

February 16, 2017

Dear Grand Rapids District Lay Leaders of The United Methodist Church,

This is the first of my monthly letters to you. So first, I want to thank you. Thank you, laity. In amazing and quiet ways you put God's love for all creation into action. Jesus put God's love into action for us. Now it's our time to put God's love into action for our world. Thank you for all you are doing at such a time as this.

We are experiencing a groundswell of laity who have awakened from slumber. Laity who no longer settle for the status quo. With the love and grace of God, laity respond to a call to action. This "laity movement" knows a better way, one that will transform the world.

I cannot accept this definition I found: *lay people are ordinary people, distinct from religious professionals or experts.* Being "**Disciples** of Jesus Christ." we study, teach and strive to live out his teachings. Ordinary? I think not, if we were ordinary, wouldn't there be more of us? If there were more of us, could we transform the world?

That's where we common church folk come in. The Mission of The United Methodist Church is for ordinary people, and there are a lot of us (12.1 million), "To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World."

Our world is transforming. We as Lay Leaders are responding with our love and grace. Laity, once again, I thank you.

Godspeed,
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