*We sit for a liturgy of*

**The Laying down of a Ministry**

Sr. Warden Our church family is constantly changing. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and of beginnings. Today we share a time of farewell with **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** who is leaving.

Sr. Warden In **“month”** of **“year”**, this congregation called **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, to serve as its **“Position/Title”**. Now, **\_\_\_\_** years later, it is time to acknowledge the completion of “**his/her/their”** service.

Rector I thank the faithful members of **“Congregation”** for their love and kindness. Over these last **\_\_\_\_** years, you have called me Rector and pastor as I have preached the Good News, done my best to provide pastoral care, participated in meetings, and continued to grow. Now it is time for our paths to separate. I am grateful and humbled for the ways my leadership has been both accepted and challenged, and for the many good things we have been able to accomplish together. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made, and for everything I have not been able to finish. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

All **We receive your gratitude, offer our forgiveness, and accept the fact that your journey will continue elsewhere. We express our gratitude for your time among us. We too ask your forgiveness for the mistakes we have made. Your influence on our faith and our faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.**

Sr. Warden Thank you for the ways in which your life has mingled with our lives. We give you thanks for your leadership, for your care, and for your influence. We ask forgiveness for the mistakes we have made.

Rector I accept your gratitude, and offer you my forgiveness, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

*We stand for a liturgy of* **The Vows of Release**

The Sr. Warden says to the congregation: Do you, the members and friends of “**Congregation**” in “**City**”, release **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** from the duties and office of Rector?

All **With grateful hearts, we do.**

Sr. Warden Do you offer your encouragement and prayerful support for **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** ministry, wherever it may take him/her?

All **With grateful hearts, we do.**

The Sr. Warden says to the Rector:

 Do you release this congregation from turning to you and depending on you as Rector?

Rector **I do, with the help of God.**

Sr. Warden Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here and for the relationship this congregation will develop with another who may be called to come and serve after you?

Rector **I do, with the help of God.**

Sr. Warden Let us pray

*We remain standing for a moment of silent prayer*

Sr. Warden O God, for remembered times when we, together, have shared the life of faith, we express our sincere gratitude. We thank you for the moments we have shared with **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** in worship, in learning, in service, and in Christian living. We pray that **“he/she/them”** will be aware of your Spirit’s guidance as **“he/she/them”** continues **“his/her/their”** journey in another place; this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

 **The Blessing and Dismissal**

Rector In faith we face the future: God behind us in the past; Christ before us, the way ahead; Christ beside us in this moment; Christ beneath us in our weakness; Christ above us to shield us – beneath the shadow of his wings we are safe; Christ between us to bind us in the unity of his love; Christ in us, equipping us with his all-sufficient grace. Thus armed, guided and protected we face all that lies ahead of us. Now we set off on the journey before us, knowing that, where Christ leads, life is a journey home. Therefore we travel in faith, in hope and in love to God and one another: And the blessing of God Almight, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon you and all those for whom you pray, this day and for ever more.

All **Amen.**

Rector Jesus, Lord of time,

All **Hold us in your eternity.**

 Jesus, image of God,

All **Travel with us the life of faith.**

 Jesus, friend of sinners,

All **Heal the brokenness of our world.**

 Jesus, Lord of tomorrow,

All **Draw us into your future. Amen.**

*We sing the hymn during which the procession goes to the back of the church:*

 **The Love of God Comes Close** where stands an open door To let the stranger in, to mingle rich and poor: The love of God is here to stay Embracing those who walk his way.

 The peace of God comes close to those caught in the storm, Forgoing lives of ease to ease the lives forlorn: The peace of God is here to stay Embracing those who walk his way.

 The joy of God comes close where faith encounters fears, Where heights and depths of life are found through smiles and tears: The joy of God is here to stay Embracing those who walk his way.

 The grace of God comes close to those whose grace is spent, When hearts are tired or sore and hope is bruised or bent: The grace of God is here to stay Embracing those who walk his way.

 The Son of God comes close where people praise his name, Where bread and wine are blest and shared, as when he came: The Son of God is here to stay Embracing those who walk his way.

Words: John L. Bell & Graham Maule © 1988, 1997 WGRG, Iona Community Music: ‘My Song is love unknown’

As we prepare to go out into the world, the Sr. Warden says,

 To a troubled world

All **Peace from Christ**

 To a searching world

All **Love from Christ**

 To a waiting world

All **Hope from Christ**

**The Dismissal Gospel**

Sr. Warden Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mathew

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

 **Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.**

Sr. Warden This is the gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Rector The Eucharist is ended, our service must now begin. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. **Amen.**

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A final prayer:

Let us pray together: **Eternal God, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, with your help, we will let go of the past. We will lay down our failures, guilt and shame, and lift up our eyes and look to the future. May we live in peace, with courage, faith and cheerfulness, until the years shall end; this we ask through the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**