

MESSAGE FROM THE LAY LEADER MARCH 2021

Dear Lillian UMC family,

Jesus said that "whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." (Matthew 10:42)

This month we put our spotlight on our lay ministries as a whole. 2020 was an extraordinary year for ministry opportunities. Hurricane Sally pummeled our area and our UMCOR tarp crews and chainsaw crews worked long hours for our church family, and our neighbors in the community. Many left their own damaged properties undone while they assisted others.

When a team from Tuscaloosa drove in and set up a field kitchen at the church, many of our own people worked long hours providing assistance. They distributed approximately 5,000 meals to anyone who was hungry. They also provided meals for power company work crews. (please see previous Facebook posts for photos)

In addition to hurricane relief, day to day life provides everyone with a chance to "give a cup of cold water" in Jesus name. Our laity, women and men, are the hands of Jesus when Pastor Daniel can't be there. Sometimes the "cup of water" requires skills and expertise that only the laity provides. Sometimes, all that is necessary is a concern and a love for others. Pastor Daniel can't do it all, and he is not supposed to.

We can all visit, or call, or send a card to a sick friend. Most of us can provide a meal or drive someone to their doctor. We can all be an encouragement to a brother or sister who is down. Sometimes, we can just be a friend who listens.

Some have the skills and the time to build wheelchair ramps, repair ministry shower trailers, and do construction work on mission trips. Others, who know their way around the church kitchen, provide hot meals on a weekly basis to Bright Bridge Ministries in Pensacola. Many have undiscovered skills and abilities, requiring only that they answer the call stirred up by the Holy Spirit.

Our bereavement ministry provides meals for families in their time of grief. Our shut in ministry serves our homebound consecrated elements for the Lord's Supper. Volunteers are still needed to assist with preparations to return to limited indoor Sunday services. Opportunities abound.

Psalm 92 reminds us that "the righteous flourish, they are planted in the house of the Lord, they still bear fruit in old age." Don't let age or inexperience prevent you from answering your call. Providing a "cup of water" allows you to "still bear fruit," no matter your age.

If you feel a stirring or a leading to serve as part of the laity, that is, regular church members who want to do more than just go to church, we can use you. Call or text Pastor Daniel. He wants to see you "bear fruit."

Your Servant in Christ,
Perry Cunningham
Lay Leader