

*Northfield United Methodist Church seeks to foster a congregational culture and ministry where people of all ages and stages in life engage in opportunities to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ, and use their talents and energies as they respond to the call of Christ to love and serve God and neighbor.*

*~adapted from the NUMC Congregational Ministry Plan*



The righteous flourish like the palm tree,  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.  
They are planted in the house of the LORD;  
they flourish in the courts of our God.  
In old age they still produce fruit;  
they are always green and full of sap,  
showing that the LORD is upright;  
he is my rock,  
and there is no unrighteousness in him.

~Psalm 92:12-15

**EngAging Ministries:** Building resilience within our congregation and community through opportunities for adults (50+) to meaningfully *Connect, Grow,* and *Serve* as we navigate the transitions of aging.

## EngAging Ministries



**Connecting - Growing - Serving**  
throughout the transitions of aging

a ministry of Northfield United Methodist Church

**Northfield United Methodist Church**

1401 Maple Street, Northfield, MN 55057

(507) 645-5689

northfieldumc@gmail.com

[www.northfieldumc.org](http://www.northfieldumc.org)

## Some Background

This past year, as our Administrative Council was deciding upon the annual priorities of our Congregational Ministry Plan, one of the new things that emerged from a number of us in the congregation was a sense that we need to pay more attention to older adult ministry. Our Congregational Ministry Plan states that *we seek to foster a congregational culture and ministry where people of all ages and stages in life engage in opportunities to grow [and serve] as disciples of Jesus Christ.* In recent years we have focused a good deal of time and attention on enhancing our ministry with children and youth and their families, which we very much needed to do. Yet we also sense that we need to be more intentional about our ministry with those who no longer have children and youth in their homes.

This winter the Administrative Council convened a task force to consider this issue. Meeting regularly for a couple of months, we directed our attention to a wide spectrum of issues and concerns faced by older adults. Our group made lists of the many opportunities that are available for older adults in our church and community. Reading and research helped us to think comprehensively about how we as a congregation can help one another navigate the transitions of aging.

There are many such transitions that we face during adulthood as we respond to our changing roles in the lives of our families, our church, and our community. Some of us are adjusting to an empty nest, preparing for a meaningful retirement, and caring for aging parents. Some are seeking ways to use the gifts and experience they have gained over a lifetime in new settings. One of the authors we read called these folks *go-go's*. Some are facing acute and chronic health concerns and other issues that lead them to make difficult decisions about where they will live and how they will expend their energy. That same author called these folks *slow-go's*. And some, who have become frail, and those who are homebound or living in care facilities, have great lessons to learn and to teach others about relinquishing control and receiving support, and about rethinking what it means to serve. The author called these folks the *no-go's*.

**There are sounds to seasons.  
There are sounds to places.  
And there are sounds  
to every time in one's life.  
~ Alison Wyrley Birch**

Throughout adulthood, as in all of life, we face so many transitions. Our hope is to find ways to help one another navigate these transitions in three broad areas:

**Connecting:** Providing opportunities for adults to **connect** with one another and with the church in order to build meaningful and supportive relationships.

**Growing:** Providing opportunities for adults to **grow** in their ability to navigate the transitions of aging, with a focus on addressing issues of aging from a faith perspective,

**Serving:** Providing opportunities for adults to **serve** one another, God, and neighbor, employing their wisdom and experience, gifts and talents in ways that are meaningful, and that are appropriate to their life circumstances.

## Our Name and Logo

We considered many names for this new ministry emphasis in the life of our congregation. We didn't want a name that included the words *older* or *senior* or *elderly*, or one that was so overly clever that we would be embarrassed to use it. Our task force wanted a name that would capture the essence of what we are trying to do in a way that is open, welcoming and engaging. A chance encounter led us to the website of "engAGED aging," a non-profit organization that emphasizes creative and wholistic programing and housing for seniors in Southern California. With that organization's blessing we came up with the name EngAging Ministries and developed the logo with the tree you find on the cover of this brochure. It is our hope that, like our SALT acronym and logo, our congregation will grow to associate this name and logo with a wide variety of ministries designed to engage adults of all ages in helping one another navigate the transitions of aging.

## Our Launch Event

On June 9<sup>th</sup> we held a luncheon for adults to officially "launch" our EngAging Ministries. It was a time for us to broaden the conversation, to glean ideas that will help shape the direction of this ministry, and to celebrate this new emphasis within the life of our congregation.

Where all of this will lead, is unknown, but we are excited to see how the Spirit will move among us.

