

Laity Sunday 2025: Together By Grace: *Be Strong in the Spirit* (Ephesians 3:16)

Laity Sunday celebrates the people of God and the Spirit working through them (all of them). As God's people grow in grace, they gather with others and connect with the saving love of Jesus Christ. So, on Laity Sunday (October 19, 2025), we continue to lift up God's call to follow the way of Jesus and lead others to him – especially, as we consider what it means to be Spirit-strong, connectional disciples, ligament leaders who “cover” the LORD's song together.



Laity Sunday 2025– Overview/Planning Worship

Laity Sunday is a day to remember and lift up the priesthood and ministry of *all*. Everyone is called to share in God's community of healing togetherness and world-repairing love.

Laity Sunday is a special Sunday defined by General Conference “to celebrate the ministry of all lay Christians” (2020/2024 *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 264.2). Usually observed on the third Sunday in October, Laity Sunday is one way to express the core Christian conviction that *all* are called to participate in God's mission to “abolish death” and bring life to light through the good news of Jesus. [Read more about the history of Laity Sunday at https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-laity-sunday](https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-laity-sunday).

This year, the emphasis is on Spirit-strong, “ligament” people of God who:

- Sing the LORD's song (together),
- Know the script (by heart),
- Accompany others (in and beyond the church), and
- Witness the story of grace (in every life).

Laity Sunday 2025 and Quadrennial Themes

The Laity Sunday theme for 2025 comes from **Ephesians 3:16** (with reference to stories from Genesis and Luke, promises from Jeremiah, and lyrics from the Psalms).

Last year, the Laity Sunday passage came from 2 Timothy 1:1-14, with resources connected to the theme, “[Rise Up! And Retain the Spirit's Good and Beautiful Things](#).” We connected the dots from that theme to the vision of living “together by grace” expressed in last year's [Laity Address at the](#)

General Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. There, the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders (AACLL) executive team encouraged laity to accompany people in love beyond church walls. Conference lay leaders also reminded us that we are witnesses to grace at work—witnesses who echo what photographer Jack Corn said was key to being a witness: *to be there, see there, and gather others to care there*.

Laity Sunday Themes. 2025-2028 – Together By Grace!

2025: TOGETHER BY GRACE!—Be Strong in the Spirit (Eph 3:16)

2026: TOGETHER BY GRACE—Be Grounded in love (Eph 3:17)

2027: TOGETHER BY GRACE!—Behold Love’s breadth/depth (Eph 3:18)

2028: TOGETHER BY GRACE —Be Filled with God’s fullness (Eph 3:19)

Laity Sunday 2025 – Preaching Notes

Texts: Ephesians 3:14-21 (NRSVA); Jeremiah 31:27-34 (CEB); Psalms 119:97-104 (CEB); Genesis 32:22-31 (CEB); Psalms 121 (CEB); 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 (CEB); Luke 18:1-8 (CEB)

LAITY SUNDAY READINGS

Read the passages for Laity Sunday listed above. Listen for what resonates with your heart and invite God’s Spirit to confirm a word or insight for your life, and then as a message to share with others. Try reading a passage more than once, listening for a word, phrase, or image that sticks with you. You might not need to read any more of the notes below to have clarity about your witness for the Laity Sunday service.

In addition to today’s Laity Sunday theme passage from Ephesians, our readings include Hebrew Bible “scripts” from Genesis, Jeremiah, the Book of Psalms, and New Testament passages from Luke and 2 Timothy. As in recent years, we liken the coming nearness of God to a song sung together (the LORD’s song, with us, for life), with every life a rhyming verse in “the whole people of God.”

In **Genesis 32**, we encounter a family origin story that is familiar to the covenant people of God. We read that as the schemer/dreamer Jacob prepares to meet his brother, Esau (from whom he has stolen both blessing and birthright), he wrestles with a “man” (an angel? God?) all night long and walks away wounded and blessed – with a limp and a new name: “the one who contends with gods and mortals and prevails.” Jacob and the whole people of God are changed by these encounters in ways that ripple across time. Jacob is a “wounded storyteller.” His limp (along with the stones and angels and forgiveness by Esau) testifies that he has been with God. He stands for “the whole people” of God, who, in their stories of contention, cry for help, brokenness, and surprising grace testify to covenant life with Yahweh.

Jacob’s cry for help and his trust in covenant promises echo in the subsequent stories of Israel and the social life of Jesus (the church): *all* those whom God gathers and brings home. The story of “the whole people of God” is always a tale of our shattered and wounded wholeness and the way God rebuilds the shards into something beautiful. Our calling as God’s people is to gather to Love’s nearing by caring in every place we encounter neighbors, friends, family – those in whom we come face to face with God in both our woundedness and blessing.

The reading from **Jeremiah** concerns the people who bear Jacob's name. It is wrapped in a promise for "the people of Jacob" who have lived in devastating exile. God proclaims that he has heard the cry for help and will rescue the people (Jer 30:5,11). The homecoming promise is a return of people whose sins and enemies have scattered them to the wind: "I will bring back my people Israel and Judah from captivity" (Jer 30:3) because "You will be my people, and I will be your God" (Jer 30:22; 31:1, 8, CEB). The reading also includes a promise to do something new and strengthen the people (31:22, 25), engraving their hearts with words for living a "whole" way of life. God's new covenant writes living instructions on the hearts of this belonging people for how to live together with others, for good, for life.

In **Psalm 119** (consider reading the entire passage during your preparation), we discover a long acrostic poem (each section beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet) that praises God's instructions and encourages living a good life. For a whole-hearted, immigrant people longing for help and mercy, the singer prays for eyes to see and feet to walk in the way that leads to life – and to live again when life seems more like death ("make me live by your way" and "make me live again" (See Psalm 119:18, 25, 36, 40, 88, 107, 149, 154, 159, 175, 193). God's Word gives new life in the stories and poems, and even the rules of the script. These are all songs for this writer, even cover songs that express a people's cry for help *and* celebrate Yahweh's pledge to rescue and save (see Psalm 119:86, 145-147, 169, 174). Throughout this long love song about clear directions for the good life, we hear over and over again a prayer to be taught what these instructions mean and how these precepts and "righteous rules" might become another way that God's faithful love is *with* us as we sing the LORD's song (see 119:98).

For the writer of **Psalm 121**, our cry for help is met not by the gods of whatever high places and idols promise security, but by the LORD who protects us with a sheltering, accompanying shade from both blistering noonday sun and whatever night lights bedazzle us.

In the gospel reading from **Luke 18**, we read of a woman crying out for justice to an oblivious judge who eventually relents due to her persistence and gives her justice for the sake of his own peace of mind. She is a witness to her own distress, violation, and pain and to the judge's obligation to respond with help. For Luke, however, that is not how God responds to our cry for help. The contrast is key: God's faithful love is a rapid response of nearness and saving presence (Lk 18:7).

In Paul's letter to a young leader in **2 Timothy**, he reminds readers that following God's instruction brings wisdom for a whole way of life in Jesus (2 Tim 3:14). The power of this script lies in its usefulness to form the character of those who belong to God and are "equipped to do everything that is good" (2 Tim 3:16-17).

Finally, a verse from our scripture reading from Ephesians takes center stage on this Laity Sunday: **Ephesians 3:16** (NRSVA¹):

"I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit." Ephesians is a book about the mystery of God's will and purpose: the gathered wholeness of those "made alive together...by grace" (Eph 2:5). This passage is a prayer, not a command, that God's Spirit power—the same power that brings life out of death—would inhabit our hearts and fill us with love.

¹ New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised (NRSVA) Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This gathering plan and the power to be one in the Spirit are revealed by the same Spirit that has marked us all for life together. As we are filled with the Spirit of God, we sing and make melody in our hearts (Eph 5:19-20). Spirited life together is our wholeness, with each witness, story, and verse in the LORD's song binding us together like ligaments as we grow in Jesus' love (Eph 4:15-16). This love is our ongoing, gathering witness to "the lasting in the passing" (Henri Nouwen, *Behold the Beauty of the Lord*), an everlasting love revealed in the life of the whole people of God.

SOME BIG IDEAS

- The Spirit-strong people of God are gathering witnesses who:
 - Sing the [LORD's] song (together),
 - Know the script (by heart)
 - Hear the story of Love's work in every life (story stewards).²
- God's instructions, stories, songs, and rules are scripts for a whole way of life.
- Spirited "ligament" leaders (Ephesians 4:16) promote whole body growth in love.
- Jacob represents the *whole* people of God.
- Spirited people are "set together" and share in God's gathering plan to make us all "alive together ... by grace" (Ephesians 2:5).
- Spirit-strong people are also witnesses to God's gathering wholeness at work in every shattered life, because "wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the *whole* church [katholikē ecclesiā]." (Ignatius of Antioch, *To the Smyrnaeans*, 8:2b).
- Spirit-strong people respond together to God's call to love all – boldly, courageously, and with great joy.

SELECT QUOTES

"It is hard to say what it means to be at work and thinking of a person you loved and love still who did that same work before you and who taught you to do it. It is a comfort ever and always, like **hearing the rhyme come** when you are singing a song."

-Wendell Berry, *Hannah Coulter* (Counterpoint, 2004, *emphasis added*), 107.³

"I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be **strengthened** in your inner being **with power through his Spirit...**"

-Ephesians 3:16 (NRSVA, *emphasis added*).

² On story stewardship and listening well, see *Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience*, Brené Brown (Random House, 2021), 249ff.

³ The character, "Hannah," a woman who grew up in rural Kentucky, is describing practical things she learned about farm work that her grandmother taught her (and how memory and effort come together in a comforting way, like expecting the next rhyme in a song). This comes just a couple of pages after a related character plays the fiddle and the family sings along to the great hymn, "Abide with Me." Like many of our hymns, it is familiar and driven by rhymes: 'Abide with me, fast falls the *eventide*. The darkness deepens, Lord, with me *abide*. When other helpers fail and comforts *flee*, help of the helpless, Lord, abide with *me*.' (*United Methodist Hymnal*, 700. Henry Francis Lyte, melody ['Eventide'] by William Henry Monk).

“Jacob named the place **Peniel** [*Peni’el*, ‘I saw God’s face there’], “because **I’ve seen God face-to-face**, and my life has been saved.” The sun rose as Jacob passed Penuel [*Pnu’el* – ‘God’s face was seen there’), **limping** because of his thigh.”

-Genesis 32:30-31 (CEB, *emphasis added*)

“The **witness of the laity** ... is the primary evangelistic ministry through which **all** people will come to know Christ and the United Methodist Church will fulfill its mission.”

-*The 2020/2024 United Methodist Book of Discipline*, ¶ 127, (*emphasis added*).

“I will put my instructions within them and **engrave them on their hearts**. I will be their God and they will be my people ... they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.”

-Jeremiah 31:33b, 34b (CEB, *emphasis added*)

The General Rule of Discipleship is this: “**to witness to Jesus Christ** in the world, and to follow his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”⁴

“Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.”

-Henry Francis Lyte and W. H. Monk, *United Methodist Hymnal*, 700.

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with **our whole heart**...and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray.

-Confession and Pardon, A Service of Word and Table II, *United Methodist Hymnal*, 12.

Questions to Nourish Your Laity Sunday Preparation

Think about a time when you felt a sense of belonging and harmony with a group or team, choir, band, or other group. Then pick one or two questions below to help you think about this year’s Laity Sunday theme (together by grace/strong in the Spirit). Read and respond to one or two questions (or begin with your own). Your context has stories of togetherness grace and the witness of your neighbors. With the Spirit’s help, these are all you need to prepare good news for the people of God in your church.

- When have you seen people in your church or community rally together around something important?
- Who have been some of the “ligament” leaders holding things together through local contentions and restorations? (Eph 4:15-16; Genesis 32-33)
- What is their witness? (Hint: testifying to ways something sacred is near and here to help)

⁴ Adapted version of Wesley’s General Rules. See *2020/2024 Book of Discipline*, ¶1109, and Gayle Turner Watson’s *A Guide to Covenant Discipleship Groups* (Discipleship Resources, 2000), 12.

- Did some of them seem to know the script by heart? What does that mean? (See Jeremiah 31:33 and 2 Timothy 3:14–4:5)
- How does that scripture-by-heart knowledge change them? (See Jer 31:34; 2 Tim 3:16.)
- What’s the difference between memorizing sentences from the Bible and having God’s instructions for life “engraved” or tattooed on our hearts?
- Who are some of the witnesses to grace in the scripts from Genesis, Jeremiah, and Psalms? What are their stories of trauma and grace?
- Do you see the “rhyming” of Love’s story at work within previous scripts/songs of Israel’s broken promises (and God’s faithfulness)?

The Whole People of God

Laity Sunday is an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be whole from the perspective of the story of a belonging people – a people restored to a different kind of wholeness through life’s most shattering experiences. Exiled and broken, alienated from family and homeland, brought back and repaired by grace, “the people of Jacob” (Jer 31:7) experience God’s spiritual power as a gathering and “togethering” force. For the writer of Ephesians, the mystery of God’s plan is “to gather up *all* things in heaven and things on earth” and make *all* “alive together...by grace” (Eph 1:10, 2:5 NRSVA, *emphasis added*). With this in mind, we can read Paul’s prayer that the Spirit’s power will strengthen a whole, gathered people in their inner being, so they will know love and be filled with God’s fullness (Ephesians 3:14-20).

As you reflect on these passages and prepare to lead worship on Laity Sunday, trust yourself and the grace already at work in your own life. Try to read the context chapters of each scripture reading for insight into the story behind these scriptures. For example, Ephesians 1-4, Genesis 31 (Jacob leaves Laban), Genesis 33 (Jacob meets Esau), Jeremiah 31 (the comfort scroll for a restored people), and all of Psalm 119 (an “in praise of life-instructions” song). For the people of God, captivity is never the last word. So, even when singing the LORD’s song in a strange land (Psalm 137), they can live in hope that “the rhyme will come” when God’s promise to make all things new comes true.

FOR A DEEPER DIVE: Choose a section below and consider how your community is growing Spirit-strong by finding “rhyming” wisdom in scripture and the life stories of God’s gathered people in your community (Jer 30:22, 31:1, 33; Eph 1:14).

Comfort Till the Rhyme Comes—Whole and Incomplete

Our stories of grace rhyme, but they are incomplete. One of my favorite authors is the farmer, poet, and novelist, Wendell Berry. In his books about mid-century life in the fictional town of Port William, Kentucky, Berry chronicles the lasting joy and the passing away of a whole way of life (rooted in a community of shared loss and joy that collaborates with others living responsibly on the land).

In Berry’s book, *Hannah Coulter*, a character reflects twice in a few pages about memory and love and the comfort that comes when both “rhyme.” Recalling the work she did with her “Grandmam” as a young girl – work that reverberates in the same chores she performs now in old age (garden tending, feeding chickens, kitchen/household tasks), Hannah thinks to herself:

“It is hard to say what it means to be at work and thinking of a person you loved and love still who did that same work before you and who taught you to do it. It is a comfort ever and always, **like hearing the rhyme come when you are singing a song.**”⁵

The satisfaction and comfort of resonant grace stories – like “the coming of the rhymes in a song”⁶– reveal something the whole people’ of God know deep in their bones: our story-song is ever and always rhyming yet incomplete without the *all* people – those in the past whose songs we cover, and especially those we don’t know now who are adding their own rhyming verses to the life of faith.⁷

Mizpah and the Whole People of Jacob

Back in the 1980s when I was in my early twenties and very much in love with the young woman I would eventually marry, we bought a gold coin “Mizpah” necklace split in two with zig-zag, puzzle piece edges inscribed with a scripture: “The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another” (Genesis 31:49 KJV). Google it; you’ll find lots of examples. She wore hers, and I mine, for many years. Neither of us really paid attention to the actual story of this “witness” tale in the Genesis nest of Jacob stories. It turns out the story is not as romantic as we thought.

We know this story, right? It falls or nests in a series of stories about the covenant people. In the Jacob storyline, we meet a schemer who undermines the priority of firstborn sons in the culture by deceiving his brother and his father (with his mother, Rebekah’s wily assistance). A recap: Jacob cheated his brother out of a birthright and a blessing, and traveled to the homeland of his parents’ kin (Paddan-aram) to find a wife his mom and dad would approve (and also, of course, to escape the wrath of his cheated brother, Esau). Feel free to skip the following few paragraphs if you know this story by heart.

On the way to the old country, Jacob had a dream while snoozing on a stone pillow at Luz (angels on an up and down escalator to heaven). Yahweh appeared in the dream and renewed the promises made to Abraham and Isaac: **place/land**, **people/descendants**, **presence/accompaniment**, and **presents/blessings** overflowing for the whole world (Genesis 28:13-25). Jacob named this place *Bethel* (meaning "God’s house") and marked it with a stone pillow, a memento of a bad night’s sleep but an awesome encounter with the living God.

Jacob goes on to Paddan-aram and meets Uncle Laban’s daughter, Rachel, at a well, where he makes a strong impression by rolling away the stone so she can water her flock. He’s smitten (she, too?) and discovers that being a schemer is a family tradition. Uncle Laban forces Jacob to work for seven years to marry his daughter, Rachel, then does a bait-and-switch with his older daughter, Leah, wringing seven more years of labor out of his nephew. It seems doubtful anyone asked Leah and Rachel what they wanted. You know this story.

⁵ Wendell Berry, *Hannah Coulter*, *emphasis mine*.

⁶ Berry, *Hannah Coulter*, 110

⁷ The writer of Ephesians uses the word “all” over and over again to remind readers of this incompleteness and promised wholeness that is always more than what we know; it is a gathering wholeness that bears witness to God’s good life for all. It’s a wholeness born out of our broken relationships and grace’s surprising mercy. God’s ‘whole people’ know they are incomplete without the ‘all’ or ‘more’ people (in more places), whether ancestors, immigrant strangers, or alienated family members restored by kindness.

I'll cut to the chase: with some divine assistance, Jacob uses mystical animal husbandry techniques to succeed in business. Yahweh appears to him and tells him to leave his uncle's country with his wives, kids, and livestock in tow and go home. Laban tracks him down. Having been warned by God to go easy on Jacob, Laban and Jacob come to an uneasy truce and treaty (covenant) at a place called Galeed ("mound of witness"). Jacob has all the relatives gather stones, and they build a pile that testifies that God is the witness: neither Laban nor Jacob will cross that boundary to scheme the other or try to reclaim "property" (sheep, wives, children, servants). Laban then names the place *Mizpah* and says the famous words found on my necklace: "The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another" (Genesis 31:49 KJV).

That's a long way to go to be reminded that the stories of Jacob bear witness to a people's cry for help, the wounds of contention and broken trust, and the blessings of a covenant promise. It's in the context of this journey that Jacob runs into angels again and breaks his family into two camps, hoping to avoid the wrath of Esau, who is nearby with hundreds of men. Terrified, Jacob cries out to God for help ("save me from my brother!") and sends his own angels (messengers) and gifts ahead in hopes of turning his brother, Esau's, heart from vengeance to kindness.

This is the context for the "wrestling with the man (angel? God?) story of Genesis 32:22-31. It's worth noting Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9-12. He reminds God of the covenant promise to multiply his family and bless him. He also reminds God that heading back home [and now running into Esau] was God's idea, not his, and he emphasizes the promise that God will "make sure things go well" for him.

After sending his wives and children across the Jabbok River, **Jacob wrestles with a man until dawn**. Like the story of another dream encounter with God that Jacob recounts to Rachel and Leah in Genesis 31, we assume he is the teller of this tale, too, since no one else is there. The fight ends in a draw at the break of dawn, with the "man" touching Jacob's thigh right where the ligaments and tendons hold leg to hip.

In response to Jacob's demand for a blessing during their wrestling match, the man/angel/God says, 'I'll bless you: you're getting a new name that means 'one who contends with gods and mortals and prevails.' So ever after, Jacob – the contentious and wounded schemer-storyteller⁸ – walks with a limp. And seemingly without any stone witnesses, he names the place "**Peniel**," which means "I saw God's face there" (and lived to tell the tale). Others will call the place "Penuel" (God was seen there).

We don't really know why Jacob thought the man who wounded him was God (or if the man/angel/God was just playing along in the wrestling match with Jacob, knowing it would be contentious and end in a blessed wounding all along). What do you think? We do know this: **this is the turning point in Jacob's scheming career**, as if the wounds that come from resisting God (and cheating your brother) have folded some compassion and humility into his body (his permanent limp).

In the very next scene, Genesis 33, we witness the showdown between Jacob and his brother, Esau. Jacob has every reason to believe Esau will kill him and take all that Jacob calls his own (sheep, servants, wives, children). Jacob has prayed for and asked through his messengers for unearned kindness from Esau (Gen 32:5; 33:8). Now, face-to-face, Jacob (or Isra'el, the one who contends with gods and mortals) meets his brother, bowing deep – only to discover that Esau – like the father in the prodigal son story – is so moved to see him again that he runs and embraces him (more kindness that Jacob had counted on). Esau tells Jacob he is content with what he has and forgives Jacob (Genesis 33:1-10). So, for the second time in

⁸ See Arthur Frank's, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, & Ethics*, second edition (University of Chicago Press, 2013), 180-182.

two chapters, Jacob sees God's face again, now in his brother's grace for him: "Seeing your face is like seeing God's face since you've accepted me so warmly" (Gen 33:10 CEB).

Jacob beholds the mystery of God in his resistance and demand for blessing, as well as in the other face-to-face encounter with God in the kindness of Esau. This story of Jacob/whole people of God rhymes and resonates throughout scripture.⁹ As the storied context of contentious witnesses – stones, angels, and broken family ties/sibling rivalries mended by a surprising grace/face of God – this whole portion of the Torah/Instruction testifies to children of promise, to schemer-dreamers like Jacob, who again stands for a whole people. The wrestling match and limping continue in the life of these people, as they discern (and fail to discern) what it means to live into the covenant promise. Watching over all in love is the promise-making/promise-keeping God.

Help, Hosanna, Blessed: When Stones Cry

In the parable of the woman seeking justice in Luke 18:1-8, the gospel writer tells us this story is about our need "to pray continuously and not be discouraged" (18:1 CEB). If that's our need, God is a contrast to the judge who delays action and sees the woman as a nuisance. For Luke, when people cry out, God is faithful to bring help quickly (18:8). It helps to read this parable in the context of Jesus' ministry of presence and healing. People cry out; Jesus heals and helps, and "whole people" sing a spirited praise song together.

Later in the same chapter (Luke 18:35-43), the "help—blessed" pattern is evident when a "certain blind man" (Bartimaeus in Mark's telling) shouts, "Jesus - Mercy!" When others try to silence him, he persists in his cry for help. Jesus asks him what he wants, and his shout becomes a specific prayer request: "Lord, I want to see" (18:41b). "At once," the man is healed; *all* the people see this and sing a song of praise.

In the very next chapter, Luke gives us one version of the "triumphal entry" story.¹⁰ Here, in a small village setting, Jesus asks the disciples to borrow a donkey/colt/ ass for him to ride into town (Luke 19:32-34). The religious leaders are offended by a spontaneous song sung by the whole crowd ("Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord"), demanding that Jesus silence the sing-along.¹¹ While missing the "Hosannas" ("save us") of the other three gospels, all four have the "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." Luke's account adds a strange punctuation the others lack: "I tell you, if they were silent, **the stones would shout**" (Luke 19:40 CEB, *emphasis added*).

So a savior carried by a donkey¹²— and a whole people who sing songs that stones would cover if the people held their peace – become witnesses to grace that starts in wounded bodies crying for help, finding repair in Jesus' nearing, followed by the LORD's song sung by all.

⁹ See Rev. Dr. Stephen D. Crites, "Angels We Have Heard" in *Religion as Story*, James B. Wiggins, ed. (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1975), 23-64.

¹⁰ See also Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; John 12:12-19.

¹¹ It seems to be a cover of their tune in Luke 18 after the healing of the blind man.

¹² From a prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 (Matthew and John quote this passage).

These images of shouting/praising stones, along with a savior carried on a colt, make interesting witnesses to God's healing nearness in Jesus. What 1 Peter 2:5 calls "living stones"¹³ resonates with the stones that witness Jacob's encounters with God in Genesis 28 and 31: God nears with promised help and those who cry for it to tell the tale of seeing God's face (in strange, wounding struggles and surprising grace/kindness).

Stones and ... Other Witnesses

In John Telford's *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, he shares the story of an encounter between Charles Wesley and a schoolmate named Richard Robinson from Charles's Westminster and Oxford days, a friend who grew up to be something of a big shot (Archbishop Lord Rokeby – there's even a gate with his name engraved on it at Oxford).

In Telford's account, Charles's conversation with Lord Rokeby goes south when the Archbishop says that he didn't believe most of the rumors [about the 'vile' quality of the Methodist movement], though he was surprised they used laity in leadership roles.

Charles responds,

'It is your fault, my lord,'

'My fault, Mr. Wesley?'

'Yes, my lord, your and your brethren's.'

'How so, sir?' said Dr. Robinson.

'Why, my lord, **you hold your peace**, and so **the stones cry out**.'¹⁴

Charles and Lord Rokeby walk together around the large room in awkward silence. Then Lord Rokeby said, 'But I hear they are unlearned [people].' To which Charles Wesley responded, 'Very true, my lord; in general they are so; **so the dumb ass rebukes the prophet**.'¹⁵

Charles Wesley's somewhat lukewarm defense of lay witness – "stones" and, well...donkeys like the one that set Balaam straight in Numbers 22 – may reflect the skepticism of the upper caste "religious" that the "whole people" could never be 'the primary evangelistic ministry'¹⁶ of their (or any) age.

¹³ The writer of Ephesians also implies this organic, growing stone structure or household in 2:21; see also Ephesians 4:16 (ligaments that hold the whole body together).

¹⁴ John Telford, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, MA (1900), 305. This 'stones cry out' reference is to one Gospel's version of the triumphal entry (Luke 19:28-44) where Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey/colt/ass to shouts of praise/cries for saving help ('Hosanna!' in Matthew, Mark, and John—meaning something like 'Save [us]!') and "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 19:37-38; see also Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, and John 12:12-19).

¹⁵ This likening of laity to ... a talking donkey is a reference to a story in Numbers 22:22-35 about a religious professional (prophet) who loves his own voice, oversharing and supplementing the LORD's message. He is blind to the presence of Yahweh in the form of an angel that only his "ass/donkey" can see (and keeps trying to avoid, since coming close to the LORD's sword-wielding messenger will likely mean death). God gives the donkey the power of speech after the religious professional beats it for trying to avoid the presence of the LORD's messenger/angel, hence 'rebuking' the prophet.

¹⁶ "The **witness of the laity** ... is **the primary evangelistic ministry** through which **all** people **will** come to **know Christ** and the United Methodist Church will fulfill its mission ." See *The 2020/2024 United Methodist Book of Discipline*, ¶ 127, (*emphasis added*).

But the laity *are* witnesses to grace and “the whole people of God.” Whether stones or donkeys (or wronged family members), the witness of this “whole people” deepens our sense of both the incompleteness of a single story/set of scripts and the need of *all* to cry “Help!” and “Blessed!” when God meets us face-to-face. This incompleteness is not a flaw; it’s what it means for those made alive together by grace (in all their shattered wholeness) to adapt to the lifeworld of the stranger and other stories and experiences they don’t know yet.

As gathering witnesses, we testify to every cry for help (Hosanna!) and to the blessing that comes when we meet God, even in our contentious relationships.

Spirit-strong, “ligament” people of God exercise this unique “super power” of witness when they listen others into speech. Perhaps this resonant chorus of shared grace stories is the “full of the Spirit” song that holds us all together by grace.

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Laity Sunday 2025 – Order of Worship

ABBREVIATIONS

TFWS = *The Faith We Sing* (2000)

UMH = *United Methodist Hymnal*

Some Suggested Congregational Songs and Hymns*:

Emmanuel, Emmanuel	UMH 204
All Creatures of Our God and King	UMH 62
Abide with Me	UMH 700
Help Us Accept Each Other	UMH 560
Nearer, My God, To Thee	UMH 528
Heal Us, Emmanuel, Hear Our Prayer	UMH 266
Here I Am, Lord (I, The Lord of Sea and Sky)	UMH 593
Please Enter My Heart, Hosanna	TFWS 2154
Breathe on Me, Breath of God	UMH 420
Change My Heart, O God	TFWS 2152
Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed)	UMH 583
All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name	UMH 154
One Bread, One Body (if sharing Communion)	UMH 620
My Jesus, I Love Thee	UMH 172
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	UMH 117
Great Is Thy Faithfulness	UMH 140
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	UMH 139
For the Beauty of the Earth	UMH 92
Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet	UMH 601

*Also see the “Suggested Hymns” tab among the Laity Sunday worship resources online at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/choosing-faith/nineteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/nineteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-hymn-suggestions>

ENTRANCE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus said we are his witnesses.

We know God's Spirit is at work in our lives.

We listen for his voice in the cries of our neighbors.

We know your plan is to gather all in love.

As God's own people, we are Spirit-strong, ligaments of grace when we follow your wisdom and instruction for a "whole" way of life.

We thank God that our own lives can "cover" the LORD's song when we know the "script" by heart.

WORD AND RESPONSE

Message Theme: **Together By Grace: *Be Strong in the Spirit***

Ephesians 3:14-21; Jeremiah 31:27-34; Psalm 119:97-104; Genesis 32:22-31; 2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:5; Luke 18:1-18

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: Holy God, we know our story with you joins a great cloud of witnesses whose lives are also verses in your song.

Lay leader: Spirit of Jesus, empower us to be a "whole body," knit together by grace.

People: God, we long to live again according to your instruction for life.

Lay leader: Jesus, help us receive the stories of struggle and joy from those who need to share them.

People: We know the Spirit's power at work in us is the same power that made Jesus alive again, forever.

Lay leader: Bless the ties and tales that bind us together in love.

People: God, help us live into your script/story for life.

Lay leader: Jesus, remind us that the stones cry out when we keep silent.

People: God, we know you are with us and the mystery of your good news is a gathering plan for life.

Pastor: Savior God, we are your people, and you are our God. We belong to you and to your love for the life of the world.

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 people 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 One Another: 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 gifts of thanksgiving and joy, O Lord,
as, by your Spirit, we remember and proclaim who you 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

Lay Leader:

Be strong in the Spirit, receiving every neighbor's story of struggle with grace.

Pastor:

And may God the Spirit empower all your efforts to live well together for others.

Amen.

Laity Sunday 2025 — 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*

JEREMIAH 31:27-34	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
All Earth Is Waiting to See the Promised One (Toda la Tierra Espera al Salvador)	210	78								
Breathe on Me, Breath of God	420									
Change My Heart, O God			278	2152						
Come and Fill Our Hearts				2157		378				
Come, Let Us Use the Grace Divine	606					135				
Give Me a Clean Heart				2133	182					
God Is So Good				2056	231					
God the Sculptor of the Mountains				2060						

Great Is Thy Faithfulness	140	30	81							
Have Thine Own Way, Lord!	382	213	327							
Here I Am, Lord (I, the Lord of Sea and Sky)	593	289	263							
I Want a Principle Within	410									
If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee	142									
Life-giving Bread				2261						
O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go	480	255	322							
Please Enter My Heart, Hosanna				2154						
Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed)	583	291								
This Is a Day of New Beginnings	383	208	311							
Wonder of Wonders				2247						
GENESIS 32:22-31	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
Be Thou My Vision	451	240				180				
Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown	386					148				
Faith is Patience in the Night				2211						
God Be with You till We Meet Again (God Be with You)	672		347		37					
God of Many Names	105									
Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God	405	201	136							

PSALM 121	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
Christ Beside Me				2166						
Eternal Father, Strong to Save				2191						
From the Rising of the Sun				2024						
God Will Take Care of You (Nunca desmayes)	130	260								
Holy Spirit, Come to Us				2118		395				
Jesus, Lover of My Soul	479									
My Life Is in You, Lord				2032						
O God, Our Help in Ages Past	117					200				
Our Help Comes from the Lord (Psalm 121)						315				
Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above	126		60			70				
Today, O God (Psalm 121)						320				
You Have Been Our Help (Psalm 121)						317				

PSALM 119:97-104	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
Abide with Me; Fast Falls the Eventide	700									
As the Deer			116	2025		267				
Be Thou My Vision	451	240				180				

Christ Beside Me				2166						
Creating God, Your Fingers Trace	109									
Cry of My Heart				2165						
Dear Lord, Lead Me Day by Day	411		100							
Freely, Freely (God Forgave My Sin)	389		258							
Guide My Feet				2208						
I Was There to Hear Your Boring Cry				2051						
Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise	103		74							
Into My Heart				2160						
O Word of God Incarnate	598									
Jesus, Lover of My Soul	479									
Lead Me, Lord	473					226				
Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth				2050						
Oh, I Know the Lord's Laid His Hands on Me				2139						
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty	139	29	68			63				
Precious Lord, Take My Hand	474		309			179				
Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name	663	349								
Thy Word Is a Lamp unto My Feet	601		109							

LUKE 18:1-8	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
Be Thou My Vision	451	240				180				
Do, Lord, Remember Me	527									
Freely, Freely (God Forgave My Sin)	389		258							
Healer of Our Every Ill				2213		161				
Faith Is Patience in the Night				2211						
I Will Trust in the Lord	464		292							
If the World from You Withhold	522									
It's Me, It's Me, O Lord	352		326		110					
I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me				2151						
Kum Ba Yah, My Lord	494		332		139					
Kyrie				2275						
Leave It There	522				23					
Let Us Plead for Faith Alone	385									
Lord, Have Mercy (SINGAPURA)				2277						
Lord, I Want to Be a Christian	402	215			76					
Lord, Listen to Your Children				2207						
Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying				2193						

LUKE 18:1-8	UMH	MVPC	CLUW	TFWS	SOZ	URW	WSM	WSW	SOG	TAH
My Faith Looks Up to Thee	452				215					
My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less	368	261								
Not So in Haste, My Heart	455									
O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come	265									
People Need the Lord				2244						
Prayer Is the Soul's Sincere Desire	492									
Remember Me, Remember Me	491		234		235					
Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me	361	247								
Sweet Hour of Prayer	496	248	330							
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	526	257	333							4113
Wounded World that Cries for Healing				2177						

2 TIMOTHY 3:14 – 4:5	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									
Come, Holy Ghost, Our Hearts Inspire	603		218							
Cry of My Heart				2165						
Deep in the Shadows of the Past				2246						
Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether	632									
Faith Is Patience in the Night				2211						
Faith of Our Fathers	710	385								
Forward Through the Ages	555									
God, Bless the Poet's Heart and Hand									63	
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	
O Word of God Incarnate	598									
May the Spirit of God Be in You								40		

Through It All	507		279							
Thy Word Is a Lamp unto My Feet	601		109							

Laity Sunday 2025 — 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 to what is needed next.

Now we move from prayer to thanksgiving, still in the spirit of awareness that Christ goes with us. Exhortation (the song), prayer (the prayers we have just prayed), and thanksgiving all use different kinds of energy. Give attention not only to the words used in the invitation to thanksgiving, but also 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 way to maintain the flow of the service when celebrating 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 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, deacons, other denomination clergy functioning as local pastors or provisional members, licensed local pastors.

A layperson 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 authorized presider leads the prayer. It should not be divided among two or more presiders.

Laity Sunday 2025— Scripture Readings

Ephesians 3:14-21, NRSVA

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father^[a] 15 from whom every family^[b] in heaven and on earth takes its name.

16 I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, 17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. 18 I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

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Jeremiah 31:27-34, CEB

The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will plant seeds in Israel and Judah, and both people and animals will spring up. ²⁸ Just as I watched over them to dig up and pull down, to overthrow, destroy, and bring harm, so I will watch over them to build and plant, declares the Lord. ²⁹ In those days, people will no longer say:

Sour grapes eaten by parents

leave a bitter taste in the mouths of their children.

³⁰ Because everyone will die for their own sins:

whoever eats sour grapes

will have a bitter taste in their own mouths.

³¹ The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. ³² It won't be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant with me even though I was their husband, declares the Lord. ³³ No, this is the covenant that I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my Instructions within them and engrave them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ They will no longer need to teach each other to say, "Know the Lord!" because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord; for I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sins.

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Psalms 119:97-104, CEB

I love your Instruction!

I think about it constantly.

⁹⁸ Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies
because it is always with me.

⁹⁹ I have greater insight than all my teachers
because I contemplate your laws.

¹⁰⁰ I have more understanding than the elders
because I guard your precepts.

¹⁰¹ I haven't set my feet on any evil path
so I can make sure to keep your word.

¹⁰² I haven't deviated from any of your rules
because you are the one who has taught me.

¹⁰³ Your word is so pleasing to my taste buds—
it's sweeter than honey in my mouth!

¹⁰⁴ I'm studying your precepts—
that's why I hate every false path.

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Genesis 32:22-31, CEB (emphasis added)

Jacob got up during the night, took his two wives, his two women servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed the Jabbok River's shallow water. ²³ He took them and everything that belonged to him, and he helped them cross the river. ²⁴ But Jacob stayed apart by himself, and **a man wrestled with him** until dawn broke. ²⁵ When the man saw that he couldn't defeat Jacob, he grabbed Jacob's thigh and tore a muscle in Jacob's thigh as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ The man said, "Let me go because the dawn is breaking."

But Jacob said, "I won't let you go until you bless me."

²⁷ He said to Jacob, "What's your name?" and he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ Then he said, "**Your name won't be Jacob any longer, but Israel,**^[a] because **you struggled with God and with men and won.**"

²⁹ Jacob also asked and said, "Tell me your name."

But he said, "Why do you ask for my name?" and he blessed Jacob there. ³⁰ Jacob named the place Peniel, "because I've seen God face-to-face, and my life has been saved." ³¹ The sun rose as Jacob passed Peniel, limping because of his thigh.

Psalm 121, CEB

A pilgrimage song.

I raise my eyes toward the mountains.

Where will my help come from?

² My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.

³ God won't let your foot slip.
Your protector won't fall asleep on the job.

⁴ No! Israel's protector
never sleeps or rests!

⁵ The Lord is your protector;
the Lord is your shade right beside you.

⁶ The sun won't strike you during the day;
neither will the moon at night.

⁷ The Lord will protect you from all evil;
God will protect your very life.^[a]

⁸ The Lord will protect you on your journeys—
whether going or coming—
from now until forever from now.

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2 Timothy 3:14-4:5, CEB

But you must continue with the things you have learned and found convincing. You know who taught you. ¹⁵ Since childhood you have known the holy scriptures that help you to be wise in a way that leads to salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character, ¹⁷ so that the person who belongs to God can be equipped to do everything that is good.

4 ¹I'm giving you this commission in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is coming to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearance and his kingdom. ²Preach the word. Be ready to do it whether it is convenient or inconvenient. Correct, confront, and encourage with patience and instruction. ³There will come a time when people will not tolerate sound teaching. They will collect teachers who say what they want to hear because they are self-centered. ⁴They will turn their back on the truth and turn to myths. ⁵But you must keep control of yourself in all circumstances. Endure suffering, do the work of a preacher of the good news, and carry out your service fully.

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Luke 18:1-18, CEB

Jesus was telling them a parable about their need to pray continuously and not to be discouraged. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him, asking, 'Give me justice in this case against my adversary.' ⁴ For a while he refused but finally said to himself, I don't fear God or respect people, ⁵ but I will give this widow justice because she keeps bothering me. Otherwise, there will be no end to her coming here and embarrassing me." ⁶ The Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ Won't God provide justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he be slow to help them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give them justice quickly. But when the Human One[a] comes, will he find faithfulness on earth?"

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Additional Resource

"History of Laity Sunday," <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-laity-sunday>