



Supporting Older Adults During COVID-19

A compilation of resources as you navigate ministry with older adults who are part of your faith communities

The Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN) is committed to supporting congregations and church affiliated groups in their work with older adults. During this time of uncertainty around the world we want to remain a viable resource and advocate for older adults that you are serving. Below is a listing of credible websites and other resources to aid you as you respond, mainly to your older adults, about COVID-19. Please help us by sharing resources that you are aware of that will be helpful in older adult ministry. Visit poamn.org to contact us and watch our [Facebook page](#) for the most up to date resources, including webinars.

Official Presbyterian Church, USA site; it will be updated often:

Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources for Congregations and Members

https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/#_6_Responding_to

Stewardship Resources:

https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/#_5_Stewardship_Resources

Ways to Support Older Adults:

- Start a buddy system! Pair an older adult that is isolated at home or elsewhere with someone else in the congregation so that they can make regular phone calls and mail cards, photos, pictures, etc. Need some tips for getting started? Here is how one congregation is reaching out:
 - o Deacons have been asked to contact all households and individuals by phone rather than email or cards to see how they are doing. Make lists of the following categories for follow-up
 1. Ask who is in the household during this “stay at home” time
 2. Those in need of help
 3. Those who are willing to help
 4. Those who need more frequent contact due to their needs including those who may be suffering from depression or anxiety
- High touch instead of high tech is the primary mode of communication with older adults who are isolated. Make frequent phone calls and mobilize the congregation to send snail mail.
- Check in to see if they need help walking their dogs. Of course, stay safe and maintain social distancing, but young people are out of school, they could bring their own leash and take a walk with a dog. Everyone wins!
- Young adults can offer to help with necessary errands like grocery & pharmacy runs. See if the older adults in your life need help paying ahead or ordering online and then leave the order on their porch/at their door.
- Reach out to the youth leader in your community to see if they can help pair up youth and older adults for prayer partners or check-in calls

- Many older adults aren't comfortable with technology and will struggle with on-line worship. Have a box outside your church with an order of worship and devotionals that can be picked up or have younger families deliver packets to older adult door (without going inside). You may need to use a conference call feature to give a Sunday devotion. Mobilize “Technical Shepherds”: People who have high tech skills and can help other congregation members navigate technology resources.
- Museums are getting very creative with their online content during this time of closure. For example, the [Speed Art Museum](#) in Louisville, KY offers online art projects you can do at home, free streaming cinema and “Museum from Home” where you can check out exhibits online. [The Washington National Opera](#) offers clips in their digital library of more than 3,000 videos. The Austin History Center has [these online exhibits](#). So, visit museum and performance arts websites and see what they might offer online.
- Have your congregation donate gift cards to be given to workers at local long-term care facilities where older adults are living, as a way of thanking them for the care they are providing at this time of high risk.
- Zoom coffee fellowship hour. Get on with your coffee and see your church community! Need help getting started with Zoom? Don't be intimidated – check out this friendly video on [How to Join a Zoom Call for the First Time](#)
- Talk with older adults about possible recent phone or email scams that are circulating in your area.
- Older adults may be feeling like there is nothing they can do to help during this time. For those that are able, have them write thank-you notes to the “helpers” in your community. This can include first responders and those with essential job functions.

Helpful Online health related Resources/Information:

Administration for Community Living/Administration on Aging
www.acl.gov/COVID-19

National Foundations for Infectious Diseases
[Common Questions and Answers About COVID-19 for Older Adults and People with Chronic Health Conditions](#)

California Department of Public Health
[COVID-19 Public Health Guidance Self-Isolation for Older Adults and Those Who Have Elevated Risk](#)

The John A. Hartford Foundation
[Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Resources for Older Adults, Family Caregivers and Health Care Providers](#)

YouTube
[What Older Adults Need to Know About COVID-19](#)

AARP
www.aarp.org/coronavirus

Other Online resources (mental health, activities, lifelong learning & more):

POAMN produces a planning guide for older adults each year. It includes resources for worship, devotion and topics specific to older adult ministries. There is a table of contents for each guide. <https://poamn.org/planning-guides/>

Some tips for social distancing...think of it as cloistering...

[I'm a nun and I've been social distancing for 29 years. Here are tips for staying home amid coronavirus fears.](#)

[10 guidelines for pastoral care during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

That discomfort that you're feeling is grief: Grief...and finding meaning within it. [This article may be a helpful guide or discussion starter.](#)

Do you have a group of artists - budding or otherwise? Check out this resource and adapt for physically distanced groups perhaps.

[10 University Art Classes You Can Take for Free Online](#)

Shelter-in-place, hunker down...take a college-level course? Older adults are among the most active "lifelong learners." Share this info with seniors (and others) in your ministry.

[Here are 450 Ivy League courses you can take online right now for free](#)

A Listening Care Package for Uncertain Times

[A collection of podcasts and poetry for however you're processing or experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

Survive Social Distancing with Your Mental Wellness Intact

[Social isolation is... isolating. Here are 10 tips to weather the worst of it.](#)

The Presbyterian Church in Canada

[New online learning opportunities are offered by the national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.](#)

Many communities have food banks, many of which connect to other resources like help with utilities, meals, etc.

[Check out this link](#) - locate your local resources - and see what's available for you and your seniors.

[Ministry in Time of Covid 19](#), by Sarai Rice

How might you practice her suggestions in your senior adult ministry, as you care for yourself and others?

New to Zoom or similar ways of outreach?

[These tips by the Rev. Abby Mohaupt are a great resource.](#)

Looking for a resource to share with seniors living in residential settings with limited visitation? [This free resource from A Sanctified Art would be easy to share.](#)

"Pray with your eyes open with this contemplative reading of John 11:32-44 that incorporates music, Visio Divina, and visual art. You are welcome to use this in your online worship or share it with your faith community for individual prayer and meditation"

[Calligraphy](#): Learn the basics of the basics of modern calligraphy and hand lettering in this how-to video.

[Chat with a Dinosaur](#): The Field Museum in Chicago invites you to chat online with Máximo the Titanosaur (*Patagotitan mayorum*) — literally, the biggest dinosaur that scientists have discovered to date

[Courses from Ivy League Schools](#): Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) of 450 free online courses available for anyone to enroll.

[Crossword Puzzles](#): 40,000 free online crossword puzzles.

[DuoLingo](#): The free site lets you learn new languages — including Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and many more.

[Free Textbooks](#): a meta collection of free textbooks available on the web. It covers everything from Art History to Biology, Math, Physics, and Psychology.

[Gutenberg Project](#): an online library of more than 60,000 free eBooks

[The Harvard Classics](#): Harvard’s influential president, Charles W. Eliot, said that if you spent just 15 minutes a day reading the right books, you could give yourself a proper liberal education. He published a 51-volume series, now known as *The Harvard Classics*, and they’re available free online.

[Howcast](#): YouTube channels with dozens of “how to” videos, from how to belly dance, read tarot, or juggle — or groom your pot-bellied pig — to how to master life skills.

[Learn Floral Arranging](#): Austin’s own The Floral Social teaches you fun and easy flower tips in these how-to videos.

[Travel all over Latin America with Esquina Tango](#): Classes in dance, language, exercise, music, and more via Zoom Video or Facebook Live – all free but donations are welcome.

[Learn to Draw](#): Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence Mo Willems invites you into his studio every day to draw, doodle and explore new ways of writing.

[Library of Congress](#): digital archives of the nation’s oldest federal cultural institution.

[Ride Rollercoasters](#): Experience point-of-view rides from TheCoasterViews aboard the top rollercoasters from theme parks across the country.

[“The Science of Well-Being”](#): Yale University’s wildly-popular course – available for free through [Coursera](#) – will help you increase your own happiness and build more productive habits.

[“A Shakespeare Sonnet a Day”](#): Acclaimed actor Patrick Stewart will perform a different Shakespeare sonnet each day, via his Twitter account.

[Solitaire](#): play online for free, with a choice of game options.

Word Searches:

- [Lovetts](#): free daily word searches and crosswords to play online.
- [USA Today](#) – new puzzles and other games added each day.
- [TheWordSearch.com](#) – thousands of word search puzzles and games to play online or print out

[World Atlas](#): world maps, atlases, and in-depth geography information.

[World Data Atlas](#): great source of world statistics on every country, with data on more than 2500 indicators.



Office of Christian
Formation

POAMN
Presbyterian Older Adult Ministers Network