

Laity Sunday 2020: Therefore Go! With Hope Through Engagement

Laity Sunday celebrates the ministry of *all* Christians to love God and all people. On Laity Sunday (this year, October 18, 2020), we lift up the vocation of *all* (lay and clergy) to follow Jesus Christ and lead others to him. As we welcome and offer the good news of Jesus' love for all, we know that the most engaging opportunities to grow deep and wide in our faith come from relationships with those beyond the comfort and security of our church walls. The stories and situations of those struggling with fear, loss, trauma, and injustice – as well as freedom, joy, and delight – become altar calls for the wholeness and holiness work of justice, mercy, and reconciliation. This is the ministry of the 'all called,' the laity. This is relational discipleship and participation in the mission of God (*mission Dei*). Therefore, we will go (with hope) through **engagement!**

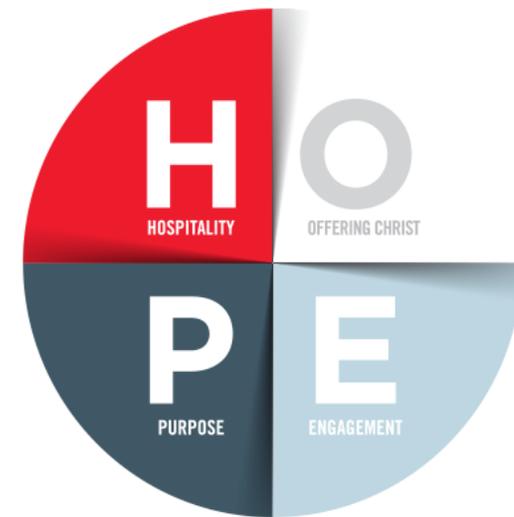


LAITY
SUNDAY
2020

THEREFORE, GO!
WITH **HOPE** THROUGH

Engagement

Send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ.



 **DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES**
The United Methodist Church

Laity Sunday 2020– Overview

Laity Sunday is a special Sunday defined by General Conference “to celebrate the ministry of all Christians” (2016 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 264.2). Traditionally observed on the third Sunday in October (this year, October 18), 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>]

“The Holiness of conversation [is] the image of God visibly expressed.”

-John Wesley, “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion”

“Absolute attention is prayer.”

-Simone Weil

Each year on Laity Sunday, we celebrate the priesthood of all believers. Last year, we emphasized deepening discipleship through participation in the means of grace (Therefore GO! With HOPE through Purpose). Through both works of piety and mercy, the means of grace are really spiritual attention training. They shape our ability to see God at work and participate in God’s world-repairing mission. This is soul-training *and* attuned vocational discernment. It is learning to hear and answer God’s call on our own lives as they intersect with the lives of *all* people: the *all called* to be *all love* (scriptural holiness) until *all love God and neighbor*.

The year 2020 has brought challenges to gathering in person that we could not fathom last October. This year, our celebrations of lay calling and leadership take place in the shadow of global pandemic, economic uncertainty, and the unavoidable conviction that the body and soul crippling racism still plaguing our communities must end.

This dramatic context of God’s call to discipleship has only amplified our longing to connect, to experience Christ’s empowering presence in ways that strengthen us as we share grace with those God so loves.

In recent months, too, church ‘rules of engagement’ have been rewritten before our very eyes. COVID-19 has created a new focus on those who aren’t in our buildings (because *all of us* can’t be in our buildings). We all know what it’s like to be ‘shut-in.’ With this experience, a light has shown on many we hadn’t seen before, people who for a variety of reasons haven’t had access to the in-person experiences of grace we used to take for granted.

In the mix of our embrace of (or resistance to) live-streamed services, *Zoom* committee meetings, online Bible studies, and virtual VBS, there continues to be critical conversation about what constitutes “real” gathering, togetherness, and **connection**. As definitions of **engagement** broaden, attention has shifted from familiar experiences of worship and learning in our buildings to **forms of participation** that extend well **beyond sanctuary walls**. ‘Can we be Christ’s witnesses online? Can people cry for help through virtual spaces? Can we respond to those in need through online platforms? Laity know all too well that the short answer is ‘yes.’

While it is tempting to think that “everything has changed” – the way we are ‘near’ one another is very different in online and social distancing environments, to be sure – some things remain the same. **Our mission and calling to grow deeper in love** (discipleship) continues to name the way God uses **lay efforts to engage all people** so that all can recognize and respond to the vocation of grace. It is this very grace that preventively meets all people’s brokenness and corruption *where they are*.

So, recognition (of those in need), participation (through shared life), and vocation (to *all love* discipleship) continue to define life together as the body of Christ. Whether through virtual connections or in-person worship and ministry, **authentic relationships remain the key to lay disciple-making efforts**. And these relationships deepen through engaging conversation and shared stories (whatever technology we use to connect and converse).

Everything comes back to the *quality* of our connections and conversations. Lay friendships and relationships with those outside the boundaries of weekly worship and programmed church life are creating new definitions of spiritual depth. And these are measured by prayerful attention to stories of graced life in the best and worst of times.

Laities are rediscovering that lasting commitment to transformation requires storied emotional connection. And they are finding new measurables, like the simple stories we listen to and share. Mark Youngman, a pastor at Providence Church in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, suggests that the new normal of online ministry for laity *and* clergy calls for measuring connection by **the grace narratives** that connect people to sacred power and one another: [“How do we measure connection in a time of isolation? Our answer has been a return to story.”](#)

Whether in person or online, laity know this: **deep discipleship is still attention training** – learning to see where grace is needed and already at work. In times such as these, laity are the eyes and ears of ministry in their communities. Like God our savior, laity see something wrong as a call for someone to help. It means having eyes to see and ears to hear God’s call coming through those who need our regard, help, and care. And increased awareness of the online lives of others, says author Deanna Thompson, helps us see, hear, and help.¹ It’s simple: virtual efforts that pay attention to the online lives of people within and beyond our congregations help us better care for those who are suffering and in need of Christ’s touch.

So, through all our ongoing (and modified) discipleship efforts, we teach recognition through honed attention to people and places where grace seems in short supply – places where suffering, trauma, captivity, delusion, and injustice devastate the life God intends for all. Along with the stories, songs, and teachings of scripture and the Wesleyan tradition (and our own experiences of grace), we also apprentice ourselves to the lives of others to discern the call of God within and beyond our own spiritual enclaves.

So maybe the better question for lay leaders and ministry planners is not, “Is this season of virtual discipleship and online worship going to be enough?” but, “Are our in-person *and* online gatherings engaging or oblivious to lonely, isolated, and ‘quarantined’ lives?”

¹ Deanna A. Thompson. *The Virtual Body of Christ in a Suffering World* (Abingdon Press, 2016).

Enhanced attention by laity to those who can't (or won't) join us in the sanctuary is a **new opportunity to “see all the people.”** And while online forms of ministry might only be the “hem” of his garment for some of us, they are already helping crowd-sourced Christ followers become more attuned to Jesus' question, “Who touched me?” (Mark 5:21-34). And pressing on with the same empowering presence Moses prayed for, laity are **responding with the gift of an attentive and listening grace** calibrated to the situations of those who need Christ's touch the most. Therefore, GO.

*This year's **Laity Sunday theme** is: **Therefore, GO with Hope through Engagement: Helping Transform the Surrounding Community.** The focus is on deep discipleship through authentic, organic, and consistent relationships with all people, especially those beyond the walls of the church.*

See also, *Engaging Your Community: A Guide to Seeing All the People*, Junius B. Dotson. <https://www.seeallthepeople.org>

*To see a simple pattern for intentional discipleship (based on ¶ 122 in the 2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline, “The Process for Carrying Out Our Mission”) view/download [the Laity Sunday brochure](#) describing the four **themes for the current quadrennium** expressed in the acronym, H.O.P.E. (Hospitality, Offer Christ, Purpose, Engagement).*

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Laity Sunday 2020 – Order of Worship

ABBREVIATIONS

BOW = *United Methodist Book of Worship*

CCLI = Christian Copyright Licensing International, [SongSelect](https://us.ccli.com/) [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*

ENTRANCE

Suggested Congregational Songs and Hymns*:

“Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”	UMH 103
“Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”	UMH 361
“Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty”	UMH 64
“I Love You, Lord”	TFWS 2068
“Lord of the Dance (I Danced in the Morning)”	UMH 261
“Awesome God”	TFWS 2040
“Breathe on Me, Breath of God”	UMH 420
“Make Me a Servant”	TFWS 2176
“It’s Me, It’s Me, O Lord”	UMH 352
“El Shaddai”	UMH 123
“Lead On, O Cloud of Presence”	TFWS 2234

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

Call to Worship

We are all called to recognize and join God’s mission of love.

We gather to become more like Jesus.

We learn how grace has met other lives.

We wait for God’s empowering presence to open our eyes.

We engage our neighbors, online and in person.
And God's love, power, and justice help repair the world.

WORD AND RESPONSE

Message Theme: Therefore, Go! With Hope Through **Engagement** Exodus 33:12-23 or Matthew 22:15-22

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 go with hope, O God, with an engaged faith.

By paying attention to your grace already at work in every life.

Wherever we meet those made in your image, we share stories of the grace that has reshaped our own lives.

As we come to see resonant patterns of grace, we find you repairing the world's shattered wholeness.

Lay leader: For a new resolve to listen to the stories of people made in your image.

People: God, hear our prayer.

Lay leader: With all who are called to become all love through your son, Jesus.

People: God, hear our prayer.

Lay leader: For those whose loneliness and isolation call for listening love.

People: God, hear our prayer.

Lay leader: With friends in faith who serve and witness through deeds and words that heal and free.

People: Savior, hear our prayer.

Pastor: Hear our prayer, O God, and help us embody your glory and presence – vessels of grace bringing mercy and justice to your world. **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 2020 – Preaching Notes

Texts: Exodus 33:12-23; Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 96:1-9 (10-13) or Psalm 99 ; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22

INTRODUCTION

Laity Sunday is embraced with enthusiasm in some congregations and ignored by others. If your congregation has an established pattern then, of course, we encourage you to continue it. And if you aren't used to letting laity take the chancel, then we hope you'd at least consider it this year. Laity Sunday can take all kinds of forms, with all levels of involvement in the leading of worship. If there is no one prepared or ready to give a sermon or message, then perhaps there could be testimonies, on video or live, that would add a lay voice to the proceedings. There could be a dialog sermon, perhaps, or other way of allowing the lay voice to be heard from the front of the sanctuary or on the screen.

We also encourage the worship team to plan to keep the worship theme going, even on Laity Sunday. Let the laity voice be a continuation of the worship plan and not an aberration or a diversion. There are notes here to help with the planning of the sermon as well as the service as a whole. Let the pastor and the lay speaker work together on the message, regardless of who will actually deliver it.

The purpose of worship is always to give glory to God, to direct the thoughts and hearts of the worshiping congregation God-ward. In short, worship is always about God before anything else. That said, it is also the time when the community gathers to recapture a shared vision of who they are as the community in that place and time. And whether that place is virtual, communicated through screens or face to face, it is also about making disciples of Jesus Christ. There is no need for this thrust to be set aside because a layperson is bringing the message of the day.

The word for today is *presence*: God's abiding and constant presence. It is not a random, "force-like" presence that just is. It is an intimate presence, a personal presence, a presence that knows your name. What a proclamation to bring this week! You are known. In our over-mediated society, it is often the individual who gets lost in the mass of voices and noise that surrounds us. There are many in your congregation who can attest to the feeling of being lonely in a crowd. This week could be an antidote to those feelings. Testimony is such an effective tool for knowing and being known. Many worshipers have observed that once a testimony has been shared, then that person is seen through new and informed eyes. We are not just faces in the crowd; we are the one who ... met God face to face, survived an illness, turned a life around; the one who found hope in a hopeless situation; the one who found love renewed, and on and on. Tell your story and listen to the stories of others.

Perhaps, if you're meeting in place, you could invite attendees to bring something that represents their journey and set up a worship center, keeping in mind all the physical distancing requirements. Or have participants email a photo that says something about who they are and how God has affected their lives. You could do this with explanations or simply let people speculate as they watch the slide show. It could generate some healthy conversations.

Let the worship be a celebration of the laity, of the people in the pews or behind the screens, scattered or gathered. Let the leadership give thanks for the people. Here might be a chance to do some statistical check in (maybe it's charge conference time?) —not as a way of bemoaning who's not there, not as a complaint because you're so small (Jesus worked well with twelve). Let it be a thanksgiving for who is there and is part of the congregation.

Let there also be an open door, an anticipation for those who will be a part of the congregation in new ways perhaps, a reminder that the congregation is always seeking to issue an invitation — simply to grow the church, but to make disciples and spread the gospel. We work for the kingdom of God. And we press on.

PREACHING NOTES

[Exodus](#) is a perfect text to explore a few important and lay intensive themes.

Let's start with the obvious. In Exodus we have a leader on the edge. This is not to say that your church is dealing with a leader who is questioning her or his call. But it happens, maybe more than we realize, certainly more than we will admit, even to ourselves, let alone to the larger community. Leadership is difficult. Trying to press on while keeping everyone content enough to go along is a near impossible task. Even the leaders who are wise enough to realize that their job is not to keep everyone happy, still wrestle with dissention. No matter how well trained we might be, there is, with Moses, a creeping suspicion that we weren't given enough information to do this monumental pilgrimage; that we weren't given enough help — wisdom, insight, grace, whatever — to be the leader that is needed.

Yet. Such an important word. For some reason the NIV skips it. But most translations give us this word asking for a pause. A hesitation, a rethink, perhaps; “yet” is a word of reversal. On one side of the yet is hesitation, uncertainty, “I don't know who is on my side” or “I don't know who will support me.” But then the yet brings another truth, a deeper truth. “You — my God, my hope — have said you know me by name.”

It would be a poor leader who said that he or she didn't care whether anyone else was willing to follow, to stand alongside. But a church leader knows that what comes first is a call from God. “The hand of the Lord is upon me,” that's how Jesus began his ministry. And each of us who want to lead God's people need to have that sense of affirmation from God in order to do the task set before us.

Presence, that is what we seek. God's presence in particular. To know and be known get us through a lot— through the difficult days ahead, through the complicated questions and the bone crushing rejection and the weighty issues that overwhelm us on a regular basis. To walk in the confidence that we are known by God, that God walks with us as we go is the first step on our journey.

One of our first realizations is that we are always in the presence of God. It is the nature of God to be present.

We cannot attain the presence of God because we're already in the presence of God. What's absent is awareness. Little do we realize that God's love is maintaining us in existence with every breath we take. As we take another, it means that God is choosing us now and now and now and now. -Richard Rohr, <https://cac.org/loving-the-presence-in-the-present-2015-12-29/>

Awareness of this presence grows from relationship. That's what is behind this text. Back up a verse and read this:

Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then he would return to the camp; but his young assistant, Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the tent (Exod 33:11).

Moses, and Joshua his protégé, knew that to become aware of the presence of God, you must spend time with God. The text says that God and Moses spent a lot of time in conversation, like friends. Like friends, meaning they enjoyed one another's company, but argued as much as agreed. It was a

contentious relationship from the beginning. There is no denying that. They complained to each other, dreamed together; they debated the meaning of life. All the usual stuff that friends do.

This time, Moses is saying he's gotten the short end of the stick again. You gave me this job, he says, but you don't say how I'm supposed to do it, or who is going to help me do it, or even for sure what it is we are supposed to do now. I've got no road map; I've got no itinerary; I've got no clue what's next. All I've got is this vague sense of call and the fact that you seem to like me for some reason. And besides, this is your mess to fix and not mine anyway. God says, "I'm here, take it easy." Moses says, "Well, duh. You're here. You'd better be here since this is all your idea anyway. But I need more than that. Way more." God says, "OK. Because I like you. Because I told you my name. OK." Moses is a bit stunned by this turn in the conversation, and he whispers, "Show me your glory."

So, what did he ask? For a light show? For thunder and lightning? Or something else? Glory. How do we give God glory? Or how do we acknowledge God's glory? By how we live. Yeah, sometimes it is praise and worship, but mostly we glorify God by living as God would have us live. Moses wanted something tangible. He wanted to see God walking around, living the way Moses was supposed to live. In short, thousands of years before time, he was asking for Jesus. He wanted God to put on flesh and come and hang out with him, come and guide him, come and sustain him if the task he was feeling way too inadequate to do. To lead the people, he was sure didn't want to be led by the likes of him. He wanted a glimpse of how it was supposed to be, how he was supposed to be in God. He wanted Jesus.

"In the morning, when I rise, give me Jesus." We are asking for glory when we sing that song, when we pray that prayer. Give me Jesus. Give me a glimpse of how I'm supposed to walk. Give me a hint of how I'm to do this task you've given me to do when I know it is beyond my ability to do. Parenting, pastoring, teaching, leading, living in love with neighbor and family, none of it is within my capabilities to do. None of it.

God says, "I know. So, here's what I'll do. I'll make all my goodness pass before you." Wait, what? My goodness, God says, just what you need. Just what will equip you, just what will fill you. On your own, the tasks before you are beyond you. But filled with my goodness, then the impossible becomes possible. "Filled with my goodness," God says to Moses, "you can lead these people." Goodness is not some ethical standard, some state of being. It is the empowering force that equips us to live as God's people. It is blessing. God blessed Moses on that mountaintop, just as God blesses us anytime we let the Spirit fill us. Filled with my goodness, God says to us, you can be who I created you to be. Filled with my goodness... See, we are so used to thinking these are attributes that we generate ourselves. We think that if we work hard enough, then we will become good. But that isn't how it works. It is a gift. It is the Spirit at work within us. And we let it work within us, because we know that without it, we fall short of who we want to be, let alone who God can equip us to be. And we invite the Spirit to bring us God's goodness because we want it; we want to be there. We want to be that something more, that something new. We want to love like that.

In the goodness of God, the God who knows us by name, we can press on. Press on as a community of faith. We can press on as the body of Christ who seeks to transform the world by making disciples of Jesus Christ. We press on.

If you're observing Laity Sunday, then this can be a time of dedication to the cause, the vision of the church. This could be a time of an expression of support for the one sent to lead, a way of saying we're on board and we will follow you as you follow Christ. We will commit to pressing on as one body of faith in this place, in this unusual time. Whether we are face to socially distant face or still virtual, we are one community, pressing on.

Laity Sunday 2020 — 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

Exodus 33:12-23	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SoG	TAH
Abide with Me; Fast Falls the Eventide	700									
Awesome God				2040						4004
Blessed Be the Name	63									
Breathe on Me, Breath of God	420					167				
Bring Many Names				2047						
Cry of My Heart				2165						
El Shaddai	123	45	77							
God of Many Names	105									
Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty	64	4	79							
How Firm a Foundation	529	256								
I Love You, Lord				2068						
Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise	103		74							
It's Me, It's Me, O Lord	352		326		110					
Jaya Ho (Victory Hymn)	478									
Jesus, Savior, Lord (Saranam, Saranam)	523		105							
Lead On, O Cloud of Presence				2234						
Lord, Dismiss Us with Thy Blessing	671									
Now Praise the Hidden God of Love				2027						
Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me	361	247								
Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above	126		60			70				
Source and Sovereign, Rock and Cloud	113									
Isaiah 45:1-7	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SoG	TAH
Children of the Heavenly Father	141		335							
God Will Take Care of You (Nunca desmayes)	130	260								
Move Me, Move Me	471		357		185					
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	117					200				
Psalm 96:1, 6, 10	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SoG	TAH
Shout to the Lord				2074						
Psalm 96:1-9	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SoG	TAH
Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven	66					75				
Psalm 99	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SoG	TAH

All Hail King Jesus				2069						
Awesome God				2040						4004
Crown Him with Many Crowns	327	157								
El Shaddai	123	45	77							
Glory to God				2033						
He Has Made Me Glad				2270						
He Is Exalted				2070						4082
Holy God, We Praise Thy Name	79		80							
Holy, Holy, Holy				2007						
Honor and Praise				2018						
How Great Thou Art	77	2	61							4015
Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise	103		74							
Lift High the Cross	159	164	174							
Lord, Be Glorified				2150						
O God Beyond All Praising				2009						
O Worship the King, All-Glorious Above	73									
Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above	96		124							
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	139	29	68			63				
Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven	66					75				
Righteous and Just Is the Word of Our Lord (La Palabra Del Señor Es Recta)	107									
Unsettled World				2183						
We Will Glorify the King of Kings				2087						
Wounded World that Cries for Healing				2177						
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SoG	TAH
Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine	369	65	287							4083
Blest Be the Dear Uniting Love	566		254							
Come, Thou Almighty King	61	11								
Filled with the Spirit's Power	537									
How Firm a Foundation	529	256								
Living for Jesus				2149						
My Life Flows On				2212		170				

O Spirit of the Living God	539									
Rejoice in God's Saints	708									
Spirit of Faith, Come Down	332		219							
Thank You, Lord	84				228					4081
This Little Light of Mine	585		338		132					4150
Matthew 22:15-22	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SoG	TAH
An Outcast Among Outcasts				2104						
Come, Let Us with Our Lord Arise				2084						
Come, My Way, My Truth, My Life	164									
He Is Exalted				2070						4082
His Name Is Wonderful	174	172	203							
How shall I come before the Lord							3124			
Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes										
Lord of the Dance (I Danced in the Morning)	261	128	170							
Lord, Be Glorified				2150						
Make Me a Servant				2176						
More Precious than Silver				2065						
O Young and Fearless Prophet	444									
Rise Up, O Men of God	576									
Take My Life, and Let It Be Consecrated	399		312							
There's Something About That Name	171	74								
We Would See Jesus	256		168							
What Does the Lord Require	441									

Laity Sunday 2020 — 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.

In this case, “Go Ye, Go Ye into the World” is already a rather energetic song, made more engaging if it has been sung in a round for the final verse. Still, it is a song of exhortation, urging people to act. Part of that action has been our prayers for the church and the world.

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.