Memory Café

Alleviating the isolation of people with dementia and fighting the stigma
The Concern

• 60-80% of dementia is caused by Alzheimer’s disease, which affects 1 in 9 seniors in the U.S., a total of 5.3 million people. Without a cure, this number is expected to triple by 2050 with the aging of the baby boomers.

• Of those with Alzheimer’s disease, 4 percent are under age 65, 15 percent are 65 to 74, 43 percent are 75 to 84, and 38 percent are 85 or older.

• One in three Episcopalians is over age 65 and another 41% are age 45-64. Parishes will see a very large increase in numbers of those with dementia and their family members or friends.

• Currently 70% of people with Alzheimer’s are living at home and most have mild to moderate dementia.

• There is a tendency for the person and caregivers to become isolated, which lowers quality of life and contributes negatively to a person’s prognosis.
What is a Memory Café?

- Safe comfortable social gathering for people with dementia, or for those who think they may have memory problems, and their care partners
- People crave respite and normalcy, if only for a short time
- New friendships and support for one another
- Not a (facilitated) support group!
- Fun – food, creative arts, music
- Usually once a month
“When did I see you hungry…” (Why the Church?)

• We live in a culture that over-values rationality, productivity and independence, and we lose status if we don’t conform. BUT:
• Our culture could learn that these are not the most important things!
• God “re-members” us; Church can “re-mind” us! (mind is so much more than memory!)
• Important to retain our families and community
• The person’s relationship with God ALWAYS REMAINS
  Nothing – no illness, hardship, distress - can separate us from God. (Rom 8:31-39)
  God seeks us more than we seek God. (K. Barth)
• Not to fix, but to be with, be present, to say God is here, “Come and see” (John 1:39)
• Abilities and capacities remain – not all is lost
• Emotional sensitivity and spiritual awareness possible
• Many people trust the Church as a safe space
• People are LIVING WITH dementia for a long time
• Disparity in access to support for people with dementia
New: Club Memory is expanding to DC Wards 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
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Who else gains?

• For Clergy - a vital new resource to offer your parishioners who may have dementia, as well as their families and caregivers

• Church makes known that it cares about us until the end of life. Families can become loyal to church in response. Neighbors may participate as well, extending mission of the Church.

• People of the Church can learn: “I see that [people living with dementia] still have the potential to inspire us, teach us, love us, heal us, amuse us, befriend us, calm us, touch us, energize us, enlighten us, empower us, forgive us, nurture us, open our hearts, bring out the best in us, and bring meaning and purpose into our lives—they have the capacity to show us how to be authentically ourselves in the present moment.” The Rev. Jade Angelica

• Volunteers (including students) become advocates for people with dementia
More information

See spiritualityanddementia.org