

ARMSS

Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors

Quarterly Newsletter

October 2008

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ARMSS Presbytery Representatives are Lifesavers

by Kenneth Smith,

ARMSS Governing Body Network Coordinator

Hi ARMSS Presbytery Representatives - Lifesavers!, and I am not talking about the candy with the hole in the middle. Let's look at a common scene. After forty-five or fifty years of serving God and his people in possibly up to four or five congregations it is time to retire. So you leave the active ministry, and the denomination suggests strongly that you move to some place away from the last congregation so that you do not disturb the bonding that the congregation will feel with the next pastor.

You were always inserted (after examination) into a congregation where you immediately had to learn new names, relationships and other possibilities. It happened for your entire ministry until you retired. Aha, now you are moving into another area, possibly an area you are unfamiliar with, possibly closer to some adult children, but you are no longer inserted. Now you have to establish those relationships. Through the local church and Presbytery you always had persons with your general concerns to accommodate to. Things have changed.

Now, let's get some insight from the Dean of Duke University Divinity School (Christian Century, July 15, 2008) "A sociological study found that between 1985 and 2004 the average American's number of close confidants declined from three to two and that those reporting "no close confidant" jumped from 10 to 25 percent." The destructive consequences of loneliness will likely afflict that 25 percent of Americans who have no confidants. Loneliness becomes a spiral downward that diminishes a person's capacity to relate to others, to envision a hopeful future.

Luther wrote that "a lonely [person] always deduces one thing from the other and thinks everything to the worst."

Dr. James J. Lynch is the author of three books:

The Broken Heart: The Medical Consequences of Loneliness, (1976)

The Language of the Heart: The Human Body in Dialogue, (1986)

A Cry Unheard: New Insights into the Medical Consequences of Loneliness, (2000)

In these books, as well as in medical textbooks, and more than 100 articles in peer-reviewed medical journals, he has shown that human loneliness is a major contributor to increased risk of disease and premature death.

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ARMSS Quarterly Newsletter

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A Message From the President of ARMSS

James F. Reese

At Any Age

Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength is spent.

Psalm 71:9

The request of the Psalmist has been answered over and over again. The May 2008 issue of *Presbyterians Today* had an article by Sue Washburn entitled *Never Too Old for Abundant Life*. Marsha Clark Myers in that issue wrote, "Vocation has no age limit." A seminary schoolmate, Leroy Selby, wrote, "I am 92 and have good health. We stay active in our wonderful church. God is doing great things and we are glad."

In this issue of the newsletter you will read about engaging activities by, with and for older adults in congregations and governing bodies. We see many persons whose retirement often bring new experiences and new identities.

All who continue to serve have as their "patron saints" Anna the prophet who at 84 years was still "on the job" and Joshua who at 80 years said, "Give me the hill country."

ARMSS has the great potential to:

- 1) provide support and opportunities for its members,
- 2) help retirees find ways to keep their callings alive,
- 3) use their experiences and skills.

Our relationships with God are not age-bound. God travels with us throughout our life journey.

We can continue to establish a relationship with God at any age.

We can be pleased with God at any age.

We can please God with good works at any age.

We can give thanks and sing praises to God at any age.

We can serve on councils, committees, boards, preach, pray, contribute at any age.

*The righteous flourish ...
... In old age they still produce fruit ...*

Psalm 92:12, 14

James Foster Reese

Prayer for Strength in Old Age

O Lord our God,
under the shadow of Thy wings
let us hope.

Thou wilt support us both when
little and even to gray hairs.

When our strength is of Thee,
it is strength; but,
when our own, it is feebleness.

We return unto Thee, O Lord,
that from their weariness
our soul may rise towards Thee,
leaning on the thing
which thou has created,
and passing on to Thyself,
who hast wonderfully made them,
for with Thee is refreshment
and true strength.

Amen

St. Augustine, A.D. 354-430

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Dr. Robert Wilson at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, found that "people who described themselves as lonely were twice as likely to develop dementia." He found that "loneliness may affect systems in the brain dealing with cognition and memory, making lonely people more vulnerable to effects of age-related decline in neural pathways."

ENTER THE ARMSS PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVE.

Facebook, yearly annual letters, cell phone address book, notwithstanding, we need to be in touch and that is what the ARMSS Pres. Rep. can do, keep us in touch with each other: through social gatherings (even sponsored by the Board of Pensions), in small groups, by telephone calls, or email keep-in-touch conversations. This is true and important for ministers, spouses, survivors, we all need the closeness that dispels loneliness.

It is true that Jesus talked to large groups but a study of his words shows that he was speaking to each individual in the large group, and at other times to each individual. We may not be successful with thousands of people but to be successful with one is very important.

So, Pres. Rep. you are a lifesaver. May God continue to bless you with His Holy Spirit as you face your voluntary experiences.

It is not by the gray of the hair that one knows the age of the heart.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

Service of the Presbytery Representatives

Bob Forsythe, PR of Pittsburgh Presbytery reports: We are going to have a BOP fall luncheon in November and invite all the retirees living within the bounds of the Presbytery. We also have started a group of retired pastors to serve the Presbytery as encouragers and listeners for the members of Presbytery. You can get more information about this idea at www.pghpresbury.org then click on ministry teams and then click on p.e.a.l. under ministry teams. This gives you the information and a bio of the members of the team.

We meet as a group every other month and we have been quite busy ministering to the members of presbytery, families, and survivors. We visit hospitals, funeral homes, and peoples homes when we are needed.

Norman Nettleton writes: The retired Church Workers of the Presbytery of the James have two occasions when they get together, usually for a luncheon and sometimes for a program combined with the luncheon. Occasions usually occur in late Spring and late Fall. On Thursday, June 19 twenty-three retired professionals--ministers, their spouses or survivors and others from the Presbytery of the James in Virginia took leave in Fredericksburg, VA for their spring luncheon cruise. The two-hour trip on the Rappanock River was an enjoyable little trip with good food and terrific fellowship, said one of the participants. The cruise was but one of the numerous

semiannual experiences of the retired folk of the presbytery. Another gathering is scheduled toward the end of 2008

North Puget Sound Presbytery: **Paul Jensen** tells: For a number of years NPSP has had an annual luncheon of retirees and spouses in the spring. About 10-20 have attended. The program has included a luncheon, a hymn sing, and an update and Q & A with our BOP area representative.

This year we increased our outreach to retirees, spouses, and survivors. A task force of five retirees met twice, updated the retirees' list of 25 and doubled the number of contacts; sent out a letter of invitation in early March; followed up with telephone calls to each one in April; held the luncheon near the ferry dock, so those on the Olympic Peninsula could easily get there; and encouraged carpooling. The result in mid-May was the best attended luncheon we've ever had --- it doubled! The women of the host church provided the meal at no charge as a gift of gratitude for the years of service to the greater church by the retirees. Every task force member had some responsibility for the program. We had a hymn sing, a short devotional, and the annual update and Q & A with our BOP representative. The task force held an evaluation session the first of July.

We are planning three area get-togethers led by task force members to develop an awareness of fellow retirees in each area of the presbytery and to reduce transportation distance. We hope to connect retirees, spouses, and survi-

vors with the resources of the BOP and the Presbytery that are available. Our hope is to hold two get-togethers a year --one in each area of the Presbytery and one including every retiree in the Presbytery.

Sacramento Presbytery Rep Richard Wylie shares: We have an annual luncheon at Presbytery. We are now under the umbrella of Pastoral Support Committee of Presbytery and this gives us a bit more visibility. In addition the Presbytery office has provided us with labels and pertinent information about the retired folks. Like everyone else, we have problems discovering the "survivors" since there is no category in Presbytery and the Board of Pensions will not give out that information.

Will be publicizing the 2009 joint ARMSS / POAMN Conference in Tucson and work with OAM here (since I am also the advocate for the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network). Hopefully, we will do well here in California promoting this annual event.

Newton Presbytery: PR Jim Chesnutt reports: Our group meets quarterly for lunch, worship, sharing, gabbing, and discussing items of concern such as current issues facing the denomination, overtures to and from GA, Board of Pensions actions, and mission projects of the Presbyter. The current Moderator and Vice Moderator of the Presbytery are members of the retirees group. We also have several key committee chairs among us.

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Lake Erie Presbytery Rep, Jack Kyle shares: The ARMSS group continues to meet twice a year for lunch. As to the attendance, there has been an increase. We plan to meet in October. A report on the ARMSS convention is on the agenda. A discussion is planned led by one of the clergy, "*Our Retirement Journey: Where are we? How are things going?*"

Agendas of that nature help us to plan for the future. There also will be reports from the caring group leaders. Each leader is to contact, and support a number of retired clergy through calling or writing to the persons.

Missouri River Valley Presbytery, Richard Skelley tells: We continue to maintain our Retired Pastors, Spouses and Survivors telephone calling network program. We had two of our Retired Pastor's die in the last 4 months and we call all persons in our network about the hours of the Memorial Service. During the memorial service or funeral service we all sit together, and it is rather amazing at the turn out for honoring our brothers in Christ.

We also call for other matters. There are two other retired pastors I call with the messages, each of us has 10-12 persons to call. This may take only take 15-20 minutes of phoning.

The Committee on Ministry relates to our group of Retired Pastors and is planning a lunch in December this year. We will be celebrating the meaning of Christmas Day. We have normally had a luncheon by the COM in

April or May each year. We, Retired Pastors, Spouses and Survivors, do so enjoy these gatherings for fellowship.

Our Presbytery is cooperating with Homestead Presbytery for a 2nd Annual Fall Retreat at Camp Calvin Crest Conference and Retreat Center, near Fremont, NE. It will be called "The OWLS (Older, Wiser, Livelier Souls) Fall Celebration". We will be contacting all of our retired persons with a mailing of the schedule. This year's theme is "This is My Father's World".

Bill Johnson, Presbytery of Riverside / Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, ARMSS Representative shares: This past Spring the Presbytery of Riverside, along with the Board of Pensions (the Rev. Art Mills, rep), hosted all retired members and/or their spouses or survivors, along with active members of the Presbytery, for a meeting and a luncheon preceding Presbytery. The Rev. Dr. Howard Rice, past Moderator of the General Assembly, was our speaker on the theme, "*Spirituality in Retirement.*" We had approximately 45 participants and Howard's presentation and subsequent discussion was well-received and deeply appreciated by all.

The purpose of the meeting and luncheon was to bring together members of ARMSS, other retirees, and potential members for ARMSS, to look at our continuing need to deepen our spiritual awareness in retirement and as we approach retirement. We look forward to continued meetings such as this this next year.

New Harmony Presbytery, Jim Clark writes: We have no activities with the exception of the Board of Pensions presentations. Most of our retired folks are cared for by our Presbytery staff, but we are considering some other ideas.

Some retired clergy do attend the monthly meetings held at various places in our Presbytery. It is a lunch gathering and an opportunity for fellowship and potential involvement in the work of the Presbytery. I suspect that some of our members and spouses are falling between the cracks but I have no data on the subject. Perhaps this year I will try to send out some sort of survey instrument to get more accurate data.

I have noted that I am the only clergy person that attends the local chapter of AARP of any denomination. That may be because few know local chapters exist. I serve as Past President and currently as VP.

John Knox Presbytery Ray Bayley shares: Our John Knox Presbytery retirees and spouses or survivors met August 27 at Oakwood Village West in Madison at 11 a.m. Newton Roberts will spoke about the country of his birth, "Living Dangerously in Korea."

Ken Meunier lead our devotions. Ken up-dated us on the disasters in John Knox Presbytery to churches and communities from floods, tornadoes, and immigrant raid.

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Western New York Presbytery, Richard McConnell shares: We enjoyed an “Afternoon Tea” at a well know and highly regarded inn, the ASA Ransom House in Clarence, NY and were pleased to have quite a good attendance because people wanted to see this inn and dine there.



Tea for Two

In August some of us traveled to Artpark in nearby Lewiston to see an excellent performance of Disney’s musical, “Beauty and the Beast” and then afterward we had supper at a well-know restaurant. In December we will have our usual potluck Christmas luncheon at the McConnell house. Our group is not large, but for those who come the fellowship and sharing seem to be important.



The ASA Ransom House in Clarence, New York

Jack Banton wants to emphasize how important it is for folks to make sure that their Board of Pensions representative is aware of ARMSS and arrange for them to get a copy of the newsletter. The BOP Rep for the **Tampa Bay Presbytery** area did not know such an organization existed.

Coastal Carolina, Bill Clark writes: Our retiree program is much as it has been for the past four years: twice a year we have a large gathering for all available HR ministers, spouses or survivors. We are getting more and more survivors.

Once a month save in the summer, regional meetings are held for pastoral & fellowship purposes - usually a luncheon that includes active and retired ministers, spouses, CLP's and some CE people.

We keep in touch with special need/concerns, i.e. deaths, through the presbytery resource person who updates those needs on the presbytery website.

This presbytery has the most active retirees in the churches and presbytery of any I have experienced!

Pines Presbytery, Mary Grisso shares: For fifteen years the retired ministers and spouses in Pines Presbytery enjoyed gathering in each others homes every other month for a meal and good conversation.

The host family provided a meat dish and the rest of us brought what we were asked. As time went by our group began to dwindle due to death and infirmities. In July 2004 we had our last get-together.

Of our original group of twenty people only nine are still living; five ministers, two of their spouses, and two survivors. Only two ministers are still able to preach and only one is doing so on a regular basis.

Since 2004 I have continued to stay in contact with these friends with phone calls and cards.

We thank all of the ARMSS Presbytery Representatives for sharing their stories. Due to the overwhelming response of stories from Representatives, we are not able to print all of them at this time. Look for more sharing of stories in future issues.

ARMSS Presbytery Representatives by Presbytery

Abingdon
Jonathan Miller Liston

Alaska
Chuck Bovee

Albany
Alfred O. Siegel

Arkansas
Maurice E. Roberts

Baltimore
Bob Jewett

Carlisle
Wayne W. Allen

Carlisle
Crea M. Clark

Cascades
Judith Ann Richards

Cayuga-Syracuse
Keith R. Shinaman

Central Florida
Dale Heaton

Central Nebraska
James P. Cooke

Central Washington
John H. Rogers

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G. William Lankton

Cimmarron
James R. Struthers

Cincinnati
Caroll A. Wood

Coastal Carolina
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Denver
Don Dhonau

Des Moines
Gustav Nelson

Detroit
Melissa Anne Rogers

Donegal
William John Brown

East Tennessee
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Eastern Oklahoma
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Arthur F. Jensen

Elizabeth
Elmer Talcott

Flint River
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Hudson River
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Ray W. G. Bayley

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Jack A. Kyle

Lake Michigan
Kurt Freund

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Edward M. Myers

Maumee Valley
Paul L. Yutzy

Miami
Richard R. Schechter

Middle Tennessee
Charles L. Moffatt

Midwest Hanmi
Chin Sam Rhee

Mississippi
Morris A. Taylor

Missouri River Valley
Richard H. Skelley

National Capital
Edward Allen White

Nevada
Ralph D. Lemme

New Castle
Robert M. Snable

New Covenant
Sharon Dardon

New Harmony
James Clark

New Hope
Ronald D. McMenamin

New York City
Euton E. Williams

Newton
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North Central Iowa
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Richard E. Wylie

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Glen A. Spearman

San Fernando
Robert Bingham

San Juan
Tomas Vazquez-Galloza

Santa Barbara
Judith Rarick

Santa Fe
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So. Dakota & Dakota
Leola Cooper

South Louisiana
John Henry Spaulding

Southern Kansas
Loren Scott

So. New England
Thomas F. Conboy

St. Augustine
Herbert Meza

St. Augustine
Earle F. Sickels

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Tampa Bay
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Covenant
Kurt Freund

Lincoln Trails
Ralph W. Adamson

Living Waters
Albert E. Pierson

Mid-America
William Gannaway

Mid-Atlantic
William M. Clark

Northeast
Hugh D. Outterson

Rocky Mountains
John Seibert Snyder

South Atlantic
James H. Huffaker

**Southern California &
Hawaii**
William Noel Johnson

Sun

John Henry Spaulding

**Governing Body
Network Chair:**
Kenneth Smith

**We extend our
heartfelt thanks
to all of these
volunteers for
their efforts to
keep us connected
and involved!**

*If your presbytery is
without a representa-
tive, and you would
be willing to volun-
teer your services,
contact Ken Smith:
kwsmith7@juno.com
or Ginny Nyhuis:
gnyhuis@verizon.net
615-426-1545.*

ARMSS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND PLEDGE FORM

Use this form to pay your membership fess for 2008 or 2009, and to make extra contributions to the work of ARMSS. Your contributions are greatly appreciated and can be given for continuing the general mission of ARMSS, or can be designated to go to the Cuba Connection or the John Rhea fund. Interest from the John Rhea fund is used annually to award scholarships for attendance to the ARMSS Convention.

Dues of \$20 per person (\$40 per couple) are for the 2008 / 2009 (circle one) calendar year \$ _____

Pledge for continuing the mission of ARMSS (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

Current Mission Project: Cuba Connection (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

John Rhea Fund (Tax Deductible) \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Please Print when completing the following information:

Name of Minister Spouse Survivor

Mailing Address City State Zip

Phone numbers (home, work, cell)

E-mail address

Presbytery where you hold membership Presbytery where you currently reside

Synod where you hold membership Synod where you currently reside

Please make checks payable to ARMSS and mail to:

Lois Siegel, Treasurer
37 Aspen Road
Latham, NY 12110

CONTRIBUTIONS

We are grateful for the contributions which we have received in support of ARMSS.
It is your gifts that supports our broad ministry.

The following persons contributed in support of ARMSS since publishing the last newsletter:

Henry & Mary Andersen
Gregory & Edna Armstrong
Mary Ellenberger
Elizabeth Hale

Jane Hays
William Heilman
John Long
Harvey Oster III
Jack & Cassandra Phillabaum

Eliza Ross
Jean Rowan
Kenneth & Betty Smith
William Walter

THANK YOU!

For your generous assistance.

NOTE: If we have failed to recognize you as a contributor for this quarter,
please contact Ginny Nyhuis at: gnyhuis@verizon.net or: 615-426-1545.

Your support is vital to our program. Please **mark your check ARMSS** and send contributions to:

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