

Article from General Assembly adapted for use here. – pastor Jim

Older Adult Week begins Sunday

Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network encourages churches to celebrate aging people of all generations
by Paul Seebeck



Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network President Michele Hendrix (center) wants Older Adult Week, which begins Sunday, to be about celebrating people as they age across all generations. As president of the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network, Michele Hendrix has long been an advocate for the PC(USA)'s Older Adult Week Sunday, which falls on May 3 this year. This special emphasis week for those 65 and above has been around since it was adopted by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly in 1992. "We want all generations in the church to view aging as a natural part of living — as part of the lifespan," Hendrix said. We are "Stronger Together: Intergenerational Relationships," as we realize anew the relationships all around us.

This intergenerational relationship theme was also the focus which Hendrix highlighted in the 2020 Older Adult Ministries planning guide, a valuable resource published by POAMN each year for planning worship and other activities during Older Adult Sunday Week, which many churches will move to later in the year, for this year.

Hendrix said the ethnic and racial diversity in the under-18 population relative to those ages 65 and older "has created a diversity gap between the generations." With nearly 50 million people in the U.S. over 65 — that number is projected to reach more than 80 million in 2050 — these trends are likely to increase, Hendrix said, not only in her congregation, but in PC(USA) churches and in congregations around the world. Over the last several years, Hendrix said we have begun to realize that older adults are the largest constituency in the church — and in the denomination. She felt like there was a negative emphasis on aging — until the boomers hit 65 and began to appreciate and celebrate the stages of their lifespan. "They wanted to share it, not only with their children and grandchildren, but with all generations of the church," she said. For these reasons, Hendrix continues to stress the importance of working to involve all ages in Older Adult Week Sunday, however it is celebrated — and to include children and youth in that celebration as well. "Christianity spreads because stories of faith were passed on year to year from generation to generation," she said. "We kind of got away from that when we moved children and youth out of the sanctuary, but it's coming back, because worship happens in the full body of Christ."