

AN ORDER OF FAREWELL TO A PASTOR OR DEACON

This order may be used within a service of worship on the last Sunday before a pastor or deacon 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 or deacon.

One or more persons may recall with thanksgiving the pastor or deacon'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 or deacon. See [An Order for the Celebration of an Appointment](#).

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

I thank you, the members and friends of *Hickory Grove* 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.

**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 with your departure.**

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*.

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

Let us pray.

**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.**