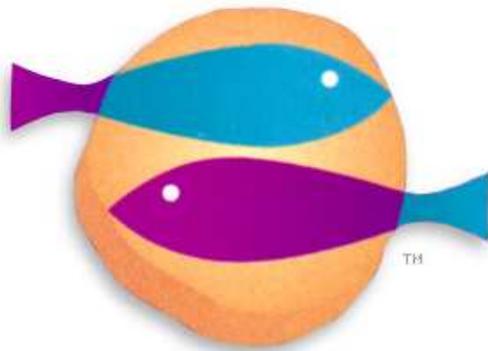


LAY LEADERS: CATCHERS OF PEOPLE

A TRAINING MANUAL FOR LAY LEADERS
OF THE VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
(Revised 2009)



Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid from now on you will be catching people.”

Luke 5:3b-10 NRSV

THE BOARD OF LAITY OF THE VIRGINIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
WISHES TO THANK CAROLYNE ROGERSON, LAY LEADER OF THE SOUTH
CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE; DR. EDWARD WHITE OF THE ALBAN
INSTITUTE WASHINGTON, DC; AND THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF LAITY
FOR THEIR WORK IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS MANUAL.

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE VISION STATEMENT

“We envision faith communities where all God’s people are welcomed at table, nurtured and transformed to be Christ to others in the world.”

OUR CHALLENGE

*Let’s Get Growing – All for Jesus:
More People, More Young People,
More Diverse People*

OUR CORE STRATEGY

All Things New is an invitation for the Virginia Conference to live into a new reality for mission. This invitation is twofold: first, we are invited to plant 250 faith communities in the next 30 years and second, we are inviting our existing churches to become renewed.

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I

CHRISTIAN AS MINISTER

**I AM THE VINE,
YOU ARE THE BRANCHES.
THOSE WHO ABIDE IN ME
AND I IN THEM
BEAR MUCH FRUIT,
BECAUSE
APART FROM ME
YOU CAN DO NOTHING.
JOHN 15:5 NRSV**

Laities are involved in the ministry of reconciliation. Every day provides laity with the opportunity to reconcile people to God and to each other through Jesus Christ. If the cause of Christ is significantly advanced in today's world, it will be the laity who are in the forefront.

Joe E. Pennel, Jr., Bishop
Virginia Annual Conference
March 1999

Jesus Christ was a member of the laity.

Dr. Evelyn Laycock
Former Director
Lay Ministry Center, Lake Junaluska

Ye have nothing to do but to save souls.

John Wesley, late 18th Century

Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. Zechariah 4:6 NSRV

God, through the prophet Zechariah
6th Century BC

All Authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28.18-20 NSRV

Jesus Christ, c. 30 AD

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Mission Statement 2009-2012
United Methodist Church
(2008 Book of Discipline, ¶120)

CRUCIAL MOMENTS

Message to those called to Lay ministry

Life is filled with crucial moments.

- The timing of a marriage proposal.
- The decision to have a child.
- The decision to borrow money to begin a new business.
- The decision to end a failing business.
- The decision about accepting Christ as Savior.
- Decisions about where to live, what job to accept, the correct school for the children.
- Decisions about money management, whether to argue, who will do the dishes.
- Decisions about war and peace.

People of Jesus' day also faced crucial moments.

- Peter and Andrew left their fishing boats, their nets and livelihood.
- James and John did the same. They left their father as well.
- Matthew walked away from his tax booth.
- Zachaeus climbed a tree.
- Blind Bartimaeus called out for mercy.
- The people shouted for the release of Barabbas.
- Jesus said, "Yet not my will, but Thine be done."
- Judas accepted the pieces of silver.
- The woman with a hemorrhage reached out and touched the hem of Jesus' cloak.
- Paul made tents and taught Priscilla and Aquila about Christ.

All crucial moments are life-affecting, life-changing moments.

In the Gospel according to St. Luke, there is a record of three others who faced crucial moments.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9.57-62 NRSV)

The first man told Jesus that he would follow Jesus wherever He went. Jesus answered this seemingly dedicated man by saying that he, Jesus, was homeless. "The birds have a place to live, the foxes have homes, but I have no place to lay my head." What discouraging words for the man who seemed so determined to follow Christ. It almost seems as if Jesus did not want this man to follow Him. This is not the case; Jesus was simply telling this man that following Him meant that there would be a price to pay.

As we look at those who have chosen to follow Christ we often find that Christian people have to pay prices and sometimes great prices.

Jesus spoke to **the second man**. Jesus said, "Follow me." That is all, nothing but "Follow me." The man said that he needed to go home and bury his father first. Then, once again Jesus made a remark that seemed, on the surface, to be a harsh remark. He said, "Let the dead bury the dead. Go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Bible scholars tell us that Jesus was not being harsh at all. They indicate that in all likelihood the man's father was not sick and probably nowhere near dying. You see, the man had some things he wanted to do before he committed to Christ.

The third man said to Jesus that he would follow him, but he wanted to go home and say farewell to his family first. Once again, Christ knew the heart of the man. This man too had things he wanted to do first, so Jesus said, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Jesus may have been telling this man that souls cannot be won for Him by concentrating on the past. He may also have been saying that he wanted no lukewarm service: that those who served Him must ever have their hand on the plow shafts; and, must be ever planting and harvesting for Christ.

Each one of these men came to a crucial moment. The first had to decide if the price was too great to pay. The second had things to do before he would commit to Christ. The third said he was willing to serve but only when it was convenient.

Crucial moments...missed.

There is a book titled Called to Be a Layman by Gus Gustafson. The book is filled with marvelous Bible teachings and stories of lay people, like many of us, who have come to understand the biblical meaning of Christian ministry. These are people who have committed to be in ministry twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

When one looks at these stories about lay persons who have committed to be Christian ministers, one sees common characteristics among them.

- Each one had accepted Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Each one had determined to order their lives after the Bible.
- Each one was an avid pray-er. They made their prayers constant and specific. They set aside time for quiet prayer and devotion, they prayed “bullet prayers” all day long, they kept prayer lists and journals, they had prayer partners and they prayed with their spouses.
- Each one had surrendered everything to Christ. Each was totally available to Him.
- Each one was alert to the bidding of Christ.
- Each one was willing to trust Christ completely.
- Each one was willing to give up fortune, fame, self...and some had to.
- Each one faced trouble and each one had times of fear.
- Each one saw no difference between their sacred life and their secular life. The two had become one.
- Each one saw Christian ministry as a way of life, becoming witnesses for Christ in every part of their lives.
- Each one faced many crucial moments.

One comes to understand that as important and valuable as our called pastors are to the life of the Church, God’s greatest need is truly not for more preachers. God’s greatest need is for more committed lay people who will witness for Christ in their everyday lives. Those who are called to the full time pastorate are vital as spiritual leaders; however, pastors will tell you that people are mostly won to Christ not from the pulpit or from evangelists or from books...as important as all these are. Pastors will tell you that most people are won to Christ through some person’s

caring about them, through some person's sharing the love of Christ with them, through the witness of some Christian person. Souls are most often won for Christ individual to individual.

In his book, Gustafson quotes these words from Elton Trueblood: "It is just as important for one boy to decide to be a Christian businessman as it is for another boy to decide to become a Christian clergyman."

Local Church Lay Leaders come face to face with many crucial moments. Lay Leaders are in the ministry of leading others to Christ and of equipping others to be in ministry for Christ. Lay Leaders quickly learn that opportunities for ministry come daily and opportunities missed may mean that some person may never come to know Christ as Lord.

The ministry of the laity flows from a commitment to Christ's outreaching love. Lay members of The United Methodist Church are, by history and calling, active advocates of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **Every layperson is called to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20); every layperson is called to be missional.** The witness of the laity, their Christ-like examples of everyday living as well as the sharing of their own faith experiences of the Gospel, is the primary evangelistic ministry through which all people will come to know Christ and The United Methodist Church will fulfill its mission. **(The Ministry of the Laity 2009-2012 United Methodist Church 2008 Book of Discipline, Paragraph 126)**

UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Lay Leaders **need training** in order to **fulfill their call** to ministry as leaders of the laity in The United Methodist Church.
2. All Lay Leaders are **not in the same place** in terms of training, experience in leadership position and call.

II

STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE LAY LEADERSHIP

Because lay ministry has been instrumental in the spread of the gospel from the earliest times and especially in the establishment of The United Methodist Church, and because God, through baptism and confirmation, continues to call each believer into ministry, the Board of Laity lifts up the crucial importance of lay ministry and urges lay people to take this call seriously, committing themselves to grow in faith and ministry. We thank the pastors who commit themselves to leading lay people to discover and develop their ministries and who partner with them in this great adventure of faith and discipleship.

Standards for Lay Leadership in the Churches of the Virginia Conference

These standards for Lay Leadership provide a vision of what the laity of the church are called to be and do as they live out the church's mission of bringing people into fellowship with God. Like the Standards for Clergy Leadership in the Virginia Conference, this list is not exhaustive but expresses the current priorities of the conference. Each lay leader and pastor is responsible for presenting and interpreting this vision to their Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development and to their congregation.

This document is intended:

- 1) to assist the local church Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development in selection, training and evaluation of church leaders.
- 2) to help current leaders evaluate their own leadership as they plan for continued growth.
- 3) to help potential leaders as they consider their response to an invitation to leadership.
- 4) to be lifted up before the congregation as a goal for all disciples to work toward.

This document recognizes that all Christians are on a journey of faith and discipleship, and that no one meets all these standards. As such, we accept them as goals and call ourselves to continue to work toward the vision.

Leaders model - at home, at work/school, and in the world, as well as at church -- what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ:

PRIMARY COMMITMENTS

- Leaders recognize that commitment to Jesus Christ is the foundation for all leadership in the church, and that commitment to God's will is the beginning of all vision.

- They recognize making disciples of Jesus Christ as the primary goal of the Church and of individual Christians.
- They see those who are closest to them - their family and friends -- as the front-line arena for their ministry/service, and commit to give them the best of themselves rather than the left-overs.

CHARACTER

- Leaders seek to respond to conflict as Jesus did - directly, openly, and responsibly, treating others with respect and always seeking justice, healthy accountability, and reconciliation.
- They recognize the importance of character and seek to become people whose lives are marked by integrity and compassion, and who treat others with respect regardless of their race, gender, social status, theological viewpoint, or any other human difference.
- They intentionally pursue spiritual growth and renewal of body, mind and spirit, setting aside time to deepen their relationship with God and to grow in faith and discipleship.

LEADERSHIP STYLE

- Leaders are determined to be servant-leaders, seeking the good of the kingdom rather than their own power and status, and making decisions based on the good of the whole Church rather than their own preferences.
- They listen to God, to the community, to their congregation, and to others of differing viewpoints, as well as to their own hearts as they discern visions and set goals for their church's future and ministry.
- They are future-oriented, willing to take risks as they encourage others to celebrate the past while moving toward the future.
- They partner with their pastors -- praying for, supporting and encouraging them, and dealing honestly and openly with difficult issues.
- They seek to identify, nurture, encourage and support leadership in others.

AREAS OF DISCIPLESHIP

- Leaders seek to grow in all areas of discipleship.
- They commit to regular, frequent participation in worship and study, and to grow in giving, service, and prayer.
- They recognize tithing as the traditional standard for giving and commit to grow toward or beyond tithing.
- They support the ministries and programs of the local church, district, conference, and general church, in order to more effectively accomplish the mission of the Church.
- They seek to understand and interpret the Methodist distinctives: history, tradition, beliefs, worship, structure, and vision.
- They are committed to discovering, developing and practicing their spiritual gifts, and to encourage others to do the same.
- They are committed to hands-on service in and beyond the local church, meeting the practical and spiritual needs of others in the church, the community and the world.

**ALL GOD'S PEOPLE IN
ALL PLACES,
AND IN
ALL TIMES,
ARE CALLED TO LOVE
AND TO SERVE.**

Ministry of the Laity

III

CHURCH STRUCTURE

**AND HE SAID TO THEM, “GO INTO
ALL THE WORLD AND PROCLAIM
THE GOOD NEWS TO THE WHOLE
CREATION.”**

Mark 16.15 NRSV

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The structure of The United Methodist Church is to center around mission and ministry for Christ.

The United Methodist Church is organized structurally as:

- **The General Conference which is for the entire Church;**
- **Jurisdictional Conferences based on geographical and regional divisions of the United States;**
- **Central Conferences for the Church outside the United States;**
- **Annual Conferences;**
- **Districts;**
- **Local churches and charges.**

STRUCTURE OF THE GENERAL CHURCH

JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Interprets legislation

GENERAL CONFERENCE

Meets every four years (Quadrennium)
Enacts binding legislation

COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

Oversight of 69 Episcopal areas in US and the Central Conferences

ORGANIZATION*

5 Jurisdictional Conferences in US

62 Annual Conferences in US with 504 Districts

73 Annual Conferences in Africa, Europe, and the Philippines

41,589 Local Churches

11,221,781 lay members worldwide
55,346 clergy members worldwide
11,277,127 total members (lay and clergy)

Source: *The United Methodist Church: Making Disciples for the Transformation of the World*

GENERAL BOARDS AND AGENCIES

Connectional Table
General Council on Finance and Administration
General Board of Church and Society
General Board of Discipleship
General Board of Global Ministries
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
General Board of Pension and Health Benefits
General Commission on Archives and History
General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns
General Commission on United Methodist Men
General Commission on Religion and Race
General Commission on the Status and Role of Women
General Commission on Communication
The United Methodist Publishing House

General Conference meets every four years and rotates among the five jurisdictions in the United States: 2012 – Tampa, FL

Legislation is passed by General Conference; however, legislation that would change the Constitution of The United Methodist Church must be affirmed “by two-thirds affirmative vote of the aggregate number of members of the several annual conferences present and voting...” (§59, *2008 Book of Discipline*.)

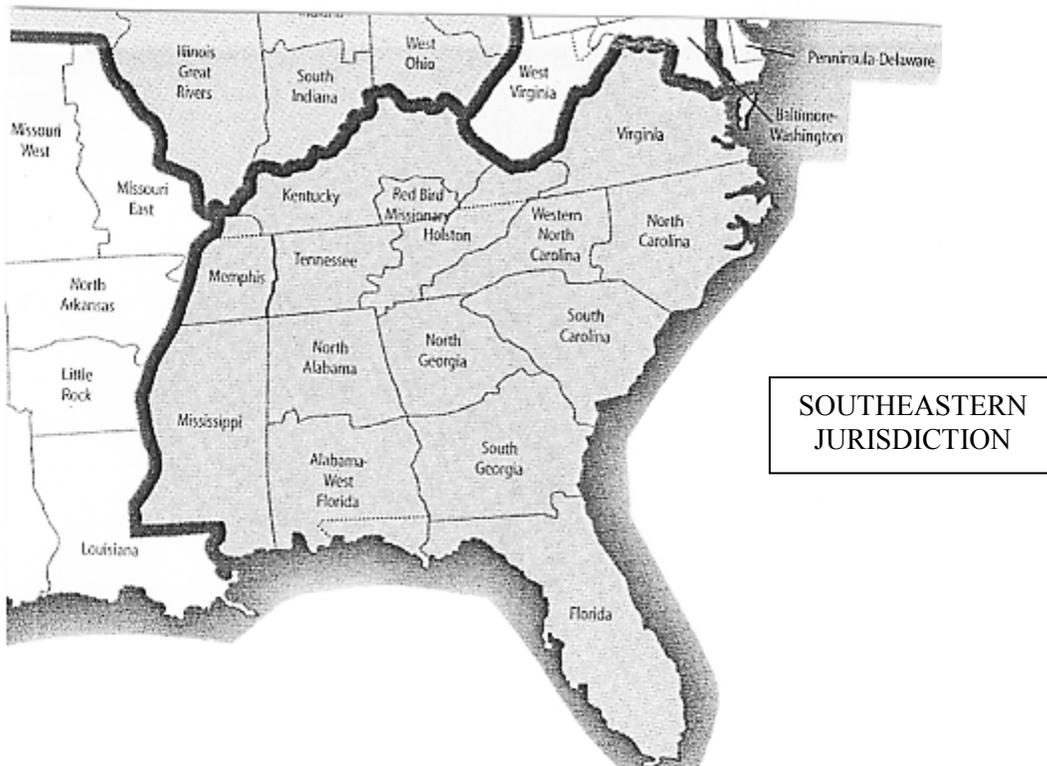
The General Conference **may modify *The Discipline*** of The United Methodist Church and **adopt resolutions** to be placed in the **Book of Resolutions**.

The Judicial Council is in attendance during General Conference sessions. When requested to do so, the Council reviews the constitutionality of proposed legislation.

STRUCTURE OF THE SOUTHEAST JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE

There are fifteen Annual Conferences in the Southeast Jurisdiction: Virginia, North Carolina, Western North Carolina, Holston, Red Bird Missionary, Kentucky, Tennessee, Memphis, Mississippi, North Alabama, Alabama-West Florida, Florida, South Georgia, North Georgia and South Carolina.

NOTE: The boundaries of all annual conferences do not necessarily conform to actual state boundaries.



ANNUAL CONFERENCE STRUCTURES VARY FROM CONFERENCE TO CONFERENCE

Most Annual Conferences have an assigned bishop although some Conferences share a bishop. Annual Conferences are divided into districts with District Superintendents in each. Duties and responsibilities of the conferences and districts are defined in the *2008 Book of Discipline*.

LOCAL CHURCH STRUCTURE *2008 BOOK OF DISCIPLINE*

The General Conference encourages **greater diversity in local church organization**. Organization is to be built around mission and ministry. The mission of The United Methodist Church is “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

**And He said to them, “Go into all the world
and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”**

Mark 16:25

Each local church has the right to determine the structure which will enable the church to effectively engage in ministry. If the present church structure is serving this purpose, the church is not required to make any changes. If, however, the structure of the local church is altered, the *2008 Book of Discipline* must be followed. Some guidelines follow.

THE SHALLS

Charge Conference
Church Council
Staff/Pastor-Parish
Relations Committee
Committee on Finance
Committee on
Nominations
and Leadership
Development
Trustees

REQUIRED POSITIONS

Church Council Chairperson
Lay Leader
Lay Member to Annual Conference
Church Treasurer

REQUIRED ORGANIZATIONS

United Methodist Men
United Methodist Women
Sunday School

N.O.W. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH 2008 Book of Discipline, ¶252.2



A question is, “How does this N.O.W. structure play out in the real life of the local church?”

This structure encourages congregations to go before God and ask Him what His Vision is for the ministries of a local church. When the local church congregation discerns what God would have them do, then the structure of the church is flexible enough that a local church can design the ministries that will better enable them to do as God has commanded. No longer is the local church bound by rigid structure that may inhibit the mission and ministry of the church. Freedom, within certain guidelines, has been given for ministry to be created following God’s instructions thereby meeting the needs of both the congregation and the community.

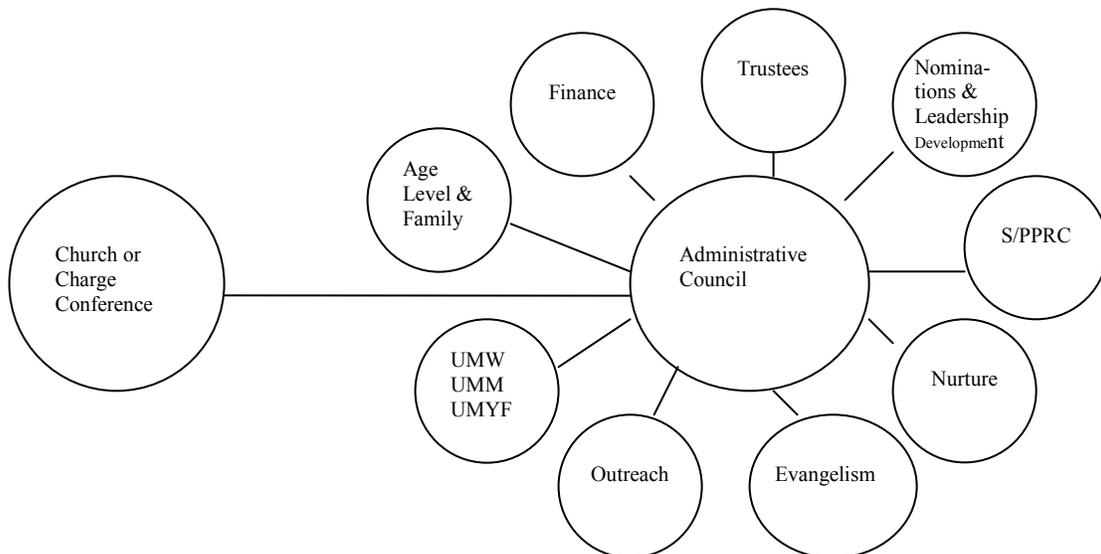
- **Nurture** ministries in a local church include the Sunday School, various kinds of worship services, and stewardship as a lifestyle.
- **Outreach** is the community ministries of compassion and advocacy. These are ministries that deal with church and society issues, global ministries (missions), welfare ministries, issues concerning women and race. Outreach ministries may be ministries that feed the hungry, that reach those in jail, that care for abused women and children, that minister to older adults or young children, that repair homes of the needy, that minister to people of differing cultures.

- **Witness** includes evangelistic outreach, membership care perhaps through shepherding programs, spiritual formation through Bible study and prayer ministry, communications through a church newsletter, lay speaking to better prepare laity to be in nurturing and caring ministries and to speak for Christ.

The important key to the new N.O.W. organization is that the local church is given the flexibility to mold its ministries to follow God’s Vision for the local church, to meet the needs of its congregation, and to be in mission to the local community and to the world.

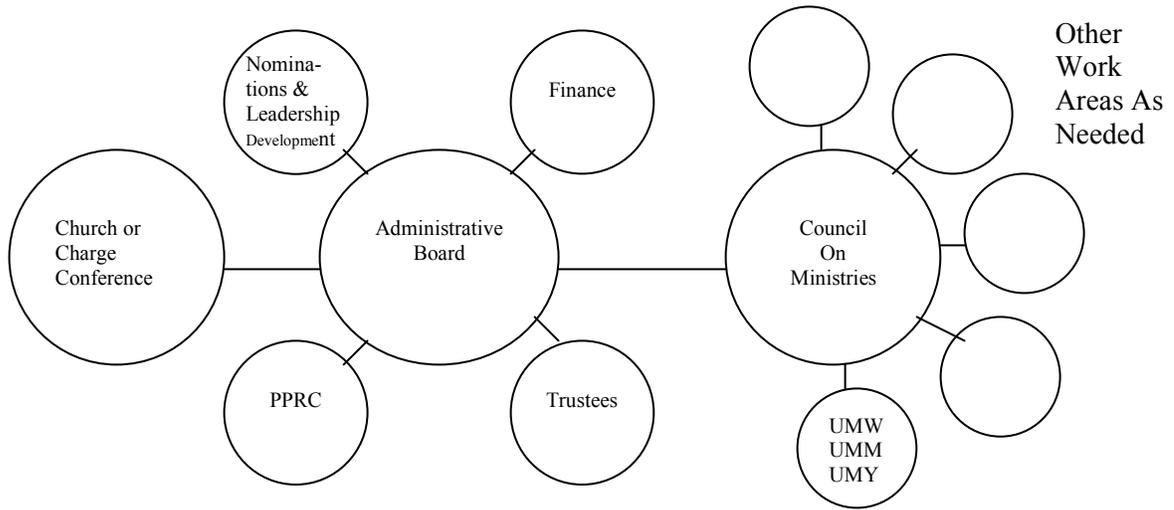
LOCAL CHURCH STRUCTURE

Basic Organizational Plan for a Local Church with Administrative Council



This chart shows the relationships among the administrative and programming groups in a church using the basic Administrative Council plan. The organization may be expanded with additional work areas and subcommittees as needed or desired. Each of the four work areas (Age Level and Family Ministries, Outreach, Evangelism, Nurture) may be the responsibility of one or more persons.

**Basic Organizational Plan for a Local Church with
Administrative Board and Council on Ministries**



This chart shows the relationships among the administrative and programming groups in a church using the Administrative Board and Council on Ministries plan. Each of the work areas may be the responsibility of one or more persons, as determined by the Charge Conference or Administrative Board.

**SELECTIONS FROM
THE 2008 BOOK OF DISCIPLINE
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**PART V
Organization and Administration
(Local Church)**

The Church and Pastoral Charge (pp. 133-134)

¶ 201. *Definition of a Local Church*--The **local church** provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

¶ 202. *The Function of the Local Church*--The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. It is primarily at the level of the charge consisting of one or more local churches that the church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church.

¶ 203. *Relation to the Wider Church*--The local church is a connectional society of persons who have been baptized, have professed their faith in Christ, and have assumed the vows of membership in The United Methodist Church. They gather in fellowship to hear the Word of God, receive the sacraments, praise and worship the triune God, and carry forward the work that Christ has committed to his church. Such a society of believers, being within The United Methodist Church and subject to its *Discipline*, is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and which in the Apostles' Creed we declare to be the holy catholic church.

Organization and Administration (pp. 157-158)

¶ 243. *Primary Tasks*--The local church shall be organized so that it can pursue its primary task and mission in the context of its own community—reaching out and receiving with joy all who will respond; encouraging people in their relationship with God and inviting them to commitment to God's love in Jesus Christ; providing opportunities for them to seek

strengthening and growth in spiritual formation; and supporting them to live lovingly and justly in the power of the Holy Spirit as faithful disciples. In carrying out its primary task, it shall be organized so that adequate provision is made for these basic responsibilities: (1) planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, and witness for persons and families within and without the congregation; (2) providing for effective pastoral and lay leadership; (3) providing for financial support, physical facilities, and the legal obligations of the church; (4) utilizing the appropriate relationships and resources of the district and annual conference; (5) providing for the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of documentary record material of the local church; and, (6) seeking inclusiveness in all aspects of its life.

¶ 244. *Organization*--The basic organizational plan for the local church shall include provision for the following units: a charge conference, a church council, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a board of trustees, a committee on finance, a committee on nominations & leadership development, and such other elected leaders, commissions, councils, committees, and task forces as the charge conference may determine. Every local church shall develop a plan for organizing its administrative and programmatic responsibilities. Each local congregation shall provide a comprehensive program of nurture, outreach, and witness, along with leadership training, and the planning and administration of the congregation's organizational and temporal life, in accordance with the mission of The United Methodist Church (see ¶¶ 120-124.)

1. The church council and other administrative and programmatic structures of the local church shall be amenable to the charge conference (see ¶ 246.) The church council shall function as the executive agency of the charge conference.
2. Alternative plans may be developed in accordance with the provisions of ¶ 247.2. Such alternatives include: nurture, outreach, and witness ministries; administrative council; or administrative board/council on ministries.
3. Members of the church council or alternative structure shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of The United Methodist Church set forth in the Social Principles, and are competent to administer its affairs. It shall include youth members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote shall be members of the local church, except where central conference legislation provides otherwise. The pastor shall be the administrative officer and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the *Discipline*.

¶ 245. *Information Technology*--Each local church, as it creates or maintains computerized information and data, is strongly encouraged to confer with its annual conference for recommendations and guidelines as it relates to information technology.

THE CHURCH COUNCIL

¶ 252. (pp. 167-169)

1. *Purpose*--The **church council** shall provide for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organizational and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference (¶ 244.).
2. *Mission and Ministry*--Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include: a) The nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages. b) The outreach ministries of the church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy. These ministries include church and society, global ministries, higher education and campus ministry, health and welfare, Christian unity and interreligious concerns, religion and race, and the status and role of women. c) The witness ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications, Lay Speaking Ministries, and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ. d) The leadership development and resourcing ministries shall give attention to the ongoing preparation and development of lay and clergy leaders for the ministry of the church (¶ 258.1). e) The nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities shall include consideration of (i) the election of a prayer coordinator to promote prayer and mobilize the local church to pray, (ii) establishing a prayer room or designated place for prayer and prayer resources, and (iii) encouraging intentional prayer for the pastoral leadership of the local church.
3. *Meetings*--a) The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings. b) In order for the council to give adequate consideration to the missional purpose of the local church, it is recommended that the first agenda item at each meeting shall be related to its ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness. The administrative and supportive responsibilities of the church will then be given attention. It is recommended that the council use a consensus/discernment model of decision-making.
4. *Other Responsibilities*--It will also be the responsibility of the church council to: a) review the membership of the local church; b) fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference; c) establish the budget on recommendation of the committee on finance and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church; d) recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations); e) review the recommendation of the committee on pastor-parish relations regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s), and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration.
5. *Membership*--The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation as

defined in ¶ 252.2. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eleven persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The council shall include persons who represent the program ministries of the church as outlined in ¶ 243. The membership shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) the chairperson of the church council;
 - b) the lay leader;
 - c) the chairperson and/or a representative of the pastor-parish relations committee;
 - d) the chairperson and/or a representative of the committee on finance;
 - e) the chairperson and/or a representative of the board of trustees;
 - f) the church treasurer;
 - g) a lay member to annual conference;
 - h) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Men;
 - i) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Women;
 - j) a young adult representative;
 - k) a representative of the United Methodist Youth;
 - l) the pastor(s).
6. *Quorum*--The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

IV

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

LOCAL LAY LEADER

¶ 251, *The 2008 Book of Discipline*

DISTRICT LAY LEADER

¶ 659, *The 2008 Book of Discipline*

DISTRICT BOARD OF LAITY

¶ 666, *The 2008 Book of Discipline*

CONFERENCE LAY LEADER

¶ 603.9, *The 2008 Book of Discipline*

CONFERENCE BOARD OF LAITY

¶ 631, *The 2008 Book of Discipline*

**YOU THEN, MY CHILD, BE STRONG
IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS;
AND WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM ME
THROUGH MANY WITNESSES
ENTRUST TO FAITHFUL PEOPLE
WHO WILL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS AS WELL
2 Timothy 2:1-2 NRSV**

**THE FOLLOWING JOB DESCRIPTIONS ARE TAKEN FROM
THE 2008 BOOK OF DISCIPLINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH**

LOCAL CHURCH LAY LEADER

¶ 251. (pp. 165)

Out of the professing membership of each local church (¶ 127), there shall be elected by the charge conference a **lay leader** who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities:

- 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, and the committee on nominations & 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 urged to become a certified lay speaker.

In instances where more than one church is on a charge, the charge conference shall elect additional lay leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Primary lay representative of the laity in the local church.
- Foster awareness of the role of the laity in all aspects of life in carrying out the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Recognize the ministries of the laity.
- Meet regularly with the pastor.
- Be continually involved in study and training opportunities in order to better understand the Church's reason for existence and the types of ministries that will fulfill the mission of the Church.
- Advise church council of needs and opportunities for ministry within the community.
- Inform laity of training opportunities provided by the district and the annual conference. Attend those training events.

- Lay leaders are urged to become certified lay speakers.

MEMBERSHIP:

- Charge Conference
- Church Council
- Committee on Finance
- Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development
- Lay member to annual conference (recommended but not required)
- Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee

DISTRICT LAY LEADER

¶ 659. (pp. 461-462)

1. The **district lay leader** is the elected leader of the district laity and shall be a professing member of a local church. The district lay leader shall provide for the training of local church lay leaders for their ministries in the local churches in relation to ¶ 249. The district lay leader shall have responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within congregations and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church, and supporting and enabling lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the district and the local churches in cooperation with the district superintendent and pastors.
2. The district lay leader shall be elected as determined by the annual conference for a term of not less than four years. The method of nomination and the maximum term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. There may be one or more associate district lay leader(s) within a district. The associate district lay leader(s) shall be elected as determined by the annual conference. The method of nomination and the maximum term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. The district lay leader and the associate district lay leader(s) may be reimbursed for their approved expenses.
3. The district lay leader will meet regularly with the district superintendent to discuss the state of the district, the Church, and the needs for ministry both locally and globally.
4. The district lay leader is a member of annual conference (see ¶ 32.)
5. The district lay leader shall be a member of the conference board of laity or equivalent structure.
6. The district lay leader shall work with the District Superintendent to ensure that there is a district director of Lay Speaking Ministries and shall serve on the district committee on Lay Speaking Ministries.
7. The district lay leader is a member of the district conference and shall be a member of the district council on ministries or alternative structure and its executive committee. The district lay leader shall also be a member of the committee on district superintendency of the district.
8. The district lay leader may serve as a lay member of the district committee on ordained ministry (or equivalent agency) and the district board of church location and building (or equivalent agency).
9. The district lay leader shall relate to the organized lay groups in the district such as United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, and United Methodist Youth and support their work and their activities.

10. The district lay leader may designate persons to serve as proxy in any of the above groups except the annual conference, the district conference, district council on ministries, and the district council on ministries executive committee, district committee on ordained ministry, and the district board of church location and building.
11. This legislation shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the 2004 General Conference.

ELECTION OF DISTRICT LAY LEADER

The election of District Lay Leaders varies from Annual Conference to Annual Conference. In Virginia, the election of the District Lay Leaders is governed by The Standing Rules of the Annual Conference and Districts.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Serve as the elected leader of the district laity.
- Provide for training of local church lay leaders.
- Foster awareness of the role of the laity in all aspects of life in carrying out the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Enabling and supporting lay participation in the life of the church in the district and in the local church.
- Ensure there is a district director for Lay Speaking Ministries.
- Relate to the organized lay groups with the district: United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and United Methodist Youth.

MEMBERSHIPS:

- District Conference
- District Council on Ministries
- District Council on Ministries Executive Committee
- Committee on District Superintendency
- District Committee on Lay Speaking
- District Nominating Committee
- Conference Board of Laity
- Annual Conference
- District Committee on Ordained Ministry (may serve)
- District Board of Church Location and Building (may serve)

DISTRICT BOARD OF LAITY

¶ 666. (pp.465-466)

Each district of an annual conference may organize a **district board of laity** or alternative structure.

1. The purpose of the district board of laity shall be: a) To foster an awareness of the role of laity both within the local congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church. b) To work with the district lay leader in: (1) developing and promoting an increased role for laity in the life of the local

church, (2) increasing the participation of laity in the sessions and programs of the district and local churches in cooperation with the district superintendent and pastors, and (3) encouraging laypersons to participate in the general ministry of the Church in the world. (See ¶ 657.). c) To develop and promote stewardship of time, talent, and possessions within the district in cooperation with the district council on ministries.

2. The membership of the board shall include the district lay leader, associate district lay leader(s), district director of Lay Speaking Ministries, and may include the district superintendent, district president of United Methodist Women, district president of United Methodist Men, district president of United Methodist Youth, district president of United Methodist Young Adults, and, where organized, the district president of the Older Adult Council, and others as deemed necessary. Special attention shall be given to the inclusion of women, men, youth, young adults, and older adults; people with disabilities; and racial and ethnic group persons.
3. The district lay leader shall chair the board. Other officers shall be elected as the board shall deem necessary.
4. The board shall relate to the lay speaking program and to the organized groups in the district such as the United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, United Methodist Youth, and United Methodist Young Adults and shall support their work and help them coordinate their activities.

¶ 666 states specific responsibilities for a district board of laity and gives permission for its creation but does not require that each district establish one. Such a board should not be established unless the board will add significant value to the ministry of the laity and to the ministry of the whole Church.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Foster an awareness of the role of the laity in all aspects of life.
- Promote an increased role for laity in the life of the local church.
- Increase lay participation in district sessions and programs.
- Encourage lay participation in the general ministry of the Church in the world.
- Develop and promote stewardship as a life style.
- Relate to the district lay speaking program. Relate to the organized lay groups with the district: United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and United Methodist Youth.

CONFERENCE LAY LEADER

¶ 603.9 (p. 371)

- a) The **conference lay leader** is the elected leader of conference laity and is an officer of the annual conference. The conference lay leader shall be a professing member of a local church in the annual conference. The conference lay leader shall participate in annual conference sessions as a partner in ministry with the Bishop.

¶ 607 (p. 377-378)

The Conference Lay Leader:

1. The conference lay leader is the elected leader of the conference laity and will have responsibility for fostering awareness of the role of the laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church and for enabling and supporting lay participation in the planning and decision-making processes of the annual conference, district, and local church in cooperation with the bishop, district superintendents, and pastors.
2. The conference lay leader shall relate to the organized lay groups in the conference such as United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Youth, and Scouting Ministries, encourage and support their work and activities. The conference lay leader shall also have the general responsibility in: (1) developing the advocacy role for laity in the life of the Church; (2) increasing the participation of laity in the sessions and structure of the annual conference; and (3) encouraging layperson in the general ministry of the Church.
3. The conference lay leader shall chair the conference board of laity or equivalent structure, shall be a member of the annual conference, the conference council on ministries or equivalent structure, the executive committee, if any, of the conference council on ministries, the conference committee on nominations, the conference committee on episcopacy, and the committee planning annual conference sessions; and may be designated by virtue of office to membership on any conference agency by the annual conference.
4. The conference lay leader shall be responsible for presenting a report to the annual conference.
5. The conference lay leader may serve on the conference board of ordained ministry and will participate in the Service of Ordination at annual conference.
6. The conference lay leader shall meet with the cabinet when matters relating to the coordination, implementation, or administration of the conference program, or other matters as the cabinet may determine are on the agenda.
7. The conference lay leader will meet regularly with the bishop to discuss the state of the annual conference, the Church, and the needs for ministry both locally and globally.
8. The conference lay leader shall ensure that the annual conference has a conference director of lay speaking ministries filled in the manner determined by the annual conference and the conference lay leader shall participate in Lay Speaking Ministries.
9. The conference lay leader shall be elected for a term of not less than four years by the annual conference as the annual conference may determine. The method of nomination and term of office shall be determined by the annual conference. Associate lay leader(s), to work with the conference lay leader, may be elected by the annual conference as it may determine. The conference lay leader and associate lay leader(s) will receive reasonable reimbursement for approved dues and expenses necessary for their ministry.
10. The conference lay leader shall be a member of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders.
11. This legislation shall take effect immediately upon adjournment of the 2004 General Conference.

ELECTION OF CONFERENCE LAY LEADER

The method of election of Conference Lay Leaders varies from Annual Conference to Annual Conference. In Virginia, the election of the Conference Lay Leader is governed by the Standing Rules of the Annual Conference.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Advocate for the role of the laity in the life of the church.
- Foster awareness of the role of the laity in all aspects of life in carrying out the mission of The United Methodist Church to make disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Enable and support lay participation in the life of the church at the annual conference, at the district, and in the local church.
- Increase lay participation in annual conference sessions.
- Chair the Conference Board of Laity, or its equivalent.
- Ensure there is a conference director for Lay Speaking Ministries.
- Relate to the organized lay groups within the annual conference: United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, and United Methodist Youth.

MEMBERSHIPS:

- Conference Board of Laity
- Annual Conference
- Conference Common Table
- Conference Leadership Discovery and Development Team (CLDDT)
- Conference Committee on Episcopacy
- The planning committee for annual conference sessions
- Any conference agency as designated by the annual conference
- Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (may serve)

CONFERENCE BOARD OF LAITY

¶ 631. (pp. 408-409)

1. There shall be in every annual conference a **conference board of laity** or other equivalent structure to provide for these functions and maintain connectional relationship. It shall provide for the ministry of the laity related to the objectives of the General Board of Discipleship as set forth in ¶¶ 1101-1127.
2. The purpose of the conference board of laity shall be: a) To foster an awareness of the role of the laity both within the local congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world in achieving the mission of the Church; to develop and promote programs to cultivate an adequate understanding of the theological and biblical basis for lay life and work among the members of the annual conference. b) To develop and promote stewardship of time, talent, and possessions within the annual conference in cooperation with the conference council on ministries or other appropriate conference bodies. c) To provide for the training of lay members of annual conference. d) To provide support

and direction for the ministry of the laity on the local, district, and annual conference levels and to promote the observance of Laity Sunday. e) To provide organization, direction, and support for the development of local church leaders.

3. The following membership of the board is recommended: the conference lay leader, associate conference lay leaders, the conference director of Lay Speaking Ministries, the conference scouting coordinator, and the presidents and two representatives elected by each of the conference organizations of United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Young Adults, and the conference council on youth ministries; and in addition, the district lay leaders, two laymen, two laywomen, and two youth elected by the annual conference upon nomination of the conference nominating committee, a district superintendent designated by the cabinet, the director of the conference council on ministries, and the presiding bishop. Special attention shall be given to the inclusion of people with disabilities and racial and ethnic persons. All members shall be professing members of local churches.

<p>In Virginia, the membership of the board includes: the conference lay leader, associate conference lay leaders, the conference Lay Speaking coordinator, the conference Scouting coordinator, and the presidents of United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Young Adults, and the conference council on youth ministries; and in addition, the district lay leaders, seven lay persons and five clergy elected by the annual conference upon nomination of the CLDDT, representative of the Cabinet, two representatives of the Conference Common Table, any appointed members, conference staff representative; Conference Treasurer; and the presiding Bishop.</p>

4. The conference lay leader shall chair the board. Other officers shall be elected as the board shall deem necessary.
5. The board shall relate to the Lay Speaking Ministries and other organized lay groups in the conference, such as United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Young Adults, and United Methodist Youth and shall support their work and help them coordinate the activities of the organized laity of the conference.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Maintain connectional relationship.
- Provide for the ministry of the laity.
- Foster an awareness of the role of the laity in all aspects of life.
- Enhance understanding of the theological and biblical basis for lay ministry.
- To develop and promote stewardship as a life style.
- Train lay members of annual conference.
- Provide direction for Lay Speaking Ministries.
- Provide direction for Laity Sunday.
- Provide an understanding of the responsibilities of the District and Local Church Lay Leaders.
- Organize a Conference Committee on Lay Speaking.

SUMMARY

Lay Leaders

- Chair boards
- Hold memberships on various boards, agencies, committees
- Partner with the corresponding clergy persons
 - Conference Lay Leader partners with the Bishop
 - District Lay leaders partner with the District Superintendents
 - Local Church Lay Leaders partner with the local church pastors
- Have numerous responsibilities

Similar Responsibilities

- Elected leader of the laity at each level.
- Chief advocate for the ministry of the laity at each level.
- Primary representative of laity at each level within the church.
- Foster awareness of role of laity in the life of the church.
- Equip, enable, encourage laity for ministry.
- Provide for the ministry of the laity.
- Enhance the understanding of the theological and biblical basis for lay ministry.
- Encourage stewardship as a life style.
- Participate in training and study.
- Be involved in lay speaking.
- Promote Laity Sunday.
- Relate to the organized lay groups: United Methodist Men, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Youth.
- Recognize the ministries of the laity.

V

LEADERS AS PARTNERS,
AND AS SERVANTS
OF GOD'S WILL

PARTNERS IN MINISTRY
SERVANT LEADERSHIP

**AFTER HE HAD WASHED THEIR FEET,
HAD PUT ON HIS ROBE, AND HAD RETURNED
TO THE TABLE, HE SAID TO THEM,
“DO YOU KNOW WHAT I HAVE DONE TO YOU?
YOU CALL ME TEACHER AND LORD--
AND YOU ARE RIGHT, FOR THAT IS WHAT I AM.
SO IF I, YOUR LORD AND TEACHER, HAVE
WASHED YOUR FEET, YOU ALSO OUGHT
TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET.”**

JOHN 13:12-14 NRSV

PARTNERS IN MINISTRY A LEADERSHIP MODEL

Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone
Exodus 18:17-18 NRSV

Jethro advised Moses to find co-workers.

Jesus had co-workers, twelve of them.

- Jesus included His disciples in every possible way.
- Jesus taught them.
- Jesus became a Partner in ministry with them.
- Jesus trusted the disciples with his vision.
- Jesus trained them to go into the world.

You as lay leaders are partners in ministry with the pastor.

- You are the pastor's friend and, if necessary, his/her confidant.
- You and the pastor must communicate with each other.
- This requires new levels of trust, commitment and communication.

You as lay leaders are partners with other leaders of the laity, with the staff and with the congregation.

- You will be involved in shared dialogue and in shared feeling.
- You will support, sustain and bind yourselves together spiritually.
- You will live out the biblical mandate to be the Body of Christ.

“Ownership” is not allowed.

- You will seek God's vision and then you will share it.
- As often as possible, decision making will be by discernment and consensus.
- Work will be worshipful.

Partners in Ministry is an attitude, something that permeates how we “do” church.

- Church becomes a place of service and ministry for everyone.
- Church becomes a place where everyone is worthy and valued and has equal voice.
- Church becomes a place where people have the ability to see through “kingdom eyes” no matter what their credentials.

PARTNERS IN MINISTRY ASSUMPTIONS

1. ALL BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED INTO MINISTRY.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. IN ORDER TO FULFILL ASSUMPTION NUMBER THREE, CLERGY AND LAITY NEED TO RECEIVE SKILL TRAINING IN HOW TO LIVE BY THE GROUND RULES AND THEY NEED TO RECEIVE THIS TRAINING TOGETHER.

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 and justifying.
- All team members agree to live by the **HEART** principles:
 - H**ear and understand me;
 - E**ven if you disagree, please don't make me wrong;
 - A**cknowledge the greatness in me;
 - R**emember to look for my loving intentions;
 - T**ell me the truth with compassion.

PARTNERS IN MINISTRY

BY DARLENE AMON

Everywhere you look you see the word *partner*—on billboards advertising banking services, in newspaper ads for insurance companies, on TV programs about nursing care, not to mention the number of Internet sites touting *partners* in their name.

In the church we have *talked* about a partnership between lay and clergy for several years. Many *written* articles have appeared across the denomination, and we *heard* about partners as a new style of leadership. While some conferences have even had Partner in Ministry themes, lay and clergy need to accept a few basics before actually knowing how to *practice* partnership in ministry

First, we need to have a clear understanding of our call: **All baptized Christians are called into ministry.** For most of us, baptism means an invitational rite into the body of Christ that represents the forgiveness of sin and the newness of life in Christ. But who associates baptism with a call to ministry? In I Corinthians 12:13, the apostle Paul makes a connection between the Holy Spirit and baptism as a sign of entrance into ministry of the whole body. Historically, our emphasis in baptism has been on the benefits received and not on the claim of Christ on the one baptized. We forget that the Holy Spirit empowers us to give our life away in service to Christ—*that's* being in ministry.

We must understand, accept, and live the fact that in God's design **all** baptized Christians are called into ministry. That means none of us can sit back and coast or let someone else minister on our behalf. 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**. It may take some transformation for that to happen, but then that should be the fundamental nature of the church—transformation in our own lives as we accept Christ as Lord and Savior...transformation for our churches as those called discover their god-given gifts...transformation when lay people catch the vision that ministry belongs to them, as well as to clergy.

There is a church where the Lord is using the laity in dynamic ways, in what were traditionally clergy-oriented roles of pastoral care. It began with a highly intentional school to equip individuals who already showed signs of spiritual giftedness. Even some indication of resistance from the larger church body which said "that is a job for the pastor" didn't keep the caregivers from tripling in size to meet the needs of the congregation. It became apparent that the laity, through the work of the Spirit, were the real transforming agents in the church. A congregation is limiting the church and limiting God if they say the pastor must be the only person to do the work of Christ.

Once we realize that we are all ministers called to be about the basics of transformation, we need leadership (see "Spiritual Leadership?" *Links*, May 1998). This new style of partnership calls for ministry and leadership to be *shared* by the pastor and local church laity. It calls for teams of lay and clergy to trust each other, to always seek win/win solutions, to keep agreements, and to assume full responsibility. We can't become what we need to be by remaining what we are. When we risk enough to move from where we may have been for years by opening ourselves to the transforming work of God in Jesus Christ, there's no telling what will happen in our lives, our churches, and our annual conferences.

Partners in Ministry, let's reach out together to make disciples of Jesus Christ!

Darlene Amon served as Virginia Annual Conference Lay Leader, 1994-2000

SERVANT LEADERSHIP...MAKES AND SUSTAINS DISCIPLES

“...but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Mark 10:43b-45 NRSV

1. Jesus is the model of the Servant Leader.
2. People in private enterprise are learning about the principles and tools of servant leadership.
 - A. These principles work.
 - B. These principles do not create losers or enemies.
3. Servant leaders share power and do not covet power or prestige.
 - A. Servant leaders are characterized by selflessness.
 - B. Most servant leaders will not be well known.
4. YET, servant leadership is not a servile or meek leadership.
 - A. It is not without convictions.
 - B. It leads by example.
 - C. It shares visions.
5. Servant leaders
 - A. Listen to God and to others...
 - B. Seek win/win resolutions...
 - C. Work toward consensus or substantial agreement...
 - D. Avoid voting because it creates losers...
 - E. Help build a spirit of community...
 - F. Help increase trust...
 - G. Are accountable...
 - H. Do not blame others or justify self...
 - I. Are fully responsible...
 - J. Watch behavior.
6. Servant leaders help prepare church for God's mission in the world by making Christian disciples and by instructing and guiding them.
7. Servant leaders help equip others to be in ministry for Christ and then they “get out of the way.” This means that when leadership changes ministries don't die. Those of us who “do it ourselves” are not furthering the kingdom.
8. “Do it my way” is out.
 - A. Servant leadership does not mean we abdicate our responsibilities as leaders.

Multiply God's Love, p. 13

VI

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH TODAY

All Things New: The Virginia Conference – Fruitful and Multiplying is a core strategy to help the Virginia Conference live into its vision of having “faith communities where all God’s people are welcomed at table, nurtured and transformed to be Christ to others in the world.” Approved by the 2008 Annual Conference, *All Things New* centers around two invitations:

1. **An Invitation to Plant** that focuses on the goal of planting 250 new faith communities in 30 years in the Virginia Conference; and
2. **An Invitation to Harvest** that focuses on the strengthening and renewal of the existing churches of the Virginia Conference.

Both of these invitations are extended through the desire to change the culture of the Virginia Conference from focusing on the loss of members to fruitfulness and multiplication by reclaiming our heritage as a missionary movement of the Holy Spirit. To achieve the goal of cultural change, ministries of the annual conference are in the process of evaluation and alignment with the desired outcome of leadership development. A “covenant of the willing,” the intention of *All Things New* is to assist churches that desire to grow as they are renewed and/or as they help to form new faith communities.

There are currently six points of focus within *All Things New*:

1. **5 Talent Academy**: Designed to help existing congregations grow in the fruitfulness and multiplication of ministries centering on worship, mission, discipleship, evangelism, and stewardship. Participation in the 5 Talent Academy is through a covenantal agreement by local congregations. Information about the 5 Talent Academy is available through the conference web site.
2. **Alignment of conference boards and agencies** with the goal of changing the culture of the Virginia Conference through leadership development: The Common Table for Church Vitality has been in consultation and evaluation with conference boards and agencies to achieve this goal.
3. **Alignment of conference staff** with the goal of changing the culture of the Virginia Conference through leadership development: The Common Table for Church Vitality has restructured and aligned staff assignments to achieve this goal.
4. **District Financial Stewardship Workshops**: In response to an expressed need for financial stewardship education, the 2009 Annual Conference approved financial stewardship workshops for the 18 districts of the Virginia Conference. These workshops

will be presented during the fall of 2009 by James D. Klote and Associates.

5. **Planting of new faith communities.** The Church Development Team, in consultation with the Cabinet, has developed strategic assessment tools and metrics to assist in the discernment of where new faith communities should be planted.
6. **Capital Financial Campaign:** The 2009 Annual Conference approved a capital fund campaign to assist with implementing the two invitations of All Things New. A campaign committee is conducting this campaign in consultation with James D. Klote and Associates. The committee will present a report on the campaign at the 2010 annual conference.

Bishop Robert Schnase believes that vibrant, growing, fruitful congregations are special congregations where all the members practice radical hospitality...gather to have passionate worship... are intentional in their faith development...don't hesitate to engage in risk-taking mission...and share with absolutely extravagant generosity. These are fundamental activities that are critical to fulfilling the mission of the church. Failure to practice them leads congregations to decline. But if congregations DO practice them, they can be fruitful and multiply!

In his book, *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* (Abingdon Press, 2007, ISBN-13: 9780687645404), Bishop Schnase describes these practices as follows:

Radical Hospitality: Christian hospitality refers to the active desire to invite, welcome, receive, and care for those who are strangers so that they find a spiritual home and discover for themselves the unending richness of life in Christ. It describes a genuine love for others who are not yet a part of the faith community; an outward focus, a reaching out to those not yet known, a love that motivates church members to openness and adaptability, willingness to change behaviors in order to accommodate the needs and receive the talents of newcomers. Beyond intention, hospitality practices the gracious love of Christ, respects the dignity of others, and expresses God's invitation to others, not our own.

Passionate Worship: Worship describes those times we gather deliberately seeking an encounter with God in Christ. We cultivate our relationship with God and with one another as the people of God. God uses worship to transform lives, heal wounded souls, renew hope, shape decisions, provoke change, inspire compassion, and bind people to one another. Passionate Worship means worship that connects people to God, worship that people enter into with expectancy, and with the anticipation that God desires to speak to them and connect to them. Whether traditional, blended, or contemporary, Passionate Worship is authentic, connecting, and sustaining.

Intentional Faith Development: Intentional Faith Development refers to the purposeful learning in community that helps the followers of Jesus mature in faith, such as Bible studies, Sunday school classes, short-term topical studies, and support groups that apply the faith to particular life challenges. Learning in community replicates the way Jesus deliberately taught his disciples. People cannot learn grace, forgiveness, patience, kindness, gentleness, or joy, simply by reading about it in a book. These are aspects of spiritual formation that one learns in community, through intentional engagement.

Risk Taking Mission: Risk-Taking Mission and Service includes the projects, the efforts, and the work people do to make a positive difference in the lives of others for the purposes of Christ, whether or not they will ever be part of the community of faith. Some churches have after-school programs for at-risk children, some send work teams across the state or across the world, some offer regular ministries to the incarcerated. Risk-Taking refers to the service we offer that stretches us out of our comfort zone and has us engaging people and offering ourselves to ministries that we would never have done if not for our desire to follow Christ. Risk-taking pushes us beyond the circle of relationships that routinely define our church commitments. It changes the lives of the people who are served as well as the lives of those who serve.

Extravagant Generosity: Extravagant Generosity describes practices of sharing and giving that exceed all expectations and extend to unexpected measures. It describes lavish sharing, sacrifice, and giving in service to God and neighbor. Every scriptural example of giving is extravagant, and churches that practice Extravagant Generosity teach, preach, and practice the tithe.

It is time the laity of The United Methodist Church become full time ministers of Jesus Christ. It is evident that Christ created the church to be HIS REDEMPTIVE AGENT IN THE WORLD. It is also evident that unless lay persons leave the pew many will die without ever having known the redeeming love of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, “Go and make disciples (Not, “sit in the pews.”). . .And I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

It is the responsibility of lay leaders within The United Methodist Church to help lay persons reclaim the biblical understanding of all Christians as ministers, to equip lay persons to carry the Gospel to the world, and to encourage them to do so.

VII

RESOURCES

THE BIBLE

THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE JOURNAL

DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES:

BASIC CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIAN BELIEVER

COMPANIONS IN CHRIST

COVENANT DISCIPLISHIP

DISCIPLE BIBLE STUDY

FAITHQUEST

LAY SPEAKING MINISTRIES

WALK TO EMMAUS

GUIDELINES, 2009-2012: LAY LEADER/LAY MEMBER

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation.

Publisher: Abingdon Press. Order from Cokesbury, Item#/ISBN-13: 9780687648115

1-800-672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com.

INFOSERVE: An Information Service of the UMC

1-800-251-8140 or www.infoserve.umc.org

VIRGINIA UNITED METHODIST ADVOCATE

Official newsmagazine for the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Order from Virginia United Methodist Communications. Mailing Address: PO Box 1719, Glen Allen VA 23060

1-800-768-6040 or 1-804-521-1100 ext. 110 or e-mail at: advocate@vaumc.org

2009-2012 HANDBOOK: MAKING DISCIPLES FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

The 2009-12 version of The United Methodist connectional giving handbook is a 48-page, colorful publication filled with comprehensive information about The United Methodist Church.

Order from United Methodist Communications at 1-888-862-3242 or www.umc.org or from

Cokesbury, Item #/ISBN: X532352, 1-800-672-1789 or www.cokesbury.com

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH: MAKING DISCIPLES FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

This handbook was developed as a communication tool to strengthen your ministry and is especially helpful in new member orientation classes, confirmation classes, and leadership training.

Order by calling 1-888-346-3862 or by visiting www.umcsgiving.org

INTERPRETER

Official magazine for United Methodist laity and clergy who are actively involved in their local churches. This is the vehicle through which local churches share ideas and learn about the church's national and international programs and ministries.

Publisher: United Methodist Communications Inc., PO Box 320, Nashville TN 37202-0320

1-888-346-3862 or www.interpretermagazine.org

LAITY SUNDAY THEMES FOR THE 2009-2012 **QUADRENNIUM**

Upon recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders, the General Board of Discipleship has approved the following emphasis and themes for Laity Sunday (3rd Sunday in October) for the 2009-2012 quadrennium:

Quadrennium emphasis: **Disciples Transforming the World**

2009: Through Prayers

2010: Through Presence

2011: Through Gifts

2012: Through Service

The Lay Leader may work with the pastor and the Worship Committee to plan Laity Sunday. Although the third Sunday in October is the suggested date for Laity Sunday, the local church may choose to celebrate it on any given Sunday.

As Lay Leader, you should be aware that action of the 2008 General Conference amended the membership vows of the denomination to include a fifth area: witness. The rationale for this action stated:

Membership vows of The United Methodist Church do not include *witness*, an integral part of laity's role from earliest Methodism, in members' participation in the church's life. Because congregations repeat these vows along with new members, a pledge to "witness" will remind members to be witnesses in the community.

Revised liturgies for baptism and membership are available which include the statement that we are to faithfully participate in the ministries of the church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts our service, and our witness.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In your own words describe your **job** as a local church lay leader in The United Methodist Church where you worship and serve. (What are you officially “charged” by the church to do?)

Describe your role as **advocate for lay ministry** in the local church where you worship and serve. (How strong is your voice? How bold are you in speaking for lay ministry and for the rights and responsibilities of laity?)

How involved are you as local church lay leader in **equipping lay persons** for ministry? (What do you actually do? Teach? Train? Bring training to your church? Do you make laity aware of training opportunities in the district and annual conference? Do you encourage and empower others to teach, train, serve?)

What do you believe about lay persons being in ministry for Christ?

What leadership roles are suitable for laity? Be specific.

What do you do to encourage and equip lay persons to be in ministry?

Describe how you include lay persons in conducting worship services.

Describe some of the lay ministries in your local church.

How does one come to know what God wants done in a local church?

Describe an effective ministry in your church.

What ministries are needed in your local church?

How active is your laity?

What must be done to better equip your laity for ministry?

THE NATURE OF MATURE FAITH

What are the characteristics of a person with mature Christian faith? Based on interviews with theological scholars and denominational executives, open-ended surveys of several hundred adults from the six participating denominations, and reviews of the literature in psychology and religion, we believe that a person of mature faith integrates eight core dimensions of faith. They are:

1. Trusts in God's saving grace and believes firmly in the humanity and divinity of Jesus.
2. Experiences a sense of personal well-being, security, and peace.
3. Integrates faith and life, seeing work, family, social relationships, and political choices as part of one's religious life.
4. Seeks spiritual growth through study, reflection, prayer, and discussion with others.
5. Seeks to be part of a community of believers in which people give witness to their faith and support and nourish one another.
6. Holds life-affirming values, including commitments to racial and gender equality, affirmation of cultural and religious diversity, and a personal sense of responsibility for the welfare of others.
7. Advocates social and global change to bring about greater social justice.
8. Serves humanity, consistently and passionately, through acts of love and justice.

From *Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Six Protestant Congregations*, The Search Institute, 122 West Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404. Reprinted with permission of Edward White, Alban Institute, Washington DC

WHAT DO WE EXPECT OF OUR MEMBERS

What Are The Norms For Membership In Your Congregation?

Many congregations suffer from an absence of meaningful expectations of church members. Often members lose interest and become inactive because they have not been challenged to grow, to make a difference, to be a living part of the Body of Christ!

Please check all those that apply!

1. To support the congregation financially?
2. To tithe?
3. To give a percentage of their income?
4. To attend regularly on Sunday morning?
5. To intentionally pursue their spiritual growth through Bible study, prayer and other spiritual disciplines?
6. To conform to our congregational culture? (i.e. like the hymns we like and accept the service the way it is)
7. To discover, develop and exercise their God given gifts and talents in the life of the church?
8. To exercise their God given gifts in the workplace, home and community?
9. To discover in what they are doing all week long a “calling” and not just a job?
10. To talk about the work of God in their lives and share their faith with others?
11. To invite their friends and family members to church?
12. To accept the norms of the congregation as to how we deal with our differences?
13. To serve on a committee?
14. To participate in a small group that will provide nurture and pastoral care?
15. To show up at Christmas and Easter?

Reprinted with permission of Edward White, The Alban Institute, Washington DC

THIS CALL'S FOR YOU

By Edward A. White

1. Who is “Called” by God?

Our language betrays us! Clergy are “**called by God**” to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Everyone else goes out and “**finds**” a job.

What do we mean by Call? We mean that God has a purpose for each person’s life. The primary call is the call to discipleship. Jesus said to the first disciples, “Come and follow me.”

The call is to be a Christian more than just to do something. The doing becomes a living out of the being. In a similar manner in marriage, one is called to be a husband or wife. The doing grows out of living in the role and in the relationship.

Baptism expresses God’s claim on our life. Living out the life of a disciple (i.e. Learner or follower) of Jesus is the fulfillment of our Call from God in Baptism.

I once conducted a pastors’ retreat for a group of twenty seven pastors. One of them mentioned that a friend of his had just “received the **call to full time Christian service.**” I asked what that meant.

“Oh,” he said, “he got the call to go to seminary and become a preacher.”

I replied, “I thought we believed that every Christian was called to full time Christian service. I thought that’s what baptism meant...Gods claim on our whole life...whether we’re a homemaker, a schoolteacher or a lawyer or banker.”

“Oh well, that’s true” he replied in a patronizing manner.

Irritated by his response I challenged the entire group: “What percentage of your congregations really understand, believe and practice the conviction that they have been called to full time Christian service by virtue of their Baptism?”

The previous speaker replied rather quickly: “Oh I suppose about ten percent.”

I was stunned by the response of everyone else in the room. “No way!” they said.

Half of them said “Maybe between one and two percent.”

The other half said, “Probably less than one percent.”

If these twenty-seven congregations are typical of the PCUSA that would mean that 99% of the three million Presbyterians in this country don’t even know the meaning of their baptism.

Why on earth would the good Lord want to increase our numbers? What great achievement would it be if we grew to have five million Presbyterians, 99% of whom didn't understand the meaning of their Baptism?

The final blow came later when I told this story to about 100 preachers at a seminary summer institute. Someone asked me where I got the idea that Baptism represented a call to full time Christian service. In response I asked the group, "How many of you teach your people that Baptism represents an ordination to full time Christian service?"

Only about fifteen of the preachers raised their hands.

If the clergy don't believe in Baptism as the most basic ordination to the full time service of Almighty God, how can we expect the laity to believe it?

Baptism was the only ordination Jesus ever had and it represented God's claim on his whole life! Neither Jesus, nor the original twelve disciples nor Paul were ordained clergy. All of them were called by God to full time Christian service. And so are you!

You are called by Jesus to be His disciple. The Presbyterian Book of Order describes the meaning of discipleship in the following words:

"A faithful member accepts Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of his Church. Such involvement includes:

- a) proclaiming the Good News
- b) taking part in the common life and worship of a particular church
- c) praying and studying Scripture and the faith of the Christian Church
- d) supporting the work of the Church through the giving of money, time and talent
- e) participating in the governing responsibilities of the Church
- f) demonstrating a new quality of life within and through the Church
- g) responding to God's activity in the world through service to others
- h) living responsibly in the personal, family, vocational, political, cultural and social relationships of life
- i) working in the world for peace, justice, freedom and human fulfillment.

According to this sequence it takes the Presbyterians a while to get beyond the Church and into the world. Nevertheless, these nine claims taken together constitute a comprehensive **"call to full time Christian service."**

Excerpted from a longer article by Dr. White and used with his permission

MAKING DISCIPLES

Empowering the Laity for Ministry

How would you rate your congregation on a scale of 1 (low), 2 (medium) or 3 (high) on the following:

1. Helping church members to understand the meaning of their baptism as a call to full time Christian service. _____
2. Helping people discover their gifts. _____
3. Helping people discern their call. _____
4. Providing opportunities for people to give an account of their ministry. _____
5. Enabling church members to find appropriate support for their ministry. _____
6. Providing recognition and affirmation of the ministry of church members in the world. _____
7. Helping people relate scripture to the issues of the work place. _____
8. Helping people develop an appropriate spirituality in the context of the work place. _____
9. Affirming the ministry of “homemakers.” _____
10. Affirming the ministry of “retirees.” _____
11. Enabling “workaholics” to be freed from this addiction. _____
12. Enabling church members to overcome the seduction of “consumerism.” _____

Invite other leaders in your congregation to do this assessment independently and then compare your perceptions.

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The following four articles are from newsletters of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Seminary and are reprinted with permission. To subscribe to the Lewis Center electronic newsletter or for additional information, visit their website at www.churchleadership.com or call 202-885-8757.

50 Ways to Communicate Effectively

View communications as a ministry

1. Understand that church communications is about “formation,” not just “information.” The ministry of communication is about stewardship, evangelism, discipleship, and education.
2. Know that effective communication is required of every church leader.

Set clear communications policies

3. Establish a committee to oversee communication efforts, but also have a clearly designated point-person for day-to-day issues. Often In larger churches this will be a staff member.
4. Conduct a communications audit annually. Ask of every communications strategy, “What is its audience?”, “What is its mission?”, and “Is it effective?” Seek input from persons outside your congregation.
5. Develop a uniform design scheme to reinforce a sense of congregational identity and “brand” your church. Choose standard colors, type styles, and an easily identifiable, contemporary logo. If possible, enlist the help of a professional graphics designer.
6. Prepare a style sheet for written material with guidelines on punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, the use of inclusive language, and how to list times and dates.
7. Make communications a line item in church budget.

Know and honor your audiences

8. Be sensitive, realistic, and respectful of your audiences. Begin not with “What do we want to tell people?” but rather, “What matters to the people with whom we are communicating?” Consider how your message relates to the felt and actual needs of your constituencies.
9. Don’t assume your audience will understand the context of your messages, the meaning of religious concepts, or be motivated to act on the information.
10. Listen. Communications is a two-way process. Gather data and feedback from your membership. Use a visitor’s card or attendance registry to collect information about visitors, including how they learned about your church. Consider an annual follow-up survey for visitors.
11. Conduct interviews or focus groups with people from outside your church. Ask about interests, what they do with their free time, what they value in life, and what they think about your church.

Prioritize your messages

12. Know that too many messages can overwhelm your congregation and can cancel each other out. Members often are poorly informed because they've been given too much information – not too little.
13. Create a communications calendar around important congregational and liturgical events. Ask: “what is the one important thing we want every member to know this week?” The newsletter cover, worship announcements, sermon, home-page, and other congregation-wide messages should focus on this.
14. Limit verbal announcements during worship. Don't raise items of church business that might make visitors feel like outsiders. Information relevant only to subgroups should be disseminated through more targeted means – post cards, emails, phone trees.
15. Maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date calendar of ALL meetings and activities on your website and in your Sunday bulletin where everyone knows to find it. Then no one can complain that their activity was not publicized. Plus, a full calendar communicates that a lot is happening in your church.

Create a user-friendly bulletin

16. Appreciate that your church bulletin is your most important piece of written communication. More people use Sunday church bulletins than read daily newspapers. Plus, it's one thing every visitor sees, so make it welcoming, clear, concise, and free of jargon.
17. Have as the most important goal helping people navigate the service and guiding them through Sunday morning activities. Provide clear information about hymnal or prayer books used. Clearly explain procedures for communion and other participatory acts of worship.
18. Remember that copyright laws require that church bulletins include notices of permission to use hymn texts, music, and other written material.
19. Limit the length of announcements printed in the bulletin. They should be much briefer and to the point than newsletter articles. Use inserts sparingly. Consider handing flyers out as people leave instead.

Make your newsletter appealing

20. Know that even with today's instantaneous communication, the newsletter is still important. It is your one shot at regularly reaching 100% of your members, including seniors, inactives, and infrequent attenders.
21. Use your newsletter to educate, build community, and create institutional loyalty. Focus on people, not just events. Celebrate accomplishments.
22. Focus on providing information that is useful and relevant to your readers. Avoid institutional jargon and insider references, particularly if your newsletter goes to non-members.
23. Keep the length reasonable. The average person will set aside something that looks like it takes more than a few minutes to read. If your newsletter runs too long, consider more frequent issues.
24. Make it easy to browse. Reserve the front page for the most timely and important items. Use active headlines, not headings. Put the most important information in the lead sentence of articles. Categorize topics consistently so readers know where to look for their particular interests.

25. Select a readable font size (not less than 10 pt.) and use no more than 2 or 3 different typefaces. Thirty-nine characters per line is optimal for readability. Don't over use boldface type, underlining, or upper case characters.
26. Strive for an appealing layout. Don't fear blank space. Don't over use clip art. The effective use of photos will make your publications more interesting, attractive, and personal. Look for action shots that "tell the story" and close-ups of people.
27. Use objective language. Avoid personal pronouns. Empower your editor to revise articles for clarity and brevity. Have someone not involved in the writing or editing do the proofreading.
28. Assign the role of newsletter editor to a single individual. Set deadlines and stick to them to encourage planning, allowing time for quality production and realistic mail delivery times.
29. Keep it fresh and interesting. Every time a story is re-run in your newsletter it should be different. Don't print meeting minutes. Instead, make them easily available on your website, a bulletin board, or by request.
30. Consider using an electronic update in addition to your printed newsletter. Limit this to immediate and timely concerns. Use it to draw people to your website.

Be present on the web

31. Establish at least a baseline web presence with a home page that is a "billboard on the information superhighway." Look at other church sites and consult your denomination for help before getting started.
32. Know that your website will be the first contact many new people will have with your church. Create a page newcomers can print with vital information – schedule, staff names, a map to the church.
33. Design a website with both members and visitors in mind. Most church website hits come from a church's members. Think of your website as a "community center for your congregation." Post sermons, newsletters, minutes, etc.
34. Select the photos on your website with care to convey a sense of welcome and belonging. Visitors will get the best sense of what your church is like from the pictures.
35. Keep your site fresh, lively, and interesting. Keep text brief and to the point. A happy picture of the pastor at a church event with a three or four sentence quote is more effective than a "welcome from the pastor" letter. Mission pages are a must.
36. Don't build a site that is too big to keep up-to-date. If you hire a web designer (or use a volunteer) to create the site, make sure you have a plan for updating the site. Invest in training for your church staff.
37. Have the right blend of technical savvy, design sense, and ministry knowledge among those responsible for the site. A techie who doesn't know the church can't produce a good site. Nor can a church staffer with little technical skill.
38. Put your web address on everything you print and on your exterior signage. Promote your site regularly.

Develop a media plan

39. Create a contact list of local news media – newspapers, community newsletters, list serves, local TV, and radio. Update it regularly. Be aware of media deadlines and production schedules.

40. Schedule an appointment to see the religion editor of your local paper. Try to establish a personal relationship.
41. Issue press releases regularly. Even if your stories aren't published at first, an editor will learn that things are happening at your church. Follow up the mailing of a press release with a phone call.
42. Develop a sense of what is newsworthy. Hint: It's not "Church holds Worship Service." Know that the news media are most interested in religion stories around the time of major religious holidays. Learn how to make "news" happen.
43. Plan in advance how to handle negative incidents or crises. Designate a spokesperson. Have plans for keeping members and denominational officials informed. Keep detailed records.
44. Send your newsletter to local opinion leaders -- city officials, community leaders, newspaper editors, other churches and synagogues, leaders of groups who use your facility.
45. Consider placing print ads someplace other than the religion page.

Communication through a wide variety of methods

46. Communicate with those who drive by. Signage should be readable from a distance, correctly positioned in relation to traffic, well-lit, and in good repair. Use banners, balloons, or yard signs to publicized special events. Keep your building and grounds in good repair.
47. Build a comprehensive photo archive. Take pictures at all church events. Ask members to contribute their shots. Ask a talented photographer to take stock photos of your building, sanctuary, and staff.
48. Make visual displays big, bold, and visually appealing. Bulletin boards should be changed frequently, so people won't stop looking. Use for new members, special activities, missions, spotlighting different ministries, new library books, service opportunities, missionary news, etc.
49. Invest in high-quality printed material. A basic brochure introducing your ministry and attractive welcome materials for visitors are standard operating tools.
50. Make sure your answering machine and voice mail are professional sounding and friendly. Include church location, service times, and a brief announcement of special events.

Other Resources

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50 Ways to Build Strength Welcoming New People

Recognize Hospitality as a Ministry

- Teach that hospitality is at the core of the Gospel.
- Teach your congregation to honor Christ in everyone and that God seeks to be in relationship with ALL persons.

Make a Good First Impression

- Convey a clear invitation and a statement of welcome in all communications directed at the external community -- advertisements, banners, flyers, website, etc.
- Know that 40% of visitors make up their mind about a church before they even see the pastor, according to Barna Research. Within two minutes of the beginning of a service visitors have formed an opinion about whether the congregation is friendly.
- Care for your building and grounds as a way of honoring your attendees and honoring God. A well-cared-for building demonstrates a commitment to excellence and communicates that what the church does is important.
- Have clear exterior and interior signage that guides a visitor everywhere he or she needs to go.
- Reserve special parking places for visitors. Encourage church members and staff to park offsite or in more remote spaces. If parking lot congestion is an issue, recruit volunteer parking attendants.
- Make your nursery clean, safe, sanitary, well-equipped, and visually appealing to children and their parents. Use a space that is easy to find and convenient to the sanctuary. Make sure your nursery workers and procedures inspire confidence on the part of parents.
- Make sure your restrooms are neat and clean.

Be Intentional about Saying Hello and Good Bye

- Station greeters at all entrances, in classroom areas, and in the parking lot or entry walks, if appropriate.
- Identify your greeters and ushers with a special badge or name tag so visitors who need information can easily identify them.
- Encourage friendly, out-going persons with the gift of “hospitality” to serve as greeters and ushers. Don’t expect that just anyone can do these jobs well. Provide regular training that helps them see the church through a visitor’s eyes.
- Escort newcomers to the nursery, classrooms, coffee hour, etc. Don’t just point the way or give directions.
- Adopt the “rule of three,” which says members will not talk to other members in the first three minutes following the service – typically how long it takes guests to exit.
- Enact the “circle of ten” rule – that each member will greet anyone, member or guest, who comes within ten feet of them.
- Say, “I don’t think we’ve met before ...” if you are not sure if the person next to you is a member or a visitor.

- Ask outgoing church members to sit in the pews where visitors most commonly sit, often near the entrance or in the back.
- Post someone at every exit to shake hands and thank people for coming. Ask worship participants (readers, music leaders, liturgists, etc.) to do this since their faces will be familiar.

Help Newcomers Feel at Home in Worship

- Accept and encourage casual attire.
- Do not ask visitors to stand and identify themselves. Seventy percent of new attendees feel negatively about being recognized. However, they do expect people to be friendly and welcoming.
- Provide nametags for the whole congregation and develop the habit of wearing them. Form a “tag team” to organize and promote name tag use.
- Review your church bulletin and other printed material to make sure information is not “insider oriented.” Avoid church jargon and assuming that people understand the context.
- Make sure your order of worship is easy for a visitor to follow. Include written or verbal explanations of what is going on and why. Print the words to all prayers, songs, and responses.
- Sing at least one hymn each Sunday that is well known outside the church, such as “Amazing Grace,” “Joyful Joyful,” or “Morning Has Broken.”
- Include a welcome to visitors in the open words before the service. Make sure the person speaking identifies him or herself. It is best for the pastor to issue this welcome.
- Remember that visitors sometimes arrive a few minutes late. Don’t front load all the information directed at them.
- Place information about your church’s ministries where a visitor can easily find it – preferably in the pew, or a clearly marked location near the entry points used by visitors. Don’t expect them to go someplace else to find it.
- Prepare Visitors Packets to be handed out by greeters with information about your church programs.
- Give visitors with small children a small activity packet (with crayons, pipe cleaners, stickers, etc.) as they enter worship.
- Avoid all talk about money with visitors.
- Keep the discussion of “family business” to a minimum in the services. Limit announcements.

Follow up with your Visitors

- Get the names and addresses of first-time visitors. Some churches use visitors’ cards, but asking ALL worshippers to record attendance makes it more likely visitors will sign. Visitors don’t want to be singled out.
- Make a special effort to remember visitors’ names and call them by name.
- Make at least one follow-up contact with first-time visitors within 24 to 36 hours of their visit – a letter from the pastor, a phone call, a hand-written note, an email message. Many churches deliver a gift, such as freshly baked cookies or a church coffee mug, to visitors’ homes. The purpose is to communicate friendliness, not get a membership commitment.

- Develop a system or data base for keeping track of visitors, their contact information, and the frequency of visits. A mailing list of persons who have visited in the past is one of your best marketing tools.
- Don't overlook visitors who come to the church for the first time for an event other than worship.
- Once someone has attended three times, they should be invited to join the church with a pastoral visit and/or an invitation to take part in an inquirers or new member class.
- Encourage visitors to get connected with activities and groups, even if they are not ready to join.

Be More Inviting

- Hold an Open House Sunday at least once a year.
- Organize a “bring-a-friend” Sunday at least once a year.
- Extend extra hospitality during back-to-school time, Christmas and Easter, when persons are most likely to consider visiting a church.
- Start a personal invitation ministry. Three out of four people attend a church for the first time because they were invited. Yet less than half of church members say they have invited someone in the last year.
- Provide training to members on how to invite others to church.
- Print special invitations to Christmas Eve services that people can deliver to friends.
- Plan special events – concerts, lectures, etc. -- that appeal to those outside the church and that members feel comfortable inviting someone to.
- Have special recognition Sundays for scout groups, preschool families, or other community groups meeting in your church to encourage them to attend worship.

Become More Aware of Visitors and their Concerns

- Gather feedback on how visitors respond to your church through surveys, focus groups, or interviews.
- Conduct a “welcome audit” annually.
- Provide training on welcoming at least once a year.
- Send your welcome team to visit other churches and report back on how they experienced their reception.

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[www.](#)

50 Ways to Build Strength in Participation

Motivate

- Lift up lay involvement as Christian ministry, not volunteer work.
- Explain the rationale for church activities. Remind people why what they are doing is important. Connect service opportunities to the larger vision of the church.
- Communicate clearly the expectation of active participation when people join the church.
- Reinforce the expectation of participation regularly from the pulpit.
- Encourage persons to serve where they have gifts and passions. Make spiritual gifts assessments available and make use of the results.
- Help congregants understand the time they give to ministries as an expression of stewardship.
- Teach stewardship of time to counteract “busyness.” Just as with financial stewardship, persons need to make giving time to the church a priority, not an afterthought. Encourage “first fruits” commitments of time.
- Know that those who give the most time to the church also give the most financially.

Communicate

- Prepare a comprehensive listing of ministry opportunities with descriptions and contact information. Keep it up-to-date.
- Develop job descriptions for key roles. Keep them up-to-date.
- Create an attractive flyer or “one pager” for each ministry that tells its story and how to get connected.
- Lift up a different ministry in worship each week, celebrating its accomplishments and recognizing participants.
- Tell the story of what your church is doing together in ministry. Document activities with photos and journals. Encourage participants to share their testimony.
- Report the results of your ministries and lift up success stories.
- Have an information center that is a visible connection point for visitors and others who want to learn about ministries. Staff it on Sunday morning.

Organize

- Develop a system or data base for member participation. Record interests, skills, spiritual gifts, leadership roles, etc.
- Develop a leadership team for lay mobilization. In some churches, this takes the place of a traditional nominating committee.
- Start new ministry teams and groups often. Despite their best intentions, ongoing groups have a tendency to become cliquish. Newcomers are far more likely to feel comfortable joining something new.
- Review the schedule and format of church activities and events. Try new approaches that might appeal to those not yet active, for example weekday breakfasts, downtown lunch gatherings, weekend retreats, etc.
- Ask of every ministry: “Does it meet a need?” “Does it make Disciples?”

- Be mindful of the need to sunset ministries or groups that no longer serve their purpose. Don't invest energy in trying to keep a dying program alive.
- Avoid pet projects that only involve a few people.

Connect

- Relationships are key. Most people serve because they are asked. Personal invitations are the most effective method of getting someone involved.
- Make worship a primary portal for involvement. Have a participation form in the worship bulletin every Sunday listing immediate opportunities to serve.
- Make getting started easy. Create easy entry points -- short-term service opportunities requiring a minimal commitment. Allows people to jump in and get their feet wet.
- Have an intentional system that helps all new attendees and members become involved in groups and activities very soon after they start coming to church.
- Interview new members. Have them complete an interest survey.
- Avoid mentor, sponsor, or buddy programs for newcomers. Although commonly used, they are seldom effective.
- Work toward having each church member/attendee involved in at least one small group – Bible study, affinity group, or ministry team.
- Remember that choirs, service teams, and even administrative committees are also “small groups.” Train leaders to make these experiences spirituality formative, rather than exclusively task-oriented.
- Emphasize small group participation during Lent. Choose a Lenten study curriculum for use by all small groups in the church. Publicize this study opportunity widely and use the Lenten period to recruit new participants into the small groups.
- Link study group topics to sermon series.
- Assess whether “pen and paper” recruitment methods, such as time and talent surveys or pledge cards, are effective in your congregation or whether a more interactive approach is desirable.
- Use your annual stewardship campaign as a way of generating commitment to activities.
- Have a ministry fair or open house to connect people with groups and ministry teams.
- Organize a “Great Day of Service” and invite people to commit a single day to helping with ministry projects. Showcase your ongoing work. Encourage people to bring friends.
- Provide opportunities for families to be in ministry together, especially parents and children.
- Follow up with church members periodically – especially the less active – to take their pulse and ask, “How are things going?”
- Recognize that sometimes people need a break. Give permission to say “no” when necessary.
- Understand that Christian service occurs through vehicles other than church programs. Empower people to serve beyond the church.

Equip and Affirm

- Provide training for ministry participants and leaders. Reinforce their role as ministers and servant leaders. Teach them to interpret and communicate their experiences through the lens of discipleship.
- Help leaders and participants appreciate how service in the church differs from responsibilities in secular settings.
- Conduct an annual retreat for leaders.

- Intentionally include newcomers in leadership.
- Reinforce the need for openness in leadership roles with a rotation system.
- Experienced leaders should be encouraged to recruit a co-leader and mentor that person.
- Encourage church members to think of their involvements in the context of their personal spiritual growth. Help them chart a deliberate plan for spiritual growth.
- Move away from the “committee” mindset, to the more collaborative and interactive “ministry team” mindset.
- Make time for affirmation and appreciation. Develop a systematic plan to publicly recognize all groups and ministries teams over the course of the year.
- Say “thank you” often.

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50 Ways to Encourage Faithful Giving

Stress the spiritual dimension of stewardship

1. Teach stewardship as a holistic model of our relationship with God, as the tangible expression of our trust in God. Giving is a spiritual matter as central to faithful living as prayer, Bible study, and worship.
2. Reinforce giving as an act of worship. Use the offering time to lift up the spiritual significance of giving. Take an offering at every service.
3. Set a good example. The pastor should tithe and encourage other ministers, staff, and leaders to do the same. All leaders must take their giving seriously and model generosity.
4. Talk openly about money and faithfulness to God. If leaders are uncomfortable about money then members will be also. Know your story of giving and be willing to testify about it.
5. Model the giving spirit you seek from members in your church budget by giving generously to ministries beyond the congregation.
6. Teach the theology of stewardship through a variety of means -- church school classes, other study venues, sermons, and correspondence. Use stewardship scripture, quotations, and stories in bulletins, newsletters, other printed materials, and the website.

Know what motivates giving

7. Know that people give to many things for a variety of reasons. Few have a well-planned or consistent giving strategy. Some give on impulse. Others are more cautious. Different kinds of appeals are effective with different types of givers.
8. Recognize that people want to make a difference. They will give to what they value.
9. Appreciate that faithful giving is a fruit of spiritual maturity. It takes time and much nurture to develop.
10. Do not engage in fund raising. People give to God, not to raise the preacher's salary or pay the utilities. Don't make church gifts "one more bill to pay" – a bill that can be skipped without late fees, penalties, or the need to catch-up. Emphasize giving as a joyful response to God's generosity, not an obligation.
11. Talk to members about stewardship and opportunities for giving. Most people never increase their giving because they were never asked, nor given compelling reasons to do so. Don't be afraid to lift up the needs of the church, but always in a way that emphasizes mission.
12. Nurture relationships. People give to persons and organizations where they feel a connection. Church leaders should listen carefully for clues about issues of importance to church members. Personal solicitation is critical, especially for larger gifts.

Link stewardship to mission and ministry

13. Remember that people – especially younger generations -- give to support mission, not institutions or budgets. Everything you communicate about giving should stress ministry, not maintenance.

14. Congregational vitality is key to giving. Whatever increases member involvement and participation will help giving. Involve as many as possible in the church's ministries.
15. Share information freely about the wonderful things giving makes possible. Use announcements to remind people of the impact they are having. Bulletin boards featuring how the church is in mission are good reminders to a congregation. Websites offer ways to tell the church's story and to interpret stewardship and giving.

Know Your Givers and Congregational Giving Patterns

16. Do not make assumptions about what people give -- most of the time you will be wrong.
17. Give your pastor access to members' giving records as a matter of pastoral care, not power or privilege.
18. Keep alert for any changes in giving patterns – if giving stops without explanation, if an adult child starts writing checks for their parents, if there is confusion about giving, if designated gifts replace general giving, etc. Notify the pastor of any potential pastoral care concerns.
19. Know your people and approach them where they are. Someone who has never given does not respond in the same manner as someone who gives faithfully, proportionately, and generously.
20. Understand the financial profiles in your community. If few people carry cash, a spur of the moment offering will not succeed. Remember that more women than men carry a checkbook and younger generations are more inclined to pay by electronic or other non-cash means. A 25 year-old is unlikely to make a stock gift, while an older member on a fixed income may prefer an estate gift to one that reduces their monthly income.
21. Monitor giving Indicators throughout the year. Compare pledge payments with those of previous years.
22. Know how actual income compares to budgeted income for a given time of year. Avoid reporting what is "needed to date" by dividing the total budget into equal monthly or weekly segments. No congregation receives its income so evenly. Instead, determine how much income is "needed to date" based on a rolling three-year average of what percent of total giving is normally received during that period.

Provide a variety of ways to give

23. Give people multiple opportunities to give. Those new to the church may be unfamiliar with the concept of pledging and tithing. Other ways of giving can get them in the habit.
24. Consider sending some appropriate communication a few times a year to those who do not pledge and to non-resident members.
25. Remember that people can give from their income, from their assets (stock, 401Ks, bonds and real property), or through legacies or bequests. Create giving opportunities appropriate to each type of gift.
26. Don't wait decades between capital campaigns. More frequent capital drives create a culture of supporting the church's capital needs and prevent neglect of property concerns.
27. Create a foundation or permanent fund, even if you have not yet received any bequests. People cannot give to what does not exist. Formulate policies for wills, legacies, and bequests. A large estate gift can be divisive if proper procedures are not in place.

Assist members in the stewardship of their personal resources

28. Remember that personal finances and spending decisions are as much a part of Christian stewardship as giving to the church. Too often churches ask people to consider the church's financial situation, but seldom offer to help with members' financial situations.
29. Teach members to think about their finances as an expression of faith. Use appropriate study resources to foster a theology of personal stewardship. Reinforce tithing and "first-fruits" giving as a faithful way of prioritizing one's personal finances – not a way to pay church bills.
30. Offer workshops on budgeting, financial management, and estate planning.
31. Encourage sessions in which members can come together to discuss personal financial challenges. For example, parents of students preparing for college could discuss educational funding options. Those responsible for aging parents could come together to talk with other members who have learned of resources to help.
32. Minister to the economic concerns of parishioners. Provide pastoral assistance and support groups for the unemployed, those in career transition, and those facing financial difficulty.

Develop a year-round, comprehensive stewardship program

33. Preach stewardship sermons throughout the year, not just in the weeks before asking for an estimate of annual giving.
34. Know that developing a congregation of faithful givers does not happen during a three to four-week stewardship drive. People do not become faithful stewards in one moment or through one influence.
35. Create an annual stewardship calendar, emphasizing different stewardship concerns at different times of year – such as annual commitment in the fall, second-mile giving at year-end, planned giving at All Saint's Day, etc. Develop stewardship themes that fit with different church events and liturgical seasons.
36. Encourage faithful giving over the summer by preaching on stewardship the last Sunday before school is out. Everyone knows the churches bills do not go on vacation, so quit reminding your members of that.
37. Make giving and stewardship education a part of your ministry with children and youth.
38. Take the time to do everything related to stewardship well. Poor planning results in poor giving.

Inspire generosity through sound management

39. Know that people give to healthy organizations where they know their money is used wisely.
40. Exhibit honesty and openness in financial interactions.
41. Seek a good working relationship based on trust between the pastor, treasurer, and financial secretary.
42. Make sure at least two unrelated people count the offering each week.
43. Make sure all funds are administered properly. Keep precise records of income and disbursements. Keep your giving records secure.
44. Keep the congregation informed of financial matters in meaningful ways. Issue timely financial reports and make them available to any member who requests them. Report financial concerns in a consistent manner.

45. Send out pledge reports/giving statements in a timely fashion, always with a thank you and a reminder about any update that may be needed.
46. Arrange for an independent audit or review of funds annually. Put a brief announcement in the Sunday bulletin a few times stating the completed audit has been reviewed by the finance committee and is available to members wishing to review it.

Say Thanks Often

47. Find multiple occasions and ways to say “thank you” to those who make the church’s ministry possible -- from the pulpit, in person, in the newsletter, and on their giving statements.
48. Conduct an annual “thank-a-thon” not associated with a fund drive.
49. Tell stories of how lives are changed because of their giving. People need to know their giving makes a difference.
50. As a sign of appreciation, make sure all your procedures for giving are as convenient as possible. Avoid procedures and policies that are for the convenience of those who handle the funds rather than those who give the funds.

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