

Laity Sunday 2021: Rise Up! And Revive God's Gift

Laity Sunday celebrates the ministry of *all* Christians to love God and neighbor. On Laity Sunday (this year, October 17, 2021), we lift up the vocation of *all* to follow the way of Jesus and lead others to him – particularly as we remember the gift of those who loved us into leadership.

When we remember the faith of our spiritual mothers, grandmothers, sisters, sons, brothers, and fathers, we find our own hearts reignited “to serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free” (*Book of Discipline* ¶ 128). This memory of grace crossing our paths directs us toward spiritual growth opportunities that can only spring from authentic and consistent relationships with other people, especially those beyond our church walls. The origin stories and concrete situations of those wrestling with the deep longings of life – to see their families survive and flourish, to belong to a community of love, to discover a vocation that fulfills God’s deep purpose for them – these moments of thoughtful engagement turn into altar calls where disciples of Jesus do more than share grace: listening love becomes the means to our own healing and wholeness on the journey of faith. This is relational discipleship. This is faithful life in Christ that shares in God’s mission and purpose for the world.

As we awaken to the voice of Christ calling us to believe and be healed, we discover that the call of God almost always comes from unexpected people and places, since they are the all-called, too. So we will rise up, remember grace, and recognize the fire of God’s gift has already been at work in every life. And through this awakening, memory, and the shared song of others, we will trust, heal, and see revival for a time such as this.

**LAITY
SUNDAY
2021**

2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7

**RISE
AND *UP!*
REVIVE GOD'S GIFT.**

Laity Sunday 2021– Overview/Planning Worship

Laity Sunday is a day set aside to remember that every person is invited to embody God's restoration project of healing love, justice, and world-repair. It is a special Sunday defined by General Conference "to celebrate the ministry of all Christians" (2016 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 264.2). Usually observed on the third Sunday in October (this year, October 17), Laity Sunday is one way we express the deep conviction that *all* are called to participate in God's mission and live this calling through the ministry of the church. [Read more about the history of Laity Sunday](https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-laity-sunday). [link to the History of Laity Sunday page: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-laity-sunday>]

Each year on Laity Sunday, we celebrate the 24/7 priesthood of all believers. In recent years we have stressed deep discipleship through participation in the means of grace (Therefore GO! With HOPE through Purpose) and building authentic relationships with people in our communities (Therefore GO! With Hope through Engagement). We considered that for John Wesley, works of piety and mercy are really spiritual attention training. They shape our ability to see God at work in the church and every life and help tune our hearts to participate in God's world-repairing mission. This is soul-training *and* attuned vocational discernment. So we learn to hear and answer God's call on our lives as they intersect with the lives of *all* people: the *all called* to be *all love* until *all love God and neighbor*.

Laity Sunday 2021– Quadrennial Themes

The year 2021 continues to bring challenges for those called to gather in Jesus' name. While the pandemic continues seemingly unabated in many communities, we are all struggling to find ways to agree on vaccination, quarantining, and how to best protect friends, neighbors, and strangers by wearing masks and social distancing.

Last year we emphasized that our calling as disciples leads us to a deeper faith, one characterized by engagement with people (online and in person) beyond church walls. By recognizing people who need our help and by sharing life together, we rediscover that a vocation to *all-love* discipleship begins and ends with authentic relationships nurtured through listening love, conversation, and shared stories of struggle and grace. Experiencing God's life-giving presence through attention to the actual lives of others continues to be a key spiritual practice for discovering and sharing scriptural wholeness together in Jesus Christ.

When the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders gathered by Zoom in **March** of **this year**, Pacific Northwest Lay Leader and AACLL president, Nancy Tam Davis, shared a powerful witness about how God is calling all people (laity) to **wake up, to rise up**.

The **Laity Sunday themes** for the next quadrennium come from II Timothy 1:1-14. Under the call to **Rise Up**, laity in the current quadrennium will continue to echo the invitation of this passage: to Rise Up and revive God's gift of faith (that first lived in those who loved us); to Rise Up and reveal the grace in Christ that destroys death and brings life; to Rise Up and remain committed to sound teaching with faith and love; to Rise Up and retain this reliable gift of good and beautiful things placed in our trust by the Holy Spirit.

Laity Sunday Themes 2021-2024 - Rise Up!

2021: **RISE UP!** - and **Revive** God's gift (2 Tim 1:3-7)

2022: RISE UP! - and **Reveal** God's grace (2 Tim 1:8-12)

2023: RISE UP! - and **Remain** committed to Love's teaching (2 Tim 1:13)

2024: RISE UP! - and **Retain** the Spirit's good and beautiful things (2 Tim 1:14)

Laity Sunday 2021– Preaching Notes

Texts: **Lamentations 1:1-6, 3:19-26; Psalm 137; Psalm 37:1-9; 2 Timothy 1:3-7; Luke 17:5-10**

“Forgetfulness leads to Exile, while remembrance is the secret of redemption.”

-*Baal Shem Tov*, inscribed at Yad Vashem.

I am reminding you to revive [rekindle, reignite] God's gift that is in you...

- *the Apostle Paul*

The emphasis on this Laity Sunday is on rekindling and reviving the gift of God that comes to us through our foremothers and forefathers – in many cases, those who have literally loved us into leadership and taught us how to cover the LORD's song in what feels like a 'strange land.'

So here are the takeaways:

- Singing the LORD's song can activate weary faith in challenging times.
- We can reignite faith's fire by remembering those who have loved us in Jesus' name.
- As we remember how love crossed our path, the gift of faith received becomes a call to share grace for life, for all.

Faith passed through our family like a song. I can think of two lay people, my mother and grandmother, whose love was the first authentic version of grace I knew. They literally and metaphorically sang the LORD'S song into my life.

Before I bury the lede, let me say again that the message that sings in 2 Timothy 1:3-7 (and Psalm 137) is this: remembering how love crossed your path can help you rise up and reignite the fire for life in Jesus – a fire to share grace that gives life. This and your own stories and songs of grace are more than enough to fill a message for God's people on Laity Sunday.

In the mid 1960s my mother Linda was an aspiring singer living in a distressed area of Los Angeles. She sometimes sang at *The Parisian Room*, a jazz club on the corner of Washington and La Brea.

I recently shared with a lay leader from California that even though I was a toddler at the time, some part of me still remembers an August night in 1965 when she stood by the window of our small apartment, softly singing and holding me while an orange sky from fires of outrage in Watts turned night into day. In my memory she sings before she speaks - sometimes it's lullaby or a freedom song, or maybe something by Fontella Bass.

Flash forward fifty years: Linda is now caring for her own mother, Eva (my "Granny"). In this moment my grandmother has forgotten much of who she is and who we are, but on this August day she is singing – hands in the air like her fifteen-year-old self, shouting along with Pentecostal tent revival songs just as she did in 1930s rural Oklahoma. She is smiling, eyes closed in worship, remembering and singing every verse to a gospel song even though she no longer recognizes family or friends. Her forgotten tunes are Savior songs that promise all things new with the Holy Spirit's help. And in a rare moment of bliss during the chaos of her permanent amnesia, we're all singing love's song with her.

In the exile Psalm and Paul's word of encouragement to young Timothy from our scripture readings, we hear core convictions from the faith of Israel about the role of memory in the life of faith. In Psalm 137, the question, "...how could we possibly sing the LORD's song on foreign soil?" is quickly connected to the perils of forgetting and a pledge to remember Jerusalem's joy and God's faithfulness. Or as the citation at Yad Vashem says, "Forgetfulness leads to exile."

Forgetting our traumas *and* God's rescuing love – embodied in those who love and teach us the ways of faith – is for some biblical writers the greatest threat and often the reason the people find themselves lost and in captivity to begin with. Common refrains of "don't forget God's rescuing lovingkindness and faithful love (*chesed*)" sing in chapters like Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 103. Remembering is the positive version of this command and, again, for many, "the secret of redemption."

I'm grateful to God, whom I serve with a good conscience as my ancestors did. I **constantly remember you** in my prayers day and night.

When I **remember your tears**, I long to see you so that I can be filled with happiness. I'm reminded of **your authentic faith**, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. I'm sure that this faith is also inside you. Because of this, I'm reminding you to **revive God's gift** that is in you through the laying on of my hands. (emphasis added)

-2 Timothy 1:3-6 (CEB)

Within just a few verses in 2 Timothy Paul uses memory words four times (words like *remember, recall, remind*). And while some memories are loss and tears, Paul invites Timothy to recall the joy and genuine faith – the song of grace – that lived in the young leader's grandmother Lois and mother Eunice. Why? Because the reminding can be a rekindling that fans the flame of God's gift in us – a gift we couldn't see until they did.

The Greek word for revive or reignite that Paul chooses contains the words "up," "again," "life," and "fire" (*anazōpurein*, 2 Timothy 1:6). Authentic faith never starts (or ends) with us. To put it another way, "we didn't start the fire." It's always a new version of an old song lived out by those who love us into the faith.

For the witnesses in scripture, faith is always a cover song. But it's one that's hard to sing (or live) when we forget the words or even the melody (as my Granny Eva used to sing, "in my heart there rings a melody of love").

Earlier this year, lay leaders were invited to ask themselves the question: “Who loved you into leadership/faithful life in Jesus?” As Paul reminded young Timothy, the shared memories of others who have loved us can reignite the spark of God’s gift that lived in so many before us, as we will celebrate soon on All Saints Sunday.

Laity Sunday presents an opportunity in advance to remember how grace crossed our path – and maybe reignite love’s power for all in our own time. As we prepare to remember the cloud of witnesses who loved us into leadership in a few weeks, we do well to remember another call story, one we might think Methodists would know by heart (instead it’s a forgotten tune that doesn’t get much airplay anymore).

In May of 1738, Charles Wesley was so sick he literally had to be carried in a chair by lay people through the streets of London from the house of one friend to another. At the home of John Bray, a lay person with whom he was staying – someone he describes in his journal as “a poor ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ; but by knowing Him, knows and discerns all things” – Charles had an experience of pardoning, assuring grace that preceded his brother John’s by three days.

It was there that Mr. Bray’s sister, a lay person (remembered as “Mrs. Turner”) trusted God’s word to her in a dream just a few days earlier. In the dream she was told to share a simple message with the body and soul-sick cleric. Following the Spirit’s leading, she stood outside Charles Wesley’s guest room door and spoke (or did she sing?) these words:

“In the name of Jesus Nazareth, **rise** and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities.”

-**Mrs. Turner**, lay person and sister of John Bray (to a sick Charles Wesley in May of 1738)

Assuming he was hearing the voice of the house servant, Charles Wesley reportedly said to himself, “Oh that Christ would but speak thus to me.”

But what if this was Christ speaking to him? When Mrs. Turner said no one else had been there, with fear and trembling and a stirring in his heart he recalled saying, “I believe, I believe.” She then revealed that Christ told her to speak this word to him.

And while grace had been at work in his life all along, it is hard not to believe that when Charles Wesley chose to trust that this lay woman’s voice was the very voice of God *for him*, he was healed and believed, rising up with confidence in God’s love and pardon. He would spend most of the rest of his life putting some version of this word of grace into songs that fueled a revival movement that still sings today. [1]

There are songs in the *Book of Discipline*, and by songs I mean the words “sing.” This one, from paragraph 128, names the vocational life of every follower of Jesus Christ:

“all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free.”

-2016 *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, ¶ 128

Laity across the connection are committed to this calling and cover song, to deeds and words that heal and free. And today, every lay person can be like the woman in this forgotten story from Charles Wesley’s journal – whom we sadly remember only as Mrs. Turner. She was tuned-in to the Spirit’s call – and because she was, a 30-year-old 18th century cleric and master songwriter for a spiritual tidal wave was healed and freed.

So on this Laity Sunday as we emphasize reviving the gift that first lived in those who loved us into leadership (mothers and grandmothers like Eunice and Lois, Linda and Eva), we pause to remember their names. Ask yourself, “Who loved me into leadership?” Can you see their face? Maybe it was a Sunday school teacher or coach, a pastor, family member, or even someone whose name you’ve forgotten.

Maybe this year at the beginning of the beginning of the ending of pandemic, a memory of those who saw a spiritual future for you is key to sharing grace with others who have forgotten or are just beginning to awaken to God’s calling.

Such memories of grace help remind us that God’s song of love has ‘scored’ every life, filling each and every person, laity and clergy, with gifts for ‘a time such as this.’ With Mrs. Turner, Charles, parents and grandparents and a host of other saints whose memory fans the flame of faith in our time, we will ‘sing our lives to God’ (Don Saliers), both metaphorically and literally.

So what will we do? We will ask each other, ‘Whose love rescued you and set you on the path of discipleship?’ We will remember our rescues to rekindle faith’s fire. And we will sing them. Maybe for you it’s “Love lifted me” or “I once was lost but now am found” or some other song that brought you back to life so you could share its abundance with others. In a strange land. Because it is the LORD’s song of love for life, for all – and in this song every life has a verse.

[1] May 21, 1738, *The Manuscript Journal of the Reverend Charles Wesley, M.A.* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008).

*This year’s **Laity Sunday theme** is: Rise Up! And Revive God’s Gift. The focus is on rekindling the fire of faith that lived in the hearts and practices of those who have loved us into faithful and responsive life in Jesus Christ.*

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Laity Sunday 2021 – Order of Worship

ABBREVIATIONS

BOW = *United Methodist Book of Worship*

CCLI = Christian Copyright Licensing International, SongSelect [include link: <https://us.ccli.com/>]

TFWS = *The Faith We Sing* (2000)

UMH = *United Methodist Hymnal*

URW= *Upper Room Worshipbook*

WSM = *Worship & Song*, Music Edition

W&S = *Worship & Song* (2011)

SOZ = *Songs of Zion*

SoG= *Songs of Grace*

TAH = *The Africana Hymnal*

Some Suggested Congregational Songs and Hymns*:

“Wonderful Words of Life”	UMH 600
“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”	UMH 526
“God of Grace and God of Glory”	UMH 577
“Leaning On the Everlasting Arms”	UMH 133
“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”	TFWS 2158
Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling	UMH 348
“Wade in the Water”	TFWS 2107
“Breathe on Me, Breath of God”	UMH 420
“Change My Heart, O God”	TFWS 2152
“Blessed Assurance”	UMH 369
“Open My Eyes, That I May See”	UMH 454
“One Bread, One Body” (if sharing Communion)	UMH 620
“My Hope Is Built”	UMH 368
“The Gift of Love”	UMH 408
“O How He Loves You and Me”	TFWS 2108

**Also see the “Suggested Hymns” tab among the Laity Sunday worship resources online.*

ENTRANCE

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are all called to experience grace and share the gift of life in Jesus

We gather to sing ourselves to God.

We remember the faith that lived in those who loved us.

We know the LORD's song includes verses of grace we've yet to learn.

In every scene of trauma, tragedy, and menace we discover love already at work.

And we join a chorus where brokenness and captivity become healing and freedom.

WORD AND RESPONSE

Message Theme: Rise Up! And Revive God's Gift

2 Timothy 1:3-7

Prayers of the People (Skip if using "A New Great Thanksgiving for Laity Sunday")

Three or four lay speakers/preachers may become the leaders of the intercessions, or other laity may be chosen to lead the prayers.

Pastor: We remember those who loved us into faith, who embodied God's invitation to experience and share life abundant.

With the psalmist we know that it is hard to sing the LORD's song in a strange land.

But even when we forget, the words to your song comes back to us:

Lay leader: Love has always been at work in our lives. Love will find us again.

People: *God, hear our song.*

Lay leader: With all people who join the chorus of faithful life in Jesus.

People: *God, sing your song through us.*

Lay leader: For those whose memories are filled with more pain than grace.

People: *God, rekindle memories of your nearness to the broken.*

Lay leader: With melodies of love and stories of redemption.

People: *God, help us share the gift of grace for the sake of life.*

Pastor: O God, help us add the verses of grace found in every life to your covenant song and promise to make all things new.

All: Amen.

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION

WHEN NOT CELEBRATING HOLY COMMUNION:

Invitation to Thanksgiving

Leader:

We will go, Lord, into the world,

telling and retelling the story with other believers,

taking the gospel and making disciples

among all the peoples with whom we come in contact.
We will go, knowing *you* will be with us.
You, O God, to whom we would
in these moments,
pour out our lives in service
and in thanksgiving. But we know the barriers that stand in our way.
We cannot pour ourselves out to you fully as individuals
with unconfessed sin in our lives.
We cannot pour ourselves out to you fully as your body
when we are in conflict with others.
So, hear our confession,
forgive and deliver us,
and give us courage to offer your peace
to one another.

Confession of Sin

Leader:

We have sinned against you and one another, Lord.
We have not lived worshipfully.
Lord, in your mercy, ***hear our confession.***

Silence

We have not loved you wholly.
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have not lived worshipfully.
Lord, in your mercy, ***hear our confession.***

Silence

We have not denied ourselves and taken up our own cross daily.
We have not lived worshipfully.
Lord, in your mercy, ***hear our confession.***

Silence

We have not loved kindness, pursued justice, or walked humbly with you.
We have not lived worshipfully.
Lord, in your mercy, ***hear our confession.***

Silence

We have not shared the good news with our lips or in our lives.
We have not lived worshipfully.
Lord, in your mercy, ***hear our confession.***

Silence

Pastor/Leader: The saying is sure: If we confess our sins, God is merciful and just and forgives us our sins, and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

In the name of Christ, you/we are forgiven.

People/Leader to Pastor and Each Other: In the name of Christ, you/we are forgiven.

All: Glory to God! Amen!

Pastor/Leader: As forgiven and reconciled people, share Christ's peace with one another.

The peace of Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

The people share the peace of Christ with one another. After a suitable period of time, the pastor may continue:

Pastor/Leader: Forgiven and reconciled to God and one another,
let us offer our gifts and our thanks to God!

Thanksgiving Songs

During the Collection:

“Thank You, Lord” (UMH 84)

At the Presentation of Gifts:

“We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise” (TFWS 2031)

Pastor: Accept our sacrifices of thanksgiving and joy, O Lord,

as, by your Spirit, we remember and proclaim who we are!

Continue with Sending Forth

OR WHEN CELEBRATING HOLY COMMUNION:

Invitation to the Table (UMH 12)

Confession of Sin (UMH 12)

Act of Pardon (UMH 12)

Sharing of Peace (UMH 12)

Offering (UMH 13)

Great Thanksgiving: **A New Great Thanksgiving for Laity Sunday**

SENDING FORTH

Blessing and Benediction

Leader:

Go into the world, sharing yourself,
and proclaiming God's lovingkindness,
justice, and peace,
in words and deeds
that bring life and hope.

Pastor:

The Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Living Spirit
is with you, today and every day, forever and always.

Amen.

Laity Sunday 2021 — Hymn Suggestions

Hymns

BOW - The United Methodist Book of Worship

CLUW - Come, Let Us Worship (Korean)

MVPC - Mil Voces Para Celebrar (Spanish)

SOZ - Songs of Zion

TFWS - The Faith We Sing

UMH - The United Methodist Hymnal

URW - Upper Room Worshipbook

WSM - Worship & Song, Music Edition

WSW - Worship & Song, Worship Resources Edition

SoG - Songs of Grace

TAH – The Africana Hymnal

LAMENTATIONS 1:1-6; 3:19-26	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
Dear Lord, for All in Pain	458									
In the Midst of New Dimensions				2238						
It's Me, It's Me, O Lord	352		326		110					
Jesus, Savior, Lord (Saranam, Saranam)	523		105							
My Prayer Rises to Heaven	498									
O Thou, in Whose Presence My Soul Takes Delight	518									

PSALM 137	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
Another Son Is Killed									73	
Beside the Streams of Babylon (Psalm 137)						343				
By the Babylonian Rivers				2217						
By the Waters (Psalm 137)						342				
Come and Fill Our Hearts				2157		378				
Come, Ye Disconsolate, Where'er Ye Languish	510									
I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord	540									
In the Midst of New Dimensions				2238						
It Is Not You Who Shape God (Psalm 139)						348				
My Prayer Rises to Heaven	498									
O God of All Times (Psalm 137)						345				
O God of Judgment (Psalm 137)						347				
O God, We Sit (Psalm 137)						346				
Someone Asked the Question				2144						
We Weep, O God (Psalm 137)						344				
When God Restored Our Common Life				2182						
When We Are Called to Sing Your Praise				2216						

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-14	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
Am I a Soldier of the Cross	511									
By Gracious Powers So Wonderfully Sheltered	517									
Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands	319									
Cry of My Heart				2165						
Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether	632									
Faith Is Patience in the Night				2211						
Forward Through the Ages	555									
He Who Began a Good Work in You				2163						
Here Is Bread, Here Is Wine				2266						
Holy Spirit, Truth Divine	465									
I Know Whom I Have Believed (I Know Not Why God's Wondrous Grace)	714		290							
In the Singing				2255						
Jesus, Priceless Treasure	532									
Jesus, You Once Called Disciples									14	
May the Spirit of God Be in You								40		
My Faith Looks Up to Thee	452				215					

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-14	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
O God, we are so grateful								151		
O Thou Who Camest from Above	501		269							
Oh, I Know the Lord's Laid His Hands on Me				2139						
Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus	514									
Standing on the Promises of Christ My King	374	252								
When Our Confidence Is Shaken	505									
You Formed Us in Your Image, Lord									60	

LUKE 17:5-10	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
By Gracious Powers So Wonderfully Sheltered	517									
Close to Thee	407				7					
Faith Is Patience in the Night				2211						
Faith, While Trees Are Still in Blossom	508		97							
Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go	438									
Give Me the Faith Which Can Remove	650									
God of Love and God of Power	578									
Let Us Plead for Faith Alone	385									
My Faith Looks Up to Thee	452				215					
My God, I Love Thee	470									
The Kingdom of God Is Like a Grain of Mustard Seed	275									
Thou My Everlasting Portion	407									
We Need a Faith				2181						
When Our Confidence Is Shaken	505									

Laity Sunday 2021— Planning Notes

About the Acts of Thanksgiving

Acts of thanksgiving, although stated as an integral part of our Basic Pattern of Worship, are an uncommon or commonly truncated element when Communion is not celebrated. Today is an opportunity to model and explore what these acts can be if you are not celebrating Holy Communion.

About the Invitation to Thanksgiving

An act of invitation to thanksgiving is probably needed in most settings, much as the Prayer for Illumination, to help transition the energy from listening, commitment, and prayer in the previous movement (Word and Response) toward the energy of offering ourselves to God in thanksgiving for all God has done and is doing and will do to save us and renew the universe.

The principles of transition are the same. Match the contents, volume, speed, and energy of what came before, then move them to what is needed for what comes next.

Now we move from prayer to thanksgiving, still in the spirit of going in the awareness that Christ goes with us. Exhortation (the song), prayer (the prayers we have just prayed), and thanksgiving are all different kinds of energy. Give attention not only to the words used in the invitation to thanksgiving, but to the kind of energy with which these words are spoken.

About the Pardon before the Acts of Thanksgiving

Anyone, lay or clergy, may lead an act of confession and pardon. If the leader of the act of pardon is the pastor, use “you are forgiven.” If the leader is a layperson, use “we are forgiven.”

About Serving Communion

One of the ways to maintain the flow of the service when you celebrate Communion is to ensure you have an efficient way to serve the elements. You don’t have to make people wait in long lines or for long periods of time in their seats. The typical amount of time for people to be able to receive both bread and cup without a sense of rush is ten to twelve seconds. This means you can easily serve five to six people per minute. Calculate the number and placement of serving stations to allow all in your congregation who wish to receive to do so within five minutes, if possible.

A Note about Presiding

While this is Laity Sunday in The United Methodist Church, the special day does not change the work laity and clergy each do in the leadership and life of the church, established by both Discipline and doctrine (*This Holy Mystery*).

Authorized presiders are clergy, whether ordained elders, provisional members preparing for ordination as elders and assigned to a particular local church, other denomination clergy functioning as local pastors or provisional members, licensed local pastors, or, in extraordinary circumstances, ordained deacons given authorization by the bishop to preside in their particular ministry setting.

A layperson or deacon may assist at the Lord's Table by preparing the table, holding the liturgy book for the authorized presider, or leading intercessions if they are included within the Great Thanksgiving. The prayer is led by the authorized presider. It should not be divvied up among two or more presiders.

Scriptures:

Lamentations 1:1-6

1 Oh, no!

She sits alone, the city that was once full of people.

Once great among nations, she has become like a widow.

Once a queen over provinces, she has become a slave.

2 She weeps bitterly in the night, her tears on her cheek.

None of her lovers comfort her.

All her friends lied to her; they have become her enemies.

3 Judah was exiled after suffering and hard service.

She lives among the nations; she finds no rest.

All who were chasing her caught her—

right in the middle of her distress.

4 Zion's roads are in mourning; no one comes to the festivals.

All her gates are deserted. Her priests are groaning,

her young women grieving. She is bitter.

5 Her adversaries have become rulers; her enemies relax.

Certainly the Lord caused her grief because of her many wrong acts.

Her children have gone away, captive before the enemy.

6 Daughter Zion lost all her glory.

Her officials are like deer that can't find pasture.

They have gone away, frail, before the hunter.

Lamentations 1:1-6 Common English Bible (CEB)

Lamentations 3:19-26

19 The memory of my suffering and homelessness is bitterness and poison.

20 I^[a] can't help but remember and am depressed.

21 I call all this to mind—therefore, I will wait.

²² Certainly the faithful love of the Lord hasn't ended;^[a] certainly God's compassion isn't through!

²³ They are renewed every morning. Great is your faithfulness.

²⁴ I think:^[a] The Lord is my portion! Therefore, I'll wait for him.

²⁵ The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the person^[a] who seeks him.

²⁶ It's good to wait in silence for the Lord's deliverance.

Lamentations 3:19-26 CEB

Psalm 137

137 Alongside Babylon's streams,
there we sat down,
crying because we remembered Zion.

² We hung our lyres up
in the trees there

³ because that's where our captors asked us to sing;
our tormentors requested songs of joy:
"Sing us a song about Zion!" they said.

⁴ **But how could we possibly sing
the Lord's song on foreign soil?**

⁵ Jerusalem! If I forget you,
let my strong hand wither!

⁶ Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth
if I don't remember you,
if I don't make Jerusalem my greatest joy.

⁷ Lord, remember what the Edomites did
on Jerusalem's dark day:
"Rip it down, rip it down!
All the way to its foundations!" they yelled.

⁸ Daughter Babylon, you destroyer,^[a]
a blessing on the one who pays you back
the very deed you did to us!

- ⁹ A blessing on the one who seizes your children
and smashes them against the rock!

Psalms 137 CEB

Psalms 37:1-9^[a]

Of David.

- 37** Don't get upset over evildoers;
don't be jealous of those who do wrong,
² because they will fade fast, like grass;
they will wither like green vegetables.
³ Trust the Lord and do good;
live in the land, and farm faithfulness.
⁴ Enjoy the Lord,
and he will give what your heart asks.
⁵ Commit your way to the Lord!
Trust him! He will act
⁶ and will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,
your justice like high noon.
⁷ Be still before the Lord,
and wait^[b] for him.
Don't get upset when someone gets ahead—
someone who invents evil schemes.
⁸ Let go of anger and leave rage behind!
Don't get upset—it will only lead to evil.
⁹ Because evildoers will be eliminated,
but those who hope in the Lord—
they will possess the land.

Psalms 37:1-9 CEB

2 Timothy 1:3-7

Thanksgiving and prayer

³ I'm grateful to God, whom I serve with a good conscience as my ancestors did. I **constantly remember you** in my prayers day and night. ⁴ When **I remember your tears**, I long to see you so that I can be filled with happiness. ⁵ I'm **reminded of your authentic faith**, which **first lived in your grandmother Lois** and your **mother Eunice**. I'm sure that this faith is also inside you. ⁶ Because of this, I'm **reminding you to revive God's gift** that is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ God didn't give us a spirit that is timid but one that is powerful, loving, and self-controlled.

2 Timothy 1:3-7 CEB

Luke 17:5-10

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

⁶ The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

⁷ "Would any of you say to your servant, who had just come in from the field after plowing or tending sheep, 'Come! Sit down for dinner'? ⁸ Wouldn't you say instead, 'Fix my dinner. Put on the clothes of a table servant and wait on me while I eat and drink. After that, you can eat and drink'? ⁹ You won't thank the servant because the servant did what you asked, will you? ¹⁰ In the same way, when you have done everything required of you, you should say, 'We servants deserve no special praise. We have only done our duty.'"

Luke 17:5-10 CEB