**Liturgy of Thanksgiving at the Conclusion of a Call**

(When a Pastor / Deacon takes a new call OR retires)

*This order is appropriately set within the service of Holy Communion on the final Sunday of a minister’s service under call in a congregation.*

*The order comes before the Benediction.*

*This order may be led by a pastor or deacon of the congregation (unless the pastor’s or deacon’s call is the one concluding), another rostered minister, a representative of the congregation, or a representative of the synod.*

**A Reading from Philippians**

*Paul writes, to the church in Philippi:*

7Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith the faith of Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. 10I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

12Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. 15Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. 16Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

**Address**

*The person whose call is concluding and representative/s of the congregation come before the assembly.*

**A Pastor**

*A representative of the congregation addresses the pastor whose call is concluding with these or similar words.*

Pastor  Name , on   date of call  ,

we of   name of congregation   called you to be pastor in this place:

to proclaim God’s word, to baptize and teach,

to announce God’s forgiveness, and to preside at the Lord’s table.

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,

in our service to this community,

and in God’s mission to the whole world.

As you leave this community of faith,

we say farewell, and we pray for God’s blessing.

**A Deacon**

*A representative of the congregation addresses the person whose call is concluding with these or similar words.*

Deacon  Name , on   date of call  ,

we of   name of congregation   called you to be deacon in this place.

Here a description of the particular ministry may be included.

Sharing our joys and sorrows, you [and your family]

have been important to our life together in the church of Jesus Christ,

in our service to this community,

and in God’s mission to the whole world.

As you leave this community of faith,

we say farewell, and we pray for God’s blessing.

*The Address continues:*

You have served our congregation faithfully for \_ years.

You are now leaving our midst (to become pastor / deacon of *name of congregation* \_\_*OR* to retire).

As your fellow members of this congregation

we wish to honor your ministry among us

and to bid you farewell and Godspeed in your new endeavor,

bringing closure to your ministry at *name of congregation* Lutheran Church.

*The pastor or deacon addresses the congregation:*

I thank the members of \_ *name of congregation* Lutheran Church for the love,

the kindness, and the support shown to me [and my family]

during my 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.

*The congregation responds:*

**We receive your thankfulness. We offer you our forgiveness**

**and accept that you now leave (to resume your ministry in another congregation *OR* to retire).**

**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.**

*The pastor or deacon responds:*

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

*The leader addresses the assembly with these or similar words.*

People of God, members of   name of congregation  , do you release Pastor / Deacon Name   from service as your pastor / deacon?

**We do, and we give thanks to God for our ministry together.**

Do you offer encouragement for (his/her/their) ministry as it unfolds in (his/her/their) (new congregation *OR* retirement)?

**We do, with God’s help.**

*The leader addresses the person whose call is concluding.*

Pastor / Deacon \_\_\_\_\_\_*Name*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, do you recognize and accept the completion of your ministry with \_\_\_\_\_\_*name of congregation*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

*Response*: I do, and I give thanks to God for our ministry together.

Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here?

*Response*: I do, with God’s help.

We will hold you in our prayers as you (begin your ministry at *OR* retire). We pledge our support and love to you and wish you God’s blessing.

**Thanksgiving and Sending**

*The presiding minister leads the assembly in prayer.*

Let us pray.

Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ

you gave the holy apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your flock.

You equip your people with abilities that differ according to the grace given to them,

and you call them to various avenues of service.

We give you thanks for the ministry of Pastor / Deacon \_\_\_\_*Name*\_\_\_\_\_\_

among the people of God in this place.

You watch over our going out and our coming in:

bless this time of ending and beginning.

You surround your people in every time and place:

keep us close in your love.

You accompany your people in times of joy and times of trial:

prosper all that has been done to your glory in this time together;

heal and forgive all that has fallen short of your will for us.

Help Pastor / Deacon \_\_\_\_*Name*\_\_\_\_\_\_  [and *her/his/their* family] and all of us

to live with courage and gladness in the future you give to us.

(*When the pastor / deacon is retiring*:

You have given Pastor / Deacon \_\_\_\_\_\_*Name*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

many gifts that she/he/they might serve your people.

We give you thanks, O God, for opportunities to grow and learn,

and for relationships built through years of connection.

As \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ now transitions to a new phase of rest and play,

direct her/him/them in new ways of serving you and one another.)

As *he/she/they* have been a blessing to us,

so now send *her/him/them* forth to be a blessing to others;

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Blessing**

*The presiding minister, or the pastor whose call has concluded, proclaims God’s blessing in these or similar words.*

Let us bless the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

*A sending song may be sung.*

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Adapted from:*

sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Liturgy for Departure of a Pastor from a Congregation; Southwest Minnesota Synod ELCA

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

*When a representative of the synod leads this order, the representative may address the person whose call is concluding and the assembly with these or similar words. This address may precede the blessing.*

Your sisters and brothers in the  name of synod

and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

give thanks to God for the ministry you have shared.

We promise you our continued support and prayer.

Rejoicing in the blessings of God in this congregation

and in the ministry of  name ,

with hope in God’s abundant grace in years to come,

I announce that name’s service as  position  in this congregation

is now concluded.