

10 Ways to Send and Welcome Salvation Army Officers

Caring Through Change

Last updated: May 1, 2025

“

The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

— *Psalm 121:8 (NIV)*

”

Transitions in ministry are holy moments. They are not just administrative changes or calendar shifts — they are sacred movements of God’s people from one place of calling to the next. In the ebb and flow of spiritual leadership, there is grief, joy, and opportunity. As a congregation, you play a vital role in how your officers are sent and how others are received. Just as God watched over Israel in their comings and goings, so too does He remain present in the arrivals and departures of His servants today.

When we send with grace and welcome with warmth, we mirror the heart of God — who calls, equips, sends, and sustains. This resource offers practical ways for your congregation to participate in that sacred rhythm with love and intentionality.

For Congregations Saying Goodbye

10 Ways to Send Officers Well

1. Pray for Them Publicly and Privately

Lift up your outgoing officer(s) in prayer — during services and in small groups — as they prepare to transition. Pray not only for the officers, but also for their children and family as a whole (if applicable). Ask for peace, clear direction, and a deep sense of God’s presence in the season ahead.

2. Host a Farewell Gathering

Organize a farewell event — a potluck, reception, or open mic night — where people can share stories, express gratitude, and celebrate their years of service. Make space for both formal

tributes and informal fellowship. Involve different age groups (e.g., youth group, seniors, kids) to reflect the breadth of their impact.

3. Write Personal Notes or Cards

Set up a table after church for several Sundays where people can write thank-you notes. You could also create a "mailbox" for the officer to receive written blessings throughout their last month. Encourage congregants to share specific ways the officer's ministry made a difference in their lives.

4. Create a Memory Book or Video Tribute

Collect photos, stories, and encouraging messages to compile into a scrapbook or digital memory book. If you have creative volunteers, consider putting together a short farewell video with clips from congregants, ministry leaders, and even community partners.

5. Include the Children (if applicable)

If the officer has a family, take time to say goodbye to them too. Children can be especially impacted by transitions, so give them space to be seen and appreciated. A simple gesture — like a small gift, card, or framed photo of friends — can go a long way. Invite Sunday school or youth group participants to make artwork or write notes for the children.

6. Give a Thoughtful Gift

Choose a meaningful gift that reflects your appreciation. It could be a framed photo of the corps family, a local keepsake, a devotional book, or something practical for their new home. If the congregation is able, consider pooling resources for a larger gift such as a family outing, or a piece of art.

7. Celebrate Their Legacy—Big or Small

During the farewell service or gathering, name the tangible and intangible ways your officers have impacted the corps: programs they supported, people they prayed with, sermons that shaped hearts, or quiet moments of care. Invite testimonies or tributes to be shared.

8. Offer Practical Help with the Move

Moving can be physically and emotionally exhausting. Ask how you can help — packing boxes, cleaning, providing meals, or even watching the children while they prepare. A sign-up sheet or simple volunteer team can go a long way in showing love through action.

9. Be Thoughtful in Your Conversations

It's perfectly okay to ask where your officers are going next. But try to avoid pressing for details like comparing appointments. Focus your conversations on expressing gratitude, offering encouragement, and affirming God's continued work in their journey. Ministry moves can be emotional for both officers and congregations. Thoughtful conversations help preserve dignity, maintain trust, and keep Christ at the centre of the transition.

10. Bless Them with Encouraging Scripture

Select a Scripture passage that reflects their ministry or this new season (e.g., Psalm 121, Jeremiah 29:11, or Philippians 1:3–6). Consider writing the verse in a card, reading it aloud as part of a farewell service, or having different groups (e.g., youth, seniors, choir) speak a blessing over them. Ending their time with prayer and God's Word grounds their departure in the shared hope of Christ.

A Gentle Reminder: Stay Connected

As your officer leaves, don't forget to take a moment to exchange contact information — email, phone number, or even social media, if appropriate. While their appointment is changing, your relationship doesn't have to end. You were their community, their congregation, and in many ways, their extended family.



Reach out from time to time with a note of encouragement or simply to say you're praying for them. A message during the holidays or on their corps anniversary can go a long way.

Just as they carried you in their hearts during their ministry, let them know they're still carried in yours.

For Congregations Saying Hello

10 Ways to Welcome New Officers Well

1. Pray for Them Before They Arrive

Start praying as a congregation even before your new officers step through the door. Pray for their transition — logistics, emotions, family dynamics, and spiritual strength. Include them in your Sunday service prayers and encourage small groups to pray specifically for their arrival. Consider organizing a 7-day prayer guide or prayer chain in the week leading up to their first Sunday.

2. Prepare a Warm Welcome

Create a visible, joyful welcome — simple signage, a bulletin board with introductions, or a banner in the lobby. Display photos of their family (if applicable), and maybe include a “Meet the Officer” feature in your weekly bulletin or social media. First impressions matter — make them feel seen, not just expected.

3. Give a Welcome Basket or Care Package

Put together a gift basket with practical and thoughtful items: local restaurant menus, coffee, snacks, a grocery gift card, homemade treats, and helpful contacts (doctor, dentist, mechanic, etc.). Include something personal from the corps — like a framed photo of the church family or a welcome note from the board.

4. Learn Their Names and Use Them Often

This may sound simple, but it’s powerful. Introduce yourself, wear name tags, and greet them regularly by name. It’s especially important to learn their children’s names (if applicable) and help them feel included. Using names shows honour, care, and a willingness to build relationship.

5. Give Them Space to Settle

As eager as you may be to connect, give your new officers a few weeks to get their bearings. Avoid overwhelming them with feedback, requests, or history. Let them observe and listen before they lead. Offer to meet at their pace, and let them know you’re available when they’re ready.

6. Invite, Don’t Expect

Extend invitations to join in ministry events, community gatherings, or small groups — but don’t assume they will attend right away. Allow them to settle into their new rhythm. Instead of, “We hope you’ll lead this,” try, “We’d love to have you join us when you’re ready.” Invitations offered without pressure foster trust and mutual respect.

7. Be Honest, But Kind

When your new officer asks questions about the corps or community, be honest — but resist the urge to unload frustrations or complaints. Share your experiences with hope and faith. Speak of both challenges and the ways God has been faithful, helping your new leader see not just problems, but possibilities.

8. Share Your Story

Help your new officer understand the heartbeat of the congregation. Introduce yourself and briefly share your connection to the corps — how long you’ve been there, what ministries you’ve

been involved in, and what excites you about the future. These conversations offer relational context and deepen community.

9. Support Their Family (If Applicable)

If your new officers have a spouse and/or children, consider how you can help them feel at home. Recommend good schools, parks, or restaurants. Invite the spouse to a small group, or offer to host a casual get-together. Connect children with others their age. Let the whole family know they're not just being received — they're being welcomed.

10. Speak Words of Life

Affirm your officers' calling and leadership with your words. Simple statements like, "We're praying for you," or "We're so glad you're here," can be deeply encouraging. Publicly and privately, speak life into this new beginning. If you feel led, write a short note or Scripture card and drop it in their mailbox or office as a gesture of welcome.

A Gentle Reminder: Be Patient and Prayerful

Welcoming a new officer is an exciting time — but it's also a big adjustment for them and for you. Remember, your new officer is learning names, settling their family, absorbing a new culture, and listening for God's direction in unfamiliar surroundings. Be patient as they find their rhythm.



Give them the gift of time, grace, and encouragement. Don't expect them to "fill the shoes" of the previous officer — instead, let them walk faithfully in their own calling. Pray for them, speak words of life, and open your hearts wide. In time, God will knit you together as a church family, and something new and beautiful will grow.