

Sending Service

The Pastor (P), a Representative of the synod designated by the Bishop (B), and a Representative of the Congregation (R) come forward. A lay leader proceeds to the font, the pulpit, the altar and the chancel, near the lectern.

R: Pastor _____, we called you to be our pastor _____ years ago: to proclaim God's Word, to baptize new members into the Church of Jesus Christ, to announce God's forgiveness to us, and to preside at our celebration of the Lord's supper. With the gospel you have comforted us in times of sickness and trouble, and at the death of our loved ones. Sharing our joys and sorrows, you and your family have been important to our life together in the church of Jesus Christ and in our service to this community.

You have served our congregation faithfully throughout your time with us. You are now leaving our midst [to retire after _____ years of faithful service to Christ's church]. As your fellow members of this congregation, we wish to honor your ministry here at _____

P: I give thanks for the life we have shared in Christ. Together we have served our neighbors, both near and far. Together we have fed, clothed, housed, supported and walked with our siblings through our faithful giving and through our hands and feet. Through our words and actions we have born witness to a God of love who continues to walk with us through life.

I thank you, members of _____ Lutheran Church for the love, kindness and support shown me [and my family] during my ministry among you. I ask forgiveness for the ways I have sinned against you. I am grateful for the ways my ministry has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

C: **We receive your thankfulness. We offer you forgiveness and accept that you now leave to a life of retirement and new opportunities and new chapters. We are grateful for your time among us. We ask forgiveness for the ways we have sinned against you. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.**

P: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

B: Do you, members of Our _____, release him/her from the duties as pastor?

C: We do, with God's help.

B: Do you offer your encouragement in her/his/their next chapter [of retirement/at _____ Lutheran Church]?

C: We do, with God's help.

B: Do you, Pastor _____, release these people from turning to you and depending on you?

P: I do, with God's help.

B: Do you offer encouragement for the continued ministry here?

P: I do, with God's help.

B: On behalf of the Minneapolis Area Synod, I witness to the words spoken here: words of thankfulness, forgiveness and release. We will hold you in prayer as you begin your retirement.

R: Let us pray. Gracious God, you have called us in our baptism to be your servants. You have enabled us to respond to your call as a community of believers. Thank you for the partnership in the gospel we have enjoyed with Pastor _____. [Now, send him forth to his well-deserved retirement filled with our gratitude and thanks.] Be present with _____ [and _____] as she/he/they go on to new adventures and may she/he/they go from here knowing our love and support. In Jesus name, **AMEN.**

You regularly sent us with a blessing. Today, we send you forth with a blessing.

C: (Arms raised toward pastor to signify bestowal of a blessing)

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine upon you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace, now and forever.

AMEN