

Congregational Best Practices

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Embracing the Second Half of Life

By J. Neil Alexander

A few years back, Margaret Guenther, an Episcopal priest and popular writer on Christian spirituality, wrote a wonderful book entitled [*Toward Holy Ground: Spiritual Directions for the Second Half of Life*](#) (Cowley, 1995). The title alone is worthy of serious reflection (and the rest of the book is good, too).

Long before most of us get “old,” we find ourselves in the second half of our lives. If one considers a full life to be “three score years and ten,” then the second half of begins at 35! That means for most of us, it’s not too soon to think about the spiritual dimensions of our second half.

Now, well into my second half of life, lots of things have changed. I am sometimes amazed at those things that used to drive me crazy but now don’t faze me much at all. I’ve made peace with traffic, for example. It is what it is and it doesn’t raise my blood pressure much anymore. And, of course, there are some things I used to think of as peripheral at best that I presently hold to be of the utmost importance, like taking time to rest. In the second half of life I’ve actually learned that I feel better and I am more productive when I get adequate amounts of rest. Like most people, when I was younger I used to pride myself on how little sleep I needed. Now I wonder what I might have accomplished in those years with a little more sleep!

In the second half of life, I have developed new levels of tolerance for risk. When it comes to the body, I am increasingly risk averse: I no longer climb extension ladders to clean out the gutters or do heroic yard work that might cause a tree to fall on me (or my house). But in matters of faith, I’ve discovered I am more willing to risk following the leading of the Holy Spirit, to listen to the Word with fresh ears and an open mind, to welcome the stranger, to look for good in the other, and to wander toward less comfortable places of the heart than would have been true in the first half of life.

Although I’ve been blessed with a wonderful family and many loving friends for my entire life, I find that relationships – real relationships, not just acquaintances – are of life-giving importance at this point. Among the gifts of the second half of life, are the long-term relationships that have made me who I am. It’s been interesting to think about those friends from the first half of life I thought I would have forever but have fallen away, compared with those that are truly life-long and we have made it intact into the second half. I cherish them. And the longer I know them, the more precious to me they become.

I suspect most of us would admit that the greatest gift of the second half of life is to have been around long enough to know that, in some small way, one’s life has made a difference. You’ve been a faithful spouse, a loving parent, a trusted friend, and honest

worker, a good citizen, a loyal follower of Jesus, a dedicated member of the body of Christ, and that's what counts. When we're young it is so easy to take these things, and so much more, for granted. The second half gives us the time and the wisdom to appreciate them in new ways and in ways that make life new all over again.

Growing older gracefully is one way of looking at it. But for now, I'm just going to call it gracefully embracing the second half of life.

The Right Reverend J. Neil Alexander is the ninth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta.

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Enriching the lives of our seniors

By Chris Moore

My name is Chris Moore and I have been graciously asked by the Task Force on Older Adult Ministries (OAM) to share my thoughts on seniors and the elderly. This came into motion because I responded to an open request from them in a bulletin at my church. They wanted to know what churches were doing in support of this fast growing population.

I have attended St Mary Episcopal Church in Crystal Lake, Illinois for about 32 years. I was married there, had my kids baptized there and buried my parents in the beautiful church yard. I have been a part of a rich spiritual family that has helped me grow and feed my passion for seniors and the elderly. It is seniors and youth together who make up the church. Since both are important, we need a vision to show how they can interact and learn from one another. Both age groups desire the other to come to recognize each other's hopes and dreams, frustrations, joys and sorrows. Each wants to know God's love.

I have found that working with seniors, as with any other group, is a learned behavior. For me, this means to watch through example and hands on experience. It is important to take the time to be still and listen to what the seniors are saying. They are the wealth and 401K investment of our next generation. They hold the history and traditions of our past that may not be found on a Google or Yahoo search.

The question may be... how do we tap into this resource? I think the first way is to find out who are the senior members in our churches. The active members will be easy to locate ... but are they attending church? If not, why not? There must be investigation as to the reason for inactive members. Many times it is from advancing age and lack of close family to get them to church so they just fall through the cracks... many times they ask for nothing and keep quiet in their loneliness. It appears to them that with our full schedules that we do not care. I do not believe this is true. I believe it is because we just do not know.

So it may be a great idea to find a group of parishioners in your church who have a passion to work with this age group. Have them research your senior and elderly members' roster and then go talk with them. You would be surprised how much they have to say. Most are not helpless but just need some help.

I think that if you form a senior group in your church it takes the pressure off just one person doing all the work. Phone trees, that include the senior members, can be formed for all kinds of duties that include driving someone to a doctor appointment, dropping off a meal, help with minor chores around the house, and the biggest one in my opinion,

friendship. Checking up on each other is the glue to our church and brings pleasure to our dear Lord. A phone call is priceless to someone who lives alone and hears from no one.

About a year ago, we formed a senior group called St. Mary Seniors (SMS). We have 25-30 seniors who regularly attend our every other month luncheon. There is such a connection with this group that was so needed. Each luncheon offers a great meal which allows for an hour or more to just visit with each other. Then we have a speaker, who is chosen by the group, to educate and enlighten. It is a wonderful time for all.

I am my brother's keeper

By Colette Phillips

St. Simon the Cyrenian is located in New Rochelle, NY, a town of about 75,000 people nestled between the city of Mount Vernon and the village of Pelham. It has the second largest population of older adults in the county (15,000 people) and is home to three Episcopal churches, all of which I have visited in my 20 years of living in Westchester. Each church serves a distinct population and each is unique in its beauty and appeal.

My family and I chose St. Simon's because it was where we felt most comfortable, and where we felt we could do the most good. For the last 20 years, I have served in various capacities but my current service as senior warden has been the most fulfilling and the most difficult. In this role, my faith has grown in a way I never thought possible. Each project or challenge or success brings with it a remarkable lesson I have learned to listen to very carefully.

At St. Simon's, we are a group of people growing in our walk with Christ, eager to welcome all into a warm community, and exploring how God may be calling us to reach out to New Rochelle and the towns and cities where we live. This exploration has caused us to look inward and consider our own assets which are many, to use and share in order to create opportunities that will affect positive change in people's lives. It turns out that my position as the research analyst for the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services is an incredible asset. It provides an excellent opportunity to share with congregants, programs designed to bring comfort to an older person's life.

One particularly important program for caregivers was introduced to St. Simon's in 2009 when it was developed. The Livable Communities Caregiver Coaching Program (L3C) was developed in collaboration with Fordham University Ravazzin Center on Aging for the purpose of providing one-on-one support to caregivers through volunteerism. Coaches act in an enhanced "good neighbor" role helping caregivers to become more knowledgeable about a wide range of options and resources available to them, thereby also helping them to become more informed decision makers.

The importance of the L3C program cannot be overstated, because caregivers are an especially large population. About 33,000 live in Westchester County alone. They spend on average about 62.6 hours per week in this role. For these reasons, I introduced the Livable Communities Caregiver Coaching Program to the congregation of St. Simon's seeking to recruit not only caregivers in need of help but volunteers willing to provide that help by becoming coaches. We were successful in both areas. The average age of the St. Simon parishioner is 62 years old. We currently have a resident Caregiver Coach at our church and many of our members have been assisted by caregiver coaches with whom they have been matched.

This enhanced *good neighbor initiative* has been embraced by St. Simon the Cyrenian in New Rochelle because it fosters the notion of *aging in place*, which is the ability to live in one's own home for as long as possible with independence and dignity. Parishioners seeking meaningful volunteer work and those in need of an unbiased and informed partner to bounce things off of can participate and reap excellent benefits.

A coach and caregiver form a strong connection. Take for example this story that was published by a local newspaper:

Kevin Smith and his wife, Marcia, signed up to be volunteer Caregiver Coaches having learned about the program through their church. Kevin was drawn to L3C by childhood memories of witnessing the strain of his grandmother's "senility" on his parents. "The training gave an awareness of things to look out for when dealing with a caregiver. I learned how to comfort the person without being directive, help open his mind as to what his options are. We talk every other week. I give him the breaks he needs when he has stress and needs someone to talk to. If he calls in the middle of the week, I know that he is stressed. Most of the time we talk, we don't talk about things that are heavy. It's a great relief to take our minds off of what's going on around us and give us a moment to breathe. I know that I have a friend that I'll have for the rest of my life."

Lawrence Cunningham, age 51, is concerned about both of his parents. His 85 year old father is primary caregiver for his 80 year old mother. She is bedridden and has dementia. Lawrence wants to make sure that his father can maintain his health, while his mother receives the care she needs.

"The program gives someone to bounce things off of. When you talk to family, there's an emotional agenda. He doesn't have the emotional attachment and we've now become friends. You think you're on this island, but you're not. You know that there are other people going through the same situations. I become stressed out by worrying about what will happen. My mother has diabetes on top of the Alzheimer's and the fall. When I talk to Kevin, I get a new perspective and a new outlook."

There is a void that needs to be filled by caring neighbors and people. We all want to know that there is somebody out there who says 'I care enough to help you get through this adjustment; to help a caregiver get from Point A to Point B'. The L3C program is a vehicle through which this can happen.

"Am I my brother's Keeper?" Gen 4:9 – Very simply put, yes you are!

Older Adult Ministries in the Diocese of Texas

By the Rev. Dr. Helen W. Appelberg

When Pablo Casals, the famous cellist, was 82 years old, his friends asked why he practiced four to five hours a day, he replied, "Because I think I am getting better." Casals, like Helen Keller, Viktor Frankl and many others, teach us how to age well and live life to the fullest... to find meaning, purpose and passion and to care for others as well as ourselves. Casals died at 97.

In 2002, in the Diocese of Texas, one of the first programs developed for seniors was a module to train Community of Hope lay-chaplains in our diocese and training centers across the country to provide pastoral care devoted to the special concerns of elders. I was 72 years old when I retired from the priesthood and as director of Community of Hope, and became a fellow in the Sealy Center on Aging at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas and was selected as the first director of the Center for Spirituality of Aging.

We initiated yearly conferences on aging, and held the ninth annual Abundant Living Conference on February 27-29, 2012 at Camp Allen, Episcopal Diocese of Texas Conference Center. This three day conference for older adults was sponsored by the Sealy Center on Aging at UTMB and Camp Allen. Located on 970 acres of piney woods, attendees enjoyed nature walks, canoeing, fly fishing, line dancing, walking the labyrinth and many other activities. They came from our diocese, surrounding dioceses and other institutions and churches from across the state. The speakers were geriatricians, researchers and nationally known experts on aging.

The need for pastoral care for the elderly is increasing every day. Community of Hope lay chaplains are providing regular pastoral care for the homebound in their own parish and for residents in retirement centers, assisted living centers and hospices. They also lead Bible study, worship services and hymn sings. Eagles Trace Retirement in Houston has their own Community of Hope training center where men and women in independent living are trained to become lay chaplains to the frail elderly in assisted living, rehab and skilled nursing.

Many of our parishes have programs for older adults that have become a vital part of the church community. St. John the Divine has a center on aging led by Dottie Harrington. They provide assistance to the elderly and enjoy health fairs and field trips. St. Martin's has an organization called, OPUS, "Older People Up to Something". They meet monthly for special speakers, activities and field trips. St. Martin's also has a model respite program called "The Gathering" for caregivers of a family member experiencing dementia. This program is led by Cathy Tellepsen. It convenes for several hours twice a month and is a template for other churches, large or small, to replicate.

During this year, I have helped a number of churches create programs on aging. Trinity in Baytown publicized their mid-week program with a buffet luncheon to the entire community. More than 60 older adults came from Baytown and surrounding communities. They enjoyed great hospitality and they loved making new friends and learning together. A similar event will take place soon at St. Stephen's in Beaumont

St. James' House, Baytown is a ministry of the Diocese of Texas and provides a continuum of care for older adults of all faiths. This year I was appointed to their Board of Directors by the Bishop. My assignment is to serve as chair of the Committee for Spirituality and Pastoral Care.

Under the leadership of Bishop Rayford High, the annual two day conference for diocesan retired clergy convened at Camp Allen. They shared fellowship, and heard inspiring guest speakers. They also received a health check-up by St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital team of nurses.

This year Bishop Andy Doyle appointed Rev. John Newton to be Canon for Lifelong Christian Formation. Canon Newton has organized a Commission for Older Adult Ministry. At our first meeting the Commission decided to formulate a strategy for submitting a questionnaire to the churches in the diocese with a large number of older parishioners.

Serving as the Province VII representative is a gracious gift and great honor. My dream is to celebrate those who have embraced aging with passion and joy and to follow their example by caring for others while we pursue becoming all that God intends.

Maintaining the Ties that Bind

By Rev. Michael L. Ward

They occupied several pews in one corner of the sanctuary, eight or so couples who had spent most Sunday mornings over the last 20 years at Walnut Hill Church. They worshiped together, shared occasions in their homes, and volunteered around the church, which they supported faithfully through their offerings. Thus they were in their usual places when I was welcomed as their congregation's pastor in the fall of 2001, and so they were most Sundays thereafter, until slowly, one by one, couple by couple, they began to be absent from our midst. Today, one of those couples is regularly seen at Sunday worship and another on most Sundays when weather and health cooperate. Several rest in the cemetery just outside the sanctuary door, while a few others are limited to their homes, or other facilities, in which they reside. As to that corner of the sanctuary, the pews are now usually filled with other worshippers, but I can hardly look in that direction without imagining those former faces.

The scenario just described is familiar to clergy and other congregational leaders, particularly those serving in smaller membership churches where Sunday attendance is reckoned more by names than numbers. The life process, by which these friends moved from regular Sunday presence, to occasional presence, to absence, is as natural as one season following the next. In a smaller membership church it is often assumed that absences are spontaneously noticed and followed up, that people are aware of and responsive to events in each others' lives affecting not only their Sunday attendance, but even more their sense of connection to the faith community and their overall well-being. Certainly the pastor visits. Their friends call and write. But does this always happen spontaneously, and even if it does, is it sufficient to maintain a sense of connection to the congregation? If not, what might a congregation do to maintain that connection and support their friends through the experience of becoming, and being, homebound?

These observations and questions were in my mind when our Vestry gathered for its regular mid-summer meeting attending to various items of church business. Among those items, we turned our attention to several older members who were no longer present in our midst on Sunday mornings. We spoke their names and shared information regarding their current circumstances: an illness here, the death of a spouse there, the loss of vision leading to transportation issues, etc, etc. We discussed how our congregation might stay connected to these friends, and how they might stay connected with us. After serious conversation, the Vestry adopted recommendations regarding ministry with and to our homebound members, including not only the pastor's role in regular and sacramental visits, but also the Vestry's role in affirming the congregation's responsibility and commitment to maintain a meaningful connection between homebound members and the church. That commitment will involve recruiting and training persons to be in regular contact with our homebound members, assessing needs and keeping the church aware of our homebound members and their concerns, accompanying the pastor on sacramental

visits to represent the church's presence, gathering information and resources that might be helpful to the homebound, exploring ways in which the homebound might continue to support the life of the church with their time, talent, energy, and imagination, and focusing particular attention on issues affecting the homebound both within and beyond our congregation.

Several of the preceding activities we were already doing, though often without the intentionality of maintaining the ties that bind us to one another. Those ties are, at the same time, both deep and fragile. They are formed by years of shared life and experience; yet, they can fade quickly if not maintained through regular attention. Time will tell regarding the success or failure of the particular activities listed above, but more important than any programmatic outcome, will be our success or failure in nurturing a community fully inclusive of those whose circumstances prevent their physical presence with us on Sunday mornings. For those who have invested so much of themselves in the life and ministry of our congregation, how can we do anything less?

Rev. Michael L. Ward
Walnut Hill Church
Lexington, Kentucky

(Walnut Hill Church is an ecumenical congregation in relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington and the Presbytery of Transylvania.)

Programs Introduction

From 2009-2010, the Task Force on Older Adult Ministries (OAM) of the Episcopal Church took the initiative to prepare for the future by performing a needs assessment to identify congregations that have vital ministries for older adults and to identify needs of other congregations who want to develop and/or enhance older adult ministries. An electronic survey was sent to parishes and dioceses across the country. Responses from the survey revealed that many congregations were interested in ideas and available programming. Moreover, the survey revealed the interests of clergy and lay leaders to expand awareness of aging, discern the diversity of need for ministry by, with, and for ever increasing older members, and learn effective ways to engage older adults in these ministries.

Included in this Guide are brief descriptions of existing program ideas that came out of the national survey. From the survey, more than 50 program profiles emerged as innovative in type or use. Such programs provide recognition and celebrate older adults, as well as honor them with a sense of their place in the history and life of the congregation. Such programs provide fellowship and a sense of community, to combat isolation and losses that often accompany circumstances of aging. Programs that are by, for and with older adults, help build maintain two-way awareness and communication between them and their community. They provide opportunities for service, so older adults might sustain a sense of purpose through meaningful activities and remain woven into the fabric of their parish family.

What can congregations do?

An Older Adults Ministry is needed nationally, in every parish, diocese, and province, to bring attention to this vital and growing demographic group, and to focus on seniors serving seniors and programs by, for and with older adults.

- Local OAM groups can meet negative “ageist” stereotypes with education about lifelong learning and spiritual formation, health promotion, vocation and volunteerism.
- Each parish is unique and is encouraged to develop their own program(s) to fit their congregation’s demographics, needs, interests and abilities.
- The unique spiritual needs of older adults can be addressed by programs that provide recognition of elders as “wisdom keepers,” with information about community services and opportunities for service in the parish and in the community.
- Such activities raise awareness of the importance of older adults in the extended family of Christ.

Ministry Type: Classes

Program: Adult Forums

Province: VI

Diocese: Nebraska

Parish: All Saints Episcopal Church

City, State: Omaha, NE

Telephone: (402) 393-8612

Website: www.allsaintsomaha.com

Size: 1,200

Program description: Adult Forums

- Five forums each week (Tuesday, Wednesday and three times on Sundays.)
- Held during adult formation hour.
- Open to all adults.
- Variety of topics offered.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Assess congregational needs before beginning a new program.
- Visibility of the ministry is extremely important.
- Allow the ministry to evolve as needs of the parishioners change.

Program: Educational Classes

Province: IV

Diocese: East Tennessee

Parish: Episcopal Church of the Ascension

City, State: Knoxville, TN

Telephone: (865) 588-0589

Website: www.knoxvilleascension.org

Size: 1,100 (More than 45% are aged 56 – 70)

Program description: Educational Classes

- End of life planning.
- Theology/belief during Lent.
- Theology group meets weekly led by a lay person.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Encourage lay leadership.
- Offer support behind the scenes.
- Clergy should attend events to show support.
- If there is an existing group lead by a lay person, clergy shouldn't accept an invitation by that lay person to take over the group.
- Elect an older person to the Vestry to represent the older parishioner's needs or issues.

Champions of OAM in the community:

- An older female elected for a third time to the Vestry to represent those who are 80+ (particularly those who don't use email and the Internet and feel disconnected.)

Program: Matters of Life and Death

Province: VIII

Diocese: Olympia

Parish: St. Paul's Episcopal Church

City, State: Port Townsend, WA

Telephone: (360) 385-0770

Website: www.stpaulspt.org

Size: 289

Program description: Matters of Life and Death

- A half-day workshop which covers wills, aging issues and services available in the community.
- People in the community are invited in as guest speakers on the issues.
- The workshop is held at the church.
- It is open to the public.

Program: Reconciliation Seminars

Province: V

Diocese: Northern Indiana

Parish: Gethsemane Episcopal Church

City, State: Marion, Indiana

Telephone: (765) 664-4638

Website: www.gethsemanemarion.com

Size: 65

Program description: Reconciliation Seminars

- Seminars are held over a weekend or on a Friday night into Saturday.
- Seminars are on various topics (What is Reconciliation; Can you be a Christian and be a Democrat or a Republican; Sexuality issues [held when the rector was in a parish in Los Angeles]).
- There is a trained reconciliation team (Rector said they do not have difficulty in finding people to serve on this team.)
- The seminar is open to the community. There are two evangelical colleges in town and often students will attend.
- Various ages attend. The younger adults like the attention given them by the older attendees and love to hear their life stories. The older members don't feel that parish activities are being 'taken away from them.'
- These seminars are safe places to express one's view. People may not change their minds, but they have a much better understanding of why others may feel differently.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Engage a trained reconciliation team. For additional information visit: <http://faithbasedreconciliation.wordpress.com/>
- Find team leaders who are skilled communicators.
- Select meaningful topics for the seminars.

Ministry Type: Homebound

PROGRAM: Faith in Action

Province: IV

Diocese: Lexington

Parish: Good Shepherd

City, State: Lexington, KY

Telephone: (859) 252-1744

Website: www.goodshepherdlex.org

Size: 820

Program description: Faith in Action

- National program of elder outreach in which volunteers are paired one-on-one with seniors in need of assistance.
- Lay persons minister to the homebound.
- Lay persons are trained by a Deacon.

Program: Ministering to the Homebound

Province: IV

Diocese: Alabama

Parish: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

City, State: Huntsville, AL

Telephone: (256-650-5590)

Website: <http://www.ststephens-hsv.org/>

Size: 150

Program description: Ministering to the Homebound

- This program is spearheaded by the Pastoral Care Committee, a Vestry commission. The Vestry has an 80+ elected member who is the spokeswoman for all older adults in the parish. She serves as the Vestry member on the Pastoral Care Committee.
- Prayer Committee – the Order of St. Luke creates a prayer chain to include those who are sick, the bereaved, etc.
- Visits, calls and communion taken on a regular schedule:
 - Hospital, nursing home and home visits are coordinated by the "Homebound Communion Coordinator" on a rotating basis on Wednesdays and Sundays.
 - Thanksgiving meals to parish dinners delivered to the homebound. The name and address of a homebound parishioner is listed on an index card and then taped to a box which is filled with leftovers from the annual parish Thanksgiving meal and delivered by a member of the Pastoral Care Committee that day.
 - Christmas treats delivered. Following the annual Christmas gathering lunch, members of the Pastoral Care Committee take Christmas cards and a poinsettia to each of the homebound members.
- Sermons with scripture copied in enlarged print are mailed weekly from the parish office to those who are homebound.

- Card Ministry through the Pastoral Care Committee writes notes in cards and mails them to shut-ins on a monthly basis.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Stephen Ministry can be helpful in pastoral parish ministries.
- Have a motivated elder on the Vestry as a spokesperson for older parishioners.

PROGRAM: Nursing Home Ministries

Province: IV

Diocese: Lexington

Parish: Good Shepherd

City, State: Lexington, KY

Telephone: (859) 252-1744

Website: www.goodshepherdlex.org

Size: 820

Program Description: Nursing home ministries

- Eucharist by Rector.
- Canon trains lay volunteers for visitation.
- Godly Play for Alzheimer's disease nursing home residents.
- Coordinated by Diocesan Deacon.

PROGRAM: Older Adult and Parish Health Ministry

Province: VI

Diocese: Nebraska

Parish: All Saints Episcopal Church

City, State: Omaha, NE

Telephone: (402) 393-8612

Website: www.allsaintsomaha.com

Size: 1,200

Program Description: Older Adult and Parish Health Ministry

- The Older Adult and Parish Health Ministries are intertwined with a strong pastoral care component.
- Twenty Ministers of Care are volunteers who visit the ill and shut-ins weekly. They are trained by a Deacon with a chaplaincy background.
- The leader for the ministry is a nurse Deacon, and a paid staff member who works 20 hours a week and began the ministries 20 years ago.
- She assigns the Care Ministers for visitations and oversees a Care Note ministry lead by one volunteer who makes notes each day on persons seen by Ministers of Care.
- She assigns pastoral care visitations, and acolytes and chalice bearers for the four services each week.
- She oversees an intercessory prayer ministry as well as the making and delivery of blankets, prayer shawls and prayer beads to the sick, hospitalized and shut-ins.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Assess congregational needs before beginning a new program.
- Visibility of the ministry is extremely important.
- Allow the ministry to evolve as needs of the parishioners change.

PROGRAM: Pastoral Friends

Province: II

Diocese: Western New York

Parish: St. Matthias

City, State: East Aurora, NY

Telephone: (716) 652-0377

Website: www.stmatthiasea.org

Size: 300

Program Description:

- Older adults participate in this ministry.
- Each volunteer is assigned 2-3 parishioners to visit and to care for their needs as they are able.
- Many older adults attend the 8am service on Sundays and go out for breakfast together following the service.

Ministry Type: Intergenerational

PROGRAM: Intergenerational Projects

Province: II

Diocese: Western New York

Parish: St. Matthias

City, State: East Aurora, NY

Telephone: (716) 652-0377

Website: www.stmatthiasea.org

Size: 300

Program description: Intergenerational Projects

- Once or twice a year, the parish has intergenerational projects/programs.
- For example, children interviewing adults.
- An 80 year old woman organized ballroom dance classes that were well attended. The classes were held for about eight weeks.

Program: Save our Seniors

Province: VIII

Diocese: El Camino Real

Parish: St. Luke's Episcopal Church

City, State: Hollister, CA

Telephone: (831) 637-7570

Website: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/parish/st-lukes-hollister-ca>

Size: 50

Program description: Save our Seniors

- Links one younger parishioner with an older adult.
- They develop a relationship, visit while at church and the young member of the team calls or sends cards to the older member.
- This is like an adopt a grandparent with a mentoring component.
- The young member is responsible for making regular contact.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Matching is an important component.
- Parent encouragement is critical.

Program: Intergenerational Sunday school

Province: IV

Diocese: Florida

Parish: St. Peter's Episcopal Church

City, State: Jacksonville, FL

Telephone: (904) 778-1434

Website: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/parish/st-peters-jacksonville-fl>

Size: 300 (Mixed ages of the congregation)

Program description: Intergenerational Sunday school

- Summer Intergenerational Sunday school program/vacation Bible school.
- Held for one hour, in the Parish Hall, between the early and later Sunday services in August.
- A theme is selected for the month-long program (example: Rome in the time of St. Paul).
- A curriculum is used and much work goes into the "scene" preparations such as columns and togas (for the Rome theme).
- The program consists of displays of carpentry work, groups doing handicrafts, old time dancing, and group worship.

PROGRAM: Intergenerational Programs

Province: IV

Diocese: Lexington

Parish: Good Shepherd

City, State: Lexington, KY

Telephone: (859) 252-1744

Website: www.goodshepherdlex.org

Size: 820

Program Description: Intergenerational programs

- Fun Shops during seasons (Advent, Lent, Epiphany.)
- Monday evenings: crafts, information sharing, etc.

- 'Be the Church': once a year during Lent where teams of parishioners are sent out to do community service.

Ministry Type: Lunch Gathering

PROGRAM: Social Gathering

Province: IV

Diocese: Lexington

Parish: Good Shepherd

City, State: Lexington, KY

Telephone: (859) 252-1744

Website: www.goodshepherdlex.org

Size: 820

Program Description: Social Gathering

- Mature Munchin' Luncheon.
- Lunches are for and by seniors for fellowship.
- Programs are varied and on topics that interest the participants.
- Meets quarterly with program.

PROGRAM: Senior Luncheon

Province: V

Diocese: Chicago

Parish: St Mary's Episcopal Church

City, State: Crystal Lake, IL

Telephone: 815-459-1009

Website: <http://www.stmaryepiscopal.org/>

Size: 230

Program Description: Senior Luncheon

- Every other month parishioners 65 years old and up and their friends are invited to join the St. Mary Seniors (SMS) for a wonderful lunch, social time and information from various invited speakers.
- The luncheon begins at 11:30am with an opening prayer and blessing of the food.
- From noon to 1pm we feast on some great food spiced up with lively conversation while sharing any new ideas brought from the group members and future ideas for speakers.
- Examples of programs include visits from Hospice, the local fire department and the rector.
- A phone tree exists that can be used to reach the members of the group quickly if an emergency arises.
- A donation of \$4 is requested for the lunch, but it is not mandatory.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Ask within your parish, if someone has a connection or a passion for working with seniors. Depending on your parish, three or four people would be best so no one becomes overwhelmed and there is enough back up for anyone who can't make it.

- Have this team advertise in the church bulletins and church newsletters about the start of this new group. Talk it up at coffee hours and before and after service to get a feel for who is interested. Have your priest mention it during announcements.
- Make it personal, go through your church roster and determine who your seniors are. Give them a call or send them an email to invite them personally.
- After a meeting or luncheon send a “recap” email out to all who attended plus those who did not.
- Get the seniors involved right away. Ask them what they are interested in and how they would like the meeting or luncheon to run.

Program: Lunch Bunch

Province: IV

Diocese: East Tennessee

Parish: Episcopal Church of the Ascension

City, State: Knoxville, TN

Telephone: (865) 588-0589

Website: www.knoxvilleascension.org

Size: 1,100 (More than 45% are aged 56–70)

Program description: Lunch Bunch

- Group for older adults that has met monthly for years.
- It ended in mid-2009 because the members became too old to coordinate/run the event.
- Now the group is meeting again with the leadership of four older adults in their 60s, a couple and a male and a female parishioner.
- The monthly luncheon includes cocktails, music, lunch, and a program.
- This is a social group that supports those who are alone and can't get to the lunch on their own.
- Lunch begins with wine and cheese at 11:30am, the organist plays music of the 40s and 50s during "cocktail" time, then lunch
- Guests of parishioners are sometimes invited.
- The program following the lunch is secular in nature, a musician might play for the group or someone with a craft or talent will perform.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Encourage lay leadership.
- Offer support behind the scenes.

- Clergy should attend events to show support.
- If there is an existing group lead by a lay person, clergy shouldn't accept an invitation by that lay person to take over the group.
- Elect an older person to the Vestry to represent the older parishioner's needs or issues.

Champions of OAM in the community:

- An older female elected for a third time to the vestry to represent those who are 80+ (particularly those who don't use email and the Internet and feel disconnected.)

Ministry Type: Marriage Celebration

PROGRAM: Celebration of Marriages of 50 +

Province: IV

Diocese: FL

Parish: All Parishes

City/State: Jacksonville, FL

Telephone: (904) 356-1328

Website: www.diocesefl.org

Size: 77 Parishes

Program description: Celebration of marriages of 50 years or more

- Begun in 2003 by the Diocesan Older Adult Ministry, these biennial celebrations of renewal of marriage vows and Holy Eucharist have become one of the most eagerly anticipated ministries of the Diocese.
- Names and contact information for couples in the Diocese wed 50 years or more are obtained from the churches in the Diocese by the Older Adult Ministry.
- Invitations, printed to resemble wedding invitations with reply cards, are mailed to each couple.
- The celebrations occur at St. John's Cathedral, Jacksonville, and at a church in Tallahassee, the western part of the Diocese. The celebrations occur at the same time on the same day and each is followed by a gala reception in the church's parish hall for the couples and their guests.
- Each couple is given a certificate honoring their marriage signed by one of our Bishops and the Dean of the Cathedral or Rector of the church, depending on which celebration the couple attends.

Program: Marriage Celebration

Province: III

Diocese: Virginia

Parish: Christ Church

City, State: Alexandria, VA

Telephone: (703) 549-1450

Website: www.historicchristchurch.org

Size: 2,000+ (50% or less aged 56–70)

Program description: Marriage Celebration

- Annual blessing service and reception, with the Diocesan Bishop, for those married 50 years or more.
- Held in two different locations within the diocese which varies from year to year.

Note on Champion of OAM:

The champion is a woman who was the award winner for work with the elderly in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

Ministry Type: Meals

PROGRAM: Well Senior Ministry

Province: VI

Diocese: Nebraska

Parish: All Saints Episcopal Church

City, State: Omaha, NE

Telephone: (402) 393-8612

Website: www.allsaintsomaha.com

Size: 1,200

Program Description: Well Senior Ministry

- Older adults deliver meals to the ill and infirmed.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Assess congregational needs before beginning a new program.
- Visibility of the ministry is extremely important.
- Allow the ministry to evolve as needs of the parishioners change.

Program: Alban's Table

Province: V

Diocese: Diocese of Eau Claire

Parish: St. Alban's Episcopal Church

City, State: Spooner, Wisconsin

Telephone: (715) 635-8475

Size: 45

Program description: Alban's Table

- On the last Wednesday of each month, a meal is provided to all who are hungry whether for food or for fellowship.
- Lay initiative.
- In 2010, they fed 1,000 people in a community of 2,000.
- All volunteers are retired.
- The majority of those who come are elderly.
- Funding: donations, \$2,000 grant from Domestic Missionary Partnership, other area churches give a little.
- Buy groceries at Sam's Club; have planted a garden in front of the church.
- Local restaurant provides soups each month.
- They are seeing an increase in the number of families who come.
- Other community churches are now doing this on a different week of the month in order to have each week covered.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- A location that is large enough and has a kitchen.
- The use of a dishwasher and freezer is very helpful.
- Volunteers in a variety of roles.

Program: Meals Coordination

Province: IV

Diocese: Alabama

Parish: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

City, State: Huntsville, AL

Telephone: (256) 881-7223

Website: <http://www.ststephens-hsv.org/>

Size: 150

Program description: Meals Coordination

- This program is spearheaded by the Pastoral Care Committee, a Vestry commission. The Vestry has an 80+ elected member who is the spokeswoman for all older adults in the parish. She serves as the Vestry member on the Pastoral Care Committee.
- Utilizes *Facebook* and email by encouraging all newcomers and young couples to bring meals to those who need it.
- This has been a successful means to bring newcomers into the life of the parish and serves as an intergenerational program.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Stephen Ministry can be helpful in pastoral parish ministries.
- Have a motivated elder on the Vestry as a spokesperson for older parishioners.

PROGRAM: Well Senior Ministry

Province: VI

Diocese: Nebraska

Parish: All Saints Episcopal Church

City, State: Omaha, NE

Telephone: (402) 393-8612

Website: www.allsaintsomaha.com

Size: 1,200

Program Description: Well Senior Ministry

- Older adults deliver meals to the ill and infirmed.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Assess congregational needs before beginning a new program.
- Visibility of the ministry is extremely important.
- Allow the ministry to evolve as needs of the parishioners change.

Ministry Type: Meetings

PROGRAM: Meeting of Senior Groups

Province: VII

Diocese: Dallas

Parish: St. Michael and all Angels

City, State: Dallas, TX

Telephone: (214) 363-5471

Website: www.saintmichael.org

Size: 7,000

Note: The church is located in an "area of wealth" 5 miles from downtown Dallas.

Program Description: Meeting of Senior Groups

- Middle age (50 – 70 years old) and older adults (71 years old and above) are two groups that are "self governing" with leadership rotating every two years.
- Clergy provide support and resources but laity runs the programs.
- The younger group has theme parties 3-4 times a year.
- The older group meets twice a month during the school year, one of which is usually a tour visit outside the parish and the other an internal program and lunch.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Find a staff person to "grow and coordinate the ministry," but not to run it.

Program: Monthly Men's Group Meeting and Episcopal Church Women (ECW) Functions for 50+

Province: IV

Diocese: Mississippi

Parish: St. Paul's Episcopal Church

City, State: Corinth, MS

Telephone: (662) 286-2922

Website: <http://www.stpaulscorinth.dioms.org>

Size: 175 (Majority of the congregation is aged 36 – 70)

Program description: Monthly Men's group and ECW women's functions for those 50+

- Visiting homebound parishioners/visitors.
- Fundraising efforts by the Men's Group.

Program: Wisdom Fellowship

Province: VIII

Diocese: Olympia

Parish: St. Hilda and St Patrick Episcopal Church

City, State: Edmonds, Washington

Telephone: (425) 743-4655

Website: www.sthildastpatrick.org

Size: 146

Program description: Wisdom Fellowship

- On the second Wednesday of each month at 1:30pm, approximately 30 individuals (those with the wisdom of the years) gather for fellowship, prayer and service.
- Ranging in age from 50 to 90+, this lively group ventures out on field trips, has provided Thanksgiving dinners for low income seniors, collected supplies for care-packages for our service veterans as well as share their stories.
- These are committed and creative seniors who share their energy, passion and money with and for seniors who are less fortunate.
- The priest recognizes and values the ministry that this group offers.
- The group lives out the question: What is our faith without action?
- There is creative expression tied to one's faith.
- There is a focus on: What food stamps won't buy seniors, we can help. To address that issue, the Wisdom Fellowship "pools" their money to support a Senior-on-the-Margin.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Have a committed program chair with good leadership and management skills.
- Create a strong steering committee to manage the many initiatives.
- Have a fluid leadership or succession planning structure.
- The leader needs to be a good delegator since the group undertakes detailed projects.
- Ensure members are good workers and doers.

Unexpected Outcomes:

- The Church seniors feel very valued for their skills and creativity.
- Retirees feel they have a good place to transition to, after retiring.

Ministry Type: Other

PROGRAM: Housing

Province: VI

Diocese: Nebraska

Parish: All Saints Episcopal Church

City, State: Omaha, NE

Telephone: (402) 393-8612

Website: www.allsaintsomaha.com

Size: 1,200

Program description: Housing

- The church owns eight small apartments behind the church for older parishioners.
- This location makes it convenient for visitations.
- The parishioners purchase the apartments and then give them back to the church when they are no longer needed.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Assess congregational needs before beginning a new program.
- Visibility of the ministry is extremely important.
- Allow the ministry to evolve as needs of the parishioners change.

Program: Livable Communities Caregivers Coaching

Province: II

Diocese: New York

Parish: Saint Simon the Cyrenian Episcopal Church

City, State: New Rochelle, New York

Telephone: 914-632-5911

Website: <http://www.stsimonc.org/index.shtml>

Size: 114

Program Description: Livable Communities Caregivers Coaching (L3C)

- Caregiver Coaches are trained by professionals such as nurses, social workers, and geriatric care manager using a curriculum developed by Fordham Ravazzin Center on Aging in collaboration with the [Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services](#).
- Curriculum topics include "Understanding the Aging Process" and Challenges Caregivers Face."
- Caregiver Coaches also learn specific coaching techniques that they pass on to caregivers such as how to convey factual information clearly.
- Volunteers serve in the role of an enhanced "good neighbor" and people who provide support and information to family caregivers.
- The one-on-one support coaches enable caregivers to make more informed decisions to meet the many challenges and responsibilities they face.
- Caregiver Coaches are matched with caregivers after training is completed. The classes run for three days – four hours long for a total of 12 hours.
- Caregiver Coaches are stabilizing forces and sounding boards.

- The training gives the coaches practical information to educate caregivers about various options, and then empowers them to set priorities and make decisions.
- The L3C program is a winner of numerous national awards.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Think about training a cadre of Caregivers Coaches in your church to assist congregants and others in the community.

Unexpected outcomes:

According to former First Lady Rosalyn Carter, “There are only four kinds of people in the world, those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers.”

The Livable Communities Caregivers Coaching Program information travels far beyond the specific coaches and caregivers who participate in this program. We have heard from other counties in the nation seeking to adapt this model to help the nearly 34 million family caregivers caring for their loved ones. It is also a way of saving taxpayer dollars by avoiding or delaying the need to move an older adult to a nursing home.

PROGRAM: Seniors Supporting the Local Boys and Girls

Province: IV

Diocese: Mississippi

Parish: Trinity Episcopal Church

City, State: Pass Christian, MS

Phone: (228) 452-4563

Website: www.trinitychurchpc.com

Size: 100 (50% of the congregation is aged 56-70)

Note: This parish was devastated by Hurricane Katrina and lost 70% of its parishioners.

Program Description: Seniors Supporting the Local Boys and Girls Club

- The Boys and Girls Club is across the street from the church.
- Seniors (12-18 of them) enjoy volunteering time at the club and working with young people.

Tips for starting this program at your church:

- Stephen Ministry can be helpful in pastoral parish ministries.
- Have a motivated elder on the Vestry as a spokesperson for older parishioners.

Program: Bunco Night

Province: IV

Diocese: Atlanta

Parish: St Andrew's in the Pines Episcopal Church

City, State: Peachtree City, Georgia

Telephone: (770) 487-8415

Website:

https://standrewschurch.episcopalatlanta.org/Content/St_Andrew_s_in_the_Pines.asp

Size: 100

Program description: Bunco Night

- BUNCO NIGHT is a four year old ECW-sponsored program, conducted three times a year.
- When a 94 year old female parishioner, active in ECW, said, "Let's do something that's fun!" another ECW member suggested the challenging British dice game, Bunco.
- The idea is supported by the Minister both from the pulpit and by playing the game.
- An ECW member's husband is British and taught the game to the group.
- Men and women of all ages enjoy the game.
- You don't have to have a partner; you can come alone.
- A \$5 fee is charged to cover costs.
- There's a lot of laughter and fun with a "pause" in between for talking.
- BUNCO is a great ice breaker for new people to get engaged.
- People wear name tags which are included in the \$5 fee.
- The name tag gets people closer faster than at coffee hour.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Have a Champion and someone to teach the game. (It can be different people.)
- Bunco Night should be advertised in the bulletin/newsletter and on a poster.
- Use the card tables in your parish hall.
- Have the rules of the game on the table.
- People can bring finger food; ECW provides coffee and tea.
- Keep the supplies together in a basket.

Unexpected Outcomes:

- BUNCO NIGHT turned out to be a fund raiser for ECW, netting about \$100 per event.
- St. Andrew's is currently in a rebuilding phase. BUNCO NIGHT has remained an important outreach program.

Program: Christmas Caroling

Province: IV

Diocese: Florida

Parish: St. Peter's Episcopal Church

City, State: Jacksonville, FL

Telephone: (904) 778-1434

Website: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/parish/st-peters-jacksonville-fl>

Size: 300 (Mixed ages of the congregation)

Program description: Christmas Caroling

- Carolers, nearly 10 of them, visit seven or eight homes of older adults, particularly shut-ins.
- This is a multi-generational group that loves to sing.
- They drive in cars to seniors' homes.
- They call ahead to alert folks they're coming.

Program: Conferences

Province: III

Diocese: Virginia

Parish: Christ Church

City, State: Alexandria, VA

Telephone: (703) 549-1450

Website: <http://www.historicchristchurch.org/>

Size: 2,000+ (50% or less aged 56–70)

Program description: Conferences

- Annual fall gathering of older adults from the three dioceses in the state of Virginia (Southern VA, VA, and Southwestern VA.)
- They attend a four-day seniors' retreat at Shrine Mont Retreat and Conference Center.
- This conference includes a special speaker, chaplain, and generous free and programmed time options.

Note on Champion of OAM:

- Our Champion was the award winner for work with the elderly in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

Program: Foundation for Leadership

Province: III

Diocese: Virginia

Parish: Christ Church

City, State: Alexandria, VA

Telephone: (703) 549-1450

Website: <http://www.historicchristchurch.org/>

Size: 2,000+ (50% or less aged 56–70)

Program description: Foundation for Leadership

- An older retired priest provides a mentoring program through “Foundation for Leadership.”
- This is sponsored by the Lily Foundation.
- The program is designed for newly ordained Episcopal priests who come to Christ Church for a two year period.
- These priests serve as interns in order to experience all facets of parish life.

Note on Champion of OAM:

- Our Champion was the award winner for work with the elderly in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

Program: Gabriel's Guild

Province: VIII

Diocese: Olympia

Parish: St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church

City, State: Issaquah, WA

Telephone: (425) 392-3215

Website: www.stmichaels-issaquah.org

Size: 355

Program description: Gabriel's Guild

- As parishioners age and are no longer able to be active, they are invited to join Gabriel's Guild.
- They are asked to pray for the parish.
- They are invited to a yearly luncheon, Silvers and Sages.
- They are given a small angel pin and a prayer folder.

PROGRAM: Housing

Province: VI

Diocese: Nebraska

Parish: All Saints Episcopal Church

City, State: Omaha, NE

Telephone: (402) 393-8612

Website: www.allsaintsomaha.com

Size: 1,200

Program description: Housing

- The church owns eight small apartments behind the church for older parishioners.
- This location makes it convenient for visitations.
- The parishioners purchase the apartments, and then give them back to the church when they are no longer needed.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Assess congregational needs before beginning a new program.
- Visibility of the ministry is extremely important.
- Allow the ministry to evolve as needs of the parishioners change.

PROGRAM: Moving Assistance Program

Province: VI

DIOCESE: South Dakota

Parish: Good Shepherd

City, State: Sioux Falls, SD

Telephone: (605) 332-1474

Website: www.sfgoodshepherd.org

Size: 96

Program description: Moving Assistance Program

- Started by Good Shepherd to help low income persons in the community who do not have resources to move into or out of subsidized housing.
- Primarily serves seniors.
- The need is revealed by Vestry whose members speak with community leaders, and staff of social services.
- The program is now a 501©3 organization.
- Movers are volunteers.
- They make 1-2 moves per week.

Program: Pet Education and Training Center

Province: VIII

Diocese: Northern California

Parish: St. Francis Episcopal Church

City, State: Fair Oaks, CA

Telephone: (916) 966-2261

Website: www.sfepiscopal.org

Size: 150

Program description: Pet Education and Training Center

- Training and raising service dogs for veterans.
- Six month training program.
- Provides equipment for dogs.
- Grants are received to help maintain this program.

Program: Prayer Packets for Youth on Mission Trips

Province: III

Diocese: Virginia

Parish: Christ Church

City, State: Alexandria, VA

Telephone: (703) 549-1450

Website: <http://www.historicchristchurch.org/>

Size: 2,000+ (50% or less aged 56–70)

Program description: Prayer Packets for Youth on Mission Trips

- Volunteers are invited from the seniors group “Savvy” [Senior Adults Very, Very Young] to send a prayer packet to youth going on mission trips. Older adults provide prayers for each young person. A volunteer places a prayer in an envelope with enough for each young person to have a prayer to open every day they are away at the conference.
- In creating this idea, the older adults were asked for any personally written prayers, a copy of meaningful prayers, etc., in the imagination of where prayer speaks to the sender.
- The volunteers compile the envelopes so that everyone on the trip would have something to bring forth each day.
- Important connection between youth and seniors.
- This idea could be utilized by parishes with those preparing for confirmation or those preparing to be received in the Episcopal Church.

Note on Champion of OAM:

The champion is a woman who was the award winner for work with the elderly in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

PROGRAM: Quilting Ministry

Province: VI

Diocese: South Dakota

Parish: Good Shepherd

City, State: Sioux Falls, SD

Telephone: (605) 332-1474

Website: www.sfgoodshepherd.org

Size: 96

Program description: Quilting Ministry

- Led by seniors.
- The group meets weekly to quilt.
- Some quilts are given to the Red Cross for families in need.
- They are also taken to a local retirement community to be placed on beds as families remove belongings of members who have died.

Program: Recycling

Province: VIII

Diocese: Nevada

Parish: St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

City, State: Las Vegas, NV

Telephone: (702) 451-2483

Website: <http://www.stmatthewslv.net/home.html>

Size: 80 (Less than half of the parishioners are between the ages of 56-70)

Program description: Recycling

- Collecting bottles for recycling.
- Monies are sent to another church to fund their youth ministry.
- Collecting bottle caps for exchange for minutes on a dialysis machine.
- Collecting cans for recycling to use the monies for their outreach program.

PROGRAM: Retirement Community

Province: VI

Diocese: South Dakota

Parish: Good Shepherd

City, State: Sioux Falls, SD

Telephone: (605) 332-1474

Website: www.sfgoodshepherd.org

Size: 96

Program Description: Retirement Community

- Dow Rummel Village is a retirement community founded by Episcopal churches and a congregation church in the Sioux Falls area.
- Good Shepherd has a seat on the governing board of the Village.

PROGRAM: Room in the Inn

Province: IV

Diocese: Lexington

Parish: Good Shepherd

City, State: Lexington, KY

Telephone: (859) 252-1744

Website: www.goodshepherdlex.org

Size: 820

Program description: Room in the Inn

- Offered November through March/April.
- They house and feed 16 homeless men.
- Older adults volunteer in the kitchen and serve as hostesses.

PROGRAM: Transportation to Church Programs

Province: VII

Diocese: Dallas

Parish: St. Michael and all Angels

City, State: Dallas, TX

Telephone: (214) 363-5471

Website: www.saintmichael.org

Size: 7,000

Note: The church is located in an “area of wealth” 5 miles from downtown Dallas.

Program description: Transportation to Church Programs

- This program operates during the week as well as on Sundays.
- It is by taxi using a voucher system.
- Persons who need a ride make their own arrangements. Those who use the taxi on a regular basis are provided vouchers.
- For those who use a taxi occasionally, the driver comes into the church to pick up the voucher at the time of the ride. The taxi drivers will transport only those persons who do not need assistance as the drivers “will not touch” the rider, (likely for liability reasons.)
- The church spends less than \$1,000 a year on this service.

Tips for starting this program at your church:

- You’ll need a staff person to “grow and coordinate the ministry,” not to run it.

Program: Travel Groups

Province: IV

Diocese: Alabama

Parish: St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

City, State: Huntsville, AL

Telephone: (256) 881-7223

Website: <http://www.ststephens-hsv.org/>

Size: 150

Program description: Travel Groups

- This program is spearheaded by the Pastoral Care Committee, a Vestry commission. The Vestry has an 80+ elected member who is the spokeswoman for all older adults in the parish. She serves as the Vestry member on the Pastoral Care Committee.
- Two couples in the parish take day trips or overnight excursions with seniors two to three times a year.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- Stephen Ministry can be helpful in pastoral parish ministries.
- Have a motivated elder on the Vestry as a spokesperson for older parishioners.

Program: Golden Girls

From: The Convocation in Europe

Program description: Golden Girls

- This is a women's group that focuses on women over 50 years of age.
- The purpose is to develop a more intimate relationship with one another so when there is a crisis, they can call on one another without having to explain details.

- They have been intimately connected over the last six years
- Support has been given to those who have become widows, for those dealing with serious illness, accidents, aging partners, estranged children, and especially living in a foreign country.

Tips for starting this program at your parish:

- The Golden Girls meet every 6-8 weeks on a Saturday.
- They begin with stretching exercises at 9:30 am for half an hour. From there they move into worship which usually lasts 1 1/2 -2 hours.
- After worship, they gather together for a pot-luck lunch.
- After lunch, they talk in earnest about the theme for the day.
- At 2:00pm. There is a closing circle which involves passing a candle around and as each woman holds the candle, she expresses her gratitude for the day and the gathering.
- Each woman has her hands blessed for particular concerns until we meet again.
- The gathering ends with the Lord's Prayer and a blessing.