

EXIT INTERVIEW FOR CONGREGATION

*(Questions for Retiring/Resigning Pastor to ask Congregation Committee.)
(This is not a survey for congregational members but a conversation guide for a small committee and the out going pastor.)*

Date: _____ Pastor's Name: _____

Congregation's Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State: _____ Zip: _____

1. What has gone particularly well during the pastor's leadership?
2. What did not go as well as you had hoped?
3. What are the major strengths of this congregation?
4. What are the major challenges of this congregation?
5. Were there any surprises when the pastor (I) first arrived?
6. What goals does the congregation need to work toward in the next 5 years?
7. Any thoughts you would like to share with the pastor about his/her leadership style?
8. What can I do to help you in the transition that is soon to take place?

CELEBRATIONS OF MINISTRY/FAREWELL AND GODSPEED

Option 1

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(You may wish to change from membership to call language where appropriate.)

1. Farewell and Godspeed is a public affirmation of the corporate nature of the baptismal faith, for use when members leave a congregation.
2. When set within the liturgy for Holy Communion, this order is used following either the Prayers (22) or the post-communion prayer (40).

(Sit)

3. A representative of the congregation comes forward with those who are leaving the congregation and addresses the assembly:
_____ (NAMES) _____ are leaving our congregation, and we wish to bid *them* farewell.
4. The pastor or a representative of the congregation may make brief comments about those who are leaving, recalling the important events which have been shared with the congregation.
5. The minister says:

Pastor: In Holy Baptism our Lord Jesus Christ received you and made you *members* of his Church. When you *came to/were baptized in* this congregation we rejoiced to receive you into our fellowship in the Gospel. In this community of faith you have heard the proclamation of God's Word, which reveals his loving purpose for you and for all creation. You have been nourished at Christ's holy table and called to be *witnesses* to the Gospel. God has blessed you in this fellowship, and he has blessed us through you.

All: We encourage you to continue to receive and share God's gifts in _____ (name of new congregation) as *workers* with us in the kingdom of God.

6. The prayer is said.

All: Let us pray.
Eternal God, we thank you for _____ (names) _____ and for our life together in this congregation and community. As *they* have been a blessing to us, so now send *them* forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

(Stand)

7. The service continues with the Peace (23) or the Benediction (42).

Notes on the Service:

8. When appropriate, the following or a similar statement may be made by a representative of the congregation

Pastor _____ (name) _____, on _____ (date of call) _____, 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.

CELEBRATIONS OF MINISTRY/FAREWELL AND GODSPEED

Option 2

RITUAL FOR THE CLOSURE OF A MINISTRY

Congregational Representative: PASTOR'S NAME, on DATE, 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 we have been challenged to live lives of service. 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 our sorrows, you have been important to our life together in the Church of Jesus Christ and in our service to this community.

Congregation: We release you from NAME OF CHURCH to share God's gifts as an ordained pastor in NAME OF CHURCH AND LOCATION.

Pastor: I give thanks for the life we shared in Christ. I have found our time together rewarding and memories of what we have shared will always remain precious and meaningful. I return to you symbols representing my role and responsibilities as an ordained minister in your midst.

- I have tried to proclaim the Word of God faithfully among you. Here is the Bible which expresses this. *(The bible is presented to a lay leader at the pulpit).*
- I have baptized people in the name of the Triune God, using water as a symbol of cleansing and rebirth. Here is water which symbolizes God's gift of belonging in Christ *(A vessel of water is given to a lay leader at the font).*
- I have celebrated Holy Communion with you. Here is bread and wine, the means by which we are strengthened in our faith and transformed into the Body of Christ. *(Bread and wine are given to a lay leader at the table).*
- Here are the keys to my office, the place where I have challenged, counseled, and comforted people. *(The keys are given to a lay leader).*

Congregational Leader: Prayer, both individual and corporate, is the means by which our relationship with God and with one another grows, deepens and strengthens. We will continue to pray for you.

Congregation: Eternal God, we thank you for PASTOR'S NAME and for our life together in this congregation and community. As he/she has been a blessing to us, so now send him/her forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Congregational Leader: We send you forth with a going away blessing.

Congregation: *(Arms raised upward toward pastor)*

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace, now and forever.

Amen.

CELEBRATIONS OF MINISTRY/FAREWELL AND GODSPEED

Option 3

ORDER FOR GODSPEED AND FAREWELL FOR A PASTOR

Congregational leader: Century after century Christians continue to take certain persons in the communities, set them apart and say, “You are our shepherd. Lead us to Christlikeness.”

The community tells the pastor: “We want you to be responsible for saying and acting among us what we believe about God and kingdom and gospel. We need help in keeping our beliefs sharp, accurate and intact. We know there are strong influences that would dilute or destroy our faith. We want you to give us help. Minister with Word and Sacrament through all the stages of our lives, in our work and play, celebrations and sorrows. This is what the church says to individuals it calls its pastors. Today we are not just saying good-bye — this is a time of ending.

Congregational leader: On BEGINNING DATE OF CURRENT CALL, Bishop NAME (or Bishop’s designee) presided as you were officially installed as pastor here at CHURCH NAME, *(Walk to pulpit)* You were invited into this pulpit. In this spot you have proclaimed the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ hundreds of times throughout these past FILL IN NUMBER of years. This pulpit has not belonged to you; the saving message of Christ is not something one can possess, but only bear witness to. You have been a faithful occupant of this church’s pulpit and messenger of the good news of God’s love in Christ. As you leave this pulpit we thank God for your preaching ministry.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational leader: *(Walk to font)* At this font you have presided at the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Through the cleansing waters of baptism we welcome new members into the family of Christ. The gift of new life in Christ belongs to God. The church is the custodian of this rite of welcome, and you have introduced this congregation to many new brothers and sisters in the faith. You have presided as FILL IN NUMBER of confirmands affirmed their baptismal promises during your years with us. As you leave this font, we thank you for your ministry surrounding baptismal promises.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational leader: *(Walk behind or to the altar)* At this altar you have presided at the Sacrament of Holy Communion. You have reminded us of the story of Jesus’ beginning of this meal. You have provided instruction to those who would receive it for the first time. The meal is the Lord’s, and this congregation has been provider of this meal to the baptized who seek to be fed with the living presence of Christ. You have presided over this meal so that it could be served in an orderly fashion. As you leave this table, we thank you for presiding at the sacrament of Holy Communion.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational leader: *(Walk to the top chancel step)* Standing in front of this congregation you have led services where we thanked God for people who had died. You led us in the midst of grief while we expressed gratitude for God’s gift of life. You proclaimed the Good News of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and encouraged the community with the comfort of the gospel. FILL IN NUMBER of services celebrating God’s victory over death took place while you were here. As you leave this sanctuary, we thank you for being with us in our times of loss.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

CELEBRATIONS OF MINISTRY/FAREWELL AND GODSPEED

Option 3 continued

Congregational leader: *(Standing at the top of the chancel steps)* It is here that you presided at services where couples were married. You were present to rejoice with those who rejoice. Thank you for sharing those and other great times of joy.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational leader: *(Hold up keys)* When you came here in YEAR you received keys to this building. You have had a study here to do your work of reading and preparing, to meet people for small talk and big conversations. You have heard confessions and spoken words of absolution. Your study has been a place of prayer and preparation. As you return your key, we thank you for your prayers, your diligent preparation and your careful listening.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational leader: It is indeed possible we will see you again, but you will no longer be pastor of NAME OF CHURCH. We ask you to honor that and help us to honor that boundary. You will continue to be a sister/brother in Christ's family and we will cherish that relationship. Thank you for journeying with us these years.

CONGREGATION: THANKS BE TO GOD!

Congregational leader: PASTOR'S NAME, you have received a Letter of Call to become pastor of NAME OF NEW CHURCH in CITY AND STATE and you have said yes to that new calling. WE want to acknowledge that it is not only that church calling you and you saying yes. We are sending you. You have been in our midst for FILL IN NUMBER of years. You have been part of this church family, sharing your gifts for the sake of Christ's mission in our community. We are proud to send you with our blessing. *(to pastor)* Please kneel to receive our prayers:

Gracious God, you have called us in our baptism to be your servants. You have enabled us to respond to your call as a community of believers. Thank you for the partnership in the gospel we have enjoyed with PASTOR AND FAMILY. Now send them forth to continue their work in another congregation and community. Strengthen them for the mission you have placed before them, and may they go from here knowing our love and our continuing partnership. In Jesus' name, Amen. *(pastor stands)* When we end our worship, you have often said to us, "Go on peace. Serve the Lord." Today we speak it to you.

CONGREGATION: GO IN PEACE. SERVE THE LORD.

PASTOR: Thanks be to God. PASTOR does the benediction.