A CEREMONY TO BE USED BY A PAST MATRON'S CLUB AT THE CLOSE OF THE CEREMONY FOR THE INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS. THIS IS TO WELCOME THE NEW JUNIOR PAST MATRON ('RETIRING WORTHY MATRON') INTO THE PAST MATRON'S CLUB.

If there are an even number of Past Matrons, they should be divided so that half of them will enter the Chapter room through the door of the preparation room, and half through the door of the outer entrance (the Sentinel's station.) If there are not an even number of Past Matrons, they should enter the Chapter room from the preparation room in single file, headed by the Junior Past Matron.

Each Past Matron carries at her side, in her right hand, a medium size white candle. Small lanterns or flashlights may be used instead of candles if the use of candles isn't permitted in your Chapter room. (They carry them hanging down unlighted.) The oldest Past Matron (not in years but in the time in which she served as Matron) has in her left hand a tiny package of matches or a lighter, with which to light the first candle. The Junior Past Matron carries two unlighted candles or flashlights.

The Past Matrons march in to music, from each door, (if using two entrances) across diagonally in front of Esther's chair, and form a circle around the altar in the order in which each one served the Chapter as its Matron. Stop when the earliest Past Matron, then Junior Past Matron stand behind altar. Leave a space between them for new Junior Past Matron to complete the circle. The others stand in the order of serving.

As soon as the Past Matrons are around the Altar, the Junior Past Matron hands her candles or flashlights to the Past Matron on her right, leaves the circle (to music) and approaches to where the retiring Worthy Matron (new Junior Past Matron) is seated. She stops before the new Junior Past Matron (who rises), and the Junior Past Matron recites:

Like the Wise man of old, you have traveled a road
Which led to a Star in the East.
Though often 'twas rugged and hard to traverse
You never complained in the least.
You performed every duty with kindness and cheer,
Led your Chapter with patience and love,
Were thoughtful, and gentle, and ever led on
With a God given strength from above.

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Just a year ago, I stood in your place;  
I had come to a journey’s end.  
My work was finished, I felt forlorn  
And much in need of a friend.  
And then I found a circle of friends  
Who still follow after the Star.  
They have been in the East, but have journeyed on,  
In a friendship no trials can mar.

I will lead you, my friend, to this circle so dear,  
A circle of Past Matrons true,  
Where a warm tender welcome and friendships sincere,  
I am sure are awaiting you, too.

As soon as the Junior Past Matron has finished speaking, she offers the new Junior Past Matron her arm and leads her to the circle where they both take their places. Now the oldest Past Matron lights her candle or torch, and as she is lighting her candle she begins to recite, very slowly, the following verse.

When, as first Worthy Matron, I stood in the East,  
I lighted a torch whose beams  
Down through the years have brighter grown,  
Surpassing that first Matron’s dreams.

And as year by year, each Matron gives  
Some help to her sisters true;  
So now, in the order in which you came  
We will pass the light on to you.

And you will pass the light along  
With Sisterly love and good will;  
Always saving a place in our hearts, and a light  
For the Sisters to join us, still.

To you, Sister ——— we hand a torch,  
You have earned a light from our beam;  
For you’ve made of your year; a grand success  
And have won the Past Matron’s esteem.

While speaking, as soon as her candle or flashlight is lighted, she holds it so the Past Matron on her left can light hers from it. (If flashlights are used, each Past Matron lights her flashlight in order and throws beam aloft.) Each Past Matron as soon as her candle is lighted offers a light to the one on her left, and this continues until all the candles are lighted. The Junior Past Matron lights her candle from that of her neighbor, then lights her second candle from her own and hands it to the new Junior Past Matron. The reciting must be done slowly enough so that the new Junior Past Matron will receive her lighted candle or flashlight as the first Past Matron is saying ‘To you Sister ———, etc.’.

Now the President of the Past Matron’s Club steps three steps forward out of the circle, into the center and addresses the new member, as follows:
Down from the East, my Sister  
You've been led to a circle of light  
Formed by our Past Matrons  
In honor of you, to-night.

We know you will add to our meetings  
By your presence and radiant good cheer;  
Just as the light from your candle, (or flashlight)  
Increase our radiance here.

And may you find our members,  
Friends who are loyal and true,  
Is the wish, with this welcome, I bring  
From all the Past Matrons, to you.

The Club President steps back into the circle, the music begins, and the Past Matrons, led by the first Past Matron march around the altar, their candles or flashlights held erect, and keep a circle until all have gone completely around once; then they march out through the preparation room.

At all times, from the time they are first lighted, the candles or flashlights must be held erect and on a level with the others. Long dresses worn by the Past Matrons add to the effectiveness of this ceremony.

The End