



Intentional Ministry By, With, and For Older Adults Becoming an Age-Friendly Congregation



Intentional Ministry By, With, and For Older Adults



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Overview of ENCORE Ministry Foundation

Our Purpose:

- ✓ Provide training and resources for church leaders in aging and older adult ministry
- ✓ Provide consultation with church teams
- ✓ Provide resources for older adults
- ✓ Provide grant funding for intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults



...Certain Age

A digital hub for aging,
faith and ministry

Purpose • Function • Practical use

...Certain Age

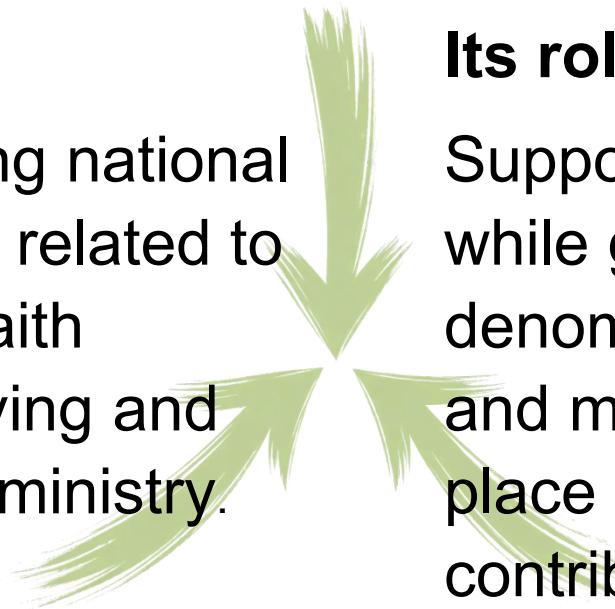
Connects aging, faith formation and practical ministry

Its purpose

Serve as a growing national hub for resources related to aging, Christian faith formation, caregiving and intergenerational ministry.

Its role

Support the AFCC initiative while giving congregations, denominations, seminaries and ministry organizations a place to discover, share and contribute useful resources.





Shared knowledge becomes practical ministry

Discover

Find articles,
interviews, research,
case studies,
downloadable tools
and practical
ministry models.

Learn

Engage
webinars, online
learning
opportunities,
resource libraries
and evidence-
based practices.

Exchange

Share ideas and
resources across
Christian traditions
with leaders,
practitioners,
researchers and
congregations.

...Certain Age

One hub brings multiple resource formats together

Users can choose the format that best fits their ministry need.

The platform combines reflection, education, research and practical support.

This makes it useful for personal learning, leadership development, congregational planning and caregiving ministry.

✓ **Articles • thought leadership**

✓ **Podcasts • video interviews**

✓ **Webinars • online learning**

✓ **Research • case studies**

✓ **Tools • models • resource libraries**

...Certain Age

Designed for a broad learning community

The platform brings together Christian leaders, practitioners, researchers, congregations and organizations from diverse traditions.

Each can discover, share or contribute resources.

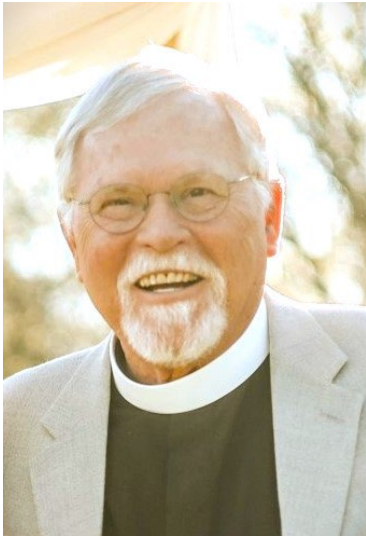
Churches Find ministry models, tools and best practices.

Clergy Build knowledge and strengthen ministry planning.

Older adults Access support materials and share lived wisdom.

Educators Contribute learning, research and evaluation resources.

Becoming an Age-Friendly Congregation through the Age-Friendly Congregation Certificate Program



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Our Society is Growing Older

- Many churches are experiencing growing numbers of older adults
- The reality is that we live in a rapidly aging society
- 1900: total US population 65+ = 4%
total US population under 18 = 40%
- 2000: total US population 65+ = 12.5%
total US population under 18 = 24%
- By 2035: total US population 65+ will *outnumber* young people under 18 years of age



A first in USA history!

Population Aging

- Population aging is primarily the result of two (2) primary developments:



- ✓ Decreasing birth rates
- ✓ Increasing life expectancy
- Advances in biology, neuroscience, healthcare, technology, and lifestyle changes are all helping more adults live to old age
- With more people living to old age, the only growth many congregations are experiencing is an increase in older members

Why Intentional Older Adult Ministry?

1. More people are living to old age
2. More older adults in local churches
3. Aging is changing
4. Older adults want to feel useful, and have purpose and meaning in their lives
5. Ageism is prevalent in society
6. Older adulthood is not always the “Golden Years”
7. In coping with frailty, loss, and mortality, the faith of older adults can be fundamentally shaken



Intentional Ministry By, With, and For Older Adults

Congregations that are engaged in intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults are:



- ✓ Re-thinking church vitality
- ✓ Re-framing aging with a new vision
- ✓ Learning to appreciate the positive aspects and unique challenges of *graying* congregations
- ✓ Recognizing that aging is not a *problem* for churches to solve, but a *gift* for churches to embrace!

Ways Your Congregation Can Make a Difference

- Overcome the temptation to view older adults as all being alike or set in their ways and unable to grow

Older Adults are Resilient!

- Confront ageism that may be present in your congregation
- Recognize that ageism can cause churches to neglect the spiritual and psychosocial well-being of older adults
- Become an *Age-Friendly Congregation* by completing the program's 8 online modules



Why Age-Friendly?

- AARP – Age-Friendly Community Program for cities
- Aging in the United States: A Strategic Framework for a National Plan on Aging, Spring 2024



- Lifelong Tennessee: Multisector Plan for Aging

Age-Friendly Ecosystem



- Over several decades, the Age-Friendly Ecosystem has evolved from multiple movements and is a true example of combining talents and efforts to improve the lives (and care) of older adults across many different life sectors and supporting agencies
- Congregations are part of this broader Age-Friendly ecosystem

Age-Friendly Ecosystem & Congregations

- Participation in this ecosystem allows congregations to:
 - Collaborate with local partners
 - Connect older adults to trusted resources
 - Strengthen community-wide support systems
 - Advocate for policies and practices that promote healthy aging
- By engaging in this ecosystem, congregations become active contributors to a larger movement working toward age inclusion and thriving communities for all generations



Age-Friendly Congregation Certificate (AFCC)

- The AFCC Program was developed by ENCORE Ministry Foundation and the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, College of Nursing, with funding from the Tennessee Department of Health



- There are two (2) categories of the AFCC program:
 1. The Age-Friendly Congregation Program *Champion*
 2. The Age-Friendly Congregation *Designation*

AFCC Program Overview

- Format: 8 Modules (1 Introductory Module + 6 Modules + 1 Sustainable Action Module)
- Delivery: Online, self-paced with optional in-person sessions
- Duration: Flexible completion timeline
- Achievement: For Individuals: AFCC Program *Champion*
- For Congregations: AFCC *Designation*



Module 1: Creating Age-Friendly Congregations

- Module 1 emphasizes the importance of *Creating Age-Friendly Congregations* that support older adults and caregivers through inclusivity, accessibility, and respect
- It provides actionable steps and principles to foster welcoming and supportive faith communities



**Age-Friendly Congregation
Certificate Program**

Module 1: Learning Objectives

- Understand the significance of Age-Friendly Ecosystem
- Implement accessibility measures
- Use inclusive language
- Adapt programs and worship
- Engage your congregation
- Support caregivers
- Reframe aging positively



Module 2: Healthy Aging and Resilience



- Module 2 focuses on healthy aging and the many transitions of aging
- It explores how congregations can support older adults through understanding aging, fostering inclusivity, and addressing their unique needs
- It emphasizes practical strategies to enhance the well-being of older adults and their caregivers

Module 2: Learning Objectives

- Understand aging
- Support for “aging in place”
- Address loneliness and social isolation
- Promote healthy habits and resilience
- Foster inclusiveness through intersectionality
- Support caregivers and those living with dementia



Module 3: Spirituality and Aging

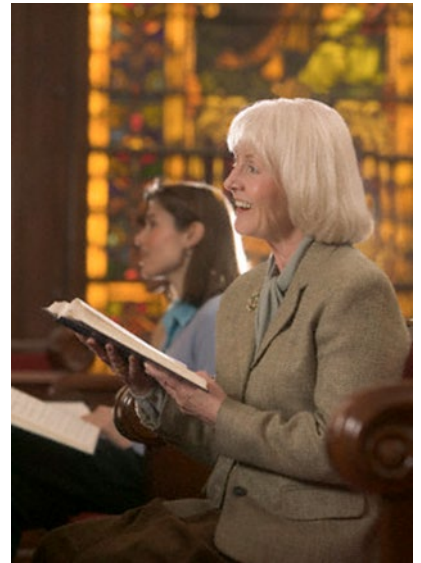
- Module 3, *Spirituality and Aging*, delves into the profound impact of faith on the aging process, emphasizing the role of spirituality enhancing the lives of older adults



- It provides insights into creating supportive, inclusive environments that foster spiritual growth and address the unique challenges faced by older adults
- It provides insights in helping congregations recognize barriers to spiritual growth, as well as providing ways to promote lifelong faith formation

Module 3: Learning Objectives

- Understand the role of spirituality
- Recognize barriers to spiritual growth
- Foster community connections
- Honor personal narratives
- Adapt ministry practices
- Promote lifelong spiritual development
- Support end-of-life decisions



Module 4: Supporting Older Adult Well-Being



- Module 4 equips congregations with the tools to support vulnerable older adults and their caregivers by addressing mental health, caregiving challenges, and end-of-life issues
- Participants learn to recognize distress, differentiate care types, and foster inclusivity

Module 4: Learning Objectives

- Understand vulnerability and recognize distress
- Differentiate palliative care and hospice
- Support advance care planning
- Provide holistic caregiver support
- Create dementia- and mental health-friendly environments
- Reduce stigma through inclusive practices
- Build partnerships and sustain improvement



Module 5: Social Inclusion and Intergenerational Connection



- Module 5, *Social Inclusion and Intergenerational Connection*, focuses on fostering intergenerational connections and social inclusion within faith-based communities
- Participants explore strategies to address challenges like isolation and ageism while creating a more unified and inclusive church environment

Module 5: Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of intergenerational engagement
- Recognize and address social isolation and ageism
- Learn practical strategies for intergenerational programs
- Equip your congregation with engagement skills
- Promote collaboration and inclusivity
- Utilize available resources effectively



Module 6: Older Adult Ministry Models and Program Design



- Module 6 highlights the importance of intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults, addressing their unique needs and providing strategies for effective ministry
- Participants explore practical tools and frameworks to create intentional, inclusive, and impactful programs within their congregations

Module 6: Learning Objectives

- Understand the significance of older adult ministry
- Recognize demographic changes
- Address ageism actively
- Develop a personalized action plan
- Foster connection
- Learn about various older adult ministry models, including S.E.N.I.O.R.S. Ministry (i.e., intentional older adult ministry in these areas:
***S**pirituality, **E**nrichment, **N**utrition & Health, **I**ntergenerational, **O**utreach, **R**ecreation, and **S**ervice)*



Module 7: Advocacy and Safety



- Module 7, *Advocacy and Safety*, empowers faith communities to address elder abuse and promote the safety and dignity of older adults
- Participants gain practical tools to recognize, prevent, and respond to elder abuse while fostering inclusive and supportive environments

Module 7: Learning Objectives

- Understand elder abuse
- Promote a safe environment
- Advocate effectively
- Engage your community
- Develop prevention strategies
- Prepare for emergencies
- Protect against frauds and scams



Module 8: Sustainable Action Plan



- Module 8, *Sustainable Action Plan*, provides congregations with strategies to support older adults through effective planning and community engagement
- Participants learn to assess needs, set goals, and build sustainable ministries

Module 8: Learning Objectives

- Assess community needs
- Set measurable goals
- Develop sustainable action plans
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Build partnerships strategically
- Evaluate progress regularly
- Communicate transparently



**Age-Friendly Congregation
Certificate Program**

Age-Friendly Congregation Training is Open to All



- AFCC is not exclusive to The United Methodist Church or to the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference or to TN
- AFCC is open and available to all churches and all denominations
- With current funding available, up to 300 individuals and congregations can register **free** to participate in the AFCC program
- Future plans involve supporting the AFCC program with additional/optional learning modules

The Next Step is Yours

- Presently, participating churches are from the following states: TN, SC, OK, NY, CA, KS, MS, FL, PA, GA, NH
- We invite you to become an AFCC *Champion* and for your church to receive the AFCC *Designation*
- For more information about AFCC contact Stephanie Blaine at sblaine@encoreministry.org or visit www.certainage.org/afcc
- If you are interested in enrolling in the program, please visit <https://bit.ly/UTCAFCC>



Dr. Richard Gentzler, Dr. Kristi Wick,
& Stephanie Blaine, MEd

Questions

