



# Buffalo United Methodist

July 2019

1000 30<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402



## Laying Myself on the Shelf

Bishop Laurie Haller

**H**ave you ever heard the phrase “lay on the table”? The Iowa Annual Conference ended its four-day session yesterday, and I have been pondering how, at one point, we used the motion to “lay on the table.” Under Robert’s Rules, the subsidiary motion to lay on the table refers to temporarily setting aside a pending motion (or a series of pending motions) to take care of something else that is urgent and cannot wait. The motion to lay on the table is less about the business being discussed than about the assembly needing to handle something else immediately. I remember feeling exhausted at the time and recall thinking to myself, “I wouldn’t mind lying on a table myself right now!”

It reminded me of one of Mark Twain’s books. . . . In 1869, he published a travel book called *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrims’ Progress*. The book chronicles what Twain called his “Great Pleasure Excursion” with a group of Americans on a chartered boat through Europe and the Holy Land in 1867.

Twain wrote, “In America, we hurry – which is well; but when the day’s work is done, we go on thinking of losses and gains, we plan for the morrow, we even carry our business cares to bed with us, and toss and worry over them when we ought to be restoring our racked bodies and brains with sleep. We burn up our energies with these excitements, and either die early or drop into a lean and mean old age at a time of life which they call a man’s prime in Europe. . . . We bestow thoughtful care upon inanimate objects, but none upon ourselves. What a

robust people, what a nation of thinkers we might be, if we would only lay ourselves on the shelf occasionally and renew our edges!”

It’s pretty amazing that the words Mark Twain wrote 150 years ago are still true for many Americans today. In the midst of fast-paced lifestyles that are increasingly complex as well as demanding, many Americans are literally making themselves sick from overwork and are refusing to care for their mental, emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual health.

It’s been an intense year for United Methodists. After the Traditional Plan was adopted by the February 2019 General Conference, our denomination was broken. No, we haven’t made any decisions yet to part ways. However, our inability to find a way to live together while honoring differences around human sexuality has again left us in a liminal space, which I wrote about several weeks before the February General Conference.

Richard Rohr’s description of a liminal space seems to fit us well: “. . . a unique spiritual position where human beings hate to be but where the biblical God is always leading them. It is when you have left the tried and true but have not yet been able to replace it with anything else. It is when you are between your old comfort zone and any possible new answer. If you are not trained in how to hold anxiety, how to live with ambiguity, how to entrust and wait, you will run. . . anything to flee this terrible cloud of unknowing.” I have discerned that in this liminal space, it is good for me to stop a while. Thus, I will be laying myself on the shelf for part of the summer,

lying fallow, actively resting, and renewing my edges.

If God didn't make it clear enough in the ten commandments that we need to rest, Jesus made sure we knew. From the very beginning of his ministry, Jesus intentionally took time to go away and be by himself to rest and pray. Already in chapter one of Mark (1:35), we read, "Early in the morning, well before sunrise, Jesus rose and went to a deserted place where he could be alone in prayer." In chapter three, we read that "Jesus left with his disciples and went to the lake. A large crowd followed him because they had heard what he was doing." (3:7) In chapter six, Jesus said to his disciples, "Come by yourselves to a secluded place and rest for a while." (6:31) Later in that chapter (6:46), Jesus sent the people away and climbed a mountain to pray. And in chapter seven, (7:24), Jesus entered a house in Tyre where he didn't think he would be found, but he couldn't hide.

As it was with Jesus, so it's difficult for you and me to stop. It's not easy to say "No." It's tempting to work at a pace that seems to get faster with each passing year. Unfortunately, it's also a tempo that will eventually make us sick, give us compassion

fatigue, or burn us out if we do not follow Jesus' example and rest. Rest is not a waste of time. Rather, it's holy time. It's a life-giving opportunity for growth, maturity, and waiting for something new and unlikely to emerge.

I enter the summer with a deep sense of gratitude for the faithfulness of United Methodists around our worldwide connection. In the midst of major differences around human sexuality, there is still so much more that we share as disciples of Jesus Christ. What might happen if, during this in between time, all of us as United Methodists would lay ourselves on the shelf and renew our edges? Could we become more robust disciples of Jesus if we intentionally created more space to honor different theological perspectives at the same time as we continue to share in mission and ministry? How might our evangelism and discipleship expand if we were open to where the biblical God is leading us? Can we hold our anxieties for a bit longer, live with ambiguity, let go of our comfort zones, and imagine possibility? How is God calling us to renew our edges?

[Bishop Haller's complete text is available in her June 12 posting to her on-line blog *Leading from the Heart.*]



## June Meeting of the Administrative Board

The following topics were discussed at the board meeting in June:

- Judy Hackney reported we now have two phones in the Meeting Room to handle incoming calls. One has an adjustable volume for those hard of hearing and one has an answering machine for those who call when no one is in the church office.
- The Rummage Sale brought in over \$800, a lower figure than in previous years because we had fewer items for sale.
- In their report on the Annual Conference, Pastor Kathryn and Judy H. informed us Pictured Rocks campground will be sold and that income will be used to bolster other UMC camping programs. With regard to the issue of members' sexual orientation, the Iowa Conference confirmed it would continue to

support the LGBTQ community. Pastor Kathryn indicated three UMC conferences have recently ordained openly gay pastors, and the Board considered displaying a banner at Buffalo affirming we are a welcoming community of faith.

- The Living Water congregation in Marion is closing, and their membership rolls are being transferred to Kenwood Park. Pastor Kathryn indicated three churches in Ottumwa are closing, but they are doing so in order to create a single, new congregation.
- Those attending the Annual Conference should be commended for passing the Conference budget on the first try. The new budget includes substantial cuts for UMC programs on college campuses.
- Admin. Board Meeting in August was canceled.

# July 2019

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1	2 11:00 am: Assist Bertram with preparing and serving lunch at Mission of Hope	3	4	5	6
7 8:45 am: Worship Service <i>Communion</i> <i>Sunday</i>	8 9:00 am: Meeting of the Spic 'n Span Church Cleaning Crew	9	10	11 11:30 am: Neighborhood Potluck	12	13
14 8:45 am: Worship Service	15	16	17	18 UMW's Big Day: Masonic Library, Lunch, & CR Art Museum	19	20
21 8:45 am: Worship Service	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 8:45 am: Worship Service	29	30	31 Fred Himes Birthday!	<b>Don't Forget: Ice Cream Supper Saturday, August 3 4:00 - 7:00 pm</b>		

## Scripture Readings for July 14 Worship Service

### A Reading from the Psalms

In you, Lord my God,  
I put my trust.  
I trust in you;  
do not let me be put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.  
No one who hopes in you  
will ever be put to shame,  
but shame will come on those  
who are treacherous without cause.  
Show me your ways, Lord,  
teach me your paths.  
Guide me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are God my Savior,  
and my hope is in you all day long.

Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love,  
for they are from of old.  
Do not remember the sins of my youth  
and my rebellious ways;  
according to your love remember me,  
for you, Lord, are good. [Psalm 25:1-10]

### A Reading from the Prophet Amos

The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. And the Lord asked me, "What do you see, Amos?"  
"A plumb line," I replied.  
Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer. . . ." [Amos 7: 7-8]

## **Congratulations to Mary Fredericksen Graduate, School for Lay Ministry**

The School for Lay Ministry (SLM) program was created to facilitate the growth of Iowa United Methodist Churches and their Christian ministry by providing an alternative, supplemental source of educated leadership for local congregations and communities. The SLM nurtures lay persons who meet entrance criteria and who have the desire to serve in, through, and beyond the church in various ministries.

SLM graduates serve communities through their contributions to Christian education, care-giving ministries, program staff positions, visitation ministries, youth programming, local church leadership, and District ministries and mission. The Buffalo congregation is proud to celebrate the successful completion of this program by Mary Fredericksen, a long-time member of our congregation and one the of the nine members of the Cornell 2019 SLM graduating class.

### **Neighborhood Potluck**

Come join us on Thursday, July 11 at 11:30 am for lunch. Good food, good conversation, and no dishes! Place settings provided.

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## **United Methodist Women**

The Secret Pal lunch on June 20 was well attended. Names were drawn for the coming year. Thanks to Verna Cartano for purchasing the gift cards for the recipients.

On July 18 we will take a trip to the Masonic Library on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue SE, eat lunch at Matthew 25 Groundswell, and tour the Cedar Rapids Art Museum. If you are interested in traveling with us, let Judy Hackney or Barb Crawford know of your plans.

### **Special Offering in July**

Rural Life Sunday celebrates the rural heritage of The United Methodist Church and recognizes "the ongoing crisis occurring in rural areas of the nation and the world today."

### **Worship Service Leaders in July**

While Pastor Kathryn is recuperating from her knee surgery, Pastor Carol Sundberg will serve as our pastor for the July 7 service, and Bob Marrs will be responsible for conducting the July 14 service.

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