



DEARBORN

FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Showing how Jesus' love restores joy and freedom to Metro Detroit

Rick Watson's Vision for Senior Ministries

My name is Rick Watson, I am the Pastor of Senior's Ministry here at Dearborn Free Methodist Church. I have served in pastoral ministry over 30 years. During that time, I have always had a heart for ministry to the senior population. I hold a Master's in Religion from Ashland Theological Seminary, with majors in Bible and Church History and a minor in Theology. I've completed the course work toward a Doctor of Ministry with an emphasis on spiritual formation. As an adjunct professor, I teach Bible and ethics for Spring Arbor University in adult studies. I also serve as a Chaplain at the Henry Ford Retirement Village here in Dearborn Michigan, ministering to those in the assisted living and nursing care, memory care, hospice care, and rehabilitation services. My wife Carolyn and I have served at DFMC since 2007. We have two sons and two beautiful granddaughters.

My ideas and principals for Senior Ministry, while still a work in progress, is primarily based on the following insights and principals:

The leading edge of the largest generation in history, the Baby Boomers, (the 78 million born between 1946-1965), is turning 60+. If you include our parents and the Greatest Generation of the World War II era, then America has more living senior citizens than at any other time in recorded history. In short, historic numbers of people in America are graying. Can I share a secret with you? The church is graying as well.

It is incumbent upon the Church to be genuinely concerned about the faith development and wellbeing of its senior population. Here at Dearborn Free Methodist Church our concern is more than merely filling pews on Sunday morning. Rather, we take seriously the calling to minister to each individual, regardless of his or her stage of life. Part of that ministry is recognizing that at each life stage, there are tasks and challenges that need to be resolved. Regarding our senior population, we strive to minister based on the following principles:

- While members of the senior population retire from careers and vocations, nowhere in Scripture is permission given to retire from seeking God and nurturing our relationship with Jesus Christ. As seniors, we are in a unique position to glorify God by helping others along their journey to know Christ, and to live out the unique calling God has placed on their lives.
- You've heard the saying, "Use it or lose it." We believe it is essential, especially in the latter years of life, to engage in activities that keeps our hearts sensitive, our minds learning, our bodies strong and well, and our souls growing ever closer to God.
- Scripture is clear. We need each other. Regardless of age or ability, each of us is an important member of the body of Christ. It is important that we develop and foster intergenerational relationships across all age groups. Children, youth, young adults, middle-aged adults, and senior adults are all intrgal in creating opportunities to fellowship, worship, learn and serve beside one another.

- At Dearborn Free Methodist Church, we believe our relationships extend in the following three directions: UP (God and Jesus), IN (among believers), and OUT (those who do not yet know Christ). Emphasis on each of these is important to ensure that we do not lose sight of the purpose God created us for and that Jesus calls us to. Believing that there is no retirement from Christianity, the graying generation is privileged and responsible to be a disciple by knowing Christ as personal savior and adhering to the admonitions and teachings of Christ. Second, we believe it is Christ's commandment that every Christian strives to make disciples by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with whomever God puts in our path.
- At Dearborn Free Methodist, we do not claim to know all the answers. But here is something we do know. We must recognize the vast wisdom and wide array of spiritual gifts and talents God has placed in our midst through the Senior population. God has blessed us with the gift of living longer lives than ever before. What the church does with this gift is vital to the well-being of the church.