

## Worship and the ageing – a list of ideas

*LOVE COMES TO LIFE when we see the image of God in every person – no matter how much age has wearied their body and mind – and honour them with patient care dignity and respect.*

Some guiding principles

- ❖ Intergenerational worship values all ages and stages
- ❖ Familiarity with worship style and content is often comforting

Note: The list below provides ideas for consideration and not a checklist of requirements.

### Accessibility

- Ensure the worship space, and access to toilets, is wheelchair and walker friendly.
- Provide rails for all steps.
- Provide a grab rail in the toilets.
- Ensure signage is clear and obvious.
- Make sure there is room for walkers and wheelchairs in the worship space (pews that take up half a row are a good spot to place sturdy seats that can easily be removed for a person in a wheelchair who, of course, wishes to sit with family or friends).
- Provide close and accessible car parks that are reserved for the ageing and those with mobility issues.

### Assistance

- Train greeters and ushers (of all ages) to assist with the ageing. In knowing when to provide assistance, if in doubt, just ask!

### Comfort

- Be aware of the comfort level of the worship space – not too hot and not too cold.
- Reassure the ageing that worshipping in their own home is ok on extreme temperature days (and there are great live-stream or worship DVD options thanks to Lutheran Media).

### Music

- Ensure at least one hymn (or an old favourite) that does not have a modernised tune or words.
- Be aware of the speed of unfamiliar songs and adjust accordingly.

### Print

- Provide some large print pew Bibles.
- Make large print versions of the weekly bulletin or service order available.
- Select a plain legible font (Calibri and Arial are recommended).
- If you provide a printed service order, keep it simple. Numbering the sections of the service order - 1 Invocation; 2 Confession, etc - may allow people with dementia to easily locate their place in the service order.

### Seating

- Remove some pews and provide a few sturdy seats with arm support - not at the front of the church (few people want to be singled out for the front row), not at the back of the church (ageing people don't wish to be relegated to the back) but somewhere in the middle works well.

### Sound

- If in doubt, use the microphone (you may think you have a loud voice, however amplification greatly assists the hearing impaired).
- Consider a digital sound system where hearing aids can receive sound directly from the sound system. (By the way, sounds loops are a thing of the past as they don't allow the user to sit where he/she desires.)
- Readers, pray-ers and preachers – slow your speech down and annunciate well.
- Bible readings, liturgy, prayers and sermons that are complemented by clear PowerPoints and/or print resources assist the hearing impaired.

### Visuals

- Ensure PowerPoint slide font does not reduce to below size 30.
- Avoid pictures behind writing in PowerPoint slides.
- Ensure appropriate contrast in PowerPoint slides - black on white or white on black is often the best default choice; if you need another colour (e.g. for the worship leader) ensure that the leader has the less preferred contrast.
- Consider changing from projection onto a white screen or wall to using LED screens due to the sharper clarity (higher definition) they provide.