

## Liturgy of Farewell



### Greeting

*Steve Whelan:* Our church community 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. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, growing toward new places, new experiences, new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share a farewell with our pastor, Rev. Martin Riekert and his family, Christa and MJ Riekert.

*Rev. Martin Riekert, Christa and MJ:* We give thanks to God for the ways you have welcomed us, supported our family and journeyed with us as disciples of Christ. We pray for God's blessing upon you.

### Ending of Authorized Ministry

*Rev. Katie Omberg.:* On December 1, 2013, this congregation called Rev. Martin Riekert to serve as Sr. Minister at The Congregational Church of Topsfield.

*Rev. Martin Riekert:* I thank The Congregational Church of Topsfield, its members and friends, for the love, kindness and support shown me these last twelve years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been encouraged and accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

**Congregation:** We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that your time with us is ending. We express our gratitude for your ministry among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

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

## Vows of Release

*Rev. Katie Omberg:* Do, you, the members and friends of The Congregational Church of Topsfield, release Rev. Martin Riekert from the duties of Sr. Minister here at The Congregational Church of Topsfield?

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

*Rev. Katie Omberg:* Do you offer him your encouragement as his life and ministry unfold in new ways?

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

*Rev. Katie Omberg:* Do you, Rev. Martin Riekert, release The Congregational Church of Topsfield from turning to you and depending on you?

*Rev. Martin Riekert:* I do, with the help of God.

*Rev. Katie Omberg:* Do you offer your encouragement for the continuing ministry here and on the relationship with another who will come to serve?

*Rev. Martin Riekert:* I do, with the help of God.

*Rev. Katie Omberg:* On behalf of the Northeast Region Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness and release. The member churches of our association and conference hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

## Prayer

*Steve Whelan:* Let us pray:

**All: O God, we give thanks for remembered times, when we, together, have shared this life of faith. We thank you for the moments we have shared with Rev. Martin Riekert in worship, in prayer, and in presence. We pray that Rev. Martin Riekert will always be aware of your Spirit's guidance in his life and ministry. Help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but 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.**