Websites and Books about Dementia-Friendly Faith Communities

Susan H. McFadden, Ph.D.

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

The Fox Valley Memory Project ([www.foxvalleymemoryproject.org](http://www.foxvalleymemoryproject.org))

This PDF has lots of links and good information about dementia-friendly communities in general, with particular attention to how people’s spiritual needs can be met. It was compiled from information presented at a workshop sponsored by Northumbria University (England) and Church of the Holy Nativity: <http://www.nr-foundation.org.uk/downloads/Dementia-Friendly-ResourceV8-Final.pdf>

*Growing Dementia-Friendly Churches: A Practical Guide*. <http://www.mha.org.uk/files/3814/0931/8295/Growing_Dementia_Friendly_Churches.pdf>

This document was published by a consortium of British groups (Christian Council on Aging; Faith in Elderly People; Methodist Homes Association). An expanded hard copy is available, but you would need to contact one of these groups to find out how to get a copy.

*Dementia Friendly America: Faith Communities*

<http://www.dfamerica.org/sector-guides-1/>

The Dementia Friendly America organization publishes a number of “sector guides.” This one lists concrete steps faith communities can take to become more welcoming for people with dementia.

Bell, V., Troxel, D., Cox, T., & Hamon, R. (2008). *The Best Friends book of Alzheimer’s activities* (Vol. 2). Baltimore, MD: Health Professions Press.

 One of a series of “best friends” books about care with persons with dementia, this one has a whole chapter on religion and spirituality and would be particularly helpful for chaplains working with persons from a variety of faith traditions.

Goldsmith, M. (2004). *In a strange land: People with dementia and the local church*. Southwell, England: 4M Publications.

 Goldsmith’s wise and practical book provides information about the experience of dementia, and about caring for persons with dementia. He argues that local congregations can (and need to) learn how to minister well with care partners and persons with the diagnosis whether they live at home or in long-term care.

Friedman, D. A. (2008). *Jewish visions for aging: A professional guide for fostering wholeness*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing.

 This book offers an important vision of ministry with aging persons, including those with dementia. It makes a strong case for “spiritual accompaniment” and offers concrete suggestions on how to do this with individuals struggling with memory loss and confusion.

Friedman, D. A. (2015). *Jewish wisdom for growing older: Finding your grit and grace beyond midlife*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing.

 This is a book to savor slowly and to read and reread. Rabbi Friedman offers blessings at the end of every chapter but actually, the whole book is a blessing. One chapter is titled “Making sense of dementia’s brokenness.”

Jewell, A. (Ed.). (2011). *Spirituality and personhood in dementia*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

 Containing all new chapters (see also his book from 2004), this book sensitively addresses the challenges and, dare we say also, the gifts of dementia from the perspective of care partners and persons with the diagnosis.

Mast, B. (2014). *Second forgetting: Remember the power of the Gospel during Alzheimer’s disease*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

 The author’s brief biography is a good introduction to this book. He’s Associate Professor in Psychological and Brain Sciences, and Associate Clinical Professor in Geriatric Medicine at the University of Louisville, as well as being an elder at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, KY. The book is grounded in evangelical Christianity and psychological research on memory and dementia. It’s very accessible and would work well in congregational discussion groups.

McFadden, S. H., & McFadden, J. T. (2014). The role of congregations in dementia-friendly communities. *Caring Connections, 11*(3), 1-12. <http://lutheranservices.org/caringconnections_vol11no3_mcfadden>

 This article applies a list of 10 key areas for communities to address in becoming dementia friendly to congregational life. It offers practical advice for faith communities, discusses potential barriers to becoming dementia friendly, and offers a rationale for why congregations should undertake this process.

McFadden, S. H., & McFadden, J. T. (2011). *Aging together: Dementia, friendship, and flourishing communities*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

 A book about how nurturing relationships with friends journeying into progressive forgetfulness. It argues that faith communities have many resources to support these relationships, not the least of which are the beliefs that bind them together.

McFadden, J. T. (2012). *Aging, dementia, and the faith community: Continuing the journey of friendship*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers.

 This free downloadable pamphlet summarizes some of the main points from McFadden and McFadden (2011) and was written so congregations could have easy, inexpensive access to these ideas. The PDF is available here: <http://www.ekklesiaproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/EkklesiaPamphlet_16.pdf>. Hard copies can be purchased for about $1.00. See <http://www.ekklesiaproject.org/publications/pamphlets/#aging>.

Shamy, E. (2003). *A guide to the spiritual dimension of care for people with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia: More than body, brain, and breath*. New York: Jessica Kingsley.

 Written by a Methodist clergywoman, this excellent book offers abundant insights into pastoral care for persons with dementia.

Swinton, J. (2012). *Dementia: Living in the memories of God*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

 Stanley Hauerwas calls Swinton the “premier pastoral theologian of our time.” A former psychiatric nurse and hospital chaplain, Swinton now teaches theology at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. He describes his book as being not only a “challenge to medicine and medical approaches to dementia; it is also a challenge to theology.”

Thibault, J. M., & Morgan, R. L. (2009). *No act of love is ever wasted: The spirituality of caring for persons with dementia*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books.

 A book that is as beautiful on the inside as its title is on the outside, this book addresses the spiritual needs of caregivers, both family members and paid staff in memory care facilities. It has good suggestions for leading worship and thus offers important insights for clergy and chaplains.