

Growing Aging Disciples- A Congregational Model

Reformation Lutheran Church is a small congregation located in the heart of Culpeper, Virginia. A majority of the membership is 50 years of age or better. Reformation is surrounded by Baptist and Non-demoninational churches with large buildings, multiple staff, and extensive childrens/youth ministry programs.

Even though this Lutheran Congregation did not have the resources for comprehensive childrens/youth ministry, they realized that their assets surrounded Senior Adult Ministry. In fact, no other church in the community was doing aging ministry, considering that the town is graying at a rapid rate. By 2010, around 25% of the population will be 60 years of age or older.

Through the call of the Holy Spirit, Reformation felt compelled to share Jesus Christ to this growing population group. So, they started the ecumenical Culpeper Senior Ministry. This ministry, which is open to anyone 50 or older, strives to share Jesus Christ through fellowship, learning, bible study, and witness.

It's ministry is based upon the 5's of Senior Adult Ministry (developed by Pastor Brad Hales). They include:

- Spiritual
- Study
- Social
- Self
- Service.

Programs are offered every Tuesday afternoon. On the 1st and 3rd Tuesday's, "Lunch and Learning" is held. After a free lunch, a speaker gives a presentation on an educational topic which effects Seniors. On the second Tuesday of each month, a Senior Bible Study is held. The 4th Tuesday has seen the development of a new advocacy group called S.U.N.- Senior's United Now! This group continually looks for ways to enhance the lives of those who are aging. Excitingly, this advocacy group is done in partnership with the area regional organization on aging. On the 5th Tuesday of the month, the senior's have lunch with pastor.

These programs continue to grow, as both churched and unchurched senior's attend. Prayer is offered at all these events, as Jesus is made known. Along with these specific activities, the Culpeper Senior Ministry also takes educational trips, and provides senior transportation to the doctor, grocery store, etc.

Amazingly, as Reformation has centered on Senior Adult Ministry, the congregation has grown. It's welcomed in both middle age and senior adults.

But the greatest growth has been seen with families. There is now young children. The congregation has started a children's sunday school, and vacation bible school is on the way!

God was leading Reformation to use its gifts, and be involved in Senior Adult Ministry. Through this, the Lord Jesus Christ has blessed this congregation, as it strives to share the Good News in Culpeper. For more information, please contact Pastor Brad Hales at pastorhales@hotmail.com. The phone number is 540-825-1376.