

# Blessing – Celebrating and Releasing Pastor

*Reader suggestions: Voice 1 (responsive reading leader); Voice 2 (elder/deacon); Voice 3 (church council representative)*

Voice 1: (Pastor) has been intentional about bringing healthy closure and saying farewell to his/her time at (Congregation). In that spirit, we want to say words of release and blessing. Please turn to the litany that is an insert in your bulletin and also turn to the hymn "I come with joy to meet my Lord," *Hymnal: A Worship Book* #459.

**People: HWB #459, Verse 1**

Voice 1: (Pastor), today we come with joy as we celebrate your years of ministry within our congregation. Our footsteps have come along side each other for a time as we walked a common path on a journey of faith as people of God here at (Congregation). We celebrate the gift you have been to our congregation. You have encouraged us to see with new eyes, in awe and wonder and excitement, what Christ has done for us.

**People: HWB #459, Verse 2**

Voice 2: (Pastor), you have embraced life and faith wholeheartedly, and with authenticity, creativity and energy sought to nurture faith and life in us. With compassion your various ministry gifts wove multi-colored threads into the larger (Congregation) community tapestry. You have become an important part of our ongoing story, and we of yours.

**People: HWB #459, Verse 3**

Voice 3: (Pastor), you have journeyed with this community, walking with us in our strength and in our human frailty, in our laughter and in our joy, in our tears and in our pain. You cared about our individual journeys whether we were young or old in age or faith. God's loving Spirit has sustained us and together we have grown.

**People: HWB #459, Verse 4**

Voice 1: You wanted us to draw closer to God, to seek and understand God's presence in real ways together, to be inspired to faithful, authentic living, to be unique

individuals walking together as Christ's disciples in a caring community. Your love of music incorporated song into our expressions of faith, life and worship. Music surrounded us and you invited all to join the song.

**People: Now our paths are separating  
and our footsteps will take us in different ways,  
but we all still walk towards Christ with the Holy Spirit.**

**So as a congregation  
we must allow you to step off our path  
and travel on your new one.**

**With God's help,  
we release you from pastoral responsibilities among us.**

**May you be strengthened in your inner being  
with power through God's Spirit.**

**May Christ dwell in your heart through faith  
and may you continually be rooted and grounded in love.**

**We pray that you may have the power to comprehend,  
along with all of us,  
how all encompassing God's amazing love is,  
so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

**We ask God's blessing on your future ministry  
at (Forthcoming congregation).**

**We offer our support and encouragement to you, (Pastor),  
as your ministry unfolds in a new setting.**

**God is able to accomplish abundantly more  
than we, or you, can ask or image,  
and so we commit you, (Pastor's family)  
into God's ongoing care.**

**Pastor: We have walked together in faith and trust,  
looking out for each other and for Christ on the way.**

At the end of this month our paths will part,  
our footsteps moving further away from each other.  
This space between us will be one of friendship.

I will not look to you  
as the persons to whom I am responsible as pastor.

The present and new team members  
will continue to provide pastoral care and leadership  
for this community.

May God bless each of you on your spiritual journey.

I pray that each of you,  
individually and all of you together,  
will carry the Christ-light,  
to light the way for your footsteps  
and for the footsteps of others who need light to find their path.

Voice 1: (Pastor), we celebrate the times and ways we have walked together over the years. We continue on our way with love in our hearts and a song on our lips, rejoicing that God walks with each of us as our journeys of life and faith continue.

**People: HWB #459, Verse 5**

Joy Dorsch (Canada), 2005.

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