

An Order of Farewell to a Pastor
Page 598 – 599, Book of Worship

This order may be used within a service of worship on the last Sunday before a pastor moves to another congregation or retires, or it may take place at a special service. It may be adapted to be an order of farewell to a member of the church staff other than the pastor.

As a Response to the Word, the lay leader or another designated leader comes forward and announces that the time has come to say farewell to the pastor.

One or more persons may recall with thanksgiving the pastor's ministry.

A gift or symbol may be given with appropriate words of thanks.

*A stole may be left to put on the next pastor. See *An Order for the Celebration of an Appointment (Book of Worship, page 595)*.*

The pastor and congregation may release one another with these or similar words:

PASTOR:

'I thank you, the members and friends of [Name] United Methodist Church, for the love and support you have shown me while I have ministered among you.

I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted.

I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made.

As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

LAITY:

We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere (retire).

We express our gratitude for your time among us.

We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes.

Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us with your departure.

PASTOR:

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

I release you from turning to me and depending on me.

I encourage your continuing ministry here and will pray for you and for your new pastor, [Name].

(The pastor may pray extemporaneously, or the pastor and congregation may join in the following prayer:

PASTOR:

'Let us pray.

PASTOR & LAITY IN UNISON:

Eternal God, whose steadfast love for us is from everlasting to everlasting, we give you thanks for cherished memories and commend one another into your care as we move in new directions. Keep us one in your love forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

A hymn may be sung. Suggestions from UMH:

566: Blest Be the Dear Uniting Love

670: Go Forth for God

557: Blest Be the Tie That Binds

667: Shalom Chaverin

672: God Be With You

666: Shalom to You

673: God Be With You