

**SERVICE OF CLOSURE**  
**(Pastoral Ministry)**

**INVOCATION** Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

**SCRIPTURE** Hear the Word of God concerning pastoral ministry!

*“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, . . .” Ephesians 4:11-12 (NRSV)*

**CHARGE** (Name), on (date), you became the pastor of this congregation. During this time you have faithfully carried out the duties and responsibilities placed in your care. For your years of service and loyalty to God and this parish we are most grateful, and we thank God for calling you to serve at (place).

As we gather here today, we recognize that this ministry is coming to a close. (Name), do you now say “Amen” to this ministry here in (place) [as you begin your new work at (place)]; and will you continue to pray for this congregation [and for their new pastor as they begin their life together]?

If this is your sincere desire, answer,

**“Yes, by the grace of God!”**

(Church), today marks the close of Pastor (name)’s ministry among you as your pastor. You have been blessed by his/her presence and pastoral leadership during these past (number) years. I ask you on behalf of the Church, [optional: and at the request of our Bishop (name)] will you remember him/her in your prayers with gratitude for the care he/she has shared with you in this parish; and, will you set him/her free from your charge so that he/she may leave you with dignity and honor [as he/she assumes his/her new ministry], and will you promise not to call on him/her for future pastoral service, but rather turn to your new pastor whom you will soon call?

Is this is your sincere desire, answer,

**“Yes, by the grace of God!”**

**BLESSING** (Name), I declare you [or as of (date)] to be free from all duties and responsibilities in this parish. Go in peace with the full assurance that God will be with you to bless your life and service.

**“Well done, thou good and faithful servant!”**

**BENEDICTION** Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**SERVICE OF CLOSURE**  
**(Associate in Ministry/Deaconess/Diaconal Minister)**

**INVOCATION** Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

**SCRIPTURE** Hear the Word of God concerning ministry!

*“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, . . . .” Ephesians 4:11-12 (NRSV)*

**CHARGE** (Name), on (date), you became the associate in ministry/deaconess/diaconal minister of this congregation. During this time you have faithfully carried out the duties and responsibilities placed in your care. For your years of service and loyalty to God and this parish we are most grateful, and we thank God for calling you to serve at (place).

As we gather here today, we recognize that this ministry is coming to a close. (Name) do you now say “Amen” to this ministry here in (place) [as you begin your new work at (place);] and will you continue to pray for this congregation [and for their new associate in ministry/deaconess/diaconal minister as they begin their life together]?

If this is your sincere desire, answer,

**“Yes, by the grace of God!”**

(Church), today marks the close of Associate in Ministry/Sister/Diaconal Minister (name)’s ministry among you. You have been blessed by his/her presence and service during these past (number) years. I ask you on behalf of the Church, [optional: and at the request of our Bishop (name)] will you remember him/her in your prayers with gratitude for the care he/she has shared with you in this parish; and, will you set him/her free from your charge so that he/she may leave you with dignity and honor [as he/she assumes his/her new ministry]?

If this is your sincere desire, answer,

**“Yes, by the grace of God!”**

**BLESSING** (Name), I declare you [or as of (date)] to be free from all duties and responsibilities in this parish. Go in peace with the full assurance that God will be with you to bless your life and service.

**“Well done, thou good and faithful servant!”**

**BENEDICTION** Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

## THE RITE OF THANKSGIVING AT RETIREMENT

Today we celebrate the retirement of (name) from the active ministry of the Lutheran Church. (Name) was ordained on (date) in (location) and has served the Church in the following places of ministry: (list).

P: We rejoice this day as we celebrate the retirement from the active ministry of Word and Sacrament (name), who has faithfully served in this ministry from the time of his/her ordination by the Church.

C: THANKS BE TO GOD.

P: According to apostolic tradition you were set apart to the office of Word and Sacrament in the one holy catholic Church by the laying on of hands and by prayer. Before Almighty God, to whom you must give account, and in the presence of his people, you assumed this office, believing that the Church's call is God's call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

R: I thank God for having called me to this ministry.

P: The Church in which you were ordained confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and are the norm of its faith and life. We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. We also acknowledge the Lutheran Confessions as true witness and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures. You have preached and taught during your ministry in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these creeds and confessions. Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously also gave you the strength and compassion to perform them.

R: I thank God for his guidance in this ministry.

P: As the Apostle Paul spoke to the Philippians, so we repeat his words to you.

C: "I THANK MY GOD EVERY TIME I REMEMBER YOU, CONSTANTLY PRAYING WITH JOY IN EVERY ONE OF MY PRAYERS FOR ALL OF YOU, BECAUSE OF YOUR SHARING IN THE GOSPEL FROM THE FIRST DAY UNTIL NOW. I AM CONFIDENT OF THIS, THAT THE ONE WHO BEGAN A GOOD WORK AMONG YOU WILL BRING IT TO COMPLETION BY THE DAY OF JESUS CHRIST."

Philippians 1:3-6 (NRSV)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

A: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs. For the holy catholic Church, that it may be filled with truth and love and by your grace may be found without fault at the last day: Lord, in your mercy.

C: HEAR OUR PRAYER.

A: For all members of the Church, that they may serve you in true and godly lives: Lord, in your mercy.

C: HEAR OUR PRAYER.

A: For our bishops, Elizabeth and James, and for all others responsible for the care and nurture of your people: Lord, in your mercy.

C: HEAR OUR PRAYER.

A: We bless you for your infinite love in Christ our Lord, in whom we have redemption and forgiveness of sins according to the richness of his grace. We thank you that by his death your Son has overcome death and, having been raised by your mighty power, has ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. We praise you, for Christ has poured out his gifts abundantly on the Church, making some apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers, to equip your people for their work of ministry for building up the body of Christ. Through your Son Jesus Christ, continue to pour out your Holy Spirit on (name) and fill him/her with the gifts of grace in his/her retirement: Lord, in your mercy,

C: HEAR OUR PRAYER.

A: For (name), chosen to be pastor in this Church, as he/she enters retirement, that he/she will continue steadfast in faith and discipleship: Lord, in your mercy.

C: HEAR OUR PRAYER.

A: Bless the fruit of Pastor (name's) ministry, that the proclamation of your Word and administration of your Sacraments be acknowledged as a blessing for your people and your Church. In his/her years of retirement grant that the effects of his/her faith and witness will continue to be felt among your people, both within and beyond the Church: Lord, in your mercy,

C: HEAR OUR PRAYER,

(Other intercessions may be offered)

P: Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: AMEN.

P: Now that (name) is retiring from the active ministry of the Church of Christ, we commend Christ's blessing: "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

C: AMEN. THANKS BE TO GOD.