

## Liturgy for Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation

*(at the end of worship, before the benediction and sending hymn)*

The Pastor (P), a representative of the Synod/cluster designated by the Bishop (Synod), and a Representative/s of the Congregation (Rep) come forward.

Rep: Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_\_ (date), \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church called you to be our \_\_\_\_\_ (title). You were called 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 have been important to our life together in the Church of Jesus Christ and in our service to this community.

Rep: Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, you served \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church faithfully for \_\_\_\_\_ years. You are now leaving our midst to \_\_\_\_\_. As your fellow members of this congregation we wish to honor your ministry among us and bid you farewell and Godspeed in your new endeavor, bringing closure to your ministry with us.

Pastor: I thank the members and friends of \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church for the love, the kindness and support shown to me (and my family), during active 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.

**Cong: We receive your thankfulness. We offer you our forgiveness and accept that you now leave to \_\_\_\_\_. We express our gratitude 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.**

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

Synod: Do you, members and friends of \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church, release him/her from the duties as Pastor?

**Congregation: We do, with God's help.**

Synod: Do you offer encouragement for Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ ( as he/she begins a new chapter in his/her ministry at \_\_\_\_\_) ( as he/she discerns where God is calling him/her to next in ministry.)

**Congregation: We do, with God's help.**

Synod: Do you, Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, release \_\_\_\_\_ Church from turning to you and depending on you?

Pastor: I do, with God's help.

Synod: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here?

Pastor: I do, with God's help.

Synod: On behalf of the Greater Milwaukee Synod, I/we witness to the words spoken here: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. We will hold you, Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, in our prayers as you (begin your new ministry with \_\_\_\_\_/discern your next call in ministry). We pledge our support and love to you and wish you God's blessing.

Rep: Let us pray: God, whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and our disappointments. We give you thanks for the countless ways our lives have been woven together in the tapestry of your Church. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories, but move us in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

Rep: Let us bless the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

Rep: The Lord bless us, defend us from evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Congregation: Amen.**