

Laity EiM = L³

Laity Excellence in Ministry Equals Laity Living and Leading.
Expectations of Excellence in Ministry in the Louisiana Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Forward

Because lay ministry has been instrumental in the spread of the gospel from the earliest times, 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 our call seriously, committing ourselves to grow in faith and expression of that faith in ministry. Jesus calls all to follow him and experience the abundant life he offers. Laity can grow into mature disciples by partnering with clergy to discover and develop our personal gifts for ministry and to join the universal church in this great adventure of kingdom building.

This document is intended to:

1. Be lifted up to the laity as a vision for all disciples to work toward;
2. Help laity consider leadership as a way of life;
3. Help laity evaluate their leadership as they plan for continued growth;
4. Assist the local church in the selection and training of its leaders.

I. THE CALL TO MINISTRY OF ALL BAPTIZED

All members of Christ's universal church are called to share in the ministry which is committed to the whole church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, each member of The United Methodist Church is to be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide community.

Excellent ministry is:

1. Joyful participation in the abundant life Christ offers;
2. Enthusiastic fulfilling of our call to share in the ministry and mission of Christ in our community and the world;
3. Living as, and making, disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world;
4. Striving to be faithful to Jesus Christ and to the community of faith and fruitful in the ministry to which God has called us.

II. GROWTH IN FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP

Faithful membership in the local church is essential for personal growth and for developing a deeper commitment to the will and grace of God. As faithful members, we involve ourselves in private and public prayer, worship, the sacraments, study, Christian action, systematic giving, and holy discipline. We grow in our appreciation of Christ, our understanding of God at work in history and the natural order, and understanding of ourselves as disciples.

III. VISION AND HOLY IDEALS FOR LAITY LIVING AND LEADING

A. COMPELLED BY CHRIST'S LOVE, WE, THE LAITY OF THE LOUISIANA ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, COMMIT TO THE VISION AND PREFERRED FUTURE OF THE CHURCH AND WILL LEAD AND SERVE THE CHURCH BY LEADING OTHERS TO ABUNDANT LIFE IN CHRIST BY:

1. **Engaging with** our surrounding communities locally and globally through use of the talents and spiritual gifts developed through prayer, reading and understanding the word;
2. **Learning, living and telling the gospel** at every opportunity;
3. **Reaching out** and drawing people from all walks of life resulting in vibrant alive and vital congregations.

B. ESSENTIALS FOR LIVING AND LEADING:

1. **Integrity:** We will live and lead with integrity. We will describe honestly what we see with grace and compassion. We will be forthright and transparent in all that we do.
2. **Accountability:** We will live and lead with accountability. We will measure our actions and decisions by their connection to our mission and we will be accountable to each other for our actions.
3. **Love:** We will live and lead with unrelenting love for all people. We will place the needs and interests of people before the needs and interests of the institution. Transformative relationships will have priority over sustaining buildings and budgets.
4. **Courage:** We will live and lead with courage and risk. We believe that new times call for new actions. We are willing to trust ourselves and each other and risk acting in new courageous ways in order to transform a declining institution into a vibrant movement of faith and action.
5. **Spirit Led:** We will live and lead open to God's Spirit. We will place the creative movement of God's Spirit above institutional priorities.

6. **Growth:** We will live and lead by pursuing spiritual growth. We will set aside time to deepen our relationship with God, to grow in faith and expression of faith for the nourishment and renewal of body, mind and spirit.
7. **Servanthood:** We will live and lead as servants. We will place the good of the kingdom above our own desire for power, status and preferences.
8. **Representative:** We will live and lead as representatives of Christ in the world, revealing God's goodness, grace and love in all we say and do so that all might come to know and love Him and join the fellowship of believers.
9. **Unity:** We will live and lead united with other believers. We will participate in the corporate life of a local congregation, the body of Christ, in ways that build up believers and glorify God.
10. **Partnership:** We will live and lead as those called to ministry by partnering with clergy. We understand this partnership is essential to the health and mission of The United Methodist Church. Partnership occurs when clergy and laity join together in ministry at the local church level and beyond in leading, caring, nurturing and communicating.

As professing United Methodists, we celebrate the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit who accepts us where we are and continues to work within us. We recognize that no one is perfect; we are all moving on to perfection. No one reaches and maintains excellence in all areas of ministry, all the time, or alone. Discipleship, then, is a journey toward perfection through word and deed in partnership with the Holy Spirit. We are called to continually grow towards perfection in each characteristic. This is a high and holy calling, but as disciples of Jesus Christ, anointed by the Holy Spirit into priesthood of all believers according to the will of the Father, we shall fulfill this calling with excellence.