

Associate Executive Minister for Elder Care Ministries

The old saying about “best-laid plans” proved to be true during 2020, but so did the saying that “when one door closes, another opens.”

When we set a 2020 goal to expand communications about the programs, resources, and assistance available through Elder Care Ministries, little did we know how crucial that goal would be. We have been able to reach out virtually through:

- **A website**—<http://eldercare.abcori.org>—that provides information about upcoming programs and opportunities; a wide variety of resources; and the *Traveling the Third Third of Life* blog.
- **A Facebook group**—Elder Care Ministries (ABCORI)—with a page that is updated daily and offers a variety of information, resources, and discussions.

While we were unable to offer in-person events during much of 2020, we had opportunities to design a variety of other programs and resources, including:

- **Coffee Chats:** Each Wednesday morning people in the third third of life gathered via Zoom to reflect on and chat about different topics. A new theme for these conversations was introduced each month.
- **Join the Conversation:** This integrated initiative allowed older adults in our region to share their thoughts and feelings about navigating the third third of life. The rich responses we received helped us shape exciting new resources.
- **Using Technology to Connect with Older Members:** This program provided grants to assist congregations with technology to enable greater connection with older members. Congregations received grants, as well as consultations, to assist with purchasing equipment, software, and related services.
- **Resources for Home Use:** We developed a variety of resources that could be used in different ways in home settings. Those resources included

Generation to Generation, a series designed to help grandparents—or other adults—share Bible stories and activities virtually or in-person with the children in their lives; *Sharing Good News of Great Joy*, a set of daily ideas for conversations and activities for use during December; and *Looking Back*, a three-part series to help people reflect on the year that was about to end.

We also worked with a growing number of congregations and individuals to find resources for such concerns as health-care services for older adults; mental-health and grief support; and congregational programs in the face of COVID-19.

I am grateful for these opportunities and the ongoing support of our region. Rev. Kathryn Palen