



## Words of Wisdom

### From the Older Adult Ministry of the Kentucky Conference

## LEGACY

AS WE GROW OLDER, MANY OF US BEGIN TO THINK ABOUT WHAT OUR MARK IN LIFE WILL BE. What will we leave behind to say we made a difference, and what will we be remembered for after we are gone? This is especially true for boomers. Many boomers grew up hopeful we could change the world, and though we may have tempered this desire with reality, we still expect to make the world a better place. None of us can do it alone. Indeed, we can do much more working collectively. Providing opportunities for making a difference and leaving a mark in the world is precisely what the church can offer all ages and especially older adults. It can form the heart of a church's ministry to boomers and older adults.

There is a popular term for leaving a legacy: "*Paying it Forward.*" This term entered culture from the title of a movie by the same name. In this movie, a teacher asks his students to come up with a project to make a difference in the world. One student's idea was to do random acts of kindness for strangers and ask them to pay it forward by doing acts of kindness for three other people. In the movie we are shown how successful his project proves to be in the extravagant outpouring of acts of kindness by strangers. Although the student's life is tragically cut short, he is remembered in a candlelight vigil by hundreds of people for the difference he made in bringing people together. It became his legacy.

As Christ's representatives in the world, we live out His legacy, and our own, too. Others see Christ in us when we make a difference for those around us. When we change the society for the better, we give a gift to the future and mark our own legacy. The original term for legacy meant just this – being a representative in the world and handling something down from the past to the future. Giving boomers and older adults the opportunity to discover or rediscover a mission in life is key to ministry with older adults and to "pay it forward."

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