



Newsletter May 2015

The Power and the Value of Pensioners

The girl at the Llandudno Junction cinema box office asked me whether I was 60. "Yes", I replied. "Two pounds off then, as you're a senior citizen," she said cheerily. I nearly protested and insisted on paying in full!

I don't feel like a 60-year-old and, according to some, I don't act my age either! I have enough energy to enjoy gardening. I enjoy the company of children and young people, although their noise makes me want to escape sometimes! I'm sure many people of my age, and older, feel the same.

Lots of people of my age are retired. People live longer and enjoy good health for years after retiring. We often hear people complaining that only pensioners go to chapel these days. But isn't a chapel full of pensioners a positive thing?



PENSIONERS ARE STILL ALIVE!

They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green.

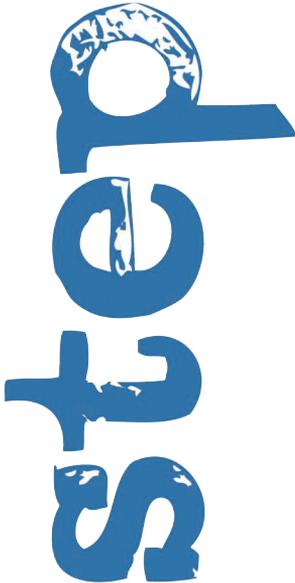
Psalm 92:14 (NIV UK)

We must remember that pensioners are still alive! People who reach retirement age don't just stop contributing to society and chapel life! Retired people have time to spend doing creative things.

WISDOM:

Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?

Job 12:12 (NIV UK)





We have much to learn from our nation's rugby team. We often hear that Wales's success is due to the enthusiasm of the younger players and the wisdom of the older ones. That's a good recipe for you!

Pensioners' wisdom has come from life's experiences, not from books!

EXPERIENCE

I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread..

Psalm 37:25 (NIV UK)

Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvellous deeds.

Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.

Psalm 71:17-18 (NIV UK)

Pensioners have the advantage of perspective and can make good use of it. They stand on top of a mountain of years and look out over a vale of time, seeing failures, successes, dangers and lessons which are not visible to those living in the valley of youth.

We remember that Moses's best years were the last forty years of his life. Therefore let us not ignore the power and the value of our pensioners!

Aldous Huxley said:

"The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age."

And here are three pensioners who have done just that

Rev. Gwyn Rhydderch
Director of the Youth and Children's Service and STEP

Aunty Llinos

Capel y Groes, Wrexham



Hello Llinos. Can you introduce yourself to us?

I was brought up in a family of eight children, I am a mother of three and a grandmother to seven. I worked as a nurse at the Wrexham Maelor hospital and, after I had the children, I worked as a special needs assistant at a Welsh-medium primary school and then at the Welsh-medium secondary school. I am a member and a Sunday School teacher at Capel y Groes, Wrexham. The above work and my day-to-day life have given me very valuable experiences. I was invited to help out at the Chapel's Christian clubs: the Kids' Club (Hwyl Hwyr) 6-7pm and the Youth Club 7-8.15pm – both on Monday evenings.

What are the advantages of being a pensioner working with children, young people and families in the church?

When people retire, they are still young and full of energy and have free time to help with various activities. Every Friday between 1.30 and 3.00 we hold Y Gorlan Fach for children under school age and their parents/carers. Y Gorlan Fach depends entirely on the Chapel's pensioners to help. Some of the children come from homes where no Welsh is spoken and it is a way of reaching out to those families. The children and their families are invited to take part in our services and, as a



result of that, some come to the Sunday School and some of those go on to Welsh-medium education.

Without the commitment of the pensioners in our church, our work would not be so effective. The children and young people know the pensioners as 'Aunty' and 'Uncle', they trust and respect them and are very fond of them.

What do you like most about working with children, young people and families?

My favourite thing about working with children, young people and families in the church is helping them to get to know Jesus better. I encourage them to come with me to weekend courses at Coleg y Bala. They trust me completely and therefore the parents' response is also encouraging. It is good to see the children developing and becoming keen to take part in the Chapel's activities, such as Sunday services.

Your top pensioner tips for working with youngsters and families within the church family?

- Pray for them.
- Be honest in your involvement with them.

- Show love and joy.
- Trust.
- It's essential that you like children.
- Show an interest in their lives.

Richard Lake Denbigh



Why should pensioners work with children, youth and families in the church?

Because, we, together, are the church: brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents in Christ. We and they are family – and family members work together for the common good. Children and young people are a vital part of any family. They should be given all the encouragement and the skills they need to grow up and live in the very challenging environment that they face on a daily basis. As part of that, they should be given suitable responsibilities – they can do more than you might expect!

Do pensioners have a value in the lives of children and young people?

Pensioners have the advantage of time, which parents may not have. They have the freedom to choose how they spend that time: to be able to “invest” that valuable resource in encouraging the younger members of the family helps to maintain that family, is good stewardship and is a great joy! We

may be able to take a “grandparent” role – to be the sympathetic listener, able to give gentle guidance to youngsters grappling with the problems of growing up.

But surely, we are also called to extend the family, to give away the love, life and hope that we have experienced through Jesus to those who are just existing in hopeless and loveless surroundings. Activities like Messy Church can provide an environment in which families can start to experience God's love shown to them in the way we react to them.

And Open the Book is a fun and easy way of creating a “bridge of confidence” between churches and primary schools (pupils, their parents, the school staff).....

What is your main delight in working with youngsters?

Seeing them grow in stature, maturity and faith, and in their ability to pass on that faith to others.

Your top pensioner tip for working with youngsters and families, within the church family and outside?

Love them, value them, respect them,

and go for it in the strength of the God who is able to do much more than we could ever imagine through us! You may be surprised!

Senior & junior citizens in the Church Spencer Morgan, Gorseinon

The ideal church comprises people of all ages at different stages in their earthly (and heavenly) walk. As in daily life, seniors in the church can give the young the benefit of their experience (and mistakes!).

As we have the best interests of our children at heart, we need to share with them the best news they will ever hear – Jesus, the babe of Christmas who is God and the Saviour of the world, wants to be their friend for all their lives. We have a great history in sharing this Good News with those abroad – perhaps we have neglected the people around us. Jesus tells us to share the news with our neighbours, young and old, especially as they are unlikely to hear of Him from any other source.

Being a senior brings (hopefully!) patience, a little wisdom and time, which are often limited in our busy family lives, and help as we endeavour to explain the relevance of Jesus in today's world which largely sidelines Him. Sometimes it appears that the news is not being received, is being drowned in a mass of other information – and yet we are still to scatter the seed since only God knows how and when it may germinate, perhaps years or decades later. Many of us (reluctant!)



Sunday School pupils can testify to that.

The response can also be encouraging as we hear questions asked which we posed many years ago and the answer is still the same! Jesus is the answer! We've witnessed a massive decline in Sunday School attendance over the last 50 years accompanied by an ignorance of even the most elementary knowledge of the Bible (just watch any of today's quiz programmes). So we need to pitch the message suitable to the age group and pray that the seeds we seek to sow will bring forth fruit in days to come.

Top tip! Time is likely to be short and attendance sporadic – give them Jesus – his birth, life, teaching, dealings with people, death and resurrection. All other things will be added unto them.

Ideas for Pensioners

Meleri Cray



Helping at the Chapel:

1. Helping with the Sunday School, Kids Club or Youth Club e.g. making drinks or toast, helping with craft work, volunteering.
2. Helping with Messy Church activities. For more information, contact STEP.
3. Holding activities to share skills with children and young people e.g. knitting, painting, electronics, playing a musical instrument, cooking, photography.
4. Baking cakes for the children's club or youth group.
5. Doing admin.
6. Sharing their experience of Jesus Christ at the Chapel Youth Club.
7. Praying!



Establishing links with the local school:

1. Running an Open the Book scheme. For more information, contact STEP.
2. Reading regularly with the pupils.
3. Holding fund-raising activities for the school e.g. a coffee morning.
4. Sharing life/work experiences with the pupils.
5. Helping to develop a school garden.
6. Running a holiday club.
7. Inviting the school pupils to a special service or inviting the school to hold services at the chapel e.g. Christmas, Easter or Harvest Thanksgiving.
8. Helping to take care of the school site.
9. Working together with the school to help good causes e.g. Summer/Christmas Fair, fund-raising.

S is for Serving

Sarah Morris



The Bible talks a lot about 'serving' and 'service.' When Jesus was asked which he considered to be the most important commandment he replied,

"'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength' and the second is 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" Mark 12:30

An essential part of loving someone is the desire to serve them, to do good things for them, to benefit them, to make them happy. The motivation comes from within, it's the fruit of love.

Christians want to serve their heavenly Father, their brothers and sisters in the faith, and their 'neighbours', and

this all stems from the love that God has put in our hearts through His Spirit.

How am I personally doing in this respect? How's our church doing?

It might help to think of different categories of 'need' – physical needs, emotional needs, spiritual needs. How are we, as a local church, trying to show love and serve one another's physical needs? Emotional needs? Spiritual needs? How are we seeking to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of our communities?

The STEP scheme hopes to encourage churches to ask these questions, and find answers too.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." Hebrews 10:24





DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT STEP?

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for the contact details of your local STEP worker.