

A Liturgy of Recreation

Clergy Appreciation 2021

For use (in part or full) on the occasion of celebrating a pastor or ministry professional, to publicly bless them in their pursuits for personal joy, freedom, healing, and recreation with God. These elements are offered for the congregational affirmation of the pastor as a person, encouraged to pursue recreation for the sake of joy.

Consider the accompaniment of gifts, funds, and/or scheduled time away.

Opening Remarks:

As the community of faith, we gather and celebrate the goodness of God and the gifts that He extends to us.

Good and perfect gifts are extended, not because we are servants, nor simply because of our good deeds, but because we are loved by God, as his children.

In this moment, we celebrate the gift of this leader in our midst; one who is called and committed to the way of Christ and the work of God in the world.

We thank God for you, (insert leader name). We want to profess that we **appreciate** all that you do and the work of your heart and hands in our lives and in our community. Even more significant than appreciating your work, is the celebration of your worth! On this day, we celebrate that you, as a person made in the image of God. Apart from anything you do or don't do, you are worthy of love, admiration, support, encouragement, companionship, and prayer.

Together as your church family, we affirm God's invitation to you:

(Congregation) Delight Yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

(Psalm 37:9)

Scripture:

Hear now the wisdom of God through the writing of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 8:15,

"I recommend having fun, for there is nothing better on earth for a person to do except to eat, drink, and enjoy life. So joy will accompany him in his toil during the days of his life which God gives him on earth."

(presentation of gifts)

Today we present you with gifts of food, and drink, and joy!

May these be a source of strength and hope.

Let them be a symbol of solidarity.

Use them as a tool for your own renewal, not only so that you may be strengthened for your work among us, but that so that you may be filled with the joy God desires for your own being.

(Congregation) Eat, Drink, and Enjoy life!

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Clergy Affirmation:

(To be offered by the SPRC or appointed leader. Consider adjusting or adding your own recreational commitments. The leader responds "I will".)

As a partner in the celebration of who you are, we invite you to commit yourself to the lesser practiced pieces in the life of a pastor.

Will you release the outcomes of the prayers you've prayed on our behalf?

Will you sometimes sleep late and skip out on lay lead events?

Will you prioritize personal hobbies and activities that sustain your own strength?

Will you honor the Sabbath, knowing it is a holy gift for your own good?

Will you play with your children and laugh whenever the opportunity arises?

Will you practice detaching from the demands of others at the end of every day?

Will you connect with friends and family that fill you up without asking anything in return?

Will you silence your cell phone for no reason at all, trusting God has got us?

Prayer:

God of wonder,

From the beginning of time you ordered the chaos that we call our world, with light and love, and you called your creation "good."

As you set forth the waters and distinguished it from land, you made space for us to experience the ebb and flows of your handiwork.

We give thanks that you are with us in the give and the take.

In your power you unleashed strength and joy.

In your wisdom you offered the capacity for awe and wonder.

In your love you called us to connection and peace.

We ask today that you would rebirth your creative goodness in the life of (Insert Name).

Lead (Insert FIRST Name) beside still waters.

Attune (his/her/their) heart to the desires you've placed within.

Refresh (his/her/their) Spirit.

Awaken (him/her/them) to adventure and opportunities that have been overlooked.

Fill his belly with laughter and his days with fun!

Strengthen feeble arms and weary knees, and make straight (his/her/their) path.

We commit our pastor, and ourselves as a people, to the abundant life you've made possible for us.

May your creativity be alive and at work in us again; our sustainer and our friend.

Amen.