

Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Older Adult Awareness Survey

Method: The Older Adult Awareness Survey was sent to all congregations in early January and conducted by Moderators of Presbyterian Women. Its purpose was to garner perceptions about older adults in the church and to provide useful information to the Older Adult Ministries Committee of the Synod.

Results:

Summary Narrative:

Older adults are *actively* involved as volunteers in our congregations! Individuals of all (adult) ages responded to the survey, but 75% were over age 55, 2/3 women.

There is consensus about two things:

- 1) There is awareness of and sensitivity to the special needs of older adults, and
- 2) There is a need for greater attention to the elderly and their families. Most (80%) feel their congregations are involved in providing visitation to homebound, hospitalized, and assisted-living residents, and many feel the church does a good job of connecting older adults with community resources.

Areas for improvement/consideration:

- Attention to the special needs of older adults
- Educational opportunities for end of life decision making and health education
- Support groups for grief, dementia, and caregivers
- Mentoring opportunities and intergenerational activities
- Knowledge of churches other than one's own – knowledge of national trends

Lessons learned from about the survey:

- Need a response category for "I don't know" responses
- Respondents feel more confident answering questions about their own congregations than about churches in general
- A generous time-line is needed for carrying out the survey
- Presbyterian Women are excellent facilitators for such a survey

Complete survey results are available at the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic OAM web site at www.civic.bev.net/oam. Our web site is one of our greatest assets, so please visit us there and give us your feedback! For further information please contact Jan McGilliard, Associate for Older Adult Ministries, at 540-552-3233 or by e-mail at jmcgill@bev.net.