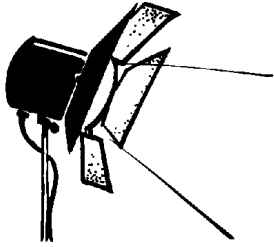


The Proactive Pulse



The Laity As the Ministry Strength of the Church



January/ February
2011

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A Special, Rare Meeting Regarding the Pastor and Trustees...

Pastor Angela looked at her watch – 4:50 p.m. – she knew that Tom, the Chairperson of the Trustees and a retired Colonel in the Army, would be a bit early. She was right as a knock came on her office door. She opened it.

“Good afternoon to you Pastor,” Tom said, “I know I am just a bit early but was excited about our meeting.”

“Me too Tom. Glad to see you. I have to tell you that this is the first church I have served where I have had a Chairperson of Trustees to give the kind of leadership you are providing. Your advance planning, clear agendas and follow up brings great joy.”

“Glad to do it Angela. There may be other Committees around here that could benefit from some additional training. If I could help with that I would be glad to.”

“I know next year we are going to be doing some intensive training of all our leaders and Committees through Nominations and Leadership Development Committee work, so I am sure they could use your ideas.”

“Just let me know. Would you mind leading us off with a prayer?”

“Loving God, we thank you for this time we have set aside to make ministry all that it can be with You. Thank you for Tom, the Trustees who care for our property and so many needs associated with every aspect of ministry here. Guide us through Your Spirit. In Christ’s Name, Amen.”

“Amen! Thank you Angela. Your support is great. It really encourages us. Here is the agenda I have outlined for the meeting next week. We will be talking about bids for a new roof repair on the steep part of the sanctuary, the study which should be concluded for the elevator proposal, improving the playground equipment – including a new fence around it, and our usual business items. I am going to have Bill lead off with a prayer – he’s new at that. And Ginger is going to bring a four minute devotional for us. What do you think?”

“This looks great Tom. I am so glad you are asking members to have the prayer and do the devotional. I think everything looks complete to me. I have to tell you that I am still getting used to not attending all the Trustee meetings. In my last church, this was expected. But you have encouraged me to use the time for things only I can do – so I’m OK with it. Is there anything you need from me?”

“Oh, there are a couple of members who think your place is to be with us, but I’m helping them realize that our Pastor needs to be the Pastor, not a Trustee. I also told them if we specifically need you at a meeting, we will ask you to attend. Just keep us in prayer on that night and use that evening to be someone’s Pastor. That’s what we want you to do.”

Continued on Page 2

A Special, Rare Meeting Regarding the Pastor and Trustees... (Continued From Page 2)

Does the previous scenario seem like it's too good to be true? In most churches that would be the case – unfortunately! Pastors spend an enormous amount of time attending meetings that are led by the Laity Leadership of the church. For every hour the Pastor spends in a Committee meeting, someone is not receiving pastoral ministry from the Pastor. This truly needs to change in congregations. Let's make certain that our Pastor is being our Pastor. Maximizing their time to minister to individuals and families with a personal touch will profoundly increase their effectiveness.

Nominations and Leadership Development – Laity Vice-chairperson

Most laity in local churches realize the Pastor is the Chairperson of the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee. This is an incredibly important leadership role of the Pastor! Unfortunately, in more than 90% of churches today across America, this is one of the weakest committees in churches. The price of this is enormous and can negatively impact every area of ministry in congregation.

Most Pastors are trained (unofficially, of course) to see how few meetings this committee can have in the course of a calendar year, how many laity can be talked into saying “yes” to a position for which they are nominated and once the leaders for the coming year are elected at Charge Conference, that's about it.

As most of you realize, Proactive Ministries teaches that the top two ministries in ANY local church are: 1) *Worship*, and 2) *The Nominations and Leadership Development Committee*. To us, this makes perfect common sense!

More lives are assembled in one location for weekly worship than any other single ministry of the church. The only thing that could possibly top this number in a congregation would be the funeral of a matriarch or patriarch of that church and community – and then it would be for less than one hour, one time. Therefore, how we do worship is of paramount importance. Lives are changed, *or not*, for the glory of God and spiritual transformation during weekly worship.

The second ministry is leadership selection. Every committee, leadership role and leadership team in the church is selected by the Nominations and Lay Leadership Development Committee. This should be a year-round, working, ministry Team that prayerfully discerns, spiritually recruits, thoroughly trains and consistently encourages *all* leaders in the congregation during the entire year. Unfortunately the complete training to do this is not provided in most churches.

A primary *KEY* to this deep, paradigm shift in leadership development is to make certain that the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee has a dedicated, hard-working Vice-Chairperson of this committee that is a lay person. Then if a meeting of this committee is scheduled and the Pastor cannot attend, this Vice-chairperson leads the meeting and works closely with the Pastor at all times. In too many churches, if the Pastor cannot attend, the committee postpones the meeting. This ministry goes on consistently. How does this work in your church?

The Laity and Clergy are in a leadership partnership in the local church. Pastors are called to be the finest Pastor they can become. Laity are called to leadership and ministry in order to become the primary ministry strength of the congregation.”

– Rev. Jim Hollis

Worship Ministry Leadership Team – A Team Effort

Who is in charge of worship in the local church – ultimately? The Holy Spirit if it is a healthy congregation! Who is the next leading person in charge? The Senior Pastor of the congregation in every church. In the United Methodist church this is by doctrine, not a decision that each local church makes. It's a given.

However, how this gets *lived out from week to week* is the key to this being a positive blessing to the entire congregation. In some churches the Pastor decides everything – the hymns, the readings, the order of worship and any additions or changes to the worship service(s). This is not necessarily the BEST way to design worship.

In our ministry we encourage each congregation to establish a Worship Leadership Team for *each weekly worship service*. This Team is comprised of the following as, an example:

- The Pastor
- The Lay Leader of the church
- The Choir or Music Director
- Other Staff involved as liturgist(s)
- The Head Usher or another leader of Ushers
- One of the newer members of the church
- One of the longer time members of the church

Why would we have a Worship Team to meet and discuss the worship themes, order, bulletin, special music, hymns and responses? Because the definition of “liturgy” is: the work of the people of God. This is a team effort, not a spectator sport, run by one or two people for everyone else!

New Ministry Model starting in 2011 Friends In Faith I & II

Every congregation, unless really small in numbers, has a fringe of members that exist but are not truly relationally connected to the other members and ministries of the church. In large congregations with 400 or more in worship, this barely connected group can be significant in size. And in a large, growing church there can also be a steady stream of new members joining. This latter blessing makes it easy to overlook those going out the back door.

Then, in middle to smaller congregations, we can have some of our most active members feel out of touch as well. If a reasonably active member has to be out for two or three Sundays someone will generally notice, and may even mention it to others in the church that Sunday. However, no one actually takes notes, names and then intentionally calls them to let them know they were being missed, thought of, prayed for and reached out to.

Our newest ministry model of "Friends In Faith" will build a consistent, relationship focused, ministry of "getting to know" members and families across the congregation who may have drifted away toward the inactive ranks or just be suspended in absence for a multiplicity of reasons, not necessarily related to a negative experience at church.

At first, the key leaders of the church will be trained for this on a weekend of training with the Proactive Staff. For the following ninety days they will build friendships with those "on the fringes" and then the group on the fringes will become engaged in ministries of outreach and relationship building with other families in the church. In large churches this will be more new members. In smaller and medium churches this will be a cross section of the active families in the congregation who rarely get affirmed, encouraged and directly related to.

This may be considered as an effective assimilation ministry – but – it is far more than this! It truly touches members who are not fully connected and engaged in the joys of ministry. Give us a call today to hear more about Friends in Faith. It will take place over the course of two Training Weekends.

Our first two Ministry Covenant Congregations to receive this training are: 1) Tavares First UMC, FL; and 2) Julia A. Porter UMC, GA. Blessings!

Our Calendar

February

18-20 Children's Ministry
Julia A. Porter UMC, Covington, GA

22 Pastor's Seminary
Reinhardt University, Waleska, GA

25-27 Friends in Faith
Tavares FUMC, Tavares, FL

March

7-8 Evangelism & Outreach (LRE)
St John UMC, Atlanta, GA

11-13 Evangelism & Outreach (LRE)
Barnabas Cluster Project
Hapeville UMC, Hapeville, GA

11-13 Youth Ministry
Tavares FUMC, Tavares, FL

15-16 Staff Retreat
St John UMC, Atlanta, GA

18-20 Evangelism & Outreach (LRE)
Inman Park UMC, Atlanta, GA

25-27 Evangelism & Outreach (LRE)
Julia A. Porter UMC, Covington, GA

April

1-3 Evangelism & Outreach (LRE)
Beaumont FUMC, Beaumont, TX

8-10 Evangelism & Outreach (LRE)
Tavares FUMC, Tavares, FL

22 Office Closed in Observance of
Good Friday

Please see Our Calendar and more at
www.proactive-ministries.org

Worship Ministry Leadership Team – A Team Effort (Continued From Page 3)

Another element we add to this in our churches we work with is to have one or two of our Staff from Proactive to hold a congregation-wide town hall session so that everyone who attends a respective service can come in and share openly, honestly and freely about their ownership and feelings about the current worship in the congregation. We ask the Pastor and Staff of the church to not attend, for people's reservations in saying something they would feel intimidated to share in front of the Pastor and Staff. We take extensive notes, guide the discussion and give insight to everyone there about how we need to work together as a ministry family to make worship the most effective it can be for that congregation.

Following this meeting we then write up all the responses and share them fully with the Pastor and Staff members. In doing so, we truly discern how the people in the pews are feeling, responding and engaging in the worship of the congregation. It has proven to be a very productive and effective process. It gives new ownership in worship, encouraging participants to "get in the game" at helping grow their respective worship experience.

Find us on the World Wide Web at:
www.proactive-ministries.org

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What is Inside?

OUR NEWS

**Laity as the
Ministry
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in the Church**

**New Ministry:
Faith in Friends**

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One of the recurring themes we hear across many congregations is, "Strengthen the ministry of the Laity." In this issue of the Pulse, we talk about this important priority - giving you specific ideas and strategies for doing this well. Helping the Laity become the ministry strength and allowing the Pastor to truly be an excellent Pastor are two of our ministry priorities at Proactive.

Blessings,

Rev. Jim Hollis



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