

Rite of Farewell and Godspeed for a Pastor

This rite is designed for use on the departing pastor's final Sunday in his or her congregation. The congregation remains standing following the Post-Communion Prayer. Representatives of the congregation join the pastor at the altar.

President (or Vice President): Pastor _____, on _____, we called you to be our pastor: 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 celebrations 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.

Congregation: The Lord is loving to everyone and God's compassion is over all God's works. All your works praise you, O Lord, and your faithful servants bless you. (Psalm 145:9-10)

Assisting Minister: Let us give thanks for God's many blessings and for the life and ministry we have shared.

Congregation: Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of your Church. By the power of your Holy Spirit you have gathered us together in love and made us your own. Here we are strengthened by your Word, nourished by your Holy Supper, and encouraged in the journey of faith by our brothers and sisters in Christ. Continue to pour out your Spirit on us, that we may proclaim the good news of your love in all that we say and do. Amen

Sit

Pastor: Dear friends in Christ, you have called me to be your pastor and entrusted to me the responsibilities of the ordained ministry in your midst. At my installation, you presented to me the symbols of that ministry. I now return them to you, that they may be entrusted to a new leader.

The pastor and a representative of the congregation go to the font.

Pastor: I have been among you to baptize, to teach, and to forgive sins. I now relinquish the sign of this office. *(The pastor gives a shell to the representative.)*

Congregation: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

The pastor and another representative go to the pulpit.

Pastor: I have been among you to proclaim the good news. I now relinquish the sign of this office. *(The pastor gives a Bible or lectionary to the representative.)*

Congregation: The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. *(Isaiah 40:8)*

The pastor and another representative go to the altar.

Pastor: I have been among you to lead worship and preside at the Holy Communion. I now relinquish the sign of this office. *(The pastor gives a chalice to the representative.)*

Congregation: Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are they who trust in God. *(Psalm 34:8)*

Stand

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. Eternal God, you continually call your people to new tasks and set before them new opportunities. We thank you for your servant[s], *[Name of pastor and spouse, if appropriate]* and *[his/her/their]* years of ministry in your Church. By your Spirit, prosper those deeds done according to your will; and grant *[them]* grace to continue your work in this new season of *[his/her/their]* life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Congregation: Thank you, God, for the variety of ways your people proclaim your goodness and lordship. Your love that binds us together is stronger than the earthly differences that keep us apart. Amen.

Pastor: It is time for me to go forth, having returned to you the signs of office that you presented to me at my installation. I ask that you send me forth in your love.

Congregation: May God's blessings be with you as you go forth from us.

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. Eternal God, you hold the times and seasons, endings and beginnings, in your hands. We give you thanks for our time together, for work accomplished, for joys and pains woven into the fabric of our common life. Grant to us all the guidance of your Holy Spirit, that fears and uncertainties about the future be transformed into the confidence that belongs to the children of God. May each day be received as a sacred trust and lived to your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Pastor: Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. Amen

Optional Sending Song

Assisting Minister: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.