



LUTHERAN
CHURCH
OF AUSTRALIA

MINISTRY WITH
THE AGEING
LOCAL MISSION



Respecting our Elders

*'Do not cast me away when I am old;
do not forsake me when my strength is gone.'*

Psalm 71:9



The Little Boy and the Old Man

Said the little boy, 'Sometimes I drop my spoon.'
Said the old man, 'I do that too.'
The little boy whispered, 'I wet my pants.'
'I do that too,' laughed the little old man.
Said the little boy, 'I often cry.'
The old man nodded, 'So do I.'
'But worst of all,' said the boy, 'it seems
Grown-ups don't pay attention to me.'
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
'I know what you mean,' said the little old man.

~ Shel Silverstein

WE WATCH THEM

We watch them as they become less of the men and women we knew
 And more of the person the disease makes of them.
 We watch them helplessly as they struggle to understand what is happening to them;
 We are overwhelmed.

RESPONSE

***No matter what,
 Let us always come with love and care.
 Let us hear the voice of their heart and spirit.
 Let us stand as advocates for safety and care, respect, dignity and wellbeing.***

We watch them, painfully as their confusion grows.
 We watch them proudly as their sense of humour eases their pain and the pain of others.
 We watch them, not accepting their fate, asking “Why, why, why?”.
 We watch them crying as much for ourselves as for themselves.
 We are overwhelmed.

***No matter what,
 Let us always come with love and care.
 Let us hear the voice of their heart and spirit.
 Let us stand as advocates for safety and care, respect, dignity and wellbeing.***

We watch them lovingly, as they grow more and more restless.
 We watch them sadly as we begin to see more help is needed.
 We watch them happily as they adjust to this new safe place.
 We are overwhelmed.

***No matter what,
 Let us always come with love and care.
 Let us hear the voice of their heart and spirit.
 Let us stand as advocates for safety and care, respect, dignity and wellbeing.***

We watch them anxiously as they try time and again to go home.
 We watch them – our hearts breaking – on the good days and the bad,
 Never knowing what the right thing really is,
 Hoping, praying that we are somehow doing it;
 We are overwhelmed

***No matter what,
 Let us always come with love and care.
 Let us hear the voice of their heart and spirit.
 Let us stand as advocates for safety and care, respect, dignity and wellbeing.***

We watch them as those big brown eyes become cloudier.
 We watch them, in agony, as they search for family,
 Long gone from this earth.
 We watch them helplessly as they become lost to us.
 Knowing that in our weakness and helplessness
 We are made strong – we are transformed – from divine light,
 Even more into divine light.

***May we always watch them and love them.
Love them and watch them.
And as we do so,
May we ever grow in the spirit of love
And compassion, joy, and peace
To serve humanity tirelessly, amen.***

We light a candle of worship for that which is beyond our humanity, the source of light, life and love.

Holy One of life and love

We give thanks for the gift of community and the diversity of all ages –

The joy and hope of a newborn baby,

The innocence and hungry mind of early childhood,

The passion and justice of youth,

The learning, giving and growing, and consolidating of middle years,

The maturity and wisdom of older age, a time of reflecting, valuing, cherishing and finding ultimate meaning, joy and peace in the latter days.

Source of life and love

Hear our prayer.

We light a candle of prayer to remember those who have suffered

Or are still suffering, elder abuse

Physical, sexual, emotional and psychological, spiritual

Financial and the abuse of neglect.

May they find within their spirit

Courage to speak up and take action,

Healing of body, mind and soul,

Pride to know this is not their fault,

Dignity to know their value as a member of humanity,

Forgiveness to release their perpetrators,

Peace today and hope for tomorrow.

Source of life and love

Hear our prayer.

We light a candle of prayer for the wellbeing, and honouring of our elders.

We pray for the day when all the elderly shall rejoice as an inspiration to others,

Be treasured and honoured by those around them,

Live older age as the approach to final wellbeing and freedom, meaning and peace.

May each one know older age as dawn, not twilight,

The final awakening, not a sleeping,

Death as eternity bursting into the fullness of life –

That precious moment before the removal of the veil

That hides us from the face of light and love.

Source of life and love

Hear our prayer.

We light a candle of prayer for families, friends, professional workers and pastoral carers.

Bless us with the strength to greet each day with energy and purpose

To eradicate the terror and disempowerment of elder abuse.

Grant us the wisdom to recognise at risk signs and stumbling blocks for what they are

And the creativity to manoeuvre our way around them and through them.

May we have a heart for listening to our elders, honouring and respecting them.

Source of life and love

Hear our prayer.

Open the eyes of those who do not see violence against elders – verbal, physical, emotional, financial, sexual, spiritual – as an issue of today's world.

Let them hear the cries of those in need.

Widen their hearts to hold the many

Faces of our communities who need our advocacy, support and protection.

Call forth compassionate words of change from their mouths

And commitment to acts of justice and transformation from their hands.

Source of life and love

Hear our prayer.

Spirit who lightens the darkness, send us forth as messengers,

Truth tellers, and witnesses to illuminate what is

And demand a world of safety and respect for elders in body, mind and spirit.

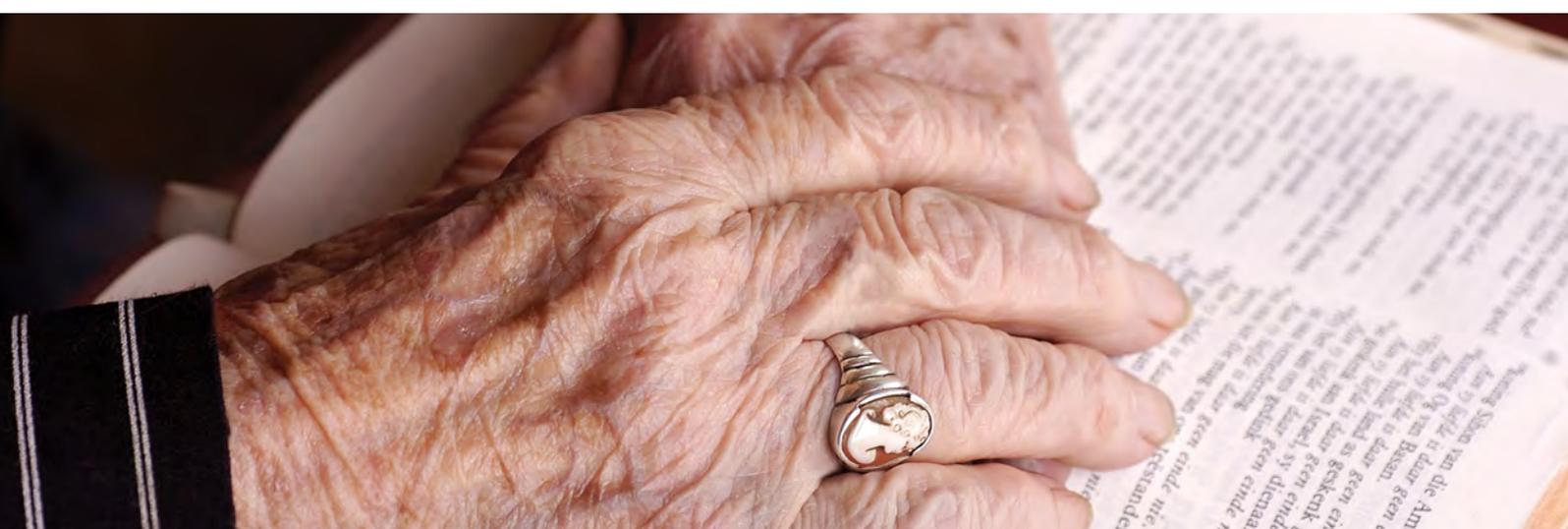
When we are tired and veer towards complacency

Stretch out your hand and reignite the passionate fire for diving humanity that lives within.

As we turn to our work

May this day be a day of seeing, hearing, and learning

that leads to new actions of healing and peace.



Reproduced with permission of Rev Lisa Spencer, *Baptcare*.

Resources used:

Julie Western-Zuge, *We Watched Him*

<http://www.zarcrom.com/users/yeartorem/ADpoetry/watched.html>

Rabbi Lisa Gelber, *Universal Prayer*

<http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/resources-documents/2013UnityPrayerLisaGelber.pdf>



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