



December 21, 2022
A Note from Ginny Fisher

Dear Friends,

What does it mean to really listen?
How do we listen?
Why do we listen?
How can we improve our listening ability?

These are some of the questions that the Art of Listening class has been diving into over the past seven weeks, with the guidance of Kay Lindahl and her book *The Sacred Art of Listening*.

Kay tells us that **truly listening to someone (even yourself!) requires an inner presence, open “ears, eyes, and hearts... undivided attention” (pg. 90), and suspended assumptions.**



Listening from deep within takes work and practice but pays off over and over again in our relationships and how we relate to the world around us.

Where and when have you been called to listen recently?

In September, I was asked to take on the role of Lay Leader on HUMC's Church Council for the next three years.

The Methodist Church's website says that, "An effective lay leader functions as the primary representative and role model of Christian discipleship and faith lived out in the church and in daily life. The lay leader works with the pastor to fulfill the mission and vision of the congregation."

In other words, not a role to be taken lightly.

While discerning whether this call was mine to take on, I did a lot of listening.

I listened to Pastor April talk about her vision for HUMC. I listened to Julie Johnson share her experiences of being our Lay Leader through the pandemic. And I listened to Jon Esala describe his impressions of the role after his first year as Lay Leader.

In addition, I listened to my husband, my daughter, myself, and God. All of the listening required that I use my ears, eyes, heart, undivided attention, and suspended assumptions as best as humanly possible.

Since accepting the call, I have continued to listen. I listened at the All-Church Meeting in November as congregants shared why they are at HUMC.

At the end of November, I listened to current and future members of Church Council share where they are seeing God in their lives. I listened with appreciation and gratitude as motions were discussed, amended, and voted on by knowledgeable leaders in our church community.

At the beginning of December, I attended a focus group led by Will Thorsberg, our Finance Committee chair, and I listened as he shared HUMC's current financial situation and elicited responses and suggestions from those who attended.

As 2022 comes to an end and 2023 arrives fresh and new and open to whatever comes, we as a church community and its leadership are being asked to listen — really listen.

We need to listen to the heart, *from* the heart, to hear where we are being called, to listen and follow in whatever direction our open hearts lead us. We need to say “yes” to God's will and direction as we believe that we are loved, no matter what.

As I take on my role as Lay Leader, I ask you to join me in listening. Where and when have you been called to listen recently? How are you being called to participate in the ministry of HUMC?

Ginny



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