

A Program of the Center for Gerontology at Concordia University Chicago

#### Session One The importance of an older adult ministry



"The reality of all life is interdependence. We need to compose our lives in such a way that we both give and receive, learning to do both with grace."

Mary Catherine
Bateson



## Agenda – Session One



#### 90 Minutes

- 3 min Agenda review
- 5 min Opening Devotion
- 5 min Introduction to SAM
- 20 min Personal Introductions
- 15 min Gerontology for older adult ministry
- 15 min Assessing congregational readiness for SAM
- 15 min Guided discussion: the need for an Older Adult Ministry
- 10 min Questions about SAM
- 2 min Session 2 Agenda preview and pre-reading

### Session Two The multi-dimensional nature of spirituality among older persons

"In God's eyes we are all the ages we have ever been and will become, grown into a pattern as inclusive as the chambered nautilus that wanders the ocean, carrying with it all the stages of its life" – Oliver Wendell Holmes



## Agenda – Session Two



#### 60 Minutes

- 5 min Opening devotion
- 10 min Hallmarks of Christian spiritual formation
- 15 min Biblical texts: Reflections on older adult spirituality
- 10 min Review and discussion of readings
- 15 min Guided discussion: spiritual formation in older adults
- 5 min Session 3 Agenda preview and pre-reading

## Session Three Reframing aging and living our best lives



"Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is...All moments are key moments and life itself is grace"

- Frederick Buechner



## **Agenda – Session Three**



#### 60 minutes

- 5 min Opening Devotion
- 5 min Questions from Session 2
- 10 min What is ageism?
- 15 min Biblical texts: Reflections on the role of older adults
- 8 min Discussion of readings
- 2 min Ageism's presence in churches
- 10 min Guided discussion: reframing the conversation about aging
- 5 min Session 4 preview and pre-reading

### Session Four Caregiving by for and with older adults



*"It's not how much you do, but how much love you put in the doing"* 

- Mother Theresa



# Agenda – Session Four



## 60 minutes\*

- 5 min Opening Devotion
- 5 min Questions from Session 3
- 10 min Landscape for caregiving today
- 10 min Review of readings
- 10 min Resources needed for assisting caregivers
- 15 min Guided discussion: ministering to caregivers
- 5 min Session 5 Agenda preview and pre-reading

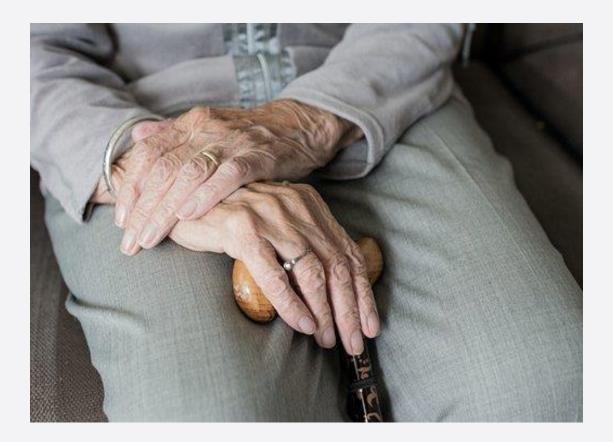
\*This session may be expanded to 90-120 minutes to discuss the specific resources for caregiving in a given community. A person knowledgeable about the community's specific resources - e.g., the local Area Agency for Aging could partner with the SAM instructor.

### Session Five Impacts of isolation and loneliness on aging



*"Faith is not for overcoming obstacles; it is for experiencing them – all the way through."* 

-Richard Rohr, Falling Upward



## Agenda – Session Five



#### 85-90 Minutes

- 5 min Opening Devotion
- 5 min Questions from Session 4
- 10 min Challenges of isolation and loneliness
- 15 min Biblical texts: reflections on isolation & loneliness
- 10 min Discussion of readings
- 15 min Mental health not the absence or a headache
- 20 min Guided discussion: addressing mental health, social isolation & loneliness
  - 5 min Session 6 Agenda preview and pre-reading

### Session Six Grieving death and celebrating eternal life





Living or dying, Lord, I ask but to be Thine; My life in Thee, Thy life in me, Make heaven forever mine.

Henry Harbaugh, 1850 hymn

# Agenda – Session Six



#### 90 Minutes

- 5 min Opening devotion
- 5 min. Questions from Session 5
- 10 min Talking about dying and death
- 15 min Biblical texts: reflections on death and life everlasting
- 10 min Discussion of readings
- 10 min Planning for a "good" and faithful death
- 20 min Participant stories/comments
- 15 min Leader closing comments & evaluation