

AN ORDER FOR THE CELEBRATION OF AN APPOINTMENT



Dear friends, today we welcome Our New Pastor, who has been appointed to serve as our pastor.

We believe that he/she is well qualified and has been prayerfully appointed by our bishop, Paul Leeland.

Our New Pastor, you have been sent to live among us as a bearer of the Word of God; a minister of the Sacraments; and a sustainer of the love, order, service and discipleship of the people of God.

Pastor: Today I reaffirm this commitment in the presence of this congregation.

Leader to congregation: Brothers and sisters in Christ, as a people committed to participate in the ministries of the Church by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service, will you who celebrate this new beginning support and uphold Our New Pastor in these ministries?

Congregation: **We reaffirm our commitment to support you with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.**

Leader: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger

Congregation: **who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation.**

Let us pray. Eternal God, strengthen and sustain us in our ministries together, with Our New Pastor as our pastor. Give him/her and us patience, courage, and wisdom so to care for one another and challenge one another that together we may follow Jesus Christ, living together in love, and offering our gifts and talents in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, you still call us to go into your service and spread the message of the salvation of your Son. Bless richly, we pray, your servant Our New Pastor entrance into our fellowship. Fill him/her with the power of your Holy Spirit and let him/her find with us an open door for the Word.

We also pray for your church on earth. Equip us all with a spirit of willingness, that we with courage can witness about you by the profession of our mouths and through our way of living. Grant us all to partake in your strength and joy, so that we can enter into the anxiety and suffering of the world, to be radiating and make alive that hope which Christ gives.

All this we dare to pray of you; for you are to us the Father of mercy and the God of all grace; you are the Son, the Savior and the Redeemer; you are the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Helper and the Giver of life. Blessed be you. Amen.

Presentation of symbols of ministry and leadership are presented by the congregation to the new pastor.

Our New Pastor, accept this **Bible**, and be among us as one who proclaims the Word. **Amen**

Our New Pastor, take this **water**, and baptize new Christians in this place. **Amen.**

Our New Pastor, take this **bread and cup**, and keep us in communion with Christ and his Church. Amen.

Our New Pastor, take this **towel and basin**, and lead us to be servants of all. Amen.

Our New Pastor, take this **plumbline**, and faithfully call us toward ministries of compassion and justice.

Our New Pastor, use this **Hymnal** and **Book of Worship** to guide us in our prayer and praise. Amen.

Our New Pastor, receive this **Book of Discipline**, and help us keep the covenant that strengthens our connections as United Methodists. Amen.

Our New Pastor, receive this **map of the world**, and lead us in our mission to this community and all the world. Amen.

Our New Pastor, receive this **stole**, signifying your ordination, and shepherd us as our pastor. Amen.

Then the pastor may take from the Lord's table the stole left by the previous pastor or deacon, put it on, and say:

This yoke has been laid upon me, and I willingly take it upon myself.

Pastor: Let us pray.

Congregation: **Lord God, bless the ministries of your Church. We thank you for the variety of gifts you have bestowed upon us. Draw us together in one Spirit, that each of us may use our differing gifts as members of one body.**

May your Word be proclaimed with faithfulness, and may we be doers of your Word and not hearers only.

As we who have died and risen with Christ in baptism gather at his table and then scatter into the world, may we be one in service to others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The pastor may kneel, and the leader and others may lay hands on his/her head. The congregation may raise their hands and unite in this blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

Congregation: **And also with you.**



AN ORDER OF FAREWELL TO A PASTOR

I thank you, the members and friends of Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, for the love and support you have shown me while I have ministered among you.

I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere.

We express our gratitude for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes.

Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave with your departure.

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

I release you from turning to me and depending on me. I encourage your continuing ministry here and will pray for you and for your new pastor.

Let us pray.

Eternal God, whose steadfast love for us is from everlasting to everlasting, we give you thanks for cherished memories and commend one another into your care as we move in new directions. Keep us one in your love forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: *Blest Be the Dear Uniting Love.* Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

1. Blest be the dear uniting love that will not let us part; our bodies may far off remove, we still are one in heart.
2. Joined in one spirit to our Head, where he appoints we go, and still in Jesus' footsteps tread, and do his work below.
3. O may we ever walk in him, and nothing know beside, nothing desire, nothing esteem, but Jesus crucified!
4. We all are one who him receive, and each with each agree, in him the One, the Truth, we live; blest point of unity!
5. Partakers of the Savior's grace, the same in mind and heart, nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place, nor life, nor death can part.

Ways for the Choir to Welcome a New Pastor

It is annual conference season across The United Methodist Church, and many congregations will be welcoming new pastors appointed by the bishop and cabinet within the succeeding weeks. Here are some suggestions for the preparation and welcoming process for those involved in the church's worship and music areas. Many of these may be handled by other groups in the church, but the church's musicians can certainly lend their help.

1. Telephone the New Pastor Introduce yourself — who you are, what you do, how you support or guide the congregation's worship and music. If your church has a website, let the pastor know and provide the URL. If the church has a pattern for staff e-mail addresses, provide it. Ask if the new pastor yet knows when the moving date and first Sunday will be. Is there anything you can begin to do to make those two dates come and go smoothly? Offer to answer any questions he or she may have. Do not talk about problems of the past, and do not overwhelm the new pastor with details.
2. Provide Information to Choir Members This should of course include names of the pastor and family and the age of any children. Where did the pastor receive theological training? What have been his or her past appointments? Is there anything specifically related to worship or music that you have learned from talking with the pastor or from the district superintendent that you can share?
3. Have a Meeting with Choir Directors and Accompanists This is an ideal time to evaluate the church's music ministry. Does the schedule for rehearsals, worship, concerts, and special services need to be altered? What do you need to change or do differently? What does the new pastor need to know?
4. Pick Up, Straighten Up, Clean Up the Choir Room, Sanctuary and offices. Most of us don't do this weekly. Make a good first impression.
5. Interim Worship Sunday The week between old and new pastors is busy and pressured. Cooperate with SPRC, your worship committee, and the new pastor to make plans for the first Sunday's service. Offer to assist where you are able: planning the service, liturgy, prayers, responses, picking hymns. Does the new pastor want to lead worship that Sunday? Preach? Will there be Holy Communion, and if so, who will preside? Suggest this Sunday's service be led by laity and musicians.
6. Welcome the Pastor and Family Include an order for welcoming or receiving the pastor in the first worship service. Plan a congregational after-church dinner, or a Sunday evening hymn sing and ice cream social.
7. Invite the New Pastor/Spouse/Family to the End of the Choir Rehearsal Plan for a shorter rehearsal time this evening. Introduce the family and the choir. Give the pastor a chance to say something to the choir. Leave a short time for fellowship. Provide edibles.
8. Request a Time for the Pastor to Meet the Music Staff. This can be a time to get to know each other and for the pastor to put names and faces together. Ask the pastor ahead of time what he or she would like to do at this meeting, if anything. Prior to the meeting provide the pastor with a list of music staff and contact information.
9. Provide a List of All Choirs and Ensembles and a Directory of Members' Names and Contact Information In many churches, choir members are also the church leaders.
10. Provide a Folder of Worship Bulletins and Church Newsletters showing highlights and special events in the last few years and major Sundays of the past year (Advent, Christmas Eve, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, choir programs).

11. Provide the New Pastor with a NEW *United Methodist Hymnal*, *The Faith We Sing*, *Worship & Song*, *Book of Worship*, *Book of Discipline*, and Desk or Appointment Calendar. These might even be presented as part of a welcoming liturgy during the first worship service.
12. Provide Worship Service Information. As music director or leader, you are in a position to make the pastor's transition shorter and easier than it might be. Find a way to provide information and details on the worship service, either in personal conversation or in a folder of printed information, but it should be done within a few days of the move. This should include:
 - who prepares bulletins and when
 - how is information gathered
 - Sunday morning schedule of worship and classes
 - details of radio or television
 - tour of the sanctuary
 - sound system
 - musical instruments
 - choir placement
 - processions/recessions
 - sacraments: frequency, logistics, liturgies, music, laity involvement
 - ushers and greeters
 - children's sermons
 - are there preparation rituals? prayer with the choir?

Above all, recognize that the new pastor is not the previous pastor. Understand that the new pastor has different interests, priorities, customs, training, and expectations. The new pastor will lead differently, and perhaps in new directions. Be assured there will be changes. Prepare your choir members for that possibility and inevitability. You and the choir can be supportive and can ease the transitions. The pastor is given by *The Book of Discipline* and United Methodist tradition the responsibility for overseeing the worship life of the congregation. Remember that that responsibility does not lie with the musicians in the church. Be open to possibilities of new growth and excellence in worship and music that God may have in mind for you and your congregation.

7 Ways to Welcome Your New Pastor

One of the best ways that a congregation can prepare for the arrival of a new pastor and his or her family is to work at making the transition as smooth as possible. In fact, the better the congregation focuses on providing hospitality for the new people in their midst, the more likely that both pastor and congregation will begin this new season of ministry together with a sense of warmth and connection that can begin generating enthusiasm and momentum for the work ahead.

To that end, here's a list of seven tips for welcoming the new pastor in every phase of the transition, from the initial announcement of the new pastor through those first months:

1) Communicate excitement.

People in the congregation will have lots of questions about the new pastor and in the absence of good information well-meaning people will try to fill in the blanks. Publish a short bio or, better yet, a spiritual autobiography of the new pastor through all the church's communication channels so that people can find points of connection, and so that the new pastor doesn't have to tell the basics of his or her life story and call to ministry over and over again in those first weeks. Include information about the family, their interests, and what they are most excited about in the transition. I recommend that the incoming pastor start a transition blog aimed at keeping people in the new congregation informed about the status of the move. It's a great way to generate excitement and keep people informed.

2) Get out the paintbrush.

Preparing the new pastor's office and the church parsonage, if you have one, for move-in are great disciplines that involve others in the process of preparing for a new season of ministry. A fresh coat of paint in the office, updating furniture, or fixing that long-standing plumbing problem in the parsonage communicates to the new pastoral family that you are ready to receive them. Make sure that the office has been fully cleaned out of the predecessor's stuff (check those desk drawers!) and is ready for immediate move-in on the day the pastor arrives.

3) Work on a transition plan.

Good transitions are the product of good planning, and the best pastoral transitions involve the congregation and the pastor planning the transition together. A good transition plan involves opportunities for the congregation and pastor to learn about each other and reveals places where the pastor can achieve some early wins in his or her tenure. For help with putting together a good transition plan, check out the Your Best Move Transition Package from Seedbed, which provides planning resources and advice for your church's personnel committee and pastor.

4) Prepare a soft landing.

Moving to a new church and community always involves a period of adjustment and churches would do well to provide space for the family in the midst of transition. While it's important for the new pastor to begin establishing relationships, visiting the sick, and preparing for leading worship, it's equally important that he or she have some extra time to help the family adjust to life in a new place. Offer the family space and time to explore the new community together, to get those initial doctor visits in, to check out schools, and to do a host of other tasks that must be done in those first weeks. When the pastor's family is cared for in this way, it actually makes the pastor's work much more effective going forward. Encourage time for prayer and reflection in those early weeks and guard the pastor's time for rest and renewal. Your church will benefit in the long run.

5) Plan for a welcome gathering.

An all-church gathering with food and fun is a great event for welcoming the pastor and family. Make it an informal time for people to simply eat together, tell stories, and celebrate a new start. Have church members wear name tags so that the family can begin learning who's who (actually, wearing name tags to worship those first few weeks can be even more helpful!).

6) Offer gifts with a purpose.

One of the ways that you can provide both a generous act of hospitality to the new pastoral family and give them an introduction to the community is to shower them with gift cards to local restaurants and businesses. Don't forget to provide gift cards for the local home improvement stores, which are the most frequently visited places when setting up a new home.

7) Lead with grace.

When a new pastor arrives, it's easy to begin making snap judgments about him or her or to make comparisons with the previous pastor. Resist the temptation to go with your first impressions. Understand that the new pastor does not yet know your traditions, your values, or your sacred cows; neither do you know your new pastor's ways of being and doing. It takes a while to learn those things about each other and leading with an attitude of grace enables both the congregation and pastor to create space for that learning to take place. Use the new pastor's arrival as an opportunity to see your congregation through a fresh set of eyes. Take the initiative to quell the inevitable rumor mill and assume the best from your new pastor. In doing so, you create a climate of trust and authenticity that makes for a good transition.

These are just a few tips that can help you welcome your new pastor and his or her family in a way that gets you started together on the right foot. Receive them as people of peace, offer them your best hospitality, and help them make their best move yet!