

Young at Heart Newsletter

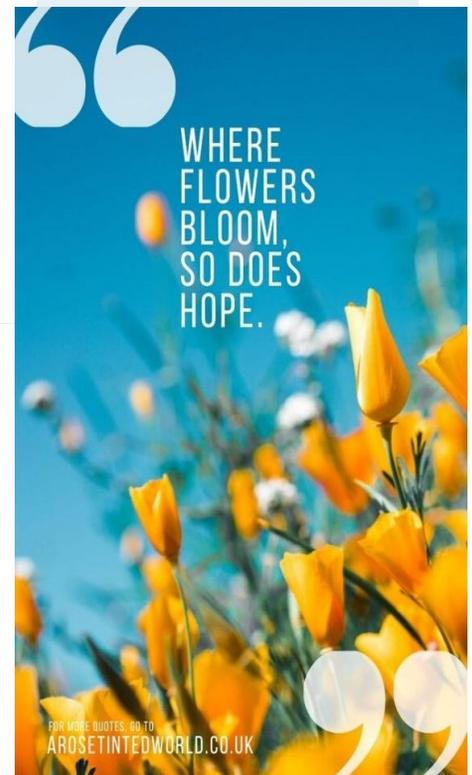
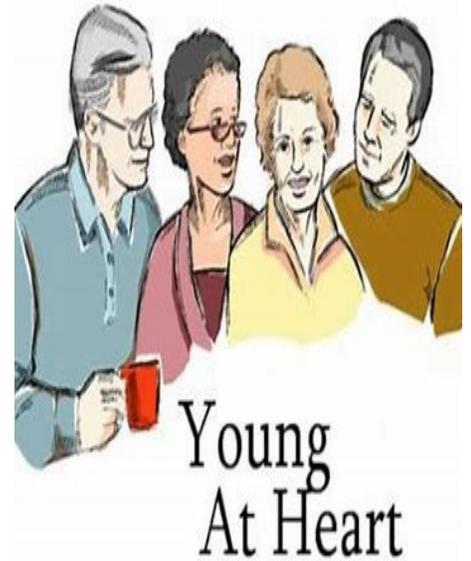
Spring has Sprung

Ahh, spring! In the meteorological world, spring begins on March 1. However, the astronomical spring — based on the Earth’s rotation around the sun—is marked by the spring equinox which occurs on March 19, 20 or 21 every year. Bluebirds and daffodils are signs of spring, as are warm weather and gentle southern breezes.

March, also celebrated as Women’s History Month, is a time to highlight and celebrate women’s contributions in history and contemporary society. Alas, one factor—aging—often overshadows those accomplishments. This is because, in general, women in the United States are more likely than men to live longer, live in poverty, have less access to a secure retirement, and pay a higher percentage of income on out-of-pocket health care costs.

Today, many congregations are filled with women — most of whom are older. By engaging in intentional ministry with today’s older adults and informing younger generations that issues related to aging affect everyone, we can build stronger communities that make aging well a reality for all.

Pastor Sue



INGREDIENTS FOR GETTING STARTED IN OLDER ADULT MINISTRY

A demographic shift is taking place throughout much of the world. Population aging is changing lives and institutions. Never before have so many people lived to such old age. In Kentucky, the number of people age 65 and older in 2020 was 729,741. By 2030, the number will grow to 903,450. Percentage wise, the 65+ population in Kentucky will grow from 16.5% to 20% of total residents by 2030.

As our nation and states continue to gray, so too are our congregations graying. If your church hasn't already been preparing for this reality, now is the time to plan and act.

The S.A.G.E Ministry is here to help you and your congregation. I want to suggest ingredients for helping leaders get started in older adult ministry. These recommendations may serve as guidelines rather than rules—alter and adapt as necessary for your situation.

Commit yourself to begin. You do not have to start with elaborate programs, but you do need to get started. Often, church leaders say something like “We need to take Older adult Ministry seriously in our church, but we never seem to get going.” There is no better time to start older adult ministry than now. Older adults are not going away, they're the fastest growing age group in our churches.

Get started with those who want to be involved. Often church leaders believe they must have a large number of people involved in a ministry program for it to be considered good. How sad. Many successful ministries with older adults have begun with only a few people. If the ministry is meeting needs, numbers will increase. If it's a specialized type of ministry, numbers generally do not matter.

Be selective in choosing ministry programs. Keep asking “What do the older adults need most, now?” Find out using questionnaires, staying alert to specific concerns, and observing people.

Publicize your ministry in an attractive, honest, and caring way. The ministry must be inspiring and meet the needs of older adults. Do not jeopardize your ministry's start by careless or sloppy presentations. Leaders must be sincere and effective in presenting the ministry and caring about the needs of older adults.

Make your program a quality ministry. It is discouraging and debilitating to have a great idea executed poorly. A quality program can be accomplished by properly training key leadership and encouraging them to do their jobs well.

Finally, carry out the program. Know the interests, needs, and resources through research and surveys.

- Determine priorities and plan appropriate ministry programs
- Utilize facilities, persons, materials, and funding
- Evaluate programs at regular intervals

To accomplish your goals for intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults you will need lay leadership, resources, funding, and ideas. Remember to reach out to S.A.G.E. Ministry for support. Once you get started, enjoy the ministry with older adults as it unfolds before you. The rewards are beyond measure!

By Dr. Richard Gentzler

Articles/Webinar on Web Site to Assist You

Webinar: Ministry to, with and for Those in the
Second Half of Life
Community Outreach
S.E.N.I.O.R.S—step by step Plan

Programs that Work
Intentional Discipleship
25 Older Adult Ministry ideas
Aging Faithfully

To find these articles type in search box: KY Conference UMC, Click “Grow”, Click “Age Level Ministries, Click “Older Adults Ministry” and scroll down the page.

Easy Home Modifications TO PREVENT FALLS



For other strategies and tips to avoid falls, check out “*Preventing Falls*,” the online guide from Harvard Medical School.
www.health.harvard.edu/fall

Some Things to Think About...

When was the last time you thought about the caregivers in your church and what you could do to encourage them?

If you need flowers planted around the church this spring, ask some people in the second half of life to “help” the youth to plant the flowers. It will be a learning experience for both.

If you are a children’s SS teacher, ask an older adult to come & share his/her experiences of Easter