

Litany – Designating a Pastor Emeritus

List of Participants:

Congregational Chair as “Leader”

Current Pastor/Minister

Other congregational representative

Representative from Denomination/Regional Church

Preamble

Leader: This morning we confer the title of Pastor Emeritus on [name], in gratitude for his/her lifetime of distinguished service to the broader Church and in recognition of his previous ministry at [name of church].

Litany

Leader: This morning we confer the title of Pastor Emeritus on [name], in gratitude for his/her lifetime of distinguished service to the broader Church and in recognition of his previous ministry at [name of church].

You, O Lord, are the hope of all the ends of the earth, of all lands near, and all lands far off.

**People: The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy.
You soften this gift of creation with showers and bless its crops for all people.
You crown harvest time with your bounty, the carts overflow with abundance.
The grasslands of the wilderness overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness.
The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain.
We join with all creation in thanksgiving and joy.**

Leader: Lord of grace and truth, in the company of your saints, we sing your praise and offer our thanksgiving for the faithfulness of all your servants. Today, our hearts swell with gratitude for the lifelong ministry of your servant, [name].

People: Our God is good, give thanks. God’s steadfast love is forever.

Leader: Thank you for the grace of his/her servanthood. Thank you for those who saw the gift, who named and nurtured it. Thank you for all who opened a place for this gift to mature, that it might become a means of grace for many people.

Thank you for truth declared, wisdom taught, faithfulness lived. Thank you for the listening ear, for comfort, consolation and counsel offered. Thank you for care through all of life's passages.

People: Our God is good, give thanks. God's steadfast love is forever.

Leader: Lord whose Spirit of Peace is our companion,
we pray that the mantle of our affection may be light,
we offer our respect and love unencumbered, freely offered as has been generously given.
Invest our sister/brother with grace.
May your wisdom accompany [name].
May the light of your glory go before him/her even as we seek together to live here on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Congregational Representative: [Name], with this designation of Pastor Emeritus, we declare the graciousness of God in having blessed us with your past leadership of this congregation. We offer our affection and the blessing of God's faithfulness for you. We welcome you in this unique role: member and former pastor, gifted with wisdom and care without obligation of leadership. We embrace you as your church family among us.

Current Pastor: [Name], I gladly extend my own welcome to you as a sister/brother in Christ. Your wisdom, experience, gifts of ministry, and servant's heart are blessings to me and to this congregation. I give thanks to God for your presence at [Name of Church] and commit to openness in navigating our own unique ministry relationship together for the benefit of God's people and kingdom.

Conference Minister: [Name], on behalf of [conference name] and the broader body of Christ, we recognize these places of significant ministry from your past that both shaped you and gratefully welcomed your gifts of service:

- *List churches served and other ministries*

We offer gratitude to God for your years of service to the Church. We pray a servant's contentment as we mark these years of God's steadfast love for you.

Leader: We offer this gift as a symbol of our memories and gratitude for God's grace, present to us through the ministry of your gifts. Hear the commendations of those who have been served by your leadership gifts.

People (pray in unison):

**O God, maker of days, Lord of all creation,
You clothe the trees in the forest in waves of resplendent colour,
and your majesty drapes creation.
Wrap [name] in the shawl of your ever-loving kindness,
we cherish them and their friendship;
We value his/her wisdom.
Bless his/her days with love's labour;
Make his/her way shine with your peace.
We pray in the name of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Response from Pastor Emeritus

Ben Cassles (Canada), 2017. Waterloo Kitchener United Mennonite Church
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