



# Monthly Ponderings

## From the Older Adult Ministry Of the Kentucky Conference

### Life's Transitions

*Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you  
With my victorious right hand. Isaiah 41:10*

One recent Sunday morning my Pastor preached about fear. More accurately, his message proclaimed do not be afraid. What he said reminded me that we often approach times of change and transition – even those transitions that are good and desired – with anxiety and fear. Being anxious and afraid must be a very human response, for the Bible frequently counsels us to fear not. Gratefully, the Bible also contains God's many promises to be with us during times of worry, distress, and uneasiness.

Aging is a life-long series of transitions, and some of the transitions can be challenging and worrisome. How do we handle the changes that we experience in our bodies, our minds, and our lives as we grow older? Gray hair and no hair, creaking bones and stiff muscles, and an increasing number of "senior moments" are trivial compared to life-altering events that come with age such as retirement, downsizing, moving, serious illness, and death.

Clinical gerontologist and professor Jane Thibault authored her book, 10 Gospel Promises for Later Life, in response to ten fears people express about aging. Delving deeply into the Gospels to find the "good news" of the Good News relevant to aging, she explores ten promises that offer hope in response to those fears. Among the promises: We are God's beloved children, we have a lifelong mission, our suffering can be meaningful, death is not the end of life, and God will provide (p. 20). Those are promises upon which we can stand. God does not promise us a life without problems, but God does promise that Christ gives us strength to face anything that comes our way (Philippians 4:13), including the challenges and transitions that come with aging. Discover what they say to you in response to your fears and concerns.

~Sue Eaton, Older Adult Team Leader

## **Prayer**

Ever-present and always loving God, we thank you for the gift of aging.

Calm our fears about the changes and transitions that come with growing older, and help us live into the future with hope and expectation.

Giver of abundant life, we thank you for your promise to strengthen and uphold us in all things. Through Christ we pray, Amen

## **To Ponder and Discuss**

*“Modern, secular society asserts that aging is primarily a process of deterioration and decline...Christianity offers a different reality; it offers a vision of aging in the realm of God.”*

(Jane Thibault in *10 Gospel Promises for Later Life*, p. 19)

1. What message does our society give about aging? How do television shows and advertising depict aging and older adults?
2. How do the children and youth you know, and your adult friends and family members, feel about growing older? How do you feel about it?
3. List your fears about growing older. How does the Good News speak to your fears? How can you age “in the realm of God”?
4. Expressing gratitude can change our attitude about things. As a spiritual practice, make a list of 10 things for which you are thankful.

## **Suggested Reading**

*10 Gospel Promises for Later Life* by Jane Marie Thibault. Upper Room Books, 2004 (This book can be used in a small group setting.)

*Living Life as a Thank You: The Transformative power of Daily Gratitude* by Nina Lesowitz and Mary Beth Sammons. 2009 Can be ordered on Amazon