

TIMES OF PASSAGE: FAREWELL

BOOK OF WORSHIP SERVICE - adapted

GREETING

The following words are spoken by the congregation's leadership or the follow in Responsive reading can be used:

Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share a time of farewell and appreciation for the Rev. (name of person leaving).

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It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings.

Today we share the time of farewell with Rev. (name of person leaving), who is leaving.

Leader

The (name of church or entity) called the Rev. (name of person) on (date) to serve as our Pastor/Teacher (or whatever title). (She, He, They) has/have served us faithfully for these (number of years).

(Person leaving) I thank the members and friends of (entity or church they are leaving) for the love, kindness, and support shown me these while I have been your Pastor/Teacher (or other title). I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. You all have increased my faith and helped me to learn and grow.

Congregation:

We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to our church and retire from ministry. 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 at your departure. You have increased our faith and helped us to learn and grow.

(Person leaving) I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

DECLARATION OF RELEASE

LEADER (addressing the church members and friends)
Please stand in body or spirit as you are able to speak to Rev. (person leaving) as one people. **Do you, the members and friends (Place or entity) release Rev. (person leaving) from the duties of Pastor/Teacher (or position they filled)?**

PEOPLE
We do, with the help of God.

WITNESS OF THE CONFERENCE

(Representing the Conference – usually spoken by a member of the Committee on Ministry or one of the Conference Ministers)

On behalf of the Pacific Northwest Conference and the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words just spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. The clergy and member churches of our Conference hold you in prayer. I pledge their support in the transitions signified in this service for both those leaving and those carrying on the work of the COM.

All **Thanks be to God.**

PRAYER

Leader Let us pray.

All **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 disappointments. Guide us as we hold these memories of service but move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

BLESSING

LEADER: As we conclude this Rite of Farewell know that we are all surrounded by a mutual love/ We are led by the promises of God, the presence of Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Amen.