

**A rite for relinquishing tokens of office**  
(Adopted by the Commission on Worship, August 2006)

Notes

1. The rite for the installation of a pastor provides an opportunity for a token of office to be given to the pastor (*Church Rites, 149*).
2. The farewell rites for a pastor accepting a call (*Church Rites, 118-120*) or a pastor who is retiring (*Church Rites, 121-123*) provide opportunity to acknowledge his work, commend him to God, pray for and bless him. However, there is no corresponding laying down of a token or tokens of office.
3. The following rite provides an opportunity for the pastor who is leaving the congregation (by virtue of call or retirement), or who is leaving the office of the ministry, to publicly relinquish a token of office.
4. The ritual relinquishment of tokens of office provides a symbolic and public expression that the public service undertaken by the pastor in Christ's name has come to an end in that locality.

Rite

1. This act may occur after the presentation in the rite farewelling a pastor.
2. It is preferable that no words be spoken during the relinquishment of tokens. The drama of the moment should involve the following:

In the sight of the congregation, the pastor relinquishes the token of office to the presiding minister/president/congregational representative, who places it upon the altar or in its appointed place in the sanctuary.

- In the case of a pastor accepting a call the token of office is handed over to the congregational representative who may place it in its appointed position in the sanctuary.
  - In the case of a pastor retiring the token is handed to the president of the district who places it on the altar.
  - In the case of a pastor leaving the office of the ministry the stole is handed over to the president of the district who places it on the altar.
3. If words are spoken then the person relinquishing the token of office may say these or similar words immediately after the token of office has been relinquished: I return this \_\_\_\_\_ and acknowledge that God has graciously worked through this ministry.
  4. The service continues with the commendation.