

# Worship Service Suggestions

*Compiled by*

*Rev. Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., Director ENCORE Ministry of the TN Conference - UMC*

*The material in this resource will provide you with information on how your local congregation can celebrate Older Adults Recognition Sunday. For a comprehensive summary of program and activity ideas go to:*

*<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/resources-for-celebrating-older-adult-recognition-day-may-2020>.*

Congregations are invited to conduct a worship service to celebrate Older Adult Recognition Day, normally held during any Sunday in May, or perhaps on the second Sunday in September (Grandparents' Day).

The purpose of this worship service is to introduce the congregation to the cause of aging in an effective, inspiring, and informative way. As you plan for a worship service to celebrate Older Adult Recognition Day, involve older people in planning and leading the service. If you have a Sunday school class that is primarily made up of older people, or if your church has an active older-adult ministry team, you will want to meet with them for discussion and planning. Here are some ideas that you might consider in your planning:

## **We recognize that:**

- God loves and blesses people of all ages.
- Aging is a natural progression in life.
- Every age and stage of life is full of unique potential.
- Birth, aging, and death are all part of divine providence and are to be regarded

and taught as positive values.

- The older-adult population is a diverse group, and no two older adults are exactly alike.
- Older adults, no less than people at every age and stage of life, need to feel valued and respected. They need a life with meaning and purpose.

- Children, youth, adults, and older adults can all learn from one another.
- God calls people of all ages into Christian discipleship.

## **We celebrate!**

- We are not only living longer, but people 65 years of age and older are healthier, wealthier, and more active than previous generations of older adults.
  - The chronological age of 65 is no longer the benchmark signaling the onset of late life.
  - As a result of medical advances, scientific discovery, better health care, nutrition, and job safety, more people are living into older adulthood.
  - The experiences of older people bring wisdom and insight to our congregation.
  - There are opportunities for all generations within our church to worship, study and learn, work, and play together.
- Mature years bring a special opportunity to redefine our goals.

## **Scripture for Sermon Ideas:**

- Genesis 6:3: Then the Lord said, “My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years.”
- Genesis 12:4: So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.
- Exodus 7:7: Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh.
- Joshua 14:10b-11, NIV: [And Caleb who said] So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then.
- Psalm 71:18: So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to all the generations to come.
- Psalm 92:12, 14: The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap.
- Proverbs 16:31: Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.
- Proverbs 20:29: The glory of youths is their strength, but the beauty of the aged is their gray hair.
- Luke 2:36-37: There was also a prophet, Anna . . . She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after marriage, then as a widow

to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day.

- John 21:18: Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.
- II Corinthians 4:16: For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day by day (GNT).
- Ephesians 6:2-3: “Honor your father and mother” – this is the first commandment with a promise: “so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”
- I Timothy 5:1, 2: Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father . . . to older women as mothers . . .

## **Hymns:**

“O For a Thousand Tongues,”  
“Great Is Thy Faithfulness,”  
“On Eagle’s Wings,”  
“My Hope Is Built,”  
“There Is a Balm in Gilead,”  
“Lord, I Want to Be a Christian,”  
“Every Time I Feel the Spirit,”

“I Am Thine, O Lord,”  
“Trust and Obey,”  
“The Old Rugged Cross,”  
“Are You Able?”  
“Be Thou My Vision,”  
“Sweet Hour of Prayer,”

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus,”  
“Blest Be the Tie That Binds,”  
“Jesus Loves Me,”  
“Blessed Assurance,”  
“Amazing Grace”

## **Prayers:**

- “Serenity Prayer,”
- “Prayer to the Holy Spirit,”
- “All Saints,”
- “The Prayer of Saint Francis,”

### **Psalter Readings:**

- Psalm 23
- Psalm 27
- Psalm 63
- Psalm 71:1-12
- Psalm 90
- Psalm 92
- Psalm 103:1-18
- Psalm 105:1-11

### **A Litany on Aging for Church Worship**

Leader: Then the Lord said, “My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be 120 years” (Genesis 6:3).

**People: Dear Lord, we do need time to grow.**

Leader: Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you (Exodus 20:12).

**People: We pray that the long years will be good years.**

Leader: The glory of youths is their strength, but the beauty of the aged is their gray hair (Proverbs 20:29).

**People: Give us strength and experience.**

Leader: Remember the days of old, consider the years long past; ask your father, and he will inform you; your elders, and they will tell you (Deuteronomy 32:7).

**People: Remind us to ask, and teach us to listen.**

Leader: Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life (Proverbs 16:31).

**People: Day by day, we strive to be more holy.**

Leader: Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old (Proverbs 23:22).

**People: We are grateful for parents who teach and nurture in love.**

Leader: So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to all the generations to come (Psalm 71:18).

**People: We love to tell the story of Jesus and his love.**

Leader: In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap (Psalm 92:14).

**People: Yes, we too will soon know and understand God's gift of growing older; give us wisdom so that we may serve others as we have been served. Amen.**