

## Every 30 Seconds Someone Turns 65

### Is Your Church Older Adult Friendly?

*The Older Adult Ministries Task Force compiled the following list of questions to help congregations think about the inter-generational aspects of their church in reference to an aging society. The ideas range from the basic to more innovative and are meant to be thought-starters.*

#### SERVICES

- Do ushers respectfully offer to help elderly people to their seats, communion, coffee hour, etc.?
- Is the communion table accessible from the floor of the nave? If not, is there a side rail or a ramp?
- Is there a good sound system? Are ministers “attuned” to speaking to aging ears?
- Are hearing devices provided and readily available? How do congregants know of their availability?
- Is the church well lit for both reading purposes and for preventing accidents?
- Do you include congregants of all ages in all aspects of the service (e.g., as readers, ushers, etc.)?
- Could lectors/intercessors do their scripture readings from their seats with a handheld mic?
- When the congregation is asked to stand or kneel, are the words “as you are able” included?

#### COMMUNICATIONS

- Are there large-print prayer books, Bibles, and bulletins available?
- Is your signage for restrooms and stairs well placed?
- If name tags are used, are names bolded and in large type?
- Is a large font size used on the church website?
- Is there a large-font bulletin available, with all hymns, etc., listed?

#### CHRISTIAN FORMATION

- Do you offer faith formation programs that respond to the spiritual needs of older adults?
- Are older adults consulted on program development?
- Are the programs held in easily accessible locations?

## **PROPERTY**

- Do you have open-ended pews to accommodate wheelchairs? Are pews at various locations?
- Do you have chairs in addition to the pews for easier seating?
- Do you have easily accessible bathroom facilities on the main floor?
- Do you have a ramp for wheelchairs or those who cannot climb steps?
- Are church doors equipped with long-handled door knobs?
- Are sidewalks and steps free of ice, snow, wet leaves, and bird droppings?
- Is there a paper cup dispenser near the water fountain?
- Do you have a hand sanitizer prominently placed?

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Do you identify who in the congregation needs assistance getting to and from church?
- Do you have an escort type program?
- Is transportation available for those with scooters?
- Do you have accessible parking spaces for elderly people with signage?
- Do you have a well-lit parking lot?

## **ACTIVITIES**

- Do you have age diversity on the vestry?
- Are committees inter-generational?
- Do you reach out and ask elders to be on committees to show you value their skills?
- Do you honor your elders with any type of celebration?
- How do you encourage lay leaders to engage older members in activities?
- Do you offer programs that help children help their aging parents?
- Do you offer programs during times that are accessible and safe for elderly people?
- Do you have a support group for caregivers?
- Do you provide information on end-of-life issues, estate planning, funerals, and mourning?
- Do you have a parish nurse?

- Do you offer CPR or First Aid courses?
- Do you know who has recently transitioned from their jobs and are depressed or disengaged?
- Do you have a listing of services available to seniors in the local community?

## **OUTREACH**

- Does the church have a relationship with a senior center?
- Does the church have a relationship with a retirement community?
- Does the church have a relationship with local non-profit agencies for the aging?
- Does the church have a relationship with Area Agency on Aging?
- Could the church become a hub for seniors looking for new volunteer activities outside of the church?

The Older Adult Ministries (OAM) Task Force knows that The Episcopal Church is diverse. If you are doing these activities already, we say kudos, and to those of you in the early stages, we hope this list is helpful.

For more information about Older Adult Ministries, please visit our website at

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/older-adult-ministries> or contact [Ruth-Ann Collins](mailto:rcollins@episcopalchurch.org) ([rcollins@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:rcollins@episcopalchurch.org)), officer for Adult Formation and Lifelong Learning.