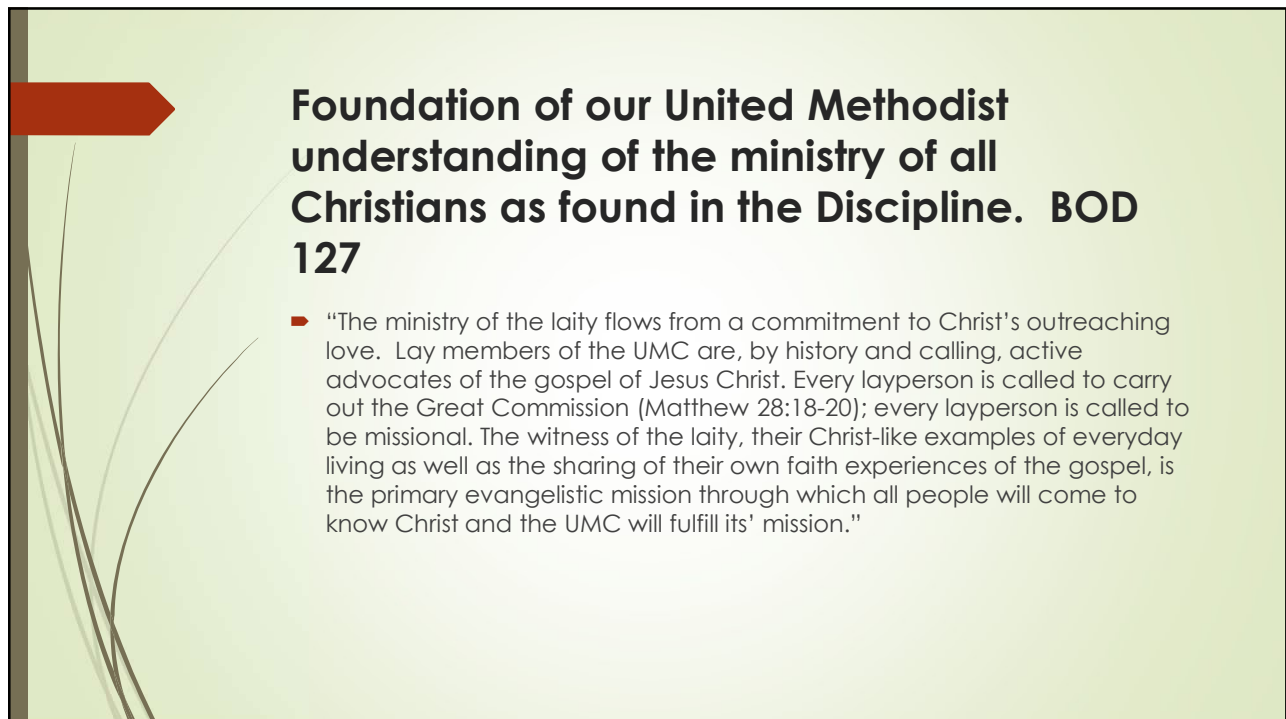


1



2



PARTNERS IN MINISTRY: A LEADERSHIP MODEL

- We must understand, accept, and live the fact that in God's design **all** baptized Christians are called into ministry. Each believer has God-given abilities to strengthen the whole body, and "ministry" is what God does through the *entire body*—not just clergy and not just laity, but the whole body, together as **partners**. This is not always an easy concept. We are set in our ways and sometimes it is hard to let go of the "old ways" and let God work through Clergy and Laity to form a partnership.


3



PARTNERS IN MINISTRY ASSUMPTIONS

- All baptized Christians are called into the ministry.
- There are no levels of leadership in the church, only different functions depending upon personal gifts and graces, the call of God, and the confirmation of the church.
- To be effective, laity and clergy need to work as teams in every local situation and abide by an agreed upon set of ground rules for behavior.
- In order to fulfill assumption number 3, clergy and laity need to receive skill training in how to live by the ground rules and they need to receive their training together.


4



GROUND RULES

- All team members are committed to Jesus Christ and to a shared vision for the church.
- All team members seek win/win solutions to problems, conflicts or any other issues that arise.
- All team members keep their agreements and are open and honest in their communications.
- All team members assume 100% responsibility for the results that are produced and do not engage in blaming or justifying.
- All team members agree to live by the **HEART** principles.
 - Hear and understand me
 - Even if you disagree, please don't make me wrong.
 - Acknowledge the greatness in me.
 - Remember to look for my loving intentions
 - Tell me the truth with compassion

5



LOCAL CHURCH LAY LEADER ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

- Paragraph 251 of the UM Book of Discipline -2016 tells us that the Local Church Lay Leader:
 - Is the primary lay representative of the laity in the local church.
 - Must be a professing member of the local church
 - Is elected annually by the charge conference

6

LOCAL CHURCH LAY LEADER ROLES AND FUNCTIONS Cont.

- There shall be one Lay Leader for each church on a charge. The use of Associate Lay Leaders is encouraged and must be elected by the charge conference.
- There is no term limit in the BOD, but it is strongly suggested that the local church commit to term limits and rotation of leadership. (generally after 3 years of service).

7

LOCAL CHURCH LAY LEADER ROLES AND FUNCTIONS cont.

- Before we look at actual responsibilities in the BOD, there are general leadership skills needed for the role of Lay Leader we need to list.
- Listen well
- Demonstrate one or more of these spiritual gifts: compassion, discernment, faith, helping, leadership, and servanthood.
- Communicate with people of all ages and backgrounds
- Show evidence of working well with both clergy and laity and with various teams and task groups
- Keep a broad view of separate parts of the congregation such as leadership committees, small groups, and specialized ministries while helping all to work toward the mission of the church.
- Work collaboratively to connect the congregation and the community and inspire the congregation to care for those beyond the walls of the local church.
- Be a living example of one "who loves God and loves neighbor," emulating the servant ministry of Jesus.

8

The Book of Discipline gives us the job description for Lay Leaders.

- Foster awareness of role of laity
- Emphasize the culture of the call
- Encourage laity to discover and use their gifts, skills, talents, treasure, and witness to love and serve God & neighbor.
- Represent the laity of the church in the community.
- Help laity of all ages recognize they represent the church in the larger community and workplace.
- Recognize and celebrate the ministry of the laity
- Advocate for the laity and promote Laity Sunday
- Assist with local church communications

9

Meet Regularly with your Pastor

- Meet and talk with your pastor regularly to understand their hopes and dreams for the congregation and for the Lay Leader's role in advancing toward the vision for ministry. Ask how you can engage in shared ministry for a more vital congregation. Each pastor & Lay Leader must discern the way to accomplish goals in your unique setting. Develop as close a relationship as you can, not only to discuss needs and make plans, but to vision and pray together. Meetings out of the regular location and format can go a long way.
- You and your pastor are a team, sharing responsibilities. Identify opportunities to share, such as leading special events, visiting the sick and homebound, or contacting visitors to your church.
- An effective relationship begins with open minds and mutual respect. You must respect each other as people as well as the importance of the roles. Above all, both must recognize that the church is God's church. It doesn't belong to clergy or laity. Congregations respond in a positive way to pastor-lay leadership when they see both are spirit filled and working in harmony for effective ministry. This kind of partnership ministry, with the whole congregation involved, becomes very important when pastoral leadership changes.
- Serve as confidant and sounding board for how ideas, visions, and plans of the clergy might be received by other laity.
- Filter multiple messages from the congregation into those things that the pastor should hear to help them prioritize where to act.
- Encourage teamwork between the pastor and lay leadership and work to strengthen the relationship between the pastor and the congregation.

10

Engage in continuous learning and study

- The Lay Leader should be a growing Christian disciple who understands that we never stop learning and growing in our faith. You will be seen as an example for the rest of the congregation. Model an attitude of continual learning.
- Study the mission of the church and learn about UM polity and heritage.
- Engage personally in spiritual practices that build attentiveness to God's will and direction. Ministry is not a job, it is a spiritual endeavor. A Christian leader must be in a healthy, dynamic, and active relationship with God.

11

The Book of Discipline gives us the job description for Lay Leaders. Cont.

- Advise Church Council on needs
- You are in the unique position of being able to feel the "pulse" of the congregation and the community because you are part of both. You sense the pulse and learn of needs as you support the church through participation in worship, attendance at events, and fellowship. You model "presence" through involvement in congregational activities.
- By virtue of being Lay Leader, you are a member of the following:
- Charge Conference—Church Council—Finance Committee—Nominations and Leadership development—Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
- Other recommended activities
- Inform the congregation about and attend training events.—Train to be a Certified Lay Servant—serve as Lay member to Annual Conference (you can apply to be an at-Large member for the district.)

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Board of Laity

- The Conference Board of Laity is led by Conference Lay Leader (Martha Stokes currently). The District Lay Leaders serve on this board along with other key laity. For more information, see the Handbook for Lay Leaders found on vaumc.org—click on “ministry of the Laity”—choose “Lay Leader Handbook and other resources.”
- They are recommending each District have a group of Associate Lay Leaders who will each be assigned a small group of church Lay Leaders to work with them. We don't have them yet, but DS Givens is working on it. Your current District Lay Leader will be Kristin Fogle in January.

13



To Everything There is a Season

- Everybody's term of off comes to an end sometime. There is no set term of office for local Lay Leaders, but the Annual Conference suggests 4 years which goes along with the quadrennial.
- It is important for a smooth transition, so you may want to work with someone who is able to replace you, as your term nears an end. This should be done with love and grace.

14

When the Pastor, DS, or Bishop Leaves

- When the appointment of a different pastoral leader is made, the Lay Leader can work to ensure a smooth transition. Providing continuity in leadership for the church, you may work with Staff-Parish Relations to be certain that the leave-taking of the current pastoral leadership is marked with good graces and blessings of the congregation. Encouraging the congregation to take appropriate time to lift up the ministry of this person and to celebrate the church's life during that time of leadership is important.
- As the next Pastor begins an appointment, your role again can be vital in promoting a smooth transition. Welcome the new pastor and express anticipation for new and continued work together. Offer to assist in any way.

15

Laity Sunday

- Usually scheduled for end of October-2025-2028 based on Ephesians 3:14-21
- 2025: Be Strong in the Spirit—Ephesians 3:15
- 2026: Be Grounded in Love—Ephesians 3:17
- 2027: Behold Love's Breadth/Depth--Ephesians 3:18
- 2028: Be Filled with God's Fullness—Ephesians 3:19
- Information can be found on vaumc.org

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Lay Servant Ministries

- ▶ One of the most significant lay leadership development programs available through the UMC. I highly recommend it. They are 10 hr. courses available on line through the conference or in-person/on line from the district. You can learn so much to help your ministry and spiritual growth. 1. Certified Lay Servant 2 Certified Lay Speaker 3 Certified Lay Minister
- ▶ Most questions can be answered on vaumc.org Ministry of the Laity
- ▶ Barb Mason is available to help!

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Questions?

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