



The Rev. Bonnie Thurston, Ph. D. - *Education and Religion*

Teacher, pastor, preacher, scholar, author, ecumenical partner, interfaith advocate, and poet – these are just a few of the titles that apply to Bonnie Thurston. Blessed with a myriad of gifts and talents, she enjoys sharing them with the world and with her neighbors. She was born in Bluefield, West Virginia; her family moved to Beckley in Raleigh County where she attended public school. She received her bachelor of arts summa cum laude from Bethany College in 1974, graduating as class valedictorian. She earned her master of arts and a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia and has completed post-doctoral work at Harvard Divinity School; Eberhard Karls University in Tubingen, Germany; and Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem. She currently resides in the greater Wheeling area.

Ordained to the ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1984, Bonnie also is affiliated with and is a licensed lay preacher in the Episcopal Church U.S.A. She has served as a pastor, co-pastor, or interim pastor of five churches including the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Wheeling and has served twice in overseas ministries. She is an experienced spiritual director and retreat leader and a world-renowned scholar, writer, and lecturer. She has written or edited 23 theological books and hundreds of articles, has contributed to multiple reference works in New Testament studies, and has taught at the university level for more than 30 years, including service with Wheeling Jesuit College (now Wheeling University), Bethany College, and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Her scholarly interests include the gospels of Mark and John, the writings of the Apostle Paul, and more generally the history of Christian spirituality and prayer.

Her published book titles include “The Spiritual Landscape of Mark,” “For God Alone: A Primer on Prayer,” and most recently, “Shaped by the End You Live For: Thomas Merton’s Monastic Spirituality.” Bonnie wrote her doctoral dissertation on the Catholic spiritual pioneer Thomas Merton. She was a

founding member of the International Thomas Merton Society; has served as president of the society; and has studied, written, and taught extensively about Merton.

Bonnie’s poetry frequently appears in religious periodicals, and she has composed and published six volumes of verse, including these intriguing titles: “A Place to Pay Attention,” “Practicing Silence,” and “From Darkness to Eastering.” She has given poetry readings at Cathedral College of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., Society of the Sacred Cross at Tymawr Convent (Wales), and the Arts Centre at the University of Aberystwyth (Wales), and locally at Bethany College, at Lunch with Books at the Ohio County Public Library, and at other public libraries in West Virginia and Ohio.

Honors and recognitions Bonnie has received include Who’s Who in Biblical Studies and Archeology; Bethany College Alumni Achievement Award in Religion; West Virginia Council of Churches Ecumenical Service Award; Thomas Merton Award of the International Thomas Merton Society; Wheeling YWCA Tribute to Women Award; and Distinguished West Virginians Archives, West Virginia University.

Bonnie is a widow, an avid walker, reader, gardener, and cook, enjoys classical music (especially the opera and liturgical music), and loves the West Virginia hills. When told of her election to the Wheeling Hall of Fame, she said, “I am stunned. It seems so odd to be honored for doing what one is supposed to do – what God has given one to do. I accept with profound humility and gratitude.”