

Romans 12

We who are many are one body in Christ.

BOLD: Being Our Lord's Delight

Produced by the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church to communicate effective principles and practices demonstrated by congregations that are actively making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

These congregations are marked by:

- Clarity around the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Practice of spiritual disciplines, both corporately and individually.
- Nurture in growth in discipleship through mutual support and accountability.
- Cultivation of intentional and mutual relationships with the most vulnerable—the poor, children, the imprisoned, the powerless.
- Consistent concern for inviting people into relationship with Jesus Christ, combined with wise practices for initiating them into the body of Christ.
- Connectional relationships that facilitate participation in God's mission of global transformation.
- Shared clergy and lay leadership.

Chapelwood United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas, takes ministry to, for, and with Older Adults very seriously. Basing their older adult ministries on Ephesians 3:12, they named them BOLD (Being Our Lord's Delight). These ministries particularly emphasize the third part of the first sentence--the ministry with seniors. This approach has positioned the church for ministry with emerging older adults (or Baby Boomers) and allows Chapelwood to be a multi-generational church for the future and beyond.

Chapelwood's ministry design and approach has always been comprehensive, looking at more than just the spiritual needs of its members. The church leadership began by asking what needs are not being currently addressed in church programs and which groups are not being reached. This led Chapelwood to consider Baby Boomers and their needs. As a result they have developed novel programs that address Boomer needs. The congregation now offers programs such as The Gathering-Respite Care, JET Job Transition Program, A Place for You-Loneliness, and Gamblers and Alcohol Anonymous. Respite Care supports Boomers who have become primary care givers of aging parents. Job transitioning helps Boomers who have lost their jobs, who are bored in retirement, or who have discovered they have or will have outlived their retirement savings. A Place for You addresses the isolation of many divorced, widowed, and never married Boomers. Through the church these needs are addressed in a spiritual manner.

Additionally, Chapelwood involves older adults in Service Academies and Missional Pilgrimages. Past pilgrimages have been intergenerational events where multi-generations served alongside each other and learned together. Bold members have joined in partnership with The Brown Sager Depot as a place for Older Adults to serve.

Through these ministries, Chapelwood helps older adults share their gifts, give of themselves, and lead ministry with others. BOLD provides older adults an outlet for using their wisdom and experience as they continue to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Questions for Reflection

1. What unfilled needs do older adults have in your church?
2. What gifts do older adults have to offer for mission and service to your community and beyond?

Will Randolph is Director of Aging and Older Adult Ministries at Discipleship Ministries. He can be reached at wrandolph@gbod.org.