

Make Church a Part of Your Life

WEEKLY SERMONETTE

"Our Prayer As We Get Older"

By Pastor Lyn Linde, Norton First United Methodist Church

And now, in my old age, don't set me aside.

Don't abandon me when my strength is failing. Psalm 71:9

We Americans venerate youth. Our screens and magazines are filled with the lithe, youthful bodies of stars and models. As they age, many of them will have multiple cosmetic surgeries to prolong their young appearance. Those of us who will never grace the covers of the magazines by the grocery checkout lines may, nevertheless, do whatever we can to prolong the semblance of our youth. We want to be young, or to look young, at any rate.

Why? Why do we try so hard to maintain that which naturally recedes as the years pass? Partly, it's hard to feel that we are losing our strength, whether physical or mental. I hate it when I can't easily remember a name, something I was once able to do effortlessly. And it bugs me that, no matter how often I work out in the gym, I just cannot lift as much weight as I was once able to lift. As I get older, I am losing strength, both intellectual and physical. And I don't like it.

Moreover, because we live in a society that adores youthfulness, older folk can, in the words of Psalm 71:9, be "set aside." A friend of mine in the entertainment business says that, when it comes to writing television comedies, you're over the hill and irrelevant if you're over 35. How terrible to be ignored and dismissed just because of a few grey hairs!

If you're moving along in years—and which of us isn't?—perhaps you can echo the prayer of Psalm 71:9: "And now, in my old age, don't set me aside. Don't abandon me when my strength is failing." Even if our culture marginalizes us and our bodies betray us, we yearn for God's affirmation and love. We want to continue to be used for God's purposes in the world. We want our work, no matter whether

we call ourselves "retired" or not, to matter for God's kingdom.

The good news is that God does indeed continue to love us, value us, and use us as we age. In fact, often the wisdom that comes from decades of faithfulness contributes more to the kingdom than the zeal of youth. If we steward well the gifts God has given us, if we continue to offer ourselves to him for his purposes,

God will indeed use us even in our old age, even when our strength isn't what it used to be.

Can you relate personally to the prayer of Psalm 71:9? Why or why not? Are you offering your whole self to God, even as you get older? If you are young and strong, how do you envision your life as you age? Are you open to the wisdom and collegiality of those who are older than you?

Gracious God, to be honest, and being anything less than honest with you is silly, I'm not happy that I can relate to the prayer of Psalm 71:9. Much of me wishes I weren't entering "old age." I wish my body were more youthful, my mind more astute. I don't like the aches and pains that come out of nowhere. And I really don't enjoy the thought that I might be regarded as irrelevant because of my age.

Of course, I cannot manage how others might react to me. But I can cry out to you in the words of Psalm 71. As I get older, Lord, don't set me aside. Continue to use me for your purposes, perhaps even more powerfully because of the wisdom and grace that come with age. Don't abandon me when my strength is failing, Lord. Even if I can't remember all that I once remembered or lift all that I once was able to lift, may my mind and body be used for your work and your glory. By your Spirit, give me all I need to honor you in everything I do. Amen.

Before You Turn the Key



Today we often hear the term "road rage" – it appears that the impatience resulting from the stress of daily life can take its toll and turn average people into snarling maniacs. How can we "cure" this condition? Perhaps the key lies in what we do before we turn the key. Daily Bible reading and prayer are necessities for a sane society. Without them we can lose our sense of serenity. In His Word we find direction for our priorities and reassurance for our lives. In prayer we find connection with Him. Worship regularly to keep your spirit in touch with God and tune Him in with prayer each day before you turn the key.

Weekly Scripture Reading						
Proverbs 3:1-35	Proverbs 4:1-27	Psalm 9	Ruth 1:1-22	Ruth 2:1-23	Ruth 3:1-18	Ruth 4:1-22
Scriptures Selected by the American Bible Society						
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SUDOKU

	8			1	2			
7				9		5	6	
	1	2						
	3			2				
		1		5	6			
		9			3	4		
5			4	1			9	
			6	8	1			

Fun By The Numbers
Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

2	1	8	3	6	9	7	6	4
5	6	4	7	2	8	3	5	1
6	9	7	1	4	3	8	2	5
4	2	3	8	7	1	6	5	9
8	6	9	5	3	4	2	7	1
1	7	2	2	6	9	5	3	8
7	8	6	4	9	8	7	1	5
9	4	2	6	8	3	5	1	4
3	5	1	6	2	4	7	8	9

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