

A Plan for Congregational and Pastoral Care Giving
with our Senior and Elder Members

Prepared for St. Mark's United Methodist Church

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Ministry of Care with Our Elder Members

The ministry presented here focuses on how we care for our elders and those at the end of life. It encourages continued ministry by older adults. The primary components of the ministry program are educational resources for members and developing lay people to serve in congregational and pastoral care. It may also serve as a model for expanding how we care for each other no matter our age or stage of life.

Ministry goals:

- St. Mark's members will experience aging in healthier and more meaningful ways.
- Ministry by older adults will be encouraged as natural expressions of their gifts and God's grace, as long as they desire to be active in carrying out God's call in their lives.
- The unique gifts, perspectives, and diversity among Baby Boomers will inform and enrich this ministry.
- Members and care givers will experience fewer and less intense crises as they get older.
- Intergenerational events and relationships will strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship and are recognized as crucial for the health and well-being of people of all ages.
- A cadre of trained volunteers will serve in congregational and pastoral care-giving roles.
- The sacredness of end-of-life will be explored and embraced.

The purpose of this document is to present a high level description of a ministry of care with our elder members. As we learn from our ministry together, the plan will be updated. First published in May, 2014, version 2.0 is our first significant update.

Background

St. Mark's mission statement is:

"Changing the world through Christ, by caring for all people."

We do that through the work of our pastors, staff, and a broad range of ministry teams whose work touches people of all ages and stages. Those include Congregational Care, Worship, Adult Education and Adult and Family Ministry groups such as Open Doors and Handy Hands. Congregational Care encompasses a wide range of ministries and teams, such as visitation with members who are homebound, hospitalized, and in rehabilitation or care facilities, prayer ministry, and hospitality associated with funerals and memorial services. Many needs are addressed by individuals and small groups outside our formal structures.

Looking across our church, we are obviously and particularly called to care for our elders. Like many communities, St. Mark's members face many challenges related to aging and care giving. Individuals and families are frequently unprepared for the normal, important, and inevitable tasks and problems associated with aging. Individuals and families at all ages and stages experience the sacred end-of-life time. Too often, both of these natural phases of life are experienced as a series of worsening crises. These concerns are further complicated when family care givers and care receivers are separated by long distances.

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At St. Mark's, we recognize that our members' needs require intentionally increasing our capacity for congregational care and pastoral care. We strive to prevent what has, at times, approached and even hit crisis-level, resulting in exhausted pastors who carried a wide variety of ministerial and administrative responsibilities. With the first Baby Boomers turning 70 in 2016, the sheer number of folks experiencing aging threatened to overwhelm our capacity for ministry.

Age	# of	
	Members	% of Total
Unknown	100	10%
Under 21	143	14%
21 – 35	133	13%
36 – 50	95	9%
51 – 70	274	27%
71 – 80	171	17%
Over 80	116	11%
Total	1032	

Table 1 - Age of St. Mark's Members

Solving for this by hiring more clergy and staff would be expensive. It would also set artificial limits on how lay people might use their gifts and talents in Christian service. Instead we should develop a culture of ministry where “we are the church” includes lay people answering God's call to use their giftedness for congregational and pastoral care giving. We will train lay people for service and put their time and talents for ministry to good use. The congregation will hold up during worship those who respond to their call.

Baby Boomers bring special gifts and opportunities for ministry to our congregation and our community. This unique generation's spiritual gifts and yearnings provide opportunity and capacity for inviting people to know Jesus. Baby Boomers, nor any other generation, cannot be treated as a monolithic entity. Our ministries must include understanding cultural sub groups. We understand that each person is a unique individual with whom building relationships and being in ministry together are precious events.

As Methodists, we have a strong tradition of attending to the educational and health needs of our communities. We also have a strong tradition of equipping lay people for ministry. We can honor and extend those traditions by education designed to reduce the number and severity of crises – social, spiritual, and health – that do not have to be inevitable consequences of aging. Especially with Baby Boomers, we have opportunities to bring fresh perspectives to ministry just as Baby Boomers have been the source of so many changes in society-at-large.

Also, in our Methodist tradition, lay people ensure the continuity of relationships and service across years and decades. In the immediate and through the next twenty or thirty years, a strong system of education and lay service with Baby Boomers and with our current elders will be the means for the best care possible for the saints among us.

High-Level Ministry Plan

- Conduct formal, informal and ongoing needs assessments to assure the ministry is correctly focused on the needs and desires of our elders.
- Recognize that people in their 60s, 70s, 80s, and beyond often desire to be in service to others as suits their own gifts, talents, and energy.
- Provide an educational curriculum to help individuals and families improve quality of life during the last third of life.

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- Equip our members with information and tools to bring about the best care possible for themselves or their families at the end of life, in order to fully experience it as the sacred time it's meant to be.
- Increase our members' use of resources provided by agencies like Interfaith Community Services (ICS) and Pima Council on Aging (PCOA). We will avoid replicating services and resources available in the community.
- St. Mark's will develop broader ministry by, with and for older adults and their families including:
 - expanded intergenerational events
 - educational offerings
 - practical helps
 - family care giver support
 - visitation with members who are homebound or reside in care homes
 - worship and communion opportunities for those unable to attend worship on campus
- Pastors, staff, and leaders will develop lay ministry at St. Mark's by:
 - encouraging a culture which recognizes and lifts up the gifts and ministries of people in third third of their life's work.
 - encouraging a culture which recognizes and values the ability of lay people to serve in congregational and pastoral care-giving roles
 - encouraging a culture which recognizes the ways God extends grace through the interdependence of young and old
 - multiplying our capacity by identifying, equipping, and utilizing lay people called to this service
 - providing for supervision to ensure meaningful, high-quality service, as well as safety for volunteers, staff and members
- Identify and enable ministry opportunities for lay people that require relatively small time commitments.

Identifying Those Called to Launch Ministry

A series of one-on-one and house meetings with leaders of existing ministries and affinity groups such as Soul Station, the Quilting Group, and United Methodist Women, etc. will be helpful in identifying who may feel called to participate as leaders and in service. The meetings would also be a rich source of information about the desires and concerns of and for older adults, as well as a means to connect people to service in existing ministries.

Education and Training

This section has undergone the most refinement since we first published the plan. The curriculum for members and training to equip lay people for ministry has three main sections.

- Exploring the Third Third of Our Life's Work
- Equipping Lay People for Congregational and Pastoral Caregiving
- Normalizing and Reclaiming End-of-Life

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The Caring Congregation covers many of the topics identified in the first version of the curriculum. It is now the text used to train new members of our Congregational Care teams who do home and hospital visitation. *Aging Grace-fully*, based on a program developed at First United Methodist Church was made available to us through the Desert Southwest Conference Senior Ministry Team. This program was designed with flexibility in mind and is being adapted into a six-week study for use at St. Mark's. Opportunities for us to listen and respond to the needs of people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers may open up through a unique approach described in *Sanctuary in the Midst of Alzheimer's: A ministry for spousal caregivers and their churches*. St. Mark's will be one of the first churches in the country to offer *YODO: You Only Die Once*, a six-week study of comprehensive end-of-life planning based on the book by the same name by Marjorie Jenkins

St. Mark's partners with organizations such as PCOA and ICS to offer high-quality programs that appeal to our members and our neighbors. These organizations are glad for faith community partners. They make it very easy for us to bring those events on to our campus, promote them well, and offer them to the community at large. Our counselor-in-residence offers programs that fit well into the context of older adult ministry and can provide advice and guidance to our program planning.

The curriculum for members and training to equip lay people for ministry has three main sections.

- Exploring the Third Third of Our Life's Work
- Equipping Lay People for Congregational and Pastoral Caregiving
- Normalizing and Reclaiming End-of-Life

See Appendix A for a description of the curriculum and intended schedule.

Congregational Care Ministries

Congregational Care Ministries is made up of several sub-teams and roles including Prayer Ministries, Lay Visitation and Congregational Care Ministers, who visit with members who are home bound, hospitalized, or residing in care facilities, and Membership Care, which provides for memorial receptions. Congregational Care Ministers are trained and supervised by Rev. Tammy Hallam.

St. Mark's has a number of members who are trained Stephen Ministers. Re-establishing Stephen Ministries was considered, but has been tabled for the near future while we concentrate on building up our caring ministries in less time-intensive ways.

A number of other teams contribute to the cradle-to-grave nature of congregational care through ministries of fellowship, encouragement, service, and Christian formation. These include the Over 50s Group, Mark-a-ritas, Family Ministries, Open Doors, Handy Hands, and

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Adult Education. These teams' work frequently intersects with the groups named in the Congregational Care structure. Combined, we experience great depth and richness by all the means by which St. Mark's offers ourselves as the hands and feet of Christ.

Ministry Structure

Developing and guiding this ministry is a shared responsibility of clergy, staff and lay people. A guiding coalition, with a lay person as its leader, will include representatives of ministry teams, clergy, staff and the congregation.

- Congregational Care Team
- Prayer Ministry Team
- Adult Education Team
- Technology Team
- Handy Hands Ministry Team
- PCOA Ambassador
- Elder members at large
- Other members at large
- Associate Pastor
- Senior Pastor (advisory)

The ministry coalition will develop an implementation and communication plan, foster a culture of ministry by lay persons, and make budget recommendations.

SPRC should support this ministry by structuring staff roles to administer, equip and supervise the volunteers in ministry in order for the ministry to flourish. It will be a primary responsibility of staff to foster a culture in which lay people are recognized by the church as equal partners in ministry with staff. Staff and lay team members will create flexible and accountable means to train and connect volunteers and services with elders who look to the church for both practical and spiritual sustenance.

"Pastoral care is the faithful ministry of a religious community to the needs of people in face-to-face relationships. This ministry comes from a genuine concern for each person, caring about her as a person of unique worth, and caring for her as a mutual responsibility."

Paul Johnson, A Theology of Pastoral Care

Budget

SPRC should take this ministry plan into consideration in their staffing decisions. No budget increases for existing ministry teams was required for 2016, nor expected for 2017. However, as budget needs are discerned, they will be presented through the normal budget process.

Next Steps

What should we add – and what should we stop doing – based on our continued discernment of how God is calling us to this ministry? What are our members' spiritual gifts? How are we called to combine them with our talents and skills? What opportunities and needs become clear?

As our ministry with older adults grows, we should consider:

- additional intergenerational fellowship, such as all-church picnics on Mt. Lemmon, field trips to Sabino Canyon or the Desert Museum, encouragement of our high school and college students with cards, new student week care packages, finals week comfort kits, and more outreach to unchurched Baby Boomers. (See [Discipleship Ministries Baby Boomer resources](#).)
- spiritual formation through Baby Boomer and intergenerational camping, held in accessible camp facilities.
- updates to our website - www.umcstmarks.org.

Appendix A - Curriculum

Curriculum	Congregational Care Team	Clergy Working with Volunteers	Church Staff	Members at Large	Friends and Neighbors	Frequency and Notes
Exploring the Third Third of Our Life's Work						
<p>Small group studies that might be chosen from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What Shall I Read First?</i> – A reading list from Discipleship Ministries: Office on Aging and Older Adult Ministry (http://tinyurl.com/hcdd7fw) - <i>What Shall I Read Second?</i> (http://tinyurl.com/zfq4644) - Topics specific to ministry by, with, and for Baby Boomers - Topics that are intentional about intergenerational ministry <p>Selections may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Shaping A Life Of Significance For Retirement</i> (Jack Hansen and Jerry Haas, 2010) - <i>Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century</i> (Richard Gentzler, 2008) 	A	A	A	SR	A	<p>At least 2 each year</p> <p>Feature a book on a bi-monthly basis in the <i>Messenger</i> and refer to a bibliography.</p>
<p>Spiritual Gifts small group study is recommended for people in transition – into retirement, into a caregiving role, new to the congregation – and anyone desiring to respond to how God is calling them. The study provides a means for members and staff to recognize where their various gifts intersect with the needs of the congregation and community.</p> <p>The text used is <i>Each One a Minister: Using God's Gifts for Ministry</i> (Carter, 2012) and can be facilitated by clergy or laypersons.</p>	R		R	SR	A	<p>Twice a year, shortly after a new member class concludes.</p>

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Curriculum	Congregational Care Team	Clergy Working with Volunteers	Church Staff	Members at Large	Friends and Neighbors	Frequency and Notes
<p>Aging Grace-fully This small group was developed by First UMC of Gilbert and is readily adaptable to St. Mark’s. Members of the congregation with expertise in topics covered can make excellent session leaders.</p> <p>Topics include: - Physical, psychological and social aspects of aging, and how wisdom and faith come in to play. - What’s my job as I get older? - Aging effects on family members – conducted as a 3-generational panel. - Healthy aging and strategies for dealing with aging. - Financial, legal, and life planning issues. - Considering memorials and services. - How the church responds to issues of aging.</p>	SR	SR	SR	A	A	<p>Annually</p> <p>This was designed as a 12-week series for a standing Sunday School class. St. Mark’s will adapt it to six weeks since several topics will be covered in other offerings.</p> <p>We will offer it annually to different groups and in various settings, likely starting with the Wednesday morning class. For an ad hoc group, it might form the basis of a continuing fellowship group.</p>
<p>Spirituality of Aging - How aging and spirituality relate to well-being. - How they are opportunities for deepening relationship with God.</p> <p>Texts chosen from: - 10 Gospel Promises for Later Life (Thibault, 2004) - From Ageing to Sage-ing: A Profound New Vision of Growing Older (Schachter-Shalomi and Miller, 1995) - Between the Dark and the Daylight: Embracing the Contradictions of Life (Chittister, 2015) or another selection by the same author</p>	R	R	SR	A	A	Annually

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Curriculum	Congregational Care Team	Clergy Working with Volunteers	Church Staff	Members at Large	Friends and Neighbors	Frequency and Notes
<p>A Matter of Balance (http://tinyurl.com/goux5lt) - An interactive workshop by PCOA to help maintain an active lifestyle as a means to reduce risk of falling and its debilitating effects.</p> <p>Healthy Living with Ongoing Health Conditions (http://tinyurl.com/goux5lt) - An interactive workshop by PCOA to help manage emotions, pain and fatigue, decrease frustration and increase fitness and self-confidence.</p> <p>Caregiving Essentials for Family Caregivers (http://tinyurl.com/goux5lt) - Designed for persons caring for an aging loved one or someone with Alzheimer’s or other dementia regardless of age. - This can be aligned to the counselor-in-residence’s Caregivers Support Group.</p> <p>Caring Through a Distance - How to locate and arrange the resources and services. - How to nurture relationships and care for loved ones despite the miles. - This might be arranged through PCOA or the counselor-in-residence in conjunction with the Caregivers Support Group. - An excellent reference: National Institute on Aging — <i>So Far Away: Twenty Questions and Answers about Long-Distance Caregiving</i> (2011).</p>	SR	SR	A	A	A	Each offered annually, in conjunction with their sponsoring agency.
<p>Other topics: Services provided by ICS, PCOA, Wingspan, and Senior Pride - Locating and evaluating housing options - Medicare and Social Security - Financial planning, wills and trusts - Specific conditions - Problem-solving and dispute resolution - Mental health and aging; suicide prevention for senior adults (promote AZ Geriatrics Society's annual Geriatric Mental Health and Aging Conference)</p>	SR	SR	SR	A	A	Offered on an ad hoc basis, as need and opportunity arises. Community organizations readily provide high-quality content at little or no cost.

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Curriculum	Congregational Care Team	Clergy Working with Volunteers	Church Staff	Members at Large	Friends and Neighbors	Notes
Equipping Lay People for Congregational and Pastoral Caregiving						
<p>Congregational Care Training The pastor of visitation trains members of the Congregational Care Team to minister effectively with members who are ill, hospitalized, home bound, or residing in a care facility. The training provides a common understanding of why we do congregational and pastoral care, and an understanding of how both clergy and lay people are called to these roles.</p> <p>Text: <i>The Caring Congregation: Training Manual and Resource Guide</i> (Lampe, 2013)</p> <p>Topics include: - Theology of care - Creating a practical care plan - Confidentiality and boundaries (See also DSC Health & Caring Ministries’ “Sticky Traps” Part One: Codependency – http://tinyurl.com/jsatn4c) - Learning to listen - Visitation etiquette – Visiting hospitalized, home-bound, and care-home residents - Support through the final days of life - Bringing Communion – Theology of Communion; special considerations for communion with ill, disabled, or very elderly people</p> <p>Congregational Care Team members should also take a spiritual gifts assessment, described in the Social Transitions section above.</p>	R	L	A	A		Annually
<p>Sanctuary in the Midst of Alzheimer’s: A ministry for spousal caregivers and their churches (Young, 2015) A five-week study. During the first four weeks, spousal caregivers meet as a group while members of the congregation meet separately. The groups come together in week five to create sanctuary.</p>	SR	SR	SR	SR	A	Annually or as additional need or opportunity arises.
<p>Safe Sanctuaries: The Church Responds to Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Older Adults (Melton, 2012)</p>	R	R	R	SR	A	Annually

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Curriculum	Congregational Care Team	Clergy Working with Volunteers	Church Staff	Members at Large	Friends and Neighbors	Notes
Normalizing and Reclaiming End-of-Life						
<i>You Only Die Once (YODO)</i>	SR	SR	SR	SR	A	First offering – October / November, 2016.
<i>Dying Well or The Best Care Possible</i> - 4-week study of one of Dr. Ira Byock’s book - How to make the end of life as meaningful and precious as the beginning - How to deal with doctors - How to talk to friends and relatives	SR	SR	SR	A	A	Scheduling TBD Adapt http://www.dyingwell.org/discguide.htm
5 Wishes for End of Life Care Participants prepare their personalized, legally binding advance care directive, medical power of attorney, and provide guidance to friends and loved ones in regard to other care-related matters in a 3-hour workshop.	SR	R	SR	A	A	Annually (Skipped 2016) http://www.agingwithdignity.org/five-wishes.php
Grief Support A weekly support group providing a healing circle of care and compassion and offering a safe, supportive place where those grieving a loss can share their feelings, stories, and healing. This group is facilitated by the St. Mark’s counselor-in-residence.						Ongoing