

WEST VIRGINIA CONFERENCE
WORSHIP BOOK
2017 Annual Conference Session



The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47)

June 8-11, 2017
West Virginia Wesleyan College
Sandra Steiner Ball, Residing Bishop

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

WORSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

Rev. Monty Brown
Rev. Jarrod Caltrider
Rev. Deborah Coble
Rev. Mark Conner
Rev. David Donathan
Rev. Lauren Godwin
Craig Hinchman
Judi Kenaston
Rev. Ken Krimmel
Rev. JF Lalaria
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Opening Worship with Communion Celebration of Flood Recovery

Thursday, June 8, 2017 ❖ 1:30 pm



Acts 2:42 - The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers.

† signifies that all are invited to stand as are able

BELLS CALLING US TO WORSHIP

VOLUNTARY

“Voluntary on the Folk Tune “REDEMPTION”

Charles Callahan

GATHERING MUSIC

**As I went down to the river to pray studyin' about that good ole way
And who should wear the starry crown, good Lord, show me the way.
O *sisters, let's go down, let's go down, come on down,
O *sisters, let's go down, down to the river to pray.**

***Verse 1 – sisters
*Verse 2 – brothers
*Verse 3 – fathers
*Verse 4 – mothers
*Verse 5 – sinners**

GREETING AND GATHERING OF THE WATER

Based on Psalm 46

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

We gather in this sacred place of beauty and memory to worship and praise God.

As streams gather themselves into larger bodies, so do we collect ourselves from far and near to form one body, placing ourselves wholly before God, our refuge and strength, the holy one who is our very present help in time of trouble.

Though the foundations of our lives become shaken,

though the waters rage and roar,

though the mountains shake with the anger of troubled waters,

still we gather here to praise our living God, present with us in the storm and flood.

Among our beloved hills and mountains are idyllic streams of peace and beauty.

Yet the skies darken and the storms come. The waters rage and roar with terror, destruction, and death.

Creeks and streams, mountain rivulets and tributaries, named and unnamed, gather themselves.

We know the rivers by name:

**Birch
Cherry
Cranberry
Elk
Gauley
Greenbrier
Kanawha
Meadow
New
Ohio
Williams**

All rippling and flowing their way to the Mississippi on their journey to the sea, in the embrace of God.

There is an eternal river whose tributaries shall make glad the city of God.

God is in the midst of all. Though the foundations shake, we live and find our hope in the strength of God. The Lord of hosts is with us.

God is our refuge and strength.

God is our help in ages past and our hope in years to come.

God is our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

†OPENING HYMN

“Living God, You Bless the Body”

REGENT SQUARE

Text David Gambrell 2011, ©2015 GIA Publications

**Living God, you bless the body called to worship in your name,
Gathered by your Word and Spirit, filled with good news to proclaim.
Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed is your holy reign.**

**Here you bathe us in your mercy, here you feed us by your Word,
Here you join us at your table, here you meet us as our Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia! Here your image is restored.**

**Eyes and ears to know your presence, lips to speak and sing your praise,
Hands and feet to serve your purpose, hearts to love you all our days.
Alleluia, alleluia! May we ever seek your ways.**

**Living God, you bless the body, gathered, scattered, washed, and fed,
Strengthened by the gifts you offer: word and water, wine and bread.
Alleluia, alleluia! Touch us, raise us from the dead.**

†OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,

who can banish all affliction both of soul and of body,

show forth your power upon those in need,

that by your mercy they may be restored to serve you afresh

in holiness of living, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

Acts 2:42-47

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Shari and David Stilgenbauer

CHORAL ANTHEM

"I Lift Up Mine Eyes"

Allen Pote

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Loving God, who speaks to us through your Scriptures and in the collective wisdom of your people throughout the ages, help us to hear anew what you would speak to us this day. For your word is always fresh, your message speaks of life and hope in our bruised world and our broken lives. Through Christ the living Word and your Spirit of Illumination who with You are Truth. Amen.

SERMON

Recovery

Scott Ferguson and Jonathan Dierdorff

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

We are never left to ourselves; God is with us.

**We believe God created us to thrive in God's creation,
the creation God deemed "good," though marred by sin.**

**We believe God the Son, Jesus, our savior, redeems creation and
God the Holy Spirit continues to sanctify all unto God.**

**We believe that where hurt and bitterness exists,
God grants healing of painful memories and the ability to salve the wounds of the past.**

**Where feelings of despair or worthlessness flood in,
God nurtures a healing spirit of hope and confidence.**

We believe God is healing the hurts and allowing us to accept new realities.

God is with us. We are your people, Lord; lead us into your preferred future.

Thanks be to God who daily bears our burdens. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Gracious and loving God, whose voice is over the waters, we approach you today with humble hearts. We come to drink from that well which quenches our thirst with life-giving water. We acknowledge that your love sustains us, even when we have failed to be the people you created us to be. Our sins sadden us, even as we know they sadden you. Forgive us when we act like we have forgotten that we belong to you. Forgive us when we refuse to see you in the face of others. Grant us that peace that flows from your throne of grace and forgiveness. Breathe fresh air into our spirits so that we might again become the people you envision us to be. Wash us thoroughly clean with your pure water. Through your Son Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross washes away our sin, and restores us again to a right relationship with you. **Amen.**

Hear the good news:
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
Glory to God. Amen.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

“Sanctuary Prayer”

Franklin Ritter

†DOXOLOGY

HYFRYDOL

Text Gareth Hill, ©2005 Hope Publishing

**Praise we bring to God the Father, praise we bring to God the Son,
praise to God the Holy Spirit, praise to you the Three in One.
Trinity of love inspire us, may we always strive to be
one in love and one in worship – children of eternity.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

(epiclesis from A Contemporary Service of Holy Communion)

(responsive)

The Lord be with you.

And Also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We do give you our thanks and praise as we remember the Body of Christ around your table this day, O God. Your Spirit gathers us in once more, assembling as your children to share in this feast. We come from near and far, with joy and in sorrow, surrounded by the cloud of witnesses, giving thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

We remember that your Spirit brought order out of chaos, separated the waters and the land, created all things and declared it good.

We remember that you led your people out of Egypt across the sea into the land that you had promised.

We remember that you brought your people out of captivity, restoring life and hope and community.

We remember that we were made in your image, that your Spirit was our breath. We remember that even though we turn away from you, you remain steadfast and faithful.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

We remember his baptism in the waters of the river Jordan, when by your Spirit you claimed him as your beloved son.

You walked among us, shared your good news, healed the sick, ate with sinners, and showed us the way to abundant life.

Your incarnation, your life, your suffering, death and resurrection gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death and made a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper, He took the cup blessed it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "This is the cup of the new covenant. Drink this in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
We offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Spirit on us.

Pour out your Spirit on us.

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts.

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts.

Make these gifts the body and blood of Christ.

Make us, through them, Christ's body alive in the world.

Abba, Father!

Let your kingdom come!

Glory to you!

Glory to you!

Come, Lord Jesus!

Be our daily bread.

Glory to you!

Glory to you!

Holy Spirit!

Send us to the world.

Glory to you!

Glory to you!

Holy, Blessed Trinity!

One God forever!

Glory to you!

Glory to you!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

UMH 894 (Ecumenical Text)

(unison)

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

(Please move to a communion station to receive the bread and cup as directed by the ushers.

The communion bread is gluten-free and the cup is filled with grape juice.

Hymns to be sung during communion are on the screens.)

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

Eternal Father, your mighty acts of salvation
have been made known through water—
from the moving of your Spirit upon the waters of creation,
to the deliverance of your people
through the flood and through the Red Sea.
In the fullness of time you sent Jesus,
nurtured in the water of a womb,
baptized by John, and anointed by your Spirit.
He called his disciples
to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection
and to make disciples of all nations.
Pour out your Holy Spirit,
to bless this gift of water and those who receive it,
to wash away their sin and clothe them in righteousness
throughout their lives
that, dying and being raised with Christ,
they may share in his final victory;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANTHEM

"Come to the Water"

Howard Helvey

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS WITH ANOINTING OF WATER

(responsive)

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those who suffer pain and ill health, with their families, friends and those who care for them....

May they know the peace of Christ.

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those who suffer in mind and spirit, and all who care for them...

May they know the peace of Christ.

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence the suffering people of our world, and the places where people are experiencing division, injustice and violence...

May they know the peace of Christ.

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence those struggling to overcome addiction or abuse, those supporting and working with them, and all whose suffering has distanced them from those who love...

May they know the peace of Christ.

Loving God, we give you thanks for health restored and prayers answered.

We hold in your healing presence and peace those whose needs are not known to us...

And we name in our hearts those who are close to us...

May they know the peace of Christ.

God of compassion, love and hope,
We offer you all of our suffering and pain.
Give us strength to bear our weakness,
Healing even where there is no cure,
Peace in the midst of turmoil and love to fill the spaces in our lives.

Glory to God the Father from whom all love flows, glory to Jesus who showed his love through suffering, and glory to the Holy Spirit, who brings light to the darkest places.

Amen.

Almighty God,
In this sacred place and time, we remember those who are hurting this day.
May they be comforted in their suffering and made whole.
When they are afraid, give them courage;
When they feel weak, grant them your strength;
When they are afflicted, afford them patience;
When they are lost, offer them hope;
When they are alone, move us to their side.
Give hope to all of our hearts and peace to our lives.
We give thanks for the protective shelter of God's healing love.
We give thanks for the freedom to pour out our grief,
release our disappointment, face our emptiness,
and know without a shadow of doubt that God cares.
We give thanks for God's word of hope that can drive away our sadness
and move us to offer God our praise.
We pray this in the name of Jesus, who suffered and died,
and then rose from the dead to lead us into new life, now and forever. **Amen.**

**God whose light pours in through windows gently warming those who wait;
 God whose love engulfs creation, God whose gifts we celebrate;
 Our Creator, our Sustainer, our Redeemer, source of grace:
 Hear our song of bold thanksgiving for your presence in this place.**

**Here the cycle of the seasons, like a timepiece counting years,
 Passing decades, yet a moment, sharing blessings, sharing tears.
 Now we mark a crucial signpost of this blessed community:
 Knowing past and living present, looking to what’s yet to be.**

**In the present we are striving, working, learning, sharing all.
 Conflict burns and turns to concord; strong with faith, we do not fall;
 Times of hardship, times of plenty-treasuring each day we live.
 Let your Spirit move within us; teach us how to love, to give.**

**Now we look to new horizons turning from the past to face
 Unknown challenges before us, in this ever stronger place.
 We would live by your example, we would humble servants be,
 We would strive to be disciples, by your steadfast love made free.**

†DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

The Lord who heals all your iniquity bless and keep you;
 the face of the Lord who heals all your afflictions
 shine upon you and be gracious to you;
 the light of the countenance of the Lord who redeems your life
 be lifted upon you and give you peace. Amen.

GOING FORTH

POSTLUDE

“*All People That on Earth Dwell*”

arr. Lani Smith

(Please be seated and continue in a spirit of worship while music is playing.)

Liturgist:

Rev. Harriett (Penny) Calmbacher, Follansbee UMC
Catherine Earl, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
Rev. Ken Krimmel, Director of Connectional Ministries
Rev. JF Lacaria, Assistant to the Bishop
Lynn Kee, Brawley Chapel UMC
Rev. Jack Lipphardt, Disaster Recovery Director
Rev. Judy Pysell, Fenwick UMC
Rev. David L. Shumate, Church of the Brethren, (WV Council of Churches Ecumenical Representative)
Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, Residing Bishop
Rev. Karen Tate, Bethel UMC
David Wayne, Wallback UMC

Children's Sermon:

Rev. David Stilgenbauer, VIM Coordinator
Rev. Shari Dawn Stilgenbauer, Emmanuel UMC

Preachers:

Rev. Scott Ferguson, Clendenin UMC
Rev. Jonathan Dierdorff, Rainelle UMC

Communion Servers:

Jim Berner
Rev. Harriett (Penny) Calmbacher
Rev. Rick DeQuasie
Rev. Ricky Duncan, Alderson UMC
Rev. Mike Estep
Rev. Mary Ellen Finegan
Rev. Greg Hayes
Lynn Kee
Rev. Joe Kenaston
Rev. Ken Krimmel
Rev. Jack Lipphardt
Rev. Martha Ognibene
Rev. Michael Palmer, Tridelphia UMC
Rev. Judy Pysell
Rev. Rick Sale
Rev. Frank Shomo
Rev. Melissa Shortridge
Rev. Shari Stilgenbauer
Rev. Karen Tate
David Wayne

Serving at the Table:

Rev. Elizabeth (Butch) Baker
Rev. Patricia Connelly
Rev. Jeffrey Taylor

Musicians:

Rev. David Donathan
Craig Hinchman

Evening Worship

Historic Questions and Retirement Service

Thursday, June 8, 2017 ❖ 7:30 pm



Acts 2:43 - A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles.

† signifies that all are invited to stand as are able

BELLS CALLING US TO WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

(written by Erin Sears)

“The place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

In this holy space, take a moment and imagine yourself as Moses in the desert. Suddenly a bush burst into flames right in front of you, yet it does not burn up. Picture yourself moving closer and hearing God’s voice calling you by name.

Tonight, through music and prayer, we reflect on God’s call upon our lives to go with Him out of Egypt and into a new land. We will celebrate those who have answered “Here I am”, and will transform their relationship with the Annual Conference. We celebrate also those who have continued to answer “Here I am”, and who are now undergoing their own transformation to a retired relationship with the church. We give thanks to God that they are still listening and following God into new lands, new challenges, and new hope. We pray for strength, that all of us may do the same.

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 7:1-3, 17-29

(Stephen reciting the history of Israel and the life of Moses)

†HYMN

“Gather Us In”

GATHER US IN

Words and Music Marty Haugen

**Here in this place, new light is streaming
now is the darkness vanished away,
see, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this day.**

**Gather us in the lost and forsaken
gather us in the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken
we shall arise at the sound of our name.**

**We are the young – our lives are a mystery
we are the old – who yearns for your face.
we have been sung throughout all of history
called to be light to the whole human race.**

**Gather us in the rich and the haughty
gather us in the proud and the strong
give us a heart so meek and so lowly
give us the courage to enter the song.**

**Here we will take the wine and the water
here we will take the bread of new birth
here you shall call your sons and your daughters
call us anew to be salt of the earth.**

**Give us to drink the wine of compassion
give us to eat the bread that is you
nourish us well and teach us to fashion
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 7:30-37
(Stephen's monologue continues)

BLESSING FOR THE JOURNEY:

Honoring Those Now Available for Appointment through Licensing

(Those who successfully completed Pastoral Ministry Licensing School this year, please rise and move to the aisle closest to your seat. All those who would bless these persons, please outstretch your hand to show them your support and prayers.)

God has called your names, and you have shown courage by lifting your head and heart toward God's will. Your "yes" will bring with it many blessings. May the blessings of your work, play, and life be a light to the world. May God grant you the patience, endurance, and grace required of those who choose to spend their life perfecting the church in love. Now available for appointment, you carry the sacredness of your call wherever you go. May you remember this call on good and difficult days alike. May you grow in kindness and wisdom, and may all your days be spent in the joy of service to God. Amen.

(Those who have moved to the aisles return to seats.)

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORIC QUESTIONS

God has blessed, is blessing and will bless the West Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church with extraordinary people. Tonight, we mark milestones along the journey, each its own beginning, for those who seek to give their hearts and service to God.

Of those women and men beginning their service to our church, we will ask questions which come from Mr. Wesley. These questions have been asked of all clergy who have served our church. Those entering a retired relationship may well remember these questions. Those who know what it takes to answer these questions with your words and actions, we ask you to take this time to pray for those just beginning their work. For those looking forward to new careers in ministry we ask you to pray for the wisdom and power of those who go before you. We ask all present to pray for the church, that it may be a place of grace and a force of peace.

(All those being commissioned and ordained, come forward to the kneeling rail.)

ASKING OF THE HISTORIC QUESTIONS

(the candidates respond)

The examination of candidates for membership is an historic action of the Annual Conference. In accordance with the usage and Discipline of The United Methodist Church and the traditions of our community, and in the presence of this Conference, I ask you:

Have you faith in Christ?

I have.

Are you going on to perfection?

I am, by the grace of God.

Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life?

God willing, I do.

Are you earnestly striving after perfection in love?

With God's help, I am.

Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and God's work?

I am so resolved.

Do you know the General Rules of our Church?

I do.

Will you keep the General Rules of our Church?

I will so endeavor.

Have you studied the doctrines of The United Methodist Church?

I have studied them.

After full examination, do you believe that our doctrines are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures?

I believe that they are.

Will you preach and maintain them?

To the best of my ability, I will.

Have you studied our form of Church discipline and polity?

I have.

Do you approve our Church government and polity?
I do so approve.

Will you support and maintain them?
I will, with God's help.

Will you diligently instruct the children in every place?
I will.

Will you visit from house to house?
This is my commitment.

Will you recommend fasting and abstinence, both by precept and example?
I will so recommend.

Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God?
This is my intention.

Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in your work?
I am not.

Will you observe the following directions? Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time: neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience sake.
The Lord being my helper, I will.

Let us pray:
(congregation in unison)

Almighty God, bless all participants of ministry. We hear you calling our names and we are ready. As your hands and feet, heart and soul on earth, we rejoice in the variety of ways you have called us. Pour out grace for all, and give special patience, courage, and wisdom to those we have recognized here so that we may all care for one another. Grant them strength of body, mind and spirit for the fulfillment of your will that they may be generous stewards of the ministry committed to them. For the glory of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

(After answering the Historic Questions, those being ordained and commissioned may return to their seats.)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

**Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,
The path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,
Then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.**

**Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way,
Whose hope burns through the terrors, whose love sustains the day.
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound.
Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Exodus 3:1-12

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

Just as God directed Moses, tonight you return to the very place many of your journeys began, in order to celebrate the ways in which you have answered God's call with your words and actions. We come here to give thanks for the new direction your call will take in retirement, and to bless you on your way.

RECOGNITION OF RETIREES

(As each name is called, the retiree (and spouse) comes to the chancel. The retiree will receive a pin and certificate. The spouse is given a corsage or boutonniere. As each retiree (and spouse) is presented, you are invited to rise in body, mind and spirit in recognition of those persons whose lives and ministries have blessed yours.)

HYMN OF CELEBRATION

"In the Midst of New Dimensions"

NEW DIMENSIONS

Words and Music Julian B. Rush

(refrain sung by all)

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.**

RECOGNITION OF RETIREES

William H. Kincaid
Danny Fleming
Brenda M. Forren
Nancy K. Cale
Carol Duffield
David G. Kinder
Charolette Ann Fretwell
R. Earl Hill
E. Dallas Forren
Deborah L. Shreve

(refrain sung by all)

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.**

RECOGNITION OF RETIREES

Gregory L. Hayes
Bryan D. Carpenter
John F. (JF) Lacaria
Lewis (Gene) Full
James H. Zinn
Larry F. Hedrick
Lloyd E. Keith
Kyle W. Peake
Pamela S. Shuman
Loretta J. Brinker

(refrain sung by all)

**God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.**

RECOGNITION OF RETIREES

H. Thomas Chafin
Lynn Rae Cartwright
James H. Gray
Phillip E. Hickman
William E. Jemison
Richard K. DeQuasie
W. Martin Wine
Richard B. Waller
Sherry L. Rawlings

“In the Midst of New Dimensions”

verses 1-4

**In the midst of new dimensions,
in the face of changing ways.
Who will lead the pilgrim peoples
wandering in their separate ways?**

***Refrain:* God of rainbow, fiery pillar,
leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever,
now and ever, now and ever more.**

**Through the flood of starving people,
warring factions and despair,
Who will lift the olive branches?
Who will light the flame of care?**

Refrain

**As we stand a world divided
by our own self seeking schemes,
Grant that we, your global village
might envision wider dreams.**

Refrain

**We are man and we are woman,
all persuasions, old and young,
Each a gift in your creation,
each a love song to be sung.**

Refrain

THANKSGIVING OVER THE RETIREES AND RELEASE FOR UNFINISHED WORK

(retirees are asked to respond from their pews)

For everything there is a season, a time for every matter under heaven. So, too, this is a time for movement, new adventure, new service. We are thankful for your time.

In our darkest nights, you gave up sleep to sit with us. In our moments of joy, you laid aside your own burdens to celebrate with us.

You balanced our needs with those of your family.

You invested your life in the hope something larger than you was being built.

You have been with us, and God has been with you.

We give thanks to God for all your gifts.

May God be with you now, in a new season.

(those retiring in unison)

We are thankful for the work to which we were called, but we worry we have not done enough.

Who will finish the work we began? Who will carry on the traditions of the church?

God is raising up leaders even now to continue the good work of Christ. May you be at peace in the new ways you can love and serve. After all, whose work is ever done? Who can transition entirely out of this good work and say, "It is finished. My heart is on to other things"?

(those retiring in unison)

We have labored among you.

Our feelings are mixed:

gratitude and sadness mingle;

expectancy and hesitancy mix.

God's passion in us for the work we do

is not a faucet we can turn on and off.

Yet, the time has come.

These active files,

these unfinished manuscripts,

these unanswered questions and unopened emails, and all the midcourse projects

we entrust to God and to you, our colleagues.

You are men and women called by God.

We give thanks to God for the work you have done among us.

(congregation in unison)

We rejoice in your service with us. We receive what you entrust to us. May God help us. Amen.

“In the Midst of New Dimensions”

verse 5

**Should the threats of dire predictions
cause us to withdraw in pain,
May your blazing phoenix spirit,
resurrect the church again.**

***Refrain:* God of rainbow, fiery pillar,
leading where the eagles soar,
We your people, ours the journey now and ever,
now and ever, now and ever more.**

VESTING

(We ask that retirees move to the altar rail at this time. Those retirees assisting ordinands are asked to take their place at the altar. Each ordinand will receive the robe or alb that she or he will wear during the Service of Ordination on Sunday. Retirees will assist them in putting on their vestments. After all have vested, retirees and ordinands will remain for the passing of the mantle.)

PASSING OF THE MANTLE

2 Kings 2:9-15

Retirees: We transfer this mantle from our generation to yours. May the spirit of today’s Elijahs rest upon today’s Elishas.

New Classes: We who come after you take up the mantle which falls upon us. May we inherit a double share of your spirit!

(At this point, we ask those who will be commissioned, and received into conference membership to join the retirees who are stationed at the kneeling rail. All the ordinands, those to be commissioned and those being received into membership will kneel and receive a prayer shawl, draped by a retiree.)

A BLESSING FOR SERVICE

(responsive)

Moses was called by God to go into Egypt to free God’s people. His call was unexpected and he was skeptical of the new direction God would have him go. Moses asked, “Who am I that I should go to the Pharaoh?”

He was chosen; he was called; he was a child of God.

May you hear the call of God now, for you too have been set apart to serve in deserts and cities, wilderness and empires.

God is changing the course of your journeys even now.

Moses was unprepared to meet God. He did not bow and he did not pray, but God instructed him to “come close”. When Moses approached the heat of the burning bush, God instructed him to listen to the hurting people and to serve those who needed to be freed. Sensing Moses’s disbelief about the land of milk and honey, God said, “I will be with you”.

God seeks to deliver us all.

(Retirees to drape shawls on those being commissioned, ordained and received

into conference membership as the blessing continues.)

May you find yourselves surprised by the places God appears. May you welcome God's instructions to listen and be heard in places of suffering and oppression. May the good news of life and abundance embolden your work. May you be blessed to walk on sacred ground.

God will be with you. God's people will be with you. Thanks be to God.

(All stand and return to seats as hymn is played.)

†HYMN

"The Servant Song"

THE SERVANT SONG
Words and Music Richard Gillard

**Brother, sister let me serve you.
Let me be as Christ to you.
Pray that I might have the grace
To let you be my servant, too.**

**We are pilgrims on a journey.
We're companions on the road.
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.**

**I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you;
Speak the peace you long to hear.**

**I will weep when you are weeping.
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.**

**When we sing to God in heaven,
We shall find such harmony
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.**

**Brother, sister let me serve you.
Let me be as Christ to you.
Pray that I might have the grace
To let you be my servant, too.**

SENDING FORTH

Go forth to where God is calling you next with boldness and joy. Amen.

POSTLUDE

(Please be seated and continue in a spirit of worship while music is playing.)

NOTES:

Prayer of unfinished work adapted from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/order-of-service-with-colleagues-retiring>, copied on 1/12/17

Liturgists:

Rev. Claudia Fizer
Rev. Sharletta Green
Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball
Rev. Ernest Watkins
Rev. Gwen Wolford

Musicians:

David Donathan
Craig Hinchman

Thank you to churches who volunteered to make the prayer shawls:

Crim Memorial UMC; Philippi, WV
Grace UMC, Keyser; WV
Point Pleasant UMC; New Cumberland, WV
Wesley UMC; Morgantown WV