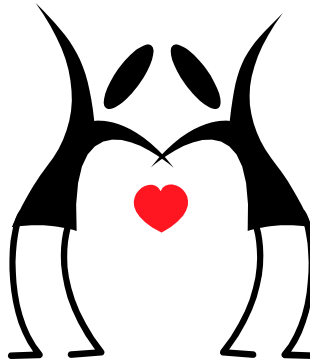


## ElderConnections

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where aging is for everyone...  
aging is *becoming*...  
and the spirit is *ageless*

### ElderConnections

is a bi-monthly e-newsletter dedicated to the promotion of positive aging, spiritual health and well-being of older adults and their families – offering information, resources, model ministries, stories, and humor! Visit our web-site at [www.civic.bev.net/oam](http://www.civic.bev.net/oam). Jan McGilliard, Editor

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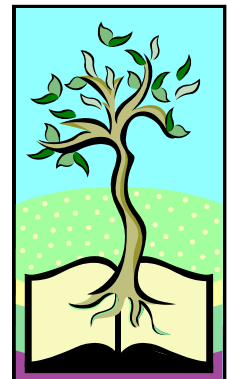
#### Quality of Life at the End of Life???

A recent article in The Washington Post posed these questions:

- How many people like Terri Schiavo lack living wills?
- How many might die every year from having treatment or nutrition withheld?
- How many families have been torn apart by the complex decisions that must be made when a loved one is dying?

The answer is that *no one knows* because little attention has been paid (in terms of research) to significant issues of living and dying responsibly. A recent review of the state of the science revealed a vast deficit of knowledge about end-of-life symptoms, caregiver burdens, and available services (National Institutes of Health conference and panel). “The gaps in what we know are awesome.” Some issues to be addressed – sooner rather than later – before the Baby Boom generation gets old and sick together might include:

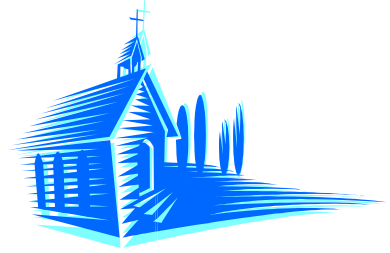
- How to deliver effective pain relief to cancer patients or to relieve the struggle to breathe
- Financial challenges and emotional crises of family caregivers (and what improvements would best support them)



- Documentation on how many Americans are being kept alive purely through technology

### Questions for the Church

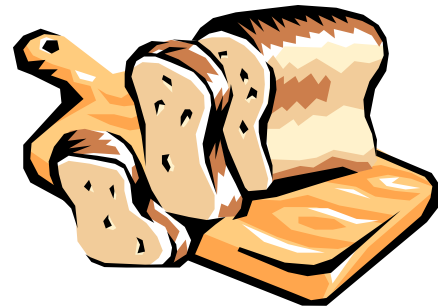
- Will congregations lead the way in promoting faithful planning and dialogue about end of life issues that face everyone?
- Will congregations be the firm foundation or the weakest link in offering good congregational care and nurture?
- Will our governing bodies (at all levels of the church) support and promote health, caring, and older adult ministries – building the Body of Christ through Christ's commission to care for one another as Christ has cared for us?
- Will Presbyterians dream dreams and see visions about holistic living and dying?
- Will we lead the way or will we drag our feet?



I believe the church's future depends on strong models of care and nurture for all ages and stages of life. **Terri Schiavo** became the 'poster child' for some of the most important ethical, emotional, and spiritual issues of our day....the fact that our ethical dialogue has not caught up with modern medical technology. **Pope John Paul II** gave us another glimpse of reality: the world witnessed his journey through life and ministry, illness, decline, and suffering with a grit and grace to which we all aspire. How will the church respond?

### Bread for the Journey – a mid-week message from a nearby Lutheran pastor

I went by to visit an old friend today. There was a time when we saw each other almost daily, but times changed. He took a different job. I got busy. Our paths did not naturally cross and we did not make the effort to make sure they did. It's a familiar story. He's had some health problems lately and it was a lot easier for me to go to him than vice versa. So I stopped by. Despite his pain he received me warmly and it was like old times.



I'm working on a project, and as we talked I remembered that he has a long interest and expertise in the area. I thought he might appreciate a chance to reengage, might like an invitation to put his oar in the water. So I asked him if he be interested in helping me. I saw his face darken a little and then he said, "Now I know why you came by to see me; you wanted me to do something." He said it without much edge; the smile never left his face. Still, I realized he suspected it might be true. He did not need a project; he wanted me to be a friend. The visit lost a little of its sparkle after that.

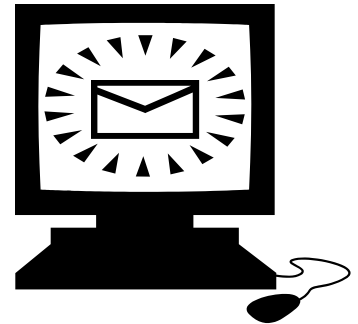
Driving away I thought how terribly important it is for us to feel valued, just for who we are and not for what we can do for someone. Most of our personal interactions are about greasing the skids, establishing a working relationship, setting up the context for getting something from the other. We rarely interact with someone who does not have

an agenda. So it is all the more precious when we feel that genuine warmth which says, "I want nothing from you except the pleasure of your company."

God's baptismal gift to us is to value us when we have precious little to offer in return. God delights in us just because we are who we are. Is there someone to whom you could give a similar gift to day? Who could use a moment of grace, the experience of being cared about, no strings attached? Take a moment to be the love of Christ for another. You can probably do a better job than I did. BK

### Mark Your Calendars!

***Touching the Inner Life in a Multi-Religious World*** is the topic of NCOAs upcoming Teleconference/Web cast. Join the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging and the National Institute for Senior Centers as they collaborate on **Thursday, June 9, 2005 at 11AM Pacific Time to bring you Donald R. Koepke, Director of the Center for Spirituality and Ethics in Aging**, California Lutheran Homes in Anaheim, CA. All senior center staff and volunteers, clergy, lay leaders, and faith-based community leaders are invited to participate as we explore from a spiritual perspective:



- How we prepare for aging, what spiritual principles can be identified to help older persons that are appropriate for, yet effective, in a religiously pluralistic setting,
- What program ideas contribute toward spiritual well-being and
- What resources are available to help senior center staff in these areas.

This a **free** one-hour teleconference/web cast. For more information or to register as a host, please contact [rita.chow@ncoa.org](mailto:rita.chow@ncoa.org). Remember only 48 sites can be accommodated. Requirements: Each site will need a telephone with a speaker and computer with monitor to access the internet. Each registered site will be sent via e-mail the power point slides and questions for discussion in advance. Each host site should then extend an invitation to other nearby community leaders who might be interested in the subject.

**June 8-11, 2005:** Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network Conference (POAMN): **Connecting the Dots: Older Adult and Health Ministries Conference**, Austin, TX. Keynote speakers include **Lou Glasse:** *"The Privatization of Social Insurance: Who Wins, Who Loses?"* **Rev. Samuel P. Riccobene:** *"Spiritual Wellness: Practicing What We Believe, Believing What We Practice"* Worship Leader: **Rev. James Thomas:** *"The Life that Christ Offers"* - Scholarships available for first time participants (deadline for application is May 15). More conference information available by contacting Ginny Nyhuis at 1-888-728-7228, X5472 or by e-mail: [gnyhuis@ctr.pcusa.org](mailto:gnyhuis@ctr.pcusa.org).



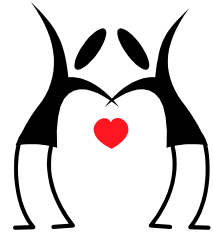
**May** is Older Adults Month: The **Older Adult Week Planning Guide for 2005** is ready! Go to the website listed below for more details.

**June 16-19, 2005:** Annual **ARMSS Conference** (Association of Retired Ministers, Spouses, and Survivors) in Kansas City, KS.

Go to the following link for details! <http://www.pcusa.org/olderadults/>

## ElderConnections Workshops

**Jan L. McGilliard, M.S.**  
Executive Director



### ***The Gift of Dying: Faithful planning for the end of life***

**Description:** This seminar (workshop/retreat) focuses on practical aspects of living and dying responsibly. We all face end of life issues, through experiences with family members or for ourselves. It is an act of love to plan ahead, and it is much easier to navigate these issues as part of a faith community. This seminar offers the opportunity to discuss and share resources about

- ***Theological thoughts about death and dying***
- ***Spiritual benefits and challenges of planning ahead***
- ***Our legacy of faith and things***
- ***Getting our affairs in order***
- ***Planning your funeral/memorial service***

### ***Extended Hands & Hearts: Care Team Ministries for Congregations***

**Description:** This seminar (workshop/retreat) introduces the concept of Care Teams: a model for strengthening congregational care and nurture. A Care Team provides a way for your congregation to respond to real-life needs of individuals and families. A group of volunteers works together to offer practical, emotional, and spiritual support to those in need. This seminar covers the following aspects of Care Team Ministries:

- ***The circle of care and the spiritual connection***
- ***The care team –What is it? What it is not...Why it's needed...***
- ***Building a Care Team: learning the language and identifying resources***
- ***Respect, boundaries, communication, confidentiality***
- ***Building the Body of Christ through care giving and care receiving***

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View my **Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (marathon)** page at:

[http://www.active.com/donations/fundraise\\_public.cfm?key=tntvaJMcGill&I9.x=39&I9.y=8](http://www.active.com/donations/fundraise_public.cfm?key=tntvaJMcGill&I9.x=39&I9.y=8)