



Lay Speaking Ministries and the Board of Laity

by *Johnnie Draughon*

The mission of the Lay Speaker in The United Methodist Church has shifted over the past few years from “speaking” to “service” with emphasis on caring, communicating and leading through ministry. In the Virginia Conference, we have adopted the name “Lay Servants” to more accurately reflect the work of our Local and Certified Lay Speakers. The new structure of the conference Board of Laity is focused on engaging, equipping and empowering the laity to work in cooperation with our clergy to grow the Kingdom of God while serving in their local congregation, district and the Virginia Conference. The resources of the Lay Speaking Ministry program, our courses and instructors, are ideal in supporting this vision for laity as we strive to fulfill our mission to provide training opportunities and experiences to equip disciples of Jesus Christ in realizing and responding to their personal calls to ministry. It is an excellent vehicle for servant ministry skill development and has aided thousands of church members to be better servants of Jesus Christ, to become stronger church family leaders, and to more capably assist their pastors. In achieving this mission for all laity within the Virginia Conference, all Lay Speaking courses have been made available to all laity and clergy.

Advance Lay Speaking courses cover a wide range of ministry opportunities. Our instructors at the district and conference levels are excellent, and our training activities provide an outstanding opportunity to network with other disciples pursuing similar ministries in their local churches. The Basic Lay Speaking



course was revised several years ago de-emphasizing “speaking” and focusing more on each individual’s call to ministry, learning to communicate more effectively in a church setting, developing skills as servant leaders, exploring various opportunities for caring ministries, and developing the art of taking your ministry into the workplace and the world. This course could be used as an excellent tool for Administrative Team development and can be offered as a five-week small group study, or a 1.5 day retreat. Completing the course does not carry any obligation to pursue designation as a Local or Certified Lay Speaker – but does begin the process if participants decide to continue in the program.

A list of all Lay Speaking courses is available at www.layspeakingministries.org under “Courses.” Pastors or local church Lay Leaders should contact their district Director of Lay Speaking Ministries to schedule the basic or any other course as a local training event.

If you have any questions about lay speaking ministries, please feel free to contact your district or conference Directors of Lay Speaking Ministries. Contact information is available on the conference Web site www.vaumc.org under “Ministries >> Laity >> LSM Leadership.”

“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news?”

— Romans 10:15

— *Johnnie Draughon is Director of Lay Speaking Ministries for the Virginia Conference.*



Johnnie Draughon

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What is the Lay Servant Academy?

by David Bailey

It is certainly not just 2,886 students over the past 10 years. It is not just the 491 churches that have sent members. It is not just 82 instructors that have come to make presentations, and it is not just a retreat attended by an average of 321 people each year.



David Bailey

It is a great opportunity to talk to others who are walking the very path each of us are on. The path of becoming the best Disciple for Christ that we can be. The concept of Holy Conferencing is clearly enjoyed here. The weekend is filled with teaching led by Holy Spirit, theological and biblical discussions, storytelling, singing, and fellowship.

It is old friends and new acquaintances. On average, about one third of our participants are returning to the Academy from a visit in the last four years. The remaining two thirds will be attending for the first time.

Overall, it is a spirit-filled weekend of consistently high caliber training with 24 returning instructors and 11 new instructors this year. Of the 24 returning, eight of them have over nine years Academy experience. The average for the returning instructors is five years of participation.

Much has been said about the Lay Servant's Academy over the past five years:

2008 Opportunities to serve within your home church are many and can be enhanced by taking a class that might assist in building a new ministry or strengthening an existing one.

2009 Remember that, as members of the Lay Speaking Ministries, we are to serve our church under the guidance of the pastor. We can teach Sunday school, lead Bible studies, serve as liturgist or deliver sermons. We may even be invited to participate beyond our local church if the district feels that our talents are needed to support district goals.

2010 Lay Speaking presents opportunities to serve in many different areas of ministry. We

must not limit the people who want to serve by telling them that they have to “preach” or lead worship if they want to be a Lay Speaker. We need to empower them to “speak” with the gifts God has given them.

2011 Something that is mentioned by students after completing the basic course is how much more they know about The United Methodist Church. We are proud of our denomination and after taking the Basic course you'll understand the connectionalism of Methodism all over the world. Now that anyone can take courses for information and education and not be concerned about accreditation, we promote it to those who want to know more about Methodism.....

2012 Our Purpose: to create a culture of call by engaging, equipping, and empowering people so that they might effectively partner with each other and their pastors to live out God's call as they lead the church in transforming the world as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Something is being offered at the 2012 Lay Servant Academy that will assist you directly in your walk along the path of becoming a better Disciple of Christ. Learn more about the courses being offered at: www.vaumc.org Click on “Ministries” >> Laity >> Lay Speaking >> and District Training Events.”

— David Bailey is Director of the Lay Servant Academy and is very appreciative of the support of a fantastic brother in Christ, Johnnie Draughon; and mentor in our Conference Lay Leader, Shirley Cauffman; four former conference directors that we call on regularly; and the very active district Directors of Lay Speaking in the Virginia Conference.

Lay Servant Academy

Feb. 24–26, 2012

**Blackstone Conference
and Retreat Center**

Registration Deadline: Feb. 10

Discounted

Early Registration Deadline: Jan. 20

www.vaumc.org