



## Commissioning for Faithful Stewards of Sacred Waters

**Invocation:** Come, all and gather in prayer and worship. We all thirst for the water that satisfies our bodies and our spirits. All who thirst, come to the sacred water.

**All: We long for the water that refreshes and gives life.**

### **Opening reflection:**

All life comes from water. Everything that lives, needs water - from the smallest plants to the largest whale. Today we celebrate water, which connects and nourishes all life.

We need to claim our identity as living beings filled with water! For we are water. Each one of us is a body of water. There are rivers and streams within us that connect us to the rivers that run through our cities, to the creeks down the mountain slope, to the streams that curl their paths through pastures. We are connected in a material and spiritual way to all the tributaries of the watershed; they are a part of us and we are a part of them because we are all bodies of water. (Adapted from Rev. Neal Halverson-Taylor) (If outdoors:) Let us take a moment of silent gratitude, listening to the voice of Creation, whose life is dependent upon water, a gift from God.

(If indoors:) Let us take a moment of silent gratitude for God's gift of water, upon which all life in Creation depends.

Today we are embarking on a journey of becoming Faithful Stewards of Sacred Waters.

We ask the Creator of the universe to open our minds and hearts for all that we will learn:

from one another, from our Creator, and from Creation. We can listen for the voice of God in Creation.

### **Litany of Water Scriptures**

**Reader:** See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in a wasteland. (from Isaiah 43: 16-21)

**Response: We are doing a new thing! We are called to restore Creation.**

**Reader:** You make springs gush forth in the valleys; ... they give drink to every wild animal; By the streams the birds... sing among the branches. (from Psalm 104: 10-13)

**Response: We are doing a new thing! We are called to heal and restore Creation.**

**Reader:** Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (from Amos 5:24)

**Response: We are doing a new thing! We are called to heal and restore Creation.**

**Reader:** Jesus said: The water that I will give will become in you a spring of water gushing up to eternal life. (John 4:14)

**Response: We are doing a new thing! We are called to heal and restore Creation.**



**Reader:** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. (Rev. 22:1-2)

**Response: We are doing a new thing! We are called to heal and restore Creation.**

**Commissioning:** (process forward as guided) to receive water that unites all life.

#### **Water Ritual:**

All of our water flows into a common watershed – the Chesapeake Bay and thereby connects us to each other. This water connects us all, physically and spiritually.

The waters of our world have been here since the beginning of time. Through the cycles rain, condensation, and evaporation, this life-giving water is the same water that Moses parted and Jesus was baptized in. This water belongs to lakes and streams, reservoirs that quench our thirst, great oceans that circle the globe, the source of all life.

All living things are connected by water, for it runs through our veins and courses through the stems and leaves of plants.

We ask each of you to come forward, take a bottle of water from the waters we have brought that join us together. We want you to carry this water back home as a reminder that we are a joined together as a community of Faithful Congregational Stewards, working together, holding each other in prayer through the challenges of this class, accomplishing together what we cannot do alone. Keep this bottle on your desk or kitchen window sill and remember that you do not labor alone. Look around you – your classmates labor with you.

May our separate work join into one collective effort. Like drops of rain, we can add up to an ocean of change. And, may we draw strength from the wellspring of life, our Creator, who sustains us on this journey.

**Final Blessing:** May God guide and inspire us to become Faithful Stewards of these Sacred Waters of the Chesapeake Bay. May God's beautiful Creation inspire us as we dedicate ourselves to the service of healing Creation.

**Leader:** Let us pledge ourselves to be restorers of sacred waters with this closing prayer:

#### **Closing Prayer**

**We implore you, O God, most merciful, renew us with your blessed water, and bring forth a renewed commitment to the full restoration of the rivers and streams and lakes and ponds, the full restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, the full restoration of ourselves of God's Creation. All this we pledge in praise of God, Creator of the Universe.**