How Lay Leadership Roles and Responsibilities Are Vital to Church Growth and Ministry

By: Pure Sight (Group 6)
Facilitator – Kim Sutherland
April 28-29, 2017

Leadership UMC 2016-2017
A Program of the Conference Board of Laity
The North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church
# Table of Contents

- Project Background ....................................................................................................................................... 3
- Structure of this Report .................................................................................................................................. 4
- Lay Leader Roles/Responsibilities (Andy Pitman) ......................................................................................... 5
  - References .................................................................................................................................................. 7
- Spiritual Life of a Lay Servant/Leader (Diane Shannon) .................................................................................. 8
  - 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 New International Version (NIV) ........................................................................ 8
- Intentional Spiritual Growth (Kiki Orum) ........................................................................................................ 10
  - References .................................................................................................................................................. 12
  - Appendix .................................................................................................................................................... 12
- Witness (Billy Raj) ......................................................................................................................................... 13
  - Bibliography ................................................................................................................................................ 14
- Grace (Lewis Lane) ......................................................................................................................................... 15
  - Wesley’s Means of Grace ............................................................................................................................ 16
- Lay Leaders and Worship (Dr. Julaunica Tigner) ........................................................................................ 17
  - References .................................................................................................................................................. 19
  - Appendix .................................................................................................................................................... 19
- Partnership (Matt Warrick) .......................................................................................................................... 20
- Rotational Leadership (Alan Brown) ............................................................................................................. 22
  - References .................................................................................................................................................. 24
  - Appendix .................................................................................................................................................... 25
Project Background

Each member of our group was honored to be selected by their local pastor and their District Superintendent to attend this 16th consecutive year of the Leadership UMC Conference. We have attended four weekend sessions starting in November 2016, where we first met and decided on a group name of “Pure Sight” - derived from the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:8 (NIV): “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” We also received our group project assignment, which is now the main title of this document: “How are Lay Leadership roles and responsibilities vital to church growth and ministry?” At the final session in April 2017, our group will present our answers to that question in this report and its associated presentation to the rest of our LUMC classmates and staff members. We then graduate with the rest of the LUMC class to our next step in the path of growing as a Lay Leader in the Methodist Church. Throughout the LUMC experience, we have learned and grown both individually and as a group toward the path set out for us by Christ.

We would like to extend our grace and sincere thanks for this opportunity to our pastors, churches, and Superintendents; to Jane Findley and the rest of her staff; and especially to our group facilitator, Ms. Kim Sutherland from St. James UMC Alpharetta in the Atlanta Roswell District. Within the group, we also want to thank Kristina (Kiki) Orum for her pioneering efforts in building a congregational survey that several other group members only needed to modify the topic definition and re-use the base survey.

The members of Pure Sight, with their districts and home churches noted, are (alphabetically):

- Alan Brown – Athens Elberton District, Hartwell First UMC
- Lewis Lane – Gainesville District, Dillard UMC
- Kristina (Kiki) Orum – Augusta District, Lewis Memorial UMC
- Andy Pitman – Atlanta College Park District, Mt. Zion UMC Atlanta
- Billy Raj – Atlanta Emory District, Northwoods UMC
- Diane Shannon – Atlanta Decatur Oxford District, Salem UMC
- Dr. Julaunica Tigner – LaGrange District, Burks Chapel UMC
- Dean (Matt) Warrick – Northwest District, Cedar Grove UMC

Together with our facilitator, Pure Sight represents nine unique districts and almost 75% of the Conference congregations. As such, we hope you find this report representative of the Conference as a whole. We have enjoyed compiling it for you!

Our goals as Methodists and as graduates of LUMC include supporting the mission of the United Methodist Church to “make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world”; and the objectives of the North Georgia Conference to “develop Christian leaders, inspire young people, provide opportunities to serve those in need, and fulfill the mission of the denomination.” ([www.gnumc.org/aboutus](http://www.gnumc.org/aboutus))
Structure of this Report

Each section of the document will start with the title and the author’s name (for that section). Each section represents that author’s writing style, and their viewpoint on the particular focus area he or she selected to help answer the group’s question. The sections are presented here in the order that matches our summarized presentation to the full LUMC class and staff. Both that presentation and this accompanying project report are planned to be made available, along with all the other LUMC groups’ projects, on the North Georgia Conference website (www.ngumc.org) sometime after our final April 2017 session.
Lay Leader Roles/Responsibilities (Andy Pitman)

What is a “Lay Leader” and what are their primary roles and responsibilities?

One of the greatest characteristics of the United Methodist Church (UMC) is the involvement of the laity. With a clergy structure that is inherently itinerant, a consistent, well-led and well-trained laity is vital to the effectiveness and longevity of a particular congregation and the leadership of the laity is crucial. Although paragraph 251.1 of *The Book of Discipline* calls for election of “a” lay leader in each local church, the many roles and numerous responsibilities of lay leadership need to be accomplished by, sometimes, many people. The elected lay leader is the representative and coordinator of those lay leaders.

*The Book of Discipline* outlines the roles of the elected lay leader in paragraph 251.1 as follows:

- **a)** fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries;
- **b)** meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry;
- **c)** membership in the charge conference and the church council, the committee on finance, on the committee on nominations and leadership development, and the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations, where, along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church (to be better equipped to comply with this responsibility, it is recommended that a lay leader also serve as a lay member of annual conference);
- **d)** continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the Church’s reason for existence and the types of ministry that will most effectively fulfill the Church’s mission;
- **e)** assisting in advising the church council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the church through its laity in the community;
- **f)** informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference. Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities in order to strengthen his or her work. The lay leader is encouraged to become a certified lay servant.

While these roles are specified for the local church’s elected lay leader, any lay person in a position of leadership (finance, trustees, worship, youth, music, stewardship, missions, etc.) can benefit from assuming and implementing them, particularly those described in a, d and e. The focus of a lay leader should not be solely on the ministries within the church, but also those at home, in the community and around the globe. Lay leaders should strive and continue to learn more about their ministry on a regular basis. The needs for ministry change at a rapid rate and staying abreast of creative and proven methods to address those needs requires constant refinement and training. Making others in leadership positions aware of certain needs and ministry opportunities, both local and global, is also important.
The “connectional” nature of the UMC calls us to involve more people, thereby adding resources and ideas that might not be realized by a narrowly focused group or committee.

Discipleship Ministries provides online articles that summarize the job description and responsibilities of the lay leader and most positions of leadership in the local church, entitled Local Church Officer Job Descriptions. The information for “Lay Leader” outlines the responsibilities of the position of lay leader which includes many of the roles described earlier. Some of the responsibilities not included as roles include:

- The lay leader engages in spiritual practices that build a relationship of attentiveness to God’s will and direction.
- The lay leader represents the laypeople in the congregation and serves as a role model of Christian discipleship for the congregation.
- The lay leader plans with other leaders in the congregation for celebrating the ministry of laypeople throughout the year and especially on Laity Sunday.

Not only are leaders called to lead with their God-given gifts and attributes, but they are responsible for participating in spiritual practices and in programs of service, learning and training – leading by example. This follows the model of Christ, who studied in the temple as a young man, who served the hungry, physically weak and outcast, who taught his followers with parables and questions that required them to learn from and for themselves. In reality, a good lay leader should be the principal servant and hardest worker in the group they lead.

Celebration of the work of the laity is important. A leader is accountable for the effectiveness of the ministry for which he or she is responsible and when that ministry is successful, celebration of the people who provided their gifts and resources is appropriate. It serves to uplift and encourage the participant to continue in their good work and many times to pursue other avenues and ministries where they can utilize their talents.

A church can sometimes rely too heavily on the leadership of the pastor, many times resulting in an uninterested laity and/or an overworked pastor. The same situation can happen to the elected lay leader, where the laity, and even the pastor depends on and expects too much of him or her. The effectiveness of the mission of the local church is contingent upon the joint leadership of the pastor, the elected lay leader and the leaders of all the ministries and missions of the church. Many times, church members fail to consider themselves “lay leaders”. Nursery workers, Sunday School teachers, parking attendants, prayer warriors, etc. often do not recognize the importance of their service or see themselves as leaders.
A brief survey was conducted to understand lay leaders’ roles and responsibilities. The survey pool included 10 members of Mt. Zion United Methodist Church from various generations who were previously or are currently in positions of leadership as either the elected Lay Leader or chair persons of committees - finance, trustees, youth, missions, etc. Seven responses were received. The following questions were asked:

1. What do you consider the roles/responsibilities of a lay leader to be?
2. Who can be a lay leader?
3. What are some characteristics of a “good” lay leader?
4. What’s the difference between The Lay Leader and a lay leader?
5. How might lay leaders be effective in church growth and ministry?

The respondents were encouraged to answer candidly and not research any topics. Since the main topic of research was lay leadership roles and responsibilities and church growth and ministry, the summary of the survey responses will be focused on questions one and five.

A recurring response to the question of the roles and responsibilities of lay leaders was to act as a liaison between the pastor and the laity and to assist the pastor in any way possible – visiting the sick, participating in the worship service, etc. Several comments addressed attendance at meetings and participation on committees and a common theme was to live a Christ-like life. There was some blending of the responsibilities of the elected Lay Leader and the non-elected lay leader but that could be attributed to the wording of the question or the position of the question in the survey line-up. Two responsibilities that were suggested that did not appear throughout any of the previous research were regular attendance and regular financial support. These two traits are, however, implicit in the basics for becoming any kind of a lay leader.

When questioned about lay leaders’ effectiveness in church growth and ministry, most responses included identifying ways to grow and actively developing ways to grow through new ministries, programs or committees. In addition, working closely with the pastor to recognize new avenues of growth and ministry was a common theme. Outreach and evangelism also appeared in a number of responses.

References

(1) – *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2012*
(2) – *Local Church Officer Job Descriptions – Lay Leader; Discipleship Ministries*
Unity and Diversity in the Body

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Footnotes:

God has a plan for his church to include laity and clergy. The spiritual life of the laity is the same as for clergy. Everyone has a place and a purpose. Clergy leaders are the head of the body and laity is the rest of the church. No one person can pray all the prayers, teach all the lessons, preach all the messages.

God uniquely made his church a body with many parts without excluding any parts of the body.

Laity spiritual life should include persons who know and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They should be persons of good character whose life reflects their love of God and mankind, they are prayer warriors (1 Thessalonians 5:17) who continuously pray for self, others, the church universal, community they live in and the world.

Paul wrote to the evangelist Timothy, Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).
Being an approved worker involves more than just leading but to be diligent in service to God. God does not approve shoddy work so we will not be ashamed to stand before God in the judgment. It involves bringing an open mind, an open heart to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Lay leaders are called to study the word and teach truth, lead and participate in Bible Study and share with others the sacrifice of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ understanding the difference before old and New Testament covenants, understanding that the New Testament is the rule of practice for Christians today.

Laity and clergy work together for the goal of making disciples of all mankind without excluding any members of the body.

I am reminded of my experience as a teacher when we would sit around and complain about the bad children in our classes. If those bad children didn’t show up we wouldn’t have jobs. That is the way with clergy and laity and lay leaders, we can’t have one without the other.
Intentional Spiritual Growth (Kiki Orum)

*Intentional Spiritual Growth as Practiced by Lay Leaders in the Church*

As a vehicle to finding out how lay leaders perceive their own and others’ spiritual growth, I contrived a survey comprised of six questions and either personally interviewed or handed them out to 25 lay leaders in my church.

The survey is attached in the appendix; the following is the overall gist of what I discerned from the answers I received.

First a definition of Intentional Spiritual Growth;

1. It must be intentional – you can grow old without growing up, we must choose spiritual growth.
2. It is incremental – it takes place over time. Step by step process of making deeper and deeper commitments.
3. It is personal – no two disciples grow at the same rate or in the same manner. Our growth in grace is as God decides. No cookie cutter disciples.
4. It is practical and habitual – God gives us practical ways to grow; Bible reading, leading by the Holy Spirit, daily time with Him, Bible study private and corporate.
5. It is relational – We cannot grow alone but together in community and with accountability
6. It is multi-dimensional – Not just Bible Reading, but fellowship, worship private and corporate, discipleship, ministry and mission.
7. It is seasonal – Spring-Summer (growth and fruit bearing) and fall-winter (roots growing deep but fruit dormant) a time of strengthening
8. It is incarnational – Our goal is more that imitation of Christ. Christ in us is the hope of Glory in the world.

On a personal level for each person spiritual growth was a combination of striving for perfection, growing in their faith, determination to grow closer to God, and putting themselves in the path of God’s will for their lives.

How does one go about intentional spiritual growth? Without exception, all set aside special time for prayer and for studying the Bible, most set aside time in the morning and a few set aside time in the evening. These were not just random but constant and purposeful. Many also read devotionals that meant something to each of them. Worship every Sunday and sometimes midweek. They also attended Bible studies, some taught Sunday school and all attended Sunday School. All were either attending Disciple classes or had attended Disciple classes in the past. Fellowship with other believers on a regular basis and were members of small groups.
Some said they saw others doing the same things very much as they did as far as their spiritual growth was concerned. Others said it was sometimes difficult to tell and that it could be judgmental to try. I believe they observed that others in their small groups or Sunday school classes appeared to be doing the same things as they were doing.

The question of mature Christians elicited varied responses but some of the most thoughtful were that maturity often came with age but that Christian maturity was not necessarily a question of age but of where they were in their walk with Christ. Others thought that it could imply complacency and that we should never be complacent in our Christian walk because not going forward meant going backward. One statement that particularly spoke to me was that it indicated that a person had “it all figured out” and that this side of heaven we will never have it figured out. That we all need to strive to better our relationship with Christ but will always fall short. Because of the Cross we get second, third, fourth, etc. chances and that it never ends but that it will always take work and that is why we DO Christianity not PRACTICE Christianity. In short maturity in our Christian walk had more to do with trusting God in our everyday lives and despite circumstances, and in our obedience to His word to the best of our ability. Joy and contentment, despite circumstances around us, seemed to be the hallmark of the truly mature Christian.

The consensus about how to bring about growth and maturity to the world was first and foremost to continue to work on personal growth, then to interact with others. Most especially, love others as Christ has loved us. Unconditionally. We find it easy to interact with our friends and other believers but there can be difficult people in the world, those we might not usually associate with and yet these are the very ones we need to show Christ’s love to the most. Also, to continue to learn from our studies and our mentors and to disciple those who look up to us. To use our experiences, good and bad to help others when they need it.

The answers to the question, are we making disciples for the transformation of the world? Were a resounding “yes” and an equally resounding “no”. Let me explain; Yes, we are doing some positive things to make disciples such as sending out career missionaries and short term missionary teams to foreign countries to assist the career missionary’s and spread the gospel. Most of the time this is short term missionary teams that go and assist our career missionaries in their work. This is a very good thing. But, there are people from other countries sending missionaries here to our country and other Western countries to remind us of the gospel. Why is that? Because we have become afraid to even say we are Christians or proclaim publicly that we believe in Jesus Christ for fear of “offending” someone. We as a Church have some work to do in this country.

In conclusion, spiritual growth was a very present part of each person’s personal life, it was a lifestyle they chose and chose willingly and joyfully. Reaching out to others was also a large part of their lives, utilizing their spiritual gifts and reaching others for Christ was extremely important to each person I talked with or who filled out the survey.
Appendix

Intentional Spiritual Growth Survey

What is Intentional Spiritual Growth?

- It must be intentional – you can grow old without growing up, we must choose spiritual growth.
- It is incremental – it takes place over time. Step by step process of making deeper and deeper commitments
- It is personal – no two disciples grow at the same rate or in the same manner. Our growth in grace is as God decides. No cookie cutter disciples
- It is practical and habitual – God gives us practical ways to grow; Bible reading, leading by the Holy Spirit, daily time with Him, Bible study private and corporate.
- It is relational – We cannot grow alone but together in community and with accountability
- It is multi-dimensional – Not just Bible Reading, but fellowship, worship private and corporate, discipleship, ministry and mission.
- It is seasonal – Spring-Summer (growth and fruit bearing) and fall-winter (roots growing deep but fruit dormant) a time of strengthening
- It is incarnational – Our goal is more that imitation of Christ. Christ in us is the hope of Glory in the world.

Below is a survey about Intentional Spiritual Growth. I am involved in a project for Leadership United Methodist Church and this is my portion of the project. I would be honored if you would take a few minutes and answer these questions.

1. What is Intentional Spiritual Growth to You?
2. How do you personally go about achieving Spiritual Growth?
3. How do you observe others going about it”?
4. What do you think constitutes a “mature” Christian?
5. How can we/you bring about growth/maturity to the world/others?
6. Are we or are we not making disciples for the transformation of the world? If not, why not, and if so what are we doing right?
Witness (Billy Raj)

**WITNESS: A ROLE OF LAY LEADER IN THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.**

Our founder John Wesley and the early Methodists gave much importance to inviting people through witness and assisting them to grow in their knowledge and love of God through Christian living. In the life of the Methodists, we strongly believe that there are two aspects we learn from Jesus life and ministry. The Great Command and the Great Commission, that is love your neighbor as you love yourself and go and preach my Gospel to all nations. Within these two great pillars, our obedience to Christ rests as Methodists. Christ calls us to be His true witness. He said you are my witness. The word witness means one who testifies before the judge to facts or events which may or may not incriminate someone.

The root word witness in the original language in Greek is *martus, marturia* and *marturein*, it appears in the Bible more than 200 times and its synonyms occur many more times in the New Testament and the Old Testament. The word witness and the word martyr comes from the same root *μάρτυς* mártys. So witness is not just to testify something, but to be willing to surrender or lay down our lives for the sake of our witness to Jesus and His Gospel. In Hebrew *ayin-waw-dalet*, meaning 'return' or 'repeat', as witness we affirm his return and repeat His Gospel as often we can. While we ponder on to be His witnesses, Jesus cautioned us not to be a false witness (Matthew 19:18). That is, when we are not His witness, then we become His false witness in this world. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church emphasizes witness in a holistic approach which incorporates personal, congregational and communal levels of witnessing beyond our borders of religion, race, cultures and ethnics.

(Book of Discipline pp 251.c).

Sharing His Gospel is the life line of our existence. Christ’s mandate is to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all the nations. Here the word for Nations in Greek "ta ethney" stands for all communities irrespective of their religion, race, language and cultures. Witnessing is not a one time event, but it is a life style of a Lay Leader in the Methodist family. The disciples of Jesus Christ took the challenge and not limited to their own Jewish backyard but made His word known to the rest of the world especially the gentiles and became the **Martyrs** *(witness)*. Thus the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the churches.

What do we witness? Witnessing Jesus is sharing His love to the unloved world, and helping the helpless and giving hope to the hopeless ones through our talks and actions in the community where we live. In other words, we are His Missionaries to His call in an 'on call service 24/7'. When God saw the fallen world He sent His Son as a missionary to us to witness the love of God and save the world. He became the light and shines brighter as darkness gets darker.
As we are His witness, we are the salt and light of this generation. As a salt, we help the community to taste and see that the Lord is good and as a light we help the dark soul come into the shining light of the Gospel. As Christ’s witnesses we are called to "Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World".

Bibliography

Ed by in Strong’s exhaustive Concordance, June 20, 2016.


Grace (Lewis Lane)

What is Grace?

From UMC.org- Book of Discipline

Grace pervades our understanding of Christian faith and life. By grace we mean the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit. While the grace of God is undivided, it precedes salvation as “prevenient grace,” continues in “justifying grace,” and is brought to fruition in “sanctifying grace.”

We assert that God’s grace is manifest in all creation even though suffering, violence, and evil are everywhere present. The goodness of creation is fulfilled in human beings, who are called to covenant partnership with God. God has endowed us with dignity and freedom and has summoned us to responsibility for our lives and the life of the world.

In God’s self-revelation, Jesus Christ, we see the splendor of our true humanity. Even our sin, with its destructive consequences for all creation, does not alter God’s intention for us—holiness and happiness of heart. Nor does it diminish our accountability for the way we live.

Despite our brokenness, we remain creatures brought into being by a just and merciful God. The restoration of God’s image in our lives requires divine grace to renew our fallen nature.

Prevenient Grace—We acknowledge God’s prevenient grace, the divine love that surrounds all humanity and precedes any and all of our conscious impulses. This grace prompts our first wish to please God, our first glimmer of understanding concerning God’s will, and our “first slight transient conviction” of having sinned against God.

God’s grace also awakens in us an earnest longing for deliverance from sin and death and moves us toward repentance and faith.

Justification and Assurance—We believe God reaches out to the repentant believer in justifying grace with accepting and pardoning love. Wesleyan theology stresses that a decisive change in the human heart can and does occur under the prompting of grace and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In justification we are, through faith, forgiven our sin and restored to God’s favor. This righting of relationships by God through Christ calls forth our faith and trust as we experience regeneration, by which we are made new creatures in Christ.

This process of justification and new birth is often referred to as conversion. Such a change may be sudden and dramatic, or gradual and cumulative. It marks a new beginning, yet it is part of an ongoing process. Christian experience as personal transformation always expresses itself as faith working by love.

Our Wesleyan theology also embraces the scriptural promise that we can expect to receive assurance of our present salvation as the Spirit “bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.”
**Sanctification and Perfection**—We hold that the wonder of God’s acceptance and pardon does not end God’s saving work, which continues to nurture our growth in grace. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to increase in the knowledge and love of God and in love for our neighbor.

New birth is the first step in this process of sanctification. Sanctifying grace draws us toward the gift of Christian perfection, which Wesley described as a heart “habitually filled with the love of God and neighbor” and as “having the mind of Christ and walking as he walked.”

This gracious gift of God’s power and love, the hope and expectation of the faithful, is neither warranted by our efforts nor limited by our frailties.

**Wesley’s Means of Grace**

Courageous and forward-leaning mission congregations practice spiritual disciplines. Our vital work is a spiritual adventure based in John Wesley’s means of grace. John Wesley taught that God’s grace is unearned and that we were not to be idle waiting to experience grace but we are to engage in the means of grace. The means of grace are ways God works invisibly in disciples, hastening, strengthening; and confirming faith so that God’s grace pervades in and through disciples. As we look at the means of grace today, they can be divided into works of piety and the works of mercy.

**Works of Piety**

Individual Practices – reading, meditating and studying the scriptures, prayer, fasting, regularly attending worship, healthy living, and sharing our faith with others

Communal Practices – regularly share in the sacraments, Christian conferencing (accountability to one another), and Bible study

**Works of Mercy**

Individual Practices - doing good works, visiting the sick, visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry, and giving generously to the needs of others

Communal Practices – seeking justice, ending oppression and discrimination (for instance Wesley challenged Methodists to end slavery), and addressing the needs of the poor

Making disciples, growing vital congregations and transforming the world is part of a spiritual adventure that is empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit as churches engage in the means of grace. Spiritual goals are accomplished by connecting the means of grace with proven vital church practices such as planning, strategic direction, prioritization, clear focus and alignment.

According to Dictionary.com the meaning of Lead is: To go with and show the way.
Lay Leaders and Worship (Dr. Julaunica Tigner)

What is worship? Worship is defined as “an acknowledgment of the worthiness, respect, and reverence; an act or attitude intended to recognize the worth of God, to honor God.” (Common English Bible 1428). In other words, worship is the action of giving honor to God through praises and thanksgiving. Based on the definition, worship is an action that is individually or a group (congregational) approach. Worship requires planning (the why) and execution of the plan (the how). These are important steps in determining the type or pattern of worship. There are six patterns of worship: Anglican (1662 Book of Common Prayer), early Methodist Society (exhortatory preaching and prayer), revival (seeker service), Sunday school (or creative worship), aesthetic (or traditional worship), Pentecostal (praise and worship), and Word and table (Phillips and Burton-Edwards 2). By having several different patterns of worship styles, members of congregation may have different expectations of what they consider “good worship”. Additionally, these six patterns incorporated to two categories, which are traditional and contemporary worship. A traditional worship service consists of using “traditional hymns, prayers and creeds”; however, a contemporary worship service consists of “using different technologies, leadership and music styles” (Phillips and Burton-Edwards 2). The importance of a clear why we worship in the planning of worship and how worship is carried out is key for essential cohesive service. In the United Methodist church a typical worship service may go as follows: 1) greeting and opening prayer, 2) an opportunity for the people to greet one another, 3) scripture readings, 4) silent prayer and meditation, 5) an offering, 6) the Lord’s Prayer, 7) a children’s message, 8) the sermon, 9) special music and hymns, and 10) a closing prayer (What will happen during a typical worship service? 1). The worship service may also include communion. This pattern of worship is the word and table.

Moreover, to get a glance of worship in a local church, a survey was given to my home church - Burks Chapel UMC in LaGrange, GA. This UM church has membership of ~50-100 members, 99% of our population is of African American descent with large older and young adult population. In the survey, the participants answered questions related to worship. The following questions were asked: 1) What is worship?, 2)What does worship mean to you?, 3)How do you personally worship?, 4) How do you observe others worship?, 5) How can we bring about growth/maturity to the world/others through worship?, and 6) Are we making disciples for the transformation of the world through our worship? If not, why not, and if so how? What are we doing right?

For the first question, the responses were similar as the participants all said that worship was giving honor to God, giving thanks to God for being God, and hearing a word of wisdom and encouragement from God. In the second question, the responses were again similar, the participants all stated praising God for his many blessings and having special time to spend with God is vital to sustaining their relationship with God. The third question responses on how they worship changed slightly - they worship God through service for others, through prayer, song, dance, tongues and praise, through loving one another, asking God guidance on what I can do daily to make Him happy, witnessing and sharing their testimony and reading scriptures and devotionals, and attending church. The fourth question responses were different - most responded that they observed others worship in their witness to the word of God through singing and praying, emotional feeling of God’s presence through others, praising God out loud, clapping hands and nodding heads, attending worship services and other events at other churches (fellowship with others), spiritual dance, and attending church. Only one individual indicated they did not observe others worship.

For the fifth question the participants responses on how to bring about growth were sharing spiritual gifts to help others, praying and studying of God’s word, inviting people to worship, meeting people
where they are and telling them about the Bible, inviting people to Bible study, praying with people, having events that reach out to the world and different cultures, uplifting God in worship and prayer, communicating and encouraging people - asking what they like to share, speaking the word of truth through God's word (without twisting the meaning for selfish reasons), sharing personal experiences (our life story), being sincere with what we do (not putting on a show), and loving God and thanking Him for His goodness.

For the last question, the responses were all unique and personal. One person indicated we do not make disciples when we are selfish, envious of others or exclude others and look down on others rather include others; however, when we share with others the goodness of God's mercy, grace, love, accepting of others, showing them and telling them about God's love and praying they will accept God as their personal Savior then we make disciples of the world. A few responded that people have become more selfish, not caring for others, people have become self-focused, and are all about the entertainment factor or personal gain. Another person indicated that by serving and loving others in need we are making disciples of the world. Another person stated by involving the youth at an early age to be involved with the worship service makes disciples of the world. Other responses to this question included praying, witnessing, encouraging others, sharing our story of faith, and sharing our testimony to allow others to see the greatness of our God. By the survey responses, it is clear that worship is essential in our relationship with God. It also an opportunity to invite and bring others to get to know God and ultimately accept God as their personal Savior.

Let's explore what one UM church is doing through worship. The Westchester UM church located in Bronx, NY has a steel pan ministry. In a video clip, the steel pan members, the members of church, and the pastor, Rev. Dr. Gordon A.R. Edwards, Ph.D., Psy.D, are interviewed. The video interview starts off with a youth named Mr. Charles Hill explaining why he attends his church, which is to “pray to God, celebrate God, and play the drums” (0:01 / 2:35-0:07 / 2:35). Watching the clip, you can see and experience how this ministry has enhanced the worship of this church. At the end of the interview, Dr. Edwards made some profound points. He said, "We are living in times when people tend to transition and transition a lot, and the congregations go through those transitions in terms of numbers, in terms of growth. If churches are going to grow, they have to look within themselves, hone the skills and the gifts they have, and whatever their gifts might be in the congregation, put those at the disposal of the community. And it becomes one of those tools that God uses to grow the church. That's what we did here at Westchester" (1:30 / 2:35-2:05 / 2:35). In other words, each church has spiritual gifts within that need to be tapped into and shared with the community that God can and will use to grow that church.
References

3. “What will happen during a typical worship service?.” *umc.org*, www.umc.org/what-we-believe/what-will-happen-during-a-typical-worship-service

Appendix

Worship Survey

1. What is worship?
2. What does worship mean to you?
3. How do you personally worship?
4. How do you observe others worship?
5. How can we bring about growth/maturity to the world/others through worship?
6. Are we making disciples for the transformation of the world through our worship? If not, why not, and if so how? What are we doing right?
Partnership (Matt Warrick)

The United Methodist Church did an in-depth study through a survey, conducted in the last quadrennial. 27,000 of these Churches surveyed were considered vital. There were 16 ministry strategies identified as major contributors to the success of the Churches. These were broken into four groups: Engagement of Disciples, Lay Leadership, Pastor, and Worship. Our group was tasked with a key driver under lay Leadership. The driver is (Vital Churches focus on increasing the effectiveness of lay leaders).

The Group further broke down these key drivers by identifying what made up the characteristics of a Church leader. The aspect of leadership I will be writing about is Partnership. Vital leaders have the ability to build and maintain partnerships, in and outside of the Church. Jim Nibblelink in his 2000 address to the general conference in Ohio said there were “Three Characteristics of a successful partnership”. He described these Characteristics as Respect, Responsibilities, and Risk. Broken down further he said Respect was that “each partner should acknowledge the other for the gifts brought to the ministry. Responsibilities were “willing to hold others in the congregation responsible in their own right for some aspect of ministry. Finally Risk as “successful partnerships require risk taking, Pastors and leaders within laity are willing to rock the boat if the situation calls for it”\(^1\).

The Clergy and Laity relationship is the Partnership I would like to focus on. Many Churches only have one Pastor, and even then they may not be full time. Laity is there to help with all aspect of the ministry. Both Clergy and Laity need to trust and guide each other. Planting this seed of trust can bloom into outreach programs, new ministries and community friendships. In the book of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 states that “two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer, three are even better, for a triple braided cord in not easily broken.” (NLT) There’s more than just strength in numbers, there’s diversity of people strengths and weaknesses making you a more capable team. Some are called to minister, some to lead and others to serve. Its these characteristics of ourselves that we bring to a partnership to make it stronger.

\(^1\) Gc2000.org/gc2000news/stories/gc006.htm
There are many other areas Laity can build partnerships within the Church. It’s important to build within the congregation itself. Churches looking to make the next quadrennial’s Vital Church list would be Prudent in developing Laity who know how to network in and outside of the Church.

Speaker Notes will elaborate on the three bullets below partnership:

- “The Clergy-Lay leader partnership is to hold each other accountable – Bishop Sue Haupert-Johnson²
- Partnership
  o Respect
  o Responsibilities
  o Risk
- Ecclesiastes 4:9 “Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed” (NLT)1a

---

² Leadership UMC “Clergy & Laity in shared Ministry” Speech, March 10 2017 by Bishop Sue Haupert-Johnson
Rotational Leadership (Alan Brown)

There is clear and significant support in many areas for the concept of rotational leadership. The Vital Congregations work mentioned earlier in this project listed an emphasis on rotating lay leadership as one of 16 key strategies. Other supporting views start with an example of God’s beauty in nature; then weave through multiple studies and references from science, schools and business; and finish with strong support from Christian authors, clergy, scriptures and a local survey of my own church.

One of the most beautiful visualizations of the concept of rotational leadership is the model in nature of the flight of a flock of Canadian geese. While one goose takes a turn leading the flock’s classic “V” formation, the other members of the flock honk in support of that leader. When the leader tires, he falls back into the formation, only to be replaced by another member of the flock that has been flying in the wind draft of the “V”, conserving energy for its turn to lead. If a member of the flock tires too much or is injured and has to leave the formation to land, two other members of the flock go with them to the ground. Together those grounded members support each other until those that are healthy enough can rejoin their group or another group. Leaders rotate, all offer peer support, and the group travels 71% further in one flight than any single goose could alone.

Published studies from the academic and business world also support rotational leadership as a desired model. Nicholas Goh found that rotational leadership allows leaders to acquire new skills, but also requires those leaders to consider a transition plan for their successors, and school culture consultants William Hughes and Terry Pickeral added that shared leadership becomes a “force multiplier.” Another published study showed an opportunity with change in leadership is “to define a new vision, look at what’s working and what needs improving, and set a new course.” Jason Davis and Kathleen Eisenhardt did a comprehensive study of leadership styles across eight high tech collaboration examples. In that study, the authors concluded through their analysis that “a rotating leadership process is associated with more innovation” when compared to other leadership models.

With respect to church-based ideas on rotational leadership, there is a richness of information. Reverend Herzen Andone took the LUMC class through multiple points of view on why and how Leadership Matters. Although we are all broken, all Christians are redeemed by Christ, and all are called to serve. The promise in this service is from Luke 10: 3 – “The harvest is bigger than you can imagine!” In his book High Yield, author Lovett Weems, Jr. says, “The leader is not the main character, but has a special responsibility to make sure the story is communicated often.” Author Ann Michel defines a synergistic ministry as grounded in the concept of the whole people of God being called to serve God and one another. She adds that the multiplying effect of synergistic leadership adds exponential growth to the church, and affirms that new leaders can breathe new life into a congregation.

Within the context of our Pure Sight group, and my home congregation at Hartwell First United Methodist Church, other key observations emerge. The Pure Sight group spans a range of experiences and backgrounds - both secular and religious; a range and diversity of ideas; and a range of Spiritual Gifts as described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. Considering just the top two gifts from each of our members, we share the gifts of Discernment, Shepherding, Giving, Wisdom, Faith, Exhortation, Witness, Teaching, and Prophesy. We believe that this diversity of gifts is representative of similar, somewhat
random groupings within the Church. By rotating through lay leadership positions, this diversity of gifts adds richness, depth and growth to each area of need. Noted American scientist Linus Pauling said, “The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas.” Surely this thought can be leveraged through a diversity of gifts and lay leaders as well.

These ideas are further evidenced in the results of a survey that was administered to both past and current lay leaders in my church (see Appendix for more survey detail). Again, the range and diversity of the survey respondents was broad and evident. Some leaders had many hours of formal training; some had no training or mentoring at all. Some leaders grew in the Methodist Church as young children of clergy; some are relatively new to the church. The range of time as lay leaders spanned from just a few months to 40 years of service. Many common themes still emerged. Lay leader attributes that were repeatedly mentioned as vital (more than 25% of the time) include listening, caring, practicing faith, and mutual love of church activities and faith. To maintain church vitality, respondents suggest that small groups activities, and generally being proactively hospitable and helping are core areas and building blocks for growing lay leadership. The final items to note from the survey support many of the points already discussed here. Rotational Leadership -

- Facilitates new ideas, new perspective and new life breathe for the church. It can keep strong, experienced leaders from getting burned out;
- Enriches the skill set of the leader, bringing them broader understanding of the many elements of the church and allowing them to focus where their interest and effectiveness are strongest;
- Should NOT be undertaken purely for the sake of rotation. Rotating out a strong lay leader with little underlying reason can weaken that area of focus, or reduce the energy level of both leaders. Strong leaders can mentor others to grow. One strong comment to close this thought said, “Never rotate someone in unless they have interest in that area.”
References


2. Based on the original work of Milton Olsen, referenced in a 1991 speech by Angeles Arrien, and then transcribed in Joel Garfinkle’s Executive Coaching Articles in an article titled “Leadership Lessons from Geese”. Copyright ©2005-2017 Joel Garfinkle, All Rights Reserved.


7. From presentations by Reverend Herzen Andone to Leadership UMC class on January 14, 2017


Appendix

Lay Leadership Survey (submitted to 50 current and past lay leaders at Hartwell First UMC in Hartwell, GA. 21 of those invited, responded)

Who are Lay Leaders, and What is Their Role?

Broadly stated, a Lay Leader is any layperson in our congregation in a leadership position. These can be formal positions (Conference Lay Leader, SPRC Chair, etc.) or less formal roles like Sunday School teacher or small group leader.

According to the “Toward Vitality Research Project” in 2012, the role of Lay Leader is as the “hands and feet of change (to help) laity feel inspired, empowered, and connected to a sense of calling”. That sense of calling could include both personal spiritual growth and church growth.

Lay leadership is personal – no two leaders grow at the same rate or in the same manner. Our growth in grace is as God decides. It is relational – As we lead, we grow together in community and accountability. It is multi-dimensional – Not just Bible Reading, but fellowship, worship private and corporate, discipleship, ministry and mission. And it is seasonal – Spring-Summer (growth and fruit bearing) and fall-winter (roots growing deep but fruit dormant - a time of strengthening).

Please consider those thoughts and your own point of view of Lay Leadership in answering the following questions.

1. What does Lay Leadership mean to you?
2. How much training or mentoring have you received to be a more effective Lay Leader? Was it formal or informal?
3. How long in total have you been in what you would consider Lay Leadership positions? In which specific roles?
4. What attributes, skills and experiences are most important for effective Lay Leaders? How can the diversity of Spiritual Gifts within Lay Leadership influence this area?
5. What are you best personal or observed examples of effective Lay Leadership?
6. How can the concept of rotational leadership (taking a variety of assignments, or new leaders rotating through key leadership roles) improve the effectiveness of Lay Leadership being vital to church growth and ministry?
7. Where do you get your information about the church? Please list all sources that apply - examples could include your pastor, church staff, church bulletins and newsletters, other church members, HFUMC website, North Georgia Conference website, UMC website, or “other sources” (please be as specific as possible). Which of these sources do you use most often? Least often?
8. How can we/you bring about Christian growth, vitality and discipleship to our church? To the world/others?
9. What is your current (or most recent) Lay Leadership role?