Missouri.

Dennis and Donna were both members of the Association of Retired Ministers, Spouses, or Survivors (ARMSS) which was started in 1997 by a group of farsighted retired clergy and their spouses. This group felt that even though they had retired from active ministry, they still could be useful to the church in general. ARMSS was the only denomination-wide organization in the PC (USA) that advocated on behalf of this segment of the church. When Dennis was in ARMSS, he served as their finance committee chair and on the executive committee of POAMN, representing ARMSS.

Donna was the Convention Committee Chair extraordinaire for many years with ARMSS, and we all know the work that goes into planning a conference. She was the designer and creator of a special banner for each year, representing the theme of the conference. She also created the banners when POAMN and ARMSS had their joint conferences.

Relationships were and are important to Dennis and Donna. They wanted the national conferences to be not only educational and informative, but also to be lots of fun! One person even recalls playing a round of golf in a Missouri cyclone.

Dennis and Donna both possess a commitment to retired ministers, church professionals, and their families. They desire that retired folks be treated with honor, love, and respect by their presbyteries and former congregations. In the workshops, worship, and songs they have led over the years, they've always emphasized happy, meaningful, and successful retirement.

Dennis and Donna are the epitome of how to grow old gracefully, sensibly, spiritually, and with good heart, giving their all to the cause with energy, commitment, and generosity.

CONGRATULATIONS, Dennis and Donna!



Dennis & Donna Haines



2021 POAMN Legacy Award

“GOD WILL KEEP YOU”

by Don Carlin, Retired Hospice Chaplain / Philadelphia, PA

Hattie was an elderly African American woman of faith, terminally ill, always in bed when I visited. Always totally, totally silent. When I visited bi-weekly, sharing simple services of scripture, hymns, and prayers, I would always watch her face. She seemed peaceful enough, but she never spoke a word, and I could only hope that in some small way my presence and my words were helpful. On November 13, 2013, my colleagues and I received the shocking news that our hospice was closing down in two weeks because we were not making a profit for the parent company who owned us. Hattie and all other patients would be transferred to the care of other hospices. I would suddenly - at Thanksgiving time - be without a job.



Don Carlin, Retired
Hospice Chaplain

I never dreamed I would be saying “goodbyes” to patients under these circumstances, and I have only foggy memories of those last 2 weeks. I do know I was living and working under high anxiety, and I chose not to say “goodbye” to Hattie - for I could never gauge what Hattie was or was not “processing.” My last visit to Hattie was again, as always, a simple service of scripture, hymns, and prayers, though my heart was breaking. Hattie did not speak.

I gave Hattie a final blessing and turned to exit her bedroom when Hattie’s voice stopped me in my tracks. I had never heard her voice before. Deliberately and very clearly she spoke 4 words - leaving me with a memory that still gives me goosebumps eight years later. “GOD WILL KEEP YOU,” Hattie said.

I returned to Hattie’s bedside, amazed and deeply moved. I do not know if Hattie ever spoke again before she died. The miracle of Hattie’s words - this wonderful promise from God - “kept me” spiritually and emotionally through the year-end holidays of 2013. On into 2014 and beyond, “God will keep you” resounded in my head.

With the passage of time, I thought of Hattie’s words less frequently - until the COVID-19 pandemic hit - putting stay-at-home orders in place, abruptly halting my many informal nursing home visits, upending my church life, and disrupting my part-time job. While browsing through the Psalms, my eyes fell on the words of Psalm 121:7-8:

“The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forever more.” (NRSV)

I wrote and re-wrote these words on my 3x5 index cards and mailed them to friends who might be helped by them. As my delivery job for the neighborhood florist resumed and expanded, I encountered on the streets of my city COVID-19 illnesses and deaths, increasing homicide rates, and increasing numbers of motor vehicle accidents. My feelings of both impatience and vulnerability increased, and my prayers to God reflected more and more my felt need for God to “keep my going out and my coming in.”

“God will keep you,” Hattie said. After my part-time job as chaplain at an adult day care center finally resumed in October, 2021, our Bible studies focused on the psalms that have helped us throughout the pandemic. Of course, I talked about Psalm 121, and I told my students the story of Hattie.

Maybe I was a bit too confident that now I was truly trusting in God’s promise. Just a few days after telling Hattie’s story in late October, 2021, I got the sad and shocking news that my church’s pastor was suddenly resigning, and it felt like the earth was trembling beneath my feet. Then I stopped at a bank cash machine, only to discover that someone (for the second time this year) had stolen my identity and cleaned out my checking account, leaving me far too little money to pay my November bills.

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The crises of November, 2013. The crises of November, 2021. "God will keep you," Hattie had miraculously said, and I knew I badly needed to trust God's promise again. "God please help me! God, please keep my church!"

A few years ago, I was prepared to hear the chaplain at an Ivy League university pray an eloquent prayer before his sermon. I still remember that prayer - all six words of it: "Lord, I need your help. Amen." That chaplain gave me the confidence to pray that prayer more often myself, and to pray it without shame. "Lord, I need your help. Amen."

"Today, Lord, I need your help. Of course, every day I need your help, but today I really feel the need. Today, I know I cannot possibly live independent of you. I cannot be a branch independent of the vine, just doing my own thing. I will wither up and die. Today, Lord, I need your help. I need to stay attached to you, the vine, for your nourishment, your wisdom, your strength, your safekeeping. I need to stay attached to you so that your life gives me life, so that your life helps me and keeps me. Amen."

A NEW SMALL GROUP STUDY OPPORTUNITY "CULTIVATING YOUR OWN OLDER ADULT MINISTRY"

by Steve Aschmann, POAMN Vice-President

POAMN Winter Cohort -- Begins Mid-February 2022

POAMN is excited to once again partner with the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Office of Christian Formation to offer an online, coach-led cohort, focused on strengthening, nurturing, and supporting leaders of older adult ministries. Our study group will consist of five to eight people and will meet for six 90-minute sessions. Participants will be active partners in learning: supporting, guiding, and resourcing the group. Each member will select their own area of focus and develop individualized goals around the announced topic. Our cohort is open to POAMN members and non-members alike, anyone working with older adults or interested in working with seniors.

The Winter Cohort topic will be "Cultivating Your Own Older Adult Ministry". It's a fact! No two congregations or older adult ministries are the same. This cohort is designed to help you to fashion and grow effective ministries for your own unique setting. We are delighted to announce that our cohort will be coached by Sarah Erickson. She is a skilled and experienced coach. Sarah Erickson serves as the Director of Lifelong Learning at Columbia Theological Seminary and is the POAMN Certification Coordinator.

Under Sarah's guidance, each member of the cohort will be encouraged to establish goals and strategies, making plans for their own context. As a participant, you may want to plan a special event, design a study series, organize a new area of service, address a specific challenge, connect with an age group like Boomers, or create a unique opportunity. Group members will also examine key topics and timely issues facing senior adults.

Registration will open in mid-January. There will be six 90-minute sessions beginning the week of February 21, 2022. At the time of this publication, we are projecting that sessions will be held on consecutive Thursday afternoons, starting on February 24, 2022, and running through March 31, 2022. We anticipate the weekly gatherings starting at 3:00 or 3:30 PM. Our coach will schedule an orientation session prior to the initial meeting. Participants are asked to make a \$25 contribution to the POAMN General Fund at the time of registration.

This coach-led cohort is an opportunity for anyone who has a leadership role in older adult ministry. There will be a virtual orientation prior to initial study session. Watch our website: www.poamn.org for registration announcements. If you would like to be notified when registration opens, please contact Steve Aschmann, se43aschmann@gmail.com.

MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022

Membership fees for 2022 are now being accepted.

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Burnetta Armour Cleveland, GA	Phyllis Hart Central Point, OR	Anne Marie Meyehoffer Zephyr Hills, FL	Tracy Williams West Columbia, TX
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Dennis & Donna Haines Independence, MO	Mary McGuire Houston, TX	Anne & Greg Tarbutton Blowing Rock, NC	Third Presbyterian Church Rochester, NY
Gretchen Hammeke Beloit, WI	Kathy McNair Glenview, IL	Mitchell Trigger Overland Park KS	Thank you to those who have joined POAMN for 2022!
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	Leah Meador Jupiter, FL	Dan Wiard Mt. Pleasant, SC	
	Evi Melberg Rockville, MD	William Wildey Ponte Vedro, FL	

POAMN Network News
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RETIRED PASTOR'S CORNER

by Rev. Dennis J. Haines, HR / Independence, Missouri

Thank you, thank you for asking us to lead the worship services for the 2021 POAMN Annual Conference in October. For us, Dennis and Donna, it was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with friends from POAMN and ARMSS. But wait, there was more! We were shocked and surprised to receive the Legacy Award that POAMN gives each year to those who have a ministry with older adults that spans many years. That beautiful award has a permanent place in our china cabinet for all to see. Just a note about vines and branches: we are all aware that there comes a time when vines need to be trimmed and branches need to be pruned to enhance new growth. I am seeing in the church today that wonderful new growth is taking place in a variety of ways. Yet the wine that has been produced by the old vines and branches might still be enjoyed and found fruitful as it continues to age. So, this old COUPLE will look for more ways to be of service in the vineyard. We look forward to sharing with you all face-to-face in 2022.

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6 NIV

