

The Laity Minute  
November 2018

One of my favorite things about being an educator is my students. I love to engage with them as they navigate my class and through their collegiate experience. I am lucky to be in a position where I get to watch them learn, create, analyze and dream. Helping them through challenges, both in my class and life in general is rewarding and purposeful. Nurturing students is one of the ways I can help make the future a better and brighter place. As my veteran educator Mom says, "We are sending our students to a time and place we will never see."

As United Methodists, we encourage education. The Church offers classes, workshops, online courses, literature and a host of other opportunities in which to educate ourselves in faith and spirit. We all can be lifelong learners in the Methodist Church. We even see several examples in the Bible regarding education such as Proverbs 2:6 – "For The Creator alone gives wisdom; from The Creator's mouth comes knowledge and understanding."

The UMC recognizes the importance of education and how it can be used to further the mission of the church. This is why The UMC instituted the General Board of Higher Education (now called The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry) in the late 1800s. Since then, it has grown to collaborate with 119 Methodist related schools, colleges and universities including 13 schools of theology. Locally, this includes the Wesley Foundation at East TN State University, Hiwassee College and Tennessee Wesleyan University.

In celebration of students of all types, the UMC celebrates UM Student Day on Sunday, November 25. The purpose is a call to the church to, "support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith and knowledge" (UMC Book of Discipline). Offerings provide scholarships and loans to deserving UM students. Participating conferences may award scholarships to UM students who reside in the Conference or will attend a UM related college or university.

UM Student Day is an official Special Sunday in the UMC. I hope you will consider gifts and prayers toward our UM students. As we celebrate the students within our own congregation at CUMC, we can also remember all those UM students out there who are changing the world in the name of faith and love. Happy UM Student Day and never stop learning!