

Blessing & Sending Forth of the Pastor

(based on "An Order of Farewell to a Pastor," The Book of Worship, pp. 598-99)

The chairperson of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee expresses thanks for the pastor's ministries.

The pastor responds with these words:

I thank you, members and friends of _____ United Methodist Church, for the love and support you have shown me as your pastor and for the ways you have accepted my leadership. I will carry with me many things you have taught me. I am also aware of my mistakes—tasks left undone, pastoral calls not made, decisions I insisted on making when I should have let you make them, and decisions I put off making when I should have made them. And so, I also ask for your forgiveness.

The congregation responds:

_____, we are grateful for the many blessings you have given us. Your influence on our faith and our faithfulness will not leave us with your departure. We, too, have made mistakes, and we ask for your forgiveness, as we offer you ours. We accept that you have now been appointed to minister elsewhere, and we release you for your ministries there.

Pastor:

Brothers and sisters, I receive your gratitude and forgiveness, and I offer you mine, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God. I release you from turning to me and depending upon me, and I place you in the care of your new pastor _____. I will pray for [her/him] and for you in your continuing ministry here.

The pastor leaves tokens of his/her ministry for the new pastor.

The pastor kneels, the lay leaders lay their hand upon the pastor's head or shoulders, and the congregation joins hands and unites in this blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you.

**The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you.**

**The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace,
as you go to shepherd the people of _____ United Methodist Church. Amen.**