

ORDER FOR A TIME OF PASSAGE

MARY: Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. 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.

PHIL: People 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 beginnings.

MARY: Today we share the time of farewell with David, our pastor, who is retiring. On August 2, 2010, we called David Weddington to serve as our pastor.

DAVID: I thank the First Congregational Church, its members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown me these last eleven years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

PEOPLE: **We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that you now leave to retire from pastoral ministry. We are grateful for your time among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.**

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

(All who are able may stand for these words.)

PHIL: Do you, the members and friends of the First Congregational Church of Littleton release David from the duties of pastor?

PEOPLE: **We do, with the help of God.**

PHIL: Do you offer your encouragement for his ministry as it unfolds in new ways?

PEOPLE: **We do, with the help of God.**

MARY: Do you, David, release this local church from turning to you and depending on you?

DAVID: I do, with the help of God.

MARY: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here and for the relationship with another who will come to serve?

DAVID: I do, with the help of God.

PHIL: Our Associate Conference Minister, Richard Slater, planned to be here to represent the larger church, but with this new outbreak of Covid, the Conference Minister has asked Conference staff to avoid in-person gatherings until the situation improves.

MARY: Nonetheless, on behalf of the North Country Association and the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ, Reverend Slater affirms the words we have spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness, and release. And the member churches of the North Country Association and the New Hampshire Conference will hold us in prayer and pledge their continued support in the transitions signified in this service.

CHURCH MEMBERS: **Thanks be to God.**

PHIL: Let us pray.

UNISON: **God, whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy, help us to trust the future which rests in your tender care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories and move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen**

HYMN: #139 “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

BENEDICTION

RESPONSE: #426 “Blest Be the Tie That Binds

POSTLUDE

