



# *Practicing Hope*

**Laity Session**

**June 14, 2026**

**Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center**



**Northern Illinois Conference**  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# Laity Session

Sunday, June 14, 2026, 1:30 p.m.

## Opening Welcome

### Hymn

### *My Hope is Built*

UMC #368

1. My hope is built on nothing less  
than Jesus' blood and righteousness.  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

3. His oath, his covenant, his blood  
supports me in the whelming flood.  
When all around my soul gives way,  
he then is all my hope and stay.

#### **Refrain**

**Refrain: On Christ the solid rock I stand,  
all other ground is sinking sand;  
all other ground is sinking sand.**

4. When he shall come with trumpet sound,  
O may I then in him be found!  
Dressed in his righteousness alone,  
faultless to stand before the throne!

#### **Refrain**

2. When darkness veils his lovely face,  
I rest on his unchanging grace.  
In every high and stormy gale,  
my anchor holds within the veil.

#### **Refrain**

### Call to Worship & Scripture

Leader: Beloved of God, we gather today as people of hope. Not because life is easy, but because God is faithful.

People: **We rejoice even in our struggles, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope** (Romans 5:3-4).

Leader: This hope does not disappoint us, for God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us (Romans 5:5).

People: **We wait for the Lord with courage. We choose to be strong and let our hearts take hope, as we wait upon God** (Psalm 27:14).

Leader: For in hope we are saved. Though we do not yet see the fullness of what is to come, we wait with patience and trust (Romans 8:24-25).

All: **We come to worship with expectant hearts, trusting in God's promises, resting in God's love, and holding fast to hope. Let us worship the God who sustains us, strengthens us, and fills us with hope. Amen.**

## Holy Communion

### The Great Thanksgiving

Leader: God's grace, peace and hope be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**



**Leader:** It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. You made us in your image, to love and to be loved. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. By the suffering, death, and resurrection of your only Son Jesus Christ you delivered us from slavery to sin and death and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. And so, with your people on earth, and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn, saying:

**People:** **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**Leader:** Holy are you and blessed is your constant love. Through Christ's patient love and unfailing grace, we are once again invited into your abiding love and rescued from the fears and sins that would separate us from your nurturing presence. With Christ's love in our lives, we are invited to live in your love and to reveal your love to the world, even as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**People:** **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

**Leader:** With joy and gratitude, we break this bread of life and remember the many times when Jesus' love was shared in the breaking of the bread.

**People:** **In remembrance, we will take and eat this bread.**

**Leader:** With joy and gratitude, we remember that on the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

**People:** **In remembrance, we will take and eat this bread.**

**Leader:** With awe and wonder, we remember that when the supper was over Jesus took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

**People:** **In remembrance, we will drink from this cup and partake of the love that overflows in our lives.**

**Leader:** Pour out your Holy Spirit on all of us gathered here, that we may be the branches of Christ, your true vine. Pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and [cup] that we may be filled with your abiding love. Strengthen us in the power of your Holy Spirit, that we may be one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at the heavenly banquet. Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forevermore. **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.  
Amen.**

## Giving the Bread and Cup

### Prayer After Receiving

**Gracious God, we give you thanks for the gift of life, for the opportunity to gather together as Laity of the Northern Illinois Conference, and for giving yourself to us in Jesus Christ. We thank you that in the power of your Holy Spirit, you have fed us in this Sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of your heavenly banquet. We are your children, and yours is the glory, now and forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**



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## Program: Practicing Hope



### Introduction to the Young Adult Panel

#### Panelists:

- Milan Christian (West Chicago: New Hope UMC)
- Vanessa Cisneros (Alsip: La Gracia de Dios)
- Daniel Dunlap (Rockford: Christ UMC)
- Vivian Porrez (Chicago: Resurrection UMC)
- Joshua Hayag (Rockford: Christ UMC)
- Arunima Sudhakar (Lasalle First UMC)

#### Questions for the Young Adults

1. What brings you joy or a sense of celebration in the church today?
2. What new opportunities or areas of growth would you like to see in the church?
3. Where do you currently see signs of hope in the church, our country, the world, and in your own life?
4. In what ways do you feel called or equipped to offer hope to others?
5. Where do you envision yourselves in the next 10–15 years?
6. How do you imagine the future of the United Methodist Church?
7. What support, resources, or guidance do you need from the Board of Laity?

#### Questions from the Audience

#### Announcements & Upcoming Events

## Closing and Sending Forth

#### Closing Remarks

#### Sending Forth

- Leader: But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; God's mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:21 – 23)
- People: **For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from the Lord.** (Psalm 62: 1 – 2)
- Leader: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for the One who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10: 23)
- People: **But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.** (Micah 7:7)
- Leader: In God's grace, go in peace to love and serve God and our neighbors. Amen.

#### Leave for Break and Plenary 1 at 4:00 p.m.

### *The Board of Laity wants to hear from you.*

*You have been given a notecard on which to write joys/concerns/questions.*

*Notecards may be placed in the baskets as you leave or at the UMM, UWFaith, and Lay Servant ministries booths in the display areas. They will be picked up, prayed over, and shared with leadership. If you leave your contact information, we will try to get back to you with answers to questions that haven't been answered during the AC Sessions.*



Please complete the evaluation.

## Young Adult Panelists

**Milan Christian** is a member of New Hope UMC in West Chicago, Prairie Central District. He is an active member of the church and sings in the choir. He is a college student. This is his second year nominated by his District Superintendent to be a member to Annual Conference.

**Vanessa Cisneros** is a member of La Gracia de Dios in Alsip, Lake South District. Vanessa is an active member of the church as a youth leader and praise band leader. She is the Lake South representative to the Annual Conference Shepherding Team.

**Daniel Dunlap** is a member of Christ UMC in Rockford, Prairie North District. He is an active member and volunteer at the Children's Ministry and Young Adult Ministry. Last year, he was selected by his District Superintendent to become a member to Annual Conference.

**Vivian Porrez** is a member of Resurrection UMC in Chicago. She is a sophomore at Oak Park and River Forest High School. She desires to attend Northwestern University in 2028 with the goal of becoming a Lawyer. Vivian serves as a youth usher, acolyte, and liturgist. She leads the children's message and plays the guitar while singing the musical witness on many Youth Sundays.

**Joshua Hayag** is a member of Christ UMC in Rockford, Prairie North District. He is a staff member of Christ UMC as Audiovisual Director. He supports the Young Adult Ministries and is part of the Young Adult Praise Band, playing piano, guitar, and voice.

**Arunima Sudhakar** is a member of First UMC in LaSalle, Prairie South District. Arunima is a MAPCC student at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary and a physical therapy student at North Central College. She works as a Christian educator at Trinity UMC in Wilmette. This is her second year nominated by her District Superintendent to be a member to Annual Conference.

## Northern Illinois Conference Board of Laity

Members of the Board of Laity work in our districts and churches to build relationships and make connections between laity and clergy in order to provide support for ministry and to assist in making disciples for Jesus for the transformation of the world. The Board of Laity provides district training sessions, communications and participates in meetings with local lay leaders, lay servant academies, and a variety of other activities.

### Co-Conference Lay Leaders

- Connie Augsburg, Disciples UMC, Mt. Morris, IL
- Eugene Williams, South Shore UMC, Chicago, IL

### District Lay Leaders

- Lake North District
  - Ellen Feliciano, Urban Village Church, Edgewater, Chicago, IL
  - Chester Lacey, Olivet UMC, Chicago, IL
- Lake South District
  - Dale Carver, Faith UMC, Orland Park, IL
- Prairie Central District
  - Kimberly Lynch, Journey of Hope UMC, Egin, IL
- Prairie North District
  - Kris Aves, Faith UMC, Genoa, IL
- Prairie South District
  - Karen Newby, First UMC, Princeton, IL

### Members by Virtue of Office

- Peggy Hansen, NIC Director, Lay Servant Ministries - St. Andrew UMC, Carol Stream, IL
- Craig McGregor, NIC President, United Methodist Men - Good Shephard UMC, Oswego, IL
- Barb Farley, NIC President, United Women in Faith - St. Andrew UMC, Carol Stream, IL
- Marilyn Steenwyk, NIC Rep., United Women in Faith - United Church, Sandwich, IL
- Jim Loeppert, NIC Conference Scouting Coordinator - Our Saviour's UMC, Schaumburg, IL
- Pastor Joy Hayag, ACST Discipleship Area Representative
- Rev. Dr. Char Hoffmann, NIC Clergy Representative (Posthumously)
- Rev. Fabiola Grandon-Mayer, NIC Director of Connectional Ministries



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**Northern Illinois Conference**  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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