

Report for the Older Adult Council

“Do you have any older adults in your congregation?” It’s a question we once asked at our Annual Conference display table—and almost everyone who stopped by (many of them older adults themselves!) quickly answered, “Yes.” Of course they did. And rightly so. After all, who faithfully teaches our children, youth, and young adults? Who helps sustain the life of the church through their generosity and commitment? Older adults are not just present in our congregations—they are essential to the life and ministry of the Church. So perhaps that “simple” question wasn’t so simple after all. The Older Adult Council continues to be a vital and active ministry, dedicated to creating spaces of welcome, spiritual growth, discipleship, and meaningful service with and for older adults. We remain committed to understanding the unique needs of older adults across our Annual Conference and equipping churches with helpful resources—available through the VAUMC website, including opportunities such as District and Conference Lay Servant Training events. This past year, we were excited to expand our membership by including individuals with expertise in related fields. While schedules have prevented full participation so far, we look forward to the valuable insight and energy they will bring to future ministry efforts. One of the highlights each year is the Festival of Wisdom and Grace, held at Lake Junaluska. This year’s gathering will take place August 17–20, centered on the theme: “And you will have life, and life abundantly” (John 10:10). We encourage you to learn more through the conference website or pick up a flyer at the Older Adult Resource Table during Annual Conference. Recently, we also learned that Charge Conference reports include a line identifying those responsible for older adult ministries in local churches. Only 72 churches responded—yet we know many more are actively engaged in this important work. If your church is involved in ministry with older adults, we would love to connect with you. Sharing ideas, successes, and challenges strengthens us all and reflects the heart of our connectional ministry. If you are attending Annual Conference, we warmly invite you to stop by our display table. You’ll find resources, encouragement, and opportunities to support your congregation in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As older adults, we are not on the sidelines—we are fully engaged in God’s ongoing work.

Submitted by Co-Chairs Rev. Denise M. Childers and Louise Landis Miller