SERVICE OF FAREWELL AND GODSPEED FOR PASTOR AND CONGREGATION

The Service of Farewell and Godspeed should take place after the classis requirements for the dissolution of the pastoral relationship have been met (Book of Church Order, Chapter 1, Part II, Article 12, Section 8).

It is recommended that this service be included in the Response to the Word on the pastor’s last Sunday with the congregation. It may also be appropriate to celebrate the Lord’s Supper immediately prior to the farewell. The vice president of the consistory or other member of the congregation leads the service of farewell.

Our church family is ever changing. Loved ones are born into the family and loved ones come to the end of their lives. Individuals come and go in our church life. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we celebrate the gifts you have brought to us as our pastor.

Hear Paul’s words written to the Ephesians:

Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 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, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ

Ephesians 4:7-13

Today we share the time of farewell with N______________ whose time as our pastor ends. He/she was installed as our pastor on ________________.

At your installation as the minister of Word and sacrament of this congregation, we heard this Scripture and we made vows to one another.
You were charged
to proclaim the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
to instruct us from the Word of God,
to admonish us, to comfort us, to reprove us.
You promised to administer the sacraments,
to share responsibility for our mutual Christian growth,
and to exercise Christian love and discipline.
You were charged to be a loyal witness to the Reformed Church in America
and to further its mission in the world.

We, in turn, promised
to receive the Word of truth you proclaimed
and to submit with cheer to the pastoral care you provided.
We promised to encourage you and pray for you,
to participate and work with you, and to financially care for you.

Paul’s words remind us today, even as he reminded the Ephesians:

to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness,
with patience, bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.
There is one body and one Spirit,
just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.

*Ephesians 4:1-6*

**Pastor:**
I thank you, my sisters and brothers,
for the love, kindness, and support shown me these past ____ years.
I am grateful for the ministry we have shared together.
With joy I recall what we accomplished with God’s help,
and with sadness those dreams not fulfilled.
I ask your forgiveness for mistakes made and expectations not met.

**People:**
*We offer our forgiveness*
and celebrate all that God has accomplished among us.
*We are grateful for your ministry*
and for your influence on our lives.
*We ask your forgiveness for mistakes made*
and for expectations not met.
Pastor:
I receive your gratitude
and forgive your shortcomings.
And I release you
from the vows and promises made at my installation.

People:
We release you from your promises to us,
and we offer you our blessing as you
leave to minister elsewhere.

The leader may offer the following or similar prayers:

O God, you have bound us together for a time
as pastor and people to work for your church in this place.
We give you thanks for the ministry we have shared.

Silence

We give you thanks for your patience with us
despite our blindness and slowness of heart.
We thank you for your forgiveness and mercy when we have failed.

Silence

We especially thank you
for your never-failing presence with us through these years,
and for the deepened knowledge of you and of each other.

Silence

We give you thanks
for those who have been joined
to this part of Christ’s family through baptism.
We thank you for opening our hearts and minds
again and again to your Word,
and for feeding us abundantly at your table.
We remember those who have gone before
and we look with hope toward those who will come.

Silence
Now, we pray, be with N___________ and with his/her family,
and with this congregation.
Grant that all of us, by drawing closer to you,
may always be close to each other in the communion of saints.  
All this we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

The congregation may share the peace of Christ.

At the close of worship, the congregation may wish to send the pastor forth 
with a blessing, which could be spoken and/or sung:

Unto God’s gracious mercy we commit you.  
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 the light of his countenance upon you  
and give you peace,  
both this day and forever. Amen.

It may be appropriate to remember the ministry together in greater detail. It 
is appropriate for people to bring gifts and speak words of appreciation, 
which can be included in the time of worship or at a reception and/or meal to 
follow.