

PRAYING FOR HARVEST & BLESSING OF GRADUATES
A Harvest Service with Blessing (or Dedication) of Ministries

PRELUDE “PSALM 8”

INTRODUCTION

OPENING WORDS

Leader: O Lord, our God, how great you are; all the world depends on you.

All: O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You make the trees to save the earth; protect them from the fires.

O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You provide the food we need; help us share what we have.

O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have created all things; help us respect each other.

O Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

SCRIPTURE READING (in 2 voices): PSALM 8

Voice 1: O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.

Voice 2: Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

Voice 1: When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?

Voice 2: Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
and crowned them with glory and honor.

Voice 1: You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

Voice 2: O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

THANKSGIVING FOR THE HARVEST

Leader: Almighty God, we thank you for the rain that falls and the sun that shines, so that our crops can grow and ripen. We thank you for the earth and praise you for all creation.

Lord of the Harvest,

All: We praise you.

We thank you for the harvest of industry and science, so that technology and discoveries are found to help us live together as your beloved community.

Lord of the Harvest,

We praise you.

We thank you for the harvest and patience of peacemakers, so that the world does not have to live in war but learn to live in peace.

Lord of the Harvest,

We praise you.

We thank you for the harvest of education and Course of Study learning opportunities so that we can lead your church with knowledge and scriptural understanding.

Lord of the Harvest,

We praise you.

We thank you for the harvest of our own talents and skills, so that we may sow seeds of kindness and reap the joy it gives to us and others.

Lord of the harvest,

We praise you. Amen.

HYMN “We See the Fruitful Harvest”

BLESSING OF GRADUATES – PART I

(Due to the large number of graduates (15) this term, the graduation service is separated into two parts in order to give each of them time to share a short reflection; today we focus on 8 of the graduates and we will bless the remaining 7 at Graduation-Part II on October 23.)

Introduction – Rev. Rebeka Maples

Reflections on the COS journey:

Brad Bloomster, East Ohio

Terry Burkhardt, East Ohio

Robert ‘Bob’ Carson, Jr., East Ohio

Willie ‘Will’ Council, Michigan

William ‘Bill’ Eckert, East Ohio

Dawn Hargraves, Western Pennsylvania

Also graduating:

Daniel ‘Dan’ Colthorp, Michigan

Ken Hundley, Kentucky

Words from Rev. Dr. Joon-Sik Park, Director of COSSO

Presentation

Director: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Director: Let us pray together:

Eternal God, by your grace you have brought us together in your Church, which is the body of Christ. Grant your continuing grace to all who are called to leadership in your Church, that they may with diligence and faithfulness fulfill their ministries; and grant that we your people may follow where you lead, and serve you faithfully in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Director: Who are presented for graduation?

Coordinator: Brad Bloomster, Terry Burkhardt, Bob Carson, Jr., Dan Colthorp, Will Council, Bill Eckert, Dawn Hargraves, and Ken Hundley are presented for graduation from the Course of Study. They will officially graduate at our service on October 23rd.

Director: Today we prayerfully offer our blessings for each of these graduates.

Blessing

Director: (name) 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: (name) May the Holy Spirit strengthen and guide you, that in all things you may do God's will in service to the church, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(service continues after blessing each graduate)

COS Coordinator: Our congratulations and prayers go with you. Your certificate and gift for graduation will be sent to you.

Prayer

Director: I invite everyone to offer your prayers and blessings for these graduates, *(you may type your prayers in the Chat box) ...*

Coordinator (continues with prayer): Let us pray,
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.

(everyone unmutes themselves and cheers with gusto)

HYMN "My Times Are In Thy Hand"

HOLY COMMUNION
An Autumn Eucharist

The Peace

Leader: Christ our healer,
As the wind blows through the trees,
send your healing Spirit to blow through
the nations and through our lives,
that the world may find peace.

We join our voices with all who cry out for peace
The peace of Christ be with you,

All: And also with you.

Great Thanksgiving Prayer

Meeting Christ today in one another
we become a community of hope.

**Celebrating the gifts of others
knowing ourselves beloved,
we are sustained for our work together.**

Blessed by the Spirit of Love,
we take this bread and cup,
blessed with fruits of the earth to nourish us
with the presence of Christ.

We recall the night of betrayal:
After he had washed the feet of his companions,
Jesus blessed the bread,
breaking it and sharing it, he said:
“Take and eat, this is my body which is given for you,
do this to re-member me.”

After the supper Jesus blessed the cup
And gave it to them, saying:
“Drink this all of you, this is my blood which is shed for you,
Drink this to re-member me.”

Breaking the Bread, Sharing the Cup

Breaking this bread, we share in the body of Christ.

(bread is broken and eaten)

Drinking this cup, we share in the forgiveness of Christ.

(lift the cup and drink)

Prayer after communion

Holy Spirit, through this meal,
you welcome us into community so we may welcome others.
Christ, present at our table, you meet us now and always.
God of changing seasons, in this meal, you bless the harvest of our lives,
our abundance and our emptiness.
With thankful hearts, we receive your blessing. Amen

CLOSING SONG “The Lord Bless You and Keep You”

CLOSING WORDS & BLESSING

Leader: In our sowing and our harvesting,

In our studying and our praying,

Let us, walk gently on the earth,

Voice 1: Sail wisely over the seas,

Enter carefully into the skies,

Voice 2: Share generously with the hungry,

Bow graciously to the stranger,

Voice 3: Praise joyfully the Creator.

Leader: Today, tomorrow and always,

May you be the blessing of the harvest.

May you be the light of Christ to others.

And in all things, may you be the change the world needs. Amen.

POSTLUDE “All Things Bright and Beautiful” UMH 147, to alternate tune

NOTE: The Blessing of Graduates may be adapted to a Dedication of Ministries Service at the beginning of the school year, with those in various education ministries of the church invited to stand. The Blessing is replaced with questions for each education area, such as:

Will you respond to God’s calling to serve as [teacher of education area] through your service to nurture and inspire, encourage and enable, showing the grace and love of Christ?

Teachers/helpers respond: With God’s help, we will.

Prayers adapted from Autumn: Liturgical resources by Ruth Burgess, Glasgow, UK: Wild Goose Publications, 2021.