

A Service of Farewell and Godspeed

Below is a sample liturgy to use in a service of farewell to your departing pastor.

PLEASE NOTE: It is very important that this service explicitly releases your departing pastor from their current pastoral role in the congregation. It will no longer be appropriate for her/him to perform acts of pastoral care (funerals, weddings, baptisms, visitation, etc.) within the congregation – these duties will be assumed immediately by your interim pastor, and then by your newly called pastor whenever she/he arrives.

Pastor: Dear siblings in Christ, we have shared together a season of ministry. It is now time to give thanks for the life we have shared in Christ. It is also time for me to move on to the next chapter in my spiritual journey on which the Lord is leading me.

All: The Lord loves everyone; God's compassion is over all God's works. All your works praise you, O Lord, and your faithful servants bless you.

Pastor: At the beginning of our ministry partnership, you presented me with symbols expressing my special role among you. It is time for me to return to you what you have lent me. I have sought to proclaim the Word of God faithfully among you. Here is the Bible that expresses this.

(The Bible is given to a member of the congregation)

All: Thanks be to God.

Pastor: I have shared, through God's grace, in bringing some through the water of new creation into birth into the Body of Christ by Holy Baptism. Here is water which symbolizes God's gift of belonging in Christ.

(A vessel of water is given to a member of the congregation.)

All: There is one Body and one Spirit; there is one Hope in God's call to us.

Pastor: Prayer, both individual and corporate, is the means by which our relationship with God grows, deepens, and strengthens. Here is our hymn book.

(The book is given to a member of the congregation.)

All: "Put your trust in God, for I will yet give thanks to the one who is my help and my God." Ps 42:5

Pastor: Bread and wine are the gifts of creation and the means by which we receive the true Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Bread and wine are given to a member of the congregation.)

All: Thanks be to God.

Synod representative: **Let us pray:**

O God, you have bound Pastor _____ and these good people to work for the advancement of your love and grace here in this place and outside these doors.

All: We give you thanks for the ministry that we have shared in these years now past.

O God, We thank you for your patience with leaders and worshippers despite our slowness of heart.

All: We thank you for your forgiveness and mercy in the face of our many failures.

O God, We especially thank you for your never-failing presence with this community of believers through these years.

All: And for the deeper knowledge of you and one another that has been given to us.

O God, We thank you for all those who have been joined to this part of Christ's family through the Sacrament of Baptism. We thank you for opening our hearts and minds again and again to your Word, and for feeding us abundantly with the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of your Son.

All: Now, we pray, be with our pastor (and family) who leave(s) us now, and be with us who remain in this place; grant that all of us, by drawing nearer to you, may always be close to each other in the communion of saints. All this we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.