



Older Adult Purpose Group

POJ Older Adult Purpose Group Growing Older, Growing in Faith

Dr. Vicki Murdock

“You shall rise before the aged, and defer to the old; and you shall fear your God: I am LORD.” God commands this of each of us in Lev. 19:32; all of us have both the obligation and the opportunity to honor the older adults among us.

An Urgent Need: “The growth in the number and proportion of older adults is unprecedented in the history of the United States. Two factors—longer life spans and aging baby boomers— will continue to *double the population of Americans aged 65 years or older* during the next 25 years to about 72 million. By 2030, older adults will account for roughly 20% of the U.S. population” (CDC, 2013). This doubling of the number of older adults will mean that many more resources will be needed than are currently available or even planned (for example, professional and paraprofessional caregivers, housing options, and opportunities for meaningful spiritual growth). Our churches have an enormous opportunity—and responsibility—to minister with and to older adults from basic physical needs to “the sustenance of the soul.”

Scholars tell us that older adults are marginalized by society; if you are older, you know this from your own experience. Retirement seems to equal non-productivity in society’s view; the older adult is assumed to be less able to keep up. The anti-aging industry sells billions of dollars’ worth of products and services promising continuing youthfulness; scammers target the old. Even our churches rarely offer older adult programming; evening services, Bible study, and church meetings cannot be attended by those who no longer drive at night. Yet, since 2000 the PCUSA has had to close its national Office on Aging and Richmond’ Union Seminary closed its Center on Aging. Older adults as a group and as individuals are the most diverse of any age group: we have lived longer and have accumulated both more experience and more frailties. Using 65 as a starting age, 65-105 is a span of 40 years for a single age group; drop the starting age to 50 and it becomes a single group covering 55 years of living! This means that older adulthood is complex, unique, and remarkable, yet largely ignored. Research also tells us that students in helping professions—physicians, nurses, ministers, social workers—prefer to work with all other age groups rather than with older adults. Young people say that they feel less competent to work with older adults because they are so different than themselves; a young pastor may understand kids and young adults in a way she/he may not feel about to understand an older adult. Our churches today are more populated with older adults than with youth, yet programming, pastoral care, and resourcing may be insufficient. And the numbers of these older adults in our churches and our communities will double. We can choose to be leaders in helping older adults and their families live fully and also ready themselves to “go to their ancestors in peace and be buried in a good old age” (Gen. 15:15).

What We Do: The mission of the Presbytery James’ Older Adult Purpose Group is to share information, resources, and programming about and for older adults with pastoral staff and members of the churches of this Presbytery. We are here to assist congregations, pastors, and church staff with the development of their programs and we would be happy to consult/confer with them.

What We Hope to Do: We imagine a webpage within the POJ site that can deliver resource information, advertise regional events, and offer programming ideas from responsible sources. We hope to develop a “speaker’s bureau”-style list of experts to provide workshops to pastors/church workers and older adult church members. These might be folks who could offer a legal workshop, a healthcare event, a financial planning seminar, or a workshop on exploring your spiritual journey. Perhaps you have expertise to share with others in the Presbytery!

National Conference Coming to Richmond: It is a privilege to invite you to join us October 11-14, 2016 for the national meeting of the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network (POAMN) being held here in Richmond. Whether you are 30, 60 or 90, this conference will inspire, connect, and suggest possibilities for older adult ministry together. Visit www.poamn.org to read about the conference in the POAMN newsletter.

We would like to hear from you if you have questions or ideas about how to minister with and to older adults. Please email Dr. Carroll Londoner clondoner@verizon.net or Lillian Rhudy at rhudys2@verizon.net.



Left to right: Miriam Bailey, Carroll Londoner, Maxine Lane, Ralph Rhudy, Lillian Rhudy, Gladys Bowles, Skip Murdock

PAST PROGRAMS

[God’s Gift of Grace, 2015](#)
[Awake to Sing God’s Hope, 2014](#)
[Unfinished Business, 2013](#)

[POAMN 2016 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION](#)
[APPLICATION COMPLETE ONLINE](#)

RESOURCES

RESOURCE	WEBSITE
HOUSING FOR SENIOR Independent living, assisted living, memory units, skilled nursing and rehab.	www.seniorsguideonline.com Pages 17-18, 22
ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION	www.ALZ.com 800-272-3900, 804-967-2580
SENIOR CONNECTIONS SERVICES	www.seniorconnections-va.org .
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGING And Rehabilitation Services	www.vadars.org .
VETERAN AND SPOUSE SERVICES	www.vabenefits.va.org
VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF HOME CARE AND HOSPICE	www.vahc.org .
POAMN Resource for churches, pastors, DCE’s for program ideas and guides to promote Activities for Seniors in their congregations.	www.poamn.org
MEDICARE and MEDICAID	www.cms.gov
MEALS ON WHEELS	www.Feedmore.org

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Older Adult Purpose Group is dedicated to hosting programs and marketing resources (electronically or digitally) to address the spiritual and personal needs of older adults in the Presbytery of the James (POJ). Our goal is to develop strategies which will help inform older adults on a wide variety of topics: those relating to spiritual, physical and mental health, financial concerns, law and retirement issues, housing and transportation matters, volunteer and employment opportunities and end of life planning. We will endeavor to publicize current publications and events, which will inform and enhance their quality of life by utilizing the Vine, the internet, and printed materials to reach all churches in the Presbytery. The Older Adult Ministry will plan retreats and other events with opportunities to gather and focus on particular age-related issues, with time for worship, learning together and fellowship. Scion of the Older Adult Purpose Group.