

A bridge for generations to share

Almost every week I am asked the question one way or another: How do you explain the fact that so many young men and women in their teens and 20s are active in the life of University Presbyterian Church? The Gospel of Christ is the big reason, but I always think of one other reason too. It is because those in our church who are older in chronological age really love and respect those who are younger.

This has been a UPC distinctive through the years. Older members elect younger people as elders and deacons just as enthusiastically as they elect their peers to these posts. They support every youth project with prayer and money and time; they actually enjoy being with youth.

But it goes both ways: our youth feel the same affection toward their elders here at UPC.

I will never forget a tender moment I saw from the pulpit on a Sunday morning. One year on the anniversary of "D Day" I asked if any in our congregation had actually been there on that historic day. Some four or five men stood throughout the sanctuary. Near the front Doug Parris rose to his feet. The congregation applauded for these men who are



From Your Pastor
Earl F. Palmer

I see this every week in all worship services, throughout our Sunday school, at work events such as the intergenerational Mexico House building project of this May. A month ago a corps of young mothers put on a birthday party for a member

of our own heroes from a terrible world war; just behind Doug three young men in their late teens and early 20s reached our their hands and placed them on his shoulder. They were honoring a hero in their own way. It was a private, quiet moment of greatness and of the coming together of generations. They wanted Doug to know that he was a grandfather to them; he belonged to them and they respected him.

of their Bible study group who was 90 years old (for details, see the article below).

It is not this way for many in our culture and we all know it, just as we worry about it. Most people in American cities feel isolated by age differences. Each generation favors its own music, its own recreation, its own concerts, its own movies and TV shows. And when people of different ages pass each other by chance at a mall or street we are all just a little, or sometimes very much, afraid of each other.

What is the cure for this chronological loneliness and isolation? We need a bridge between the generations that each can walk on together and as equals. But what is that bridge? The good news is that the answer to that question is a "who," not a "what."

Jesus Christ is the bridge because only He is able to break through the divisions (Ephesians 2: 11-20). And when we walk with Him, then age and race and sex and position and skill cease to matter the most. I think that Jesus Christ Himself holds the grand key which unlocks the doorway between the generations. When our eyes are on Him and when His goals become our goals, that doorway is flung wide open.