

## Calling

*You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit and so that your fruit could last. (John 15:16a, CEB)*

I experienced a very powerful moment Wednesday afternoon at the Service of Commissioning and Ordination, one that actually brought me to tears when I witnessed several laypersons come forward to answer the call of God on their lives, taking a first step of faith toward becoming a pastor. The worship service took place in Hoover Auditorium at Lakeside, the same place where I was commissioned and then later ordained by our previous episcopal leader, Bishop John Hopkins. It was also the place where I first considered the possibility that I was being called by God to ordained ministry, although I must admit that I mightily resisted God's call the first time around. However, God persisted!

"Called" is this year's theme for our Annual Conference session. Each one of us, by virtue of our baptism, is called to the ministry of being a disciple who participates in making disciples. Yes, that means that all of us are called by God to a general form of ministry within the Body of Christ. We are all considered to be ministers. Now, among those people are some who are called to forms of leadership, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers.

In the past, the lay representative to annual conference and I have tried to bring back to the churches I've served verbal and written reports about what took place at the Annual Conference session. But with modern technology, I don't have to work that hard because so much of that information is available online. Thank you, Lord!

I invite you to visit this website (<http://www.eocumc.com/eoac18/index.html>) to find daily recaps of worship services and business sessions. The sermons shared during the week have been particularly powerful for me and I encourage you to listen to some of them as time allows.

I look forward to being back with you in Orrville later this week!

Grace and Peace.

*Pastor David Rittgers*