

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO
SPIRITUAL FORMATION

August 1, 2026

***A SERVICE OF ENDING AND BEGINNINGS:
"BLESSING THE WORD BETWEEN"***

PRELUDE	"Turn, Turn, Turn"	The Byrds
WELCOME		Grace Wallace, COSSO Coordinator
OPENING REMARKS		Rev. Jay Rundell, MTSO President
INTRODUCTION	Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples, COSSO Spiritual Formation Director	

CALL TO WORSHIP *(adapted from James 5:13-16)*

Leader: Are any among you in need of a blessing?

All: Call the elders of the church and have them pray over us, and anoint us with oil in the name of the Lord.

Leader: The prayers of faith will bless you, and the Lord will raise you up.

All: May the Lord bless us with understanding.

Leader: Are any among you in need of forgiveness?

All: We will confess our sins and pray for one another.

Leader: May the Lord bless us and guide us, that we may be a blessing to others.

OPENING BLESSING

(Receiving and offering a blessing is a gift of acceptance of God's presence in our lives. As we begin, you may close your eyes and receive our blessing.)

Rebeka: Blessed are you, who God has invited into a life of sacred service.

Joon-Sik: May you always find that your ministry has special meaning as local pastors and spiritual leaders in the church.

Grace: May happiness be yours, and may your sorrows be brief.

Lori: May God's Word be a lantern to guide you, and a spark to rekindle your call to ministry with renewed hope and courage.

Rebeka: We pronounce this blessing in the name of Almighty God, the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

(You may make the sign of the cross on your forehead as a sign of receiving the blessing)

GOD'S BLESSING from Numbers 6:24-26

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you;

The Lord's blessing be upon you and give you peace.

BLESSING PRAYER

Blessings are our prayers, "God has no hands but ours, no bread but the bread we bake, no prayers but the ones we make."
(Barbara Brown Taylor)

All created things are drenched in God's blessing. Let us share in this blessing prayer:

Open the heavens, O God, and pour out your blessings on us.

Open your Word, Lord Jesus, and fill us with the blessing of your love.

Open your breath, O God, and we will receive every joy you have for us.

Creator of all good things, bless us now as we worship you.

**Grant that we might open our lives to mirror your everlasting love,
and be a blessing to You and all Creation. Amen.**

HYMN "Make Me a Blessing"

Ira B. Wilson

GOD'S WORD **Matthew 26:36-46**

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE "To Be Present Where We Are" **Rev. Dr Joon-Sik Park, COSSO Director**
Dr. Joon-Sik Park received his M.Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary and his Ph.D. in Christian Ethics from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. A United Methodist elder, he is E. Stanley Jones Professor of World Evangelism at MTSO.

HYMN "Living for Jesus"

TFWS #2149

BLESSING PRAYERS FOR CELEBRATION OF GRADUATION

WORDS from Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples, COSSO Director of Spiritual Formation

RESPONSIVE READING

Director: Beloved in Christ, the Church is the Body of Christ, and we are God's holy people, called by name and guided by the Holy Spirit.

All: We are received into the Church at baptism, and called to proclaim the mighty acts of God in the name of Jesus Christ, to serve him in the Church and the world.

Director: God sent us a Savior and called the apostles to witness to his words and deeds. Through him, the Church was formed. Now God has called you into ministry with The United Methodist Church.

All: We honor this tradition and celebrate our call to ministry, as servants of the Church, as pastors, preachers, teachers, and bearers of God's word.

Director: In all things, God's grace is sufficient to strengthen you, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: By the same Spirit, God has called each of us. We stand with joy to honor these graduates, and celebrate their completion of the Course of Study.

Director: May God increase in you the gifts of grace for your life and ministry.

PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES

Director: Who is presented for graduation from the Course of Study?

COS Coordinator: I present these candidates for graduation:

Trevor Liburd

Baltimore-Washington Conference

Louis "Randy" Locker

West Ohio Conference

BLESSING OF GRADUATES *(each candidate receives a blessing)*

Director: In the name of Almighty God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, we celebrate your graduation from the Course of Study. We commend you to your ministry as a Local Pastor in The United Methodist Church and pledge our continued prayers.

Spiritual Director: May the Holy Spirit strengthen you and guide you, that in all things you may do God's will in service to the church, in the name of God our Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER

Director: We offer our virtual blessings as a sign of our connection in the body of Christ; please send your blessings in the Chat box which will be sent to the graduates.

COS Coordinator: Our congratulations and prayers go with you. Your certificates of completion will be sent to you. Let us pray together for our graduates:

Gracious God, we thank you for calling faithful servants to be Local Pastors in your Church. We humbly place these graduates in your care. Give them courage, patience, and vision, and bless them with caring communities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Director: And now, remember your call. Preach the Good News. Shepherd the flock of Christ. And in all things, give God the glory, now and always.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare that you have graduated from the Course of Study.

Please unmute and cheer as we congratulate our graduates.

HYMN

"Here I Am Lord"

UMH #593

BLESSING PRAYERS FOR CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION, CONFESSION & PARDON

Holy communion is an act of remembrance of the four actions of Jesus in the upper room: taking, blessing, breaking, and giving the bread and cup. As we celebrate on Zoom, you are invited to participate with your own bread and juice.

Christ invites to his table all who love him, and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another:

Gracious God, have mercy on us. Forgive us our sins, those things we have done and left undone. Uphold us by your Word and Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Hear the good news: in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Glory to God!

Alleluia and Amen!

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

Creator of heaven and earth, we praise you for your love, in all our endings and beginnings: for bringing order out of chaos, breathing life into dust, leading captives into freedom, calling wandering children home, giving bread to the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, raising death to life. Therefore, we join our voices with saints and prophets and all the faithful of every time and place, singing:

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.

(lifting bread)

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, who on the night before he died, *took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:*

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

(lifting cup)

In the same way, Jesus took the cup saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Drink from this and remember me."

Bread of heaven. Cup of remembrance. Great is the mystery of faith:

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

Blessing the bread and cup

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and juice, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be our communion in the body and blood of Christ.

Send us into the world ready to serve others and work for peace,

through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in unity with the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer (adapted version from Parker J. Palmer)

Now, with the confidence of children of God we are bold to pray:

Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother.

Holy and blessed is your name. We pray for your peace to come. We pray your will be done.

Let heaven and earth become one. Give us this day the bread we need and enough to share.

Let your Word flow like a river between us, with forgiveness from each one to each one.

**Lead us beyond the evil of our days. Come Mother Father God, come quickly.
For yours is the power and glory forever. Amen.**

Breaking the bread

Now, even in our distance let us re-member our communion in Christ.

In remembrance of God's love for us, we break this bread.

(all break the bread)

Giving the bread and cup

Because we are one loaf, we, who are many, are one body.

"I am the bread of life. Anyone who comes to me will never be hungry."

(all eat the bread)

We remember the cup of forgiveness:

"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let any who believe in me drink."

(all drink the cup)

Prayer after communion

Loving God, thank you for the blessing of your holy presence within and among us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to be a blessing for others. In the name of Jesus, the Christ, Amen.

HYMN

"Blessed Be the Tie that Binds"

UMH 557

BLESSING

**Go forth now, in the Faith which overcomes the world,
in the Hope which sings from your soul,
in the Love which never fails.**

**May God bless and direct you
and send you out with the living Word written on your heart.
May God fill you with enough courage to love and serve the world.
In the name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

POSTLUDE

"The Blessing"

Kari Jobe

SOURCES:

Prayers and Blessings adapted from:

A Book of Blessings, by Ruth Burgess, Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Publications, 2004
(www.ionabooks.com);

Blessing Life's Losses, by Joan Guntzelman, Liguori, MS: Liguori Pubs., 2004;

The Song of the Seed, by Macrina Wiederkehr, NY: HarperOne, 1995;

Blessings & Rituals, by Susan Langhauser, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000;

Prayers for the Domestic Church, by Edward Hays, Leavenworth, KS: Forest of Peace Publishing, 1979.

Communion prayers adapted from:

Feasting on the Word: Worship Companion, Kimberly Bracken Long, ed., Louisville: John Knox Press, 2012;

Upper Room Worshipbook, Elise S. Eslinger, ed., Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2006;

UMC Worship Book; <https://sandhyajha.com/2013/07/01/variations-on-the-lords-prayer/>.