

## **Section 6: God is calling people into lay and pastoral ministry**

There are opportunities to recognize the calling of God and identify persons who are being called into ministry. Churches are where pastors are made. We need to raise up new pastors! We need our laity and we need to raise up, multiply new lay leadership and lay ministers! We have an opportunity to work on our lay ministry and empower our lay ministry. We have an opportunity to work and strengthen our lay and clergy partnerships. When was the last time that your church sent someone into ministry - a licensed ministry, an ordained ministry, or a certified lay ministry? When was the last time your church recognized God working in somebody's life and affirmed that call and lifted them up as a person who God might be calling into some type of ministry?

I am so thankful for our retirees. Our retirees cover a large number of our pastoral leadership positions. However, we need more pastors and more lay leadership. Church, if you're not lifting people up and helping people to recognize God's call in their lives, then they are not going to end up in ministry with our congregations and in our communities. There is an opportunity here, great opportunity!

### CLOSING

This is the state of the church. Yes, it is messy, but this is a place that the church has been before and not been defeated. The state of the church is one that is grounded in the love of God and the sacrifice, compassion, and spirit of Christ. The state of the church is one that is filled with many opportunities to make a difference and bring people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and have their lives transformed. And, when people's lives are transformed, when they come to know Christ, this world begins to develop a momentum where it becomes more of God desires, and what God dreams of and created it to be: God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. May we work together to be a part of making that so! Amen.

### Questions for reflection

1. Could you or your congregation or your parish plan and carry out a gathering to celebrate and equip the laity?? (Your Superintendent, your Bishop, your conference staff would be glad to help)

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball 2022 State of the Church Address  
West Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church

2. Could you do a study on Baptism and help others open up their lives to how God might be gifting them for mission and ministry?
3. Celebrations! We all need celebrations! People need to know that they are valued and valuable! How can you build an intentional celebration plan into your ministry and mission so that those who serve God through the Church or in their job, or in their community service might receive a hearty "Thank You" and be encouraged for a future and a world that will continue to be messy?
4. The Portico course called Discover Your SHAPE can be a tool to help those in your congregation discover how God has uniquely gifted them for ministry. (hint...we are ALL called to ministry)