

Lay Leader

What's My Job?

Result Expected

An effective lay leader functions as the primary representative and role model of Christian discipleship and faith lived out in the church and in daily life. The lay leader works with the pastor to fulfill the mission and vision of the congregation.

Spiritual Gifts and Qualifications Helpful for the Job

- This leader should be a growing Christian disciple who understands that everyone has spiritual gifts and experiences that are vital to the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12). This person benefits from having one or more of these spiritual gifts: compassion, discernment, faith, helping, leadership, and servanthood.
- This leader should be a living example of one who “loves God and loves neighbor.” It is important for a lay leader to listen well and communicate with people of all ages. This person should show evidence of working well with both clergy and laity and with various teams and task groups.
- This leader must have the ability to keep a broad view of the separate parts of the congregation and work with the pastor to help align the entire ministry toward the mission of the church.
- This leader should show interest in connecting the congregation with the community and the world as they participate in the *missio Dei*...God's mission to the world through five main charges: the **Great Commandment** (Matthew 22:37-39) to put love of God and neighbor above all else; the **Great Commitment** (Matthew 16:24) to embody God's love individually through spiritual disciplines; the **Great Requirement** (Micah 6:8) to live God's love through our actions; and the **Great Commission** (Matthew 28:19-20) to go and take God's love into the world by making disciples, baptizing, and teaching faithful obedience.

Responsibilities of the Position

- The lay leader represents the laypeople in the congregation in working with the pastor for the mission and vision of the congregation.
- The lay leader engages in spiritual practices that build a relationship of attentiveness to God's will and direction.
- The lay leader represents the laypeople in the congregation and serves as a role model of Christian discipleship for the congregation.
- The lay leader works with the pastor and other leaders to launch or strengthen ministries that build discipleship.
- The lay leader assists in advising the church council about opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective lay ministry of the church in the community.
- The lay leader plans with other leaders in the congregation for celebrating the ministry of laypeople throughout the year and especially on Laity Sunday.
- The lay leader meets regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the opportunities for ministry to advance the mission and ministry of the congregation in the community.

- The lay leader continues to study and train and 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 and that will help strengthen the lay leader's own work.
- The lay leader informs the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference.
- Lay leaders are encouraged to become certified lay servants.
- The lay leader is a member of the charge conference, the church council, the pastor-parish or staff-parish relations committee, the finance committee, and the nominations and leadership development committee.
- Lay leaders are voting members of all the aforementioned committees. Each of these committees has specific responsibilities, but the lay leader represents the laity in each situation, as well as serving 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.

Getting Started

1. Participate in the webinar "Local Church Lay Leaders/Lay Members to Annual Conference: What's My Job?" available on the [Discipleship Ministries website](#).
2. Meet and talk with the pastor regularly to understand his/her hopes and dreams for the congregation and for the lay leader's role in advancing toward the vision for ministry. Ask how you can engage in shared ministry for a more vital congregation.
3. Explore, with others, the opportunities for intentional mission and ministry using the "why, what, and how" model.
4. Examine ways your congregation as a whole and as individuals can be involved in caring ministries in the community.
5. Work with the pastor and other leaders to launch or strengthen ministries that build an effective discipleship system such as H.O.P.E. (*Book of Discipline*, ¶122, "The Process for Carrying Out Our Mission") and increase God's presence of caring, justice, and love in the world.
6. Make plans with leaders in your congregation for celebrating the ministry of laypeople throughout the year, especially on Laity Sunday.
7. Learn about the actions taken at your annual conference and by the General Conference, and share this information with members of your congregation.
8. Study *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation, 2017-2020: Lay Leader/Lay Member* and participate in training experiences.
9. Lift up and support leadership development through Lay Servant Ministries.
10. Help build a culture of call through the mission and ministry of the congregation.
11. Connect with the district lay leader and take advantage of training opportunities.

People and Agencies That Can Help

- Your pastor, active laypeople in your congregation, and people who live in your community.
- District and conference lay leaders and lay leaders in other congregations. As you travel, visit other congregations to observe roles and ministries of laity.

- InfoServ, the information service for the church, provides current information about United Methodist resources, programs, and staff services. Email: infoserv@umcom.org; Website: infoserv.umc.org.

Web and Print Resources

- *Being a Christian in the Wesleyan Tradition* by John O. Gooch (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2009)
- *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2016)
- **Discipleship Ministries**, toll free, 1-877-899-2780; email, laity@umcdiscipleship.org
- *Each One a Minister: Using God's Gifts for Ministry* by William J. Carter (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2002)
- *Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation, 2017-2020: Lay Leader/Lay Member* (Cokesbury, 2016)
- *Interpreter*, www.interpretermagazine.org
- *Lay Servant Ministries Basic Course* by Sandy Zeigler Jackson and Brian Jackson (also available in **Spanish**)
- **Lay Servant materials from Discipleship Resources**
- *Living Our United Methodist Beliefs* by George H. Donigian (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2014)
- *Three Simple Rules* by Rueben Job (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007)
- *The United Methodist Way* by Branson L. Thurston (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2003)
- *What Every Leader Needs to Know*, bookstore.upperroom.org (small booklets useful for individual study or as an outline for a one-hour workshop) – *Spiritual Leadership* by Michael Bealla; *Leading Meetings* by Betsey Heavner; *Mission and Vision* by Carol F. Krau; and *Leading in Prayer* by Betsey Heavner