

Older Americans Month

In 1963, there were only 17 million Americans age 65 or older. Approximately one-third of them lived in poverty, and the nation had few programs to address their needs. In April, President John F. Kennedy met with the National Council of Senior Citizens and later designated May as Senior Citizen Month, encouraging Americans to recognize past and present contributions of older persons to our country.

President Jimmy Carter changed the title to Older Americans Month in 1980. Every president since 1963 has issued a formal proclamation asking the country to honor older members of their communities. Today, 44 million people are age 60 or older – one in six Americans – and 36.3 million are age 65 or older.

Most Americans dread getting older, but aging has a positive connotation in the Bible. The Old Testament uses phrases like “ripe old age” and “good old age.” Proverbs assures us that gray hair is “a crown of glory” (Proverbs 16:31) and “the splendor of the old” (Proverbs 20:29). Besides their natural gifts and abilities, older believers have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience. They are an invaluable asset to the body of Christ when we are wise enough to honor them.

In Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home, we learn from the wisdom of the aged, and we are blessed to be able to care for them, as God has allowed us to do.

God promises His people that He will carry us from our conception through our death. If we trust Him to watch over us, there is no need to fear growing older. It seems appropriate that Older Americans Month is celebrated in the birth month of Robert Browning. Some of the British poet’s best-loved lines are: *Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be.*

If we are a child of God, the best is truly yet to be.

I will be your God throughout your lifetime – until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you. Isaiah 46:4

--Beecher Hunter