

# Sixty-five Pastors Celebrated in Ordering of Ministry Service

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**By:** Neill Caldwell

A group greatly diverse in age, gender and ethnicity were honored by family and friends and celebrated in their ministry in the Western North Carolina Conference Saturday night at Stuart Auditorium.

Fifteen Elders and one Deacon were ordained, nine were commissioned as Provisional Members, and 40 were licensed as Local Pastors in the tradition-laden Ordering of Ministry service.

[See the full photo archive.](#)

All were asked the questions of the General Examination of their beliefs and call to ministry by Bishop Paul Leeland. These questions go back to John Wesley.

Guest preacher Bishop Mike Lowry of the Central Texas Annual Conference based his sermon using the Great Commission in the final chapter of Matthew's Gospel, the "Those who wait upon the Lord" passage from Isaiah Chapter 40, and words from the hymn "Trust and Obey," which is the theme of the 2019 Annual Conference.

Lowry, who has been in ministry for 45 years, 11 as a bishop of the church, told those being ordained, commissioned and licensed that there would be difficult days in their church careers.

"Remember to 'Trust and Obey,' and let that settle into the very core of your being," Lowry said. "There will be those tough days for you. They're still there for me and I'm a bishop."

Lowry also used as an illustration the story of the soccer team whose plane crashed high in the Andes Mountains. After many passengers died in the initial crash or of their injuries shortly thereafter, those who survived were eventually airlifted out by helicopter after two team members made an arduous journey to get help.

"Our rescuer is Jesus Christ, as both Lord and Savior," he said. "It's not Captain America coming to save us. It's not Captain Marvel or the Black Panther. And Thor is not even in the right universe!"

In addition to Leeland and Lowry, three other bishops participated in the laying on hands ceremony for

those being ordained. Bishops Charlene Kammerer and Lawrence McCleskey, two former WNC bishops who are retired at Lake Junaluska, and Council of Bishops President Ken Carter, who also has a home in the area and was present to ordain his son-in-law, Rev. Allen Stanton.



Photo by Rev. Earl Bradshaw