

CHAPTER 2



DUTIES and MISSION of THE LOCAL CHURCH LAY LEADER

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OVERVIEW

Congratulations and thank you for accepting the call to be the lay leader of your congregation! God has called you, through your church's charge conference, to serve the church in an important way. As the Local Church Lay Leader your primary purpose is to help your congregation fulfill its mission as the local & visible representatives of Jesus Christ to your community.

OUR IDENTITY, CALL and MISSION

The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

You have agreed to serve as a leader bringing your unique passions, gifts, and abilities to the church. When the leaders focus on the church's purpose---its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ---and link that purpose to the passions of the people, amazing things can happen.

The fundamental way we fulfill our mission is to reach out to people in the name of Jesus Christ, to relate people to God, to nurture and strengthen them in their journey of discipleship, and to send them into the world to be the church---inviting and receiving others in the name of Jesus Christ. We call this the primary task of The United Methodist Church. Effective leaders keep the whole of the primary task in their sight, working to keep all of its aspects in concert.

Leaders in the church must be first, and foremost, spiritual leaders who model and embrace Christian discipline and teaching. By practicing the means of grace—prayer, fasting, studying Scripture, corporate worship, celebration of the Lord's Supper, Christian conversation, and acts of mercy—church leaders stay tuned to the mission of the church and live out the primary task. Members and would-be members should be able to look to a congregation's leaders for spiritual example and direction because true leaders are known by their fruits. People's lives are changed through their influence.

Leaders use their gifts and talents to enable others to use their gifts and talents to the fullest potential. The flow of information, inspiration, guidance and vision from leaders is an encouragement to others on their spiritual journey. Leaders help others to see new possibilities. When leaders are focused on the mission of the church, community is built and ministry occurs. The church focused on God is alive with creative energy aimed at transformation.

WHAT DOES A LAY LEADER DO ANYWAY?

The Local Church Lay Leader's job is succinctly described by Mary Ann Smith, Asbury UMC, Tulsa as "to help the church look beyond itself to the needs and ministries of the church outside its local area and (to) become an advocate for laity involvement."

So that means.....A LAY LEADER HAS OPPORTUNITY TO.....

- Recognize, foster awareness of, and celebrate within the church the daily ministries of all laity.
- Actively develop a relationship with your pastor.
- Develop a "Partnership" Relationship with your pastor, not as a rubber stamp but being mutually supportive, working as a team, intentionally spending time together, linking and networking for the benefit of your church.
- Represent the laity to your pastor.
- Be a source of positive and constructive feedback to your pastor.
- Know members ---their gifts and interests.
- Know the needs of the congregation and community.
- Help to build a shared vision between the Pastor & Laity for your Church's mission
- Take advantage of training opportunities and extend those opportunities to all laity.
- Understand and encourage apportionment support.
- Look at the church from a distance to see needs for growth and how that can best be acted out in being the church.
- Suggest and get new programs/ministries started that are needed—involving others in the process.
- Promote observance of Laity Sunday.
- Serve on Lay Leadership Committee with pastor.
- Be aware of and actively seek out laity within your church that, with encouragement and training, can become the leaders of tomorrow for your church.
- Serve as member of charge conference, Administrative Council, Finance Committee to advise about ministry opportunities and needs within the community and world.
- Serve on Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the Church Council, and Committee on Finance.
- Look for those special wise persons in your congregations and seek their counsel.
- Interpret ministries and concerns of the Annual Conference and general church to foster understanding of the connectional interaction with the local congregation.
- Offer opportunities for involvement in conference ministries.
- Encourage your members to offer themselves in service to the district or conference, and recommend them along with contact information.
- Serve as the lay member of your annual conference, if elected, to share and interpret the actions of the annual conference.

**The BOOK of DISCIPLINE
of The United Methodist Church
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¶ 251. Duties of Leaders and Members—1. 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, the committee on nominations and leadership development, and the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations, where, along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church (to be better equipped to comply with this responsibility, it is recommended that a lay leader also serve as a lay member of annual conference);

d) continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the Church's reason for existence and the types of ministry that will most effectively fulfill the Church's mission;

e) assisting in advising the church council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the church through its laity in the community;

f) informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference. Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities in order to strengthen his or her work. The lay leader is 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.

THE ROLE OF THE LAY LEADER In Serving on Designated Committees

CHURCH COUNCIL - Connecting Vision & Ministry in Your Church

(Luke 5:1-11; 27-32; 6:12-16 – Acts 15; Roman 12; 1 Corinthians 12)

The purpose of the Council is to plan a program of nurture, outreach & witness; Generate a vision and align the ongoing work with the mission; Implement a plan based on clarity of the mission, goals, achievable objectives; Establish time lines; Provide an Administrative infrastructure; See that resources are provided along with appropriate structures and processes for effective ministry; Evaluate the Plan; Act as the administrative agency of the congregation; Makes recommendation to charge conference concerning pastor & staff salaries; Works with Trustees & Finance; & Relate to the larger connectional church.

Your role is to ask questions & bring a broad perspective of all ages of laity in the planning & implementing the mission & vision of the congregation. Interpret the plans and decision of the council to the laity of the congregation.

FINANCE – Funding Ministries that Nurture Persons in Their Faith

(Proverbs 22:16, 2 Cor. 8-9, Prov. 21:20; 22:7, Luke 12:13-21; 1 Tim. 6:10)

The purpose of the Committee is to identify, perfect & manage the financial system for the congregation so that the mission of the church can be achieved. The functions are to provide financial direction; Provide for the annual funding program; Provide the program budget; Provide financial communications; Provide for financial reports and substantiation; Build philanthropists; Encourage giving beyond the budget; and Encourage planned giving.

Your role is to ask questions, represent all the laity as the budget is prepared & as funds are administered. Interpret the finances of the church to the laity of the congregation.

LAY LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE – Nurturing Leaders in Your Congregation

(Romans 12:1-8; 12: 9-21; Philippians 4: 8-9; Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13; 10:1-4; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:11-16)

The Committee is to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate & monitor the Christian spiritual leadership of your church. The functions are to work in building a vision; Take stock of the present; Know the church members, their spiritual gifts & interests; Keep information useful and useable; Make recommendations; Invite people to serve; Report to the charge conference; Empower people for service and leadership through training, support & providing resources; and Celebrate the leadership ministry of individuals.

Your role is to assist in visioning and, accessing spiritual gifts; to bring suggestions of people to serve, encourage leadership training, assist in monitoring and evaluating needs for leadership. It is no longer just “nominations” but year round in developing, deploying & nurturing leaders.

STAFF/PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS (PPRC – SPRC) – Supporting your Pastor, Staff & Congregation

(Mark 2:1-12; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-13)

2/14/06

The Committee works with the pastor & staff in assessing their gifts and setting priorities as they lead and serve the church. All discussions are confidential. It integrates the staff & congregational interests focusing on the mission of the church. It explains the nature and function of ministry to the staff & congregation; Confers with the congregation & staff/pastor about the ministry direction; Assesses the ministry of the congregation & the pastor annually; Confers & consults with the District Superintendent; Supports continuing education for all staff; Identifies & supports individuals whom God is calling for ordained ministry.

Since a part of your role as lay leader is to be a partner in ministry through communication and, support of the pastor, as well as sharing in tasks and responsibilities of leading God's church, you bring a unique perspective. Your role includes accentuating the laity perspective concerning the effective of mission of the church.

CHARGE CONFERENCE

The Charge Conference is the connecting link between the local church and the general church. It has general oversight of the church council. It is held annually at a time set by the District Superintendent. Report of the mission and ministry and state of the church are open for discussion. There are special occasions for a called charge conference.

The lay leader represents the laity of the congregation. Works with the pastor on what information will be uplifted. A report on the state of lay ministry in the congregation may be a part of the charge conference.

Lay Leader Reference Calendar

January:

Meet with pastor and set goals for church ministry and personal accountability goals as lay leader of the church.

Meet with pastor to design a church training event to orientate new and existing church leadership. This will enhance the LCLW experience.

Local Church Leaders Workshop's. Encourage people to attend.

Offer any names of people in your church that would be willing to serve on a conference committee to your district lay leader.

Check conference web site for up to date information and training events.
www.okumc.org

February:

Local Church Leaders Workshop's. Encourage people to attend.

Develop relations with all of the church leadership, so that you will know of any needs that may arise for resources from your district or conference.

District Lay Speaking School – Many district lay speaking schools will be offered. If you have a person in your church that wants to attend but are unable to attend your district school, check into another district.

Offer any names of people in your church that would be willing to serve on a conference committee to your district lay leader.

Check conference web site for up to date information and training events.
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March:

District Lay Speaking School – Many district lay speaking schools will be offered. If you have a person in your church that wants to attend but are unable to attend your district school, check into another district.

Offer any names of people in your church that would be willing to serve on a conference committee to your district lay leader.

Check conference web site for up to date information and training events.

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Schedule time to meet with pastor and discuss the state of the church.

April:

District Lay Speaking Schools. Encourage people to attend.

Check conference web site for up to date information and training events.

www.okumc.org

Some District's may have Pre-Conference Meetings.

May:

Check conference web site for up to date information, training events and Annual Conference information. www.okumc.org

Some District's may have Pre-Conference Meetings.

Annual Conference

June:

Plan a celebration / reception for your pastor's re-appointment or for the new pastor.

Camp's begin for youth.

Summer Slump begins, Find ways to keep people engaged and excited about church.

Schedule time to meet with pastor and discuss the state of the church.

July:

Camp's are in full swing

District's begin planning LCLW's, if you have any ideas contact your District Lay Leader.

Summer is in full swing; create excitement with a new summer ministry.

School will be starting soon. Brainstorm some back to school ministries

August:

Summer Camps winding down.

School will be starting.

Great opportunity for an after school program.

September:

Local Church's begin the process for "Charge Conference's"

Lay Speakers reports and other board and committee reports are due.

Ask your pastor for your church's charge conference date.

Conference Journal is available on-line.

Schedule time to meet with pastor and discuss the state of the church.

October:

Conference Training Event for Lay Leaders.

Charge Conferences begin.

Laity Sunday is the third Sunday.

November:

Fall Lay Speaking Schools – Many district lay speaking schools will be offered. If you have a person in your church that wants to attend but are unable to attend your district school, check into another district.

December:

Charge Conference's wind down.

Schedule time to meet with pastor and discuss the state of the church.

Review benchmarks set for the year.

Brainstorm with pastor ministry opportunities for the coming year.

Merry Christmas

Keep up to date by visiting: www.okumc.org

Lay Leader Handbook is available free online at: <http://www.okumc.org>