



August 22, 2021

You are NOT an afterthought!

Sometimes I wonder if local churches and laypeople specifically, think they are an afterthought. Let me begin with an...ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Of course, you know I must share a story. Well, one day the pastor of our church approached my mother and asked her to teach Sunday School. It was a huge part of the church in those days. They even had a Superintendent of the Sunday School!!! Her response to him was, "I don't know enough to do that." His response to her was, "You will learn by doing it." She did and her service in the church expanded. She was so faithful and active that people used to tell me that I was as close to becoming a PK (preacher's kid) without her being a preacher!

I have never forgotten that story. It was one of the reasons I didn't hesitate to jump into serving myself. My first young adult experiences were starting a Young Adult Ministry in our church...which led to me being the youngest member on Church Council...which led to me be an under 30 delegate to Conference Meetings...which led to me being the under 30 delegate to General Synod...which led to me...well...you get the picture. My point is this...LAYPEOPLE ARE THE HEART OF THE CHURCH!

The United Church of Christ cannot function without you laypeople. It is as simple as that. When I began a New Church Start, we had many members join from various other traditions. They had a hard time wrapping their heads around the concept of a denomination that not only says we believe in the Priesthood of ALL Believers...our polity...the way of church structure/organization, REQUIRES laypeople to be an active, integral part of it.

WE CELEBRATE YOU...WELCOME YOU...EXPECT YOU...APPRECIATE YOU...WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOU!

Now, I know all too well how local congregations need their own people to serve in their own settings. I do! I hope you are responding when you are asked. I also know that our Association Committees need you. So do Conference Committees. Perhaps that word 'committee' or 'meeting' seem to be a turnoff. How about changing that to ministry/ ministries? These are

ministries that we are called to do together and you...laypeople are necessary. You are not being asked to serve because you are an afterthought. NO...you are asked because ministry in the UCC is not done only by authorized ministers alone. Ministry in the UCC is done with laypeople and authorized ministers serving together as WE respond to the call of God. This is a ministry WE have been woven into by virtue of our baptisms, confirmations and membership into this part of the Christian family tree.

So, you are NOT an afterthought! YOU are the church. WE are the church. Let's BE the church together.

Here is your invitation for the week. Read I Corinthians 12:1-31. Sit with this scripture and pray. Allow God to speak to you and then listen for how God is calling you to serve. When you see a need or are asked to serve...remember "You will learn by doing."

Remember laypeople...YOU are NOT an afterthought!

Thanks be to God!

Blessings and Peace,
Susan

Rev. Dr. Susan A. Minasian, Interim Associate Conference Minister



Racial Justice Banners/Yard Signs Still Available

The Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Initiative team, in promoting racial justice, is offering banners and yard signs free to churches and individuals.

For those who are able, we are suggesting a love offering of \$70 per banner (image of the 4'x10' Vinyl Banner with grommets below) and \$7 per yard sign (image of the 18"x24" Yard sign above right). The love offerings will go to further our efforts in this sacred ministry of racial equity and justice. To order, please email Anne Cormier at annecormier@comcast.net. Include in the subject box "banner" or "yard sign".

**Love one another;
 Work against racism**

Racial Justice Initiative
 Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
 of the United Church of Christ