

PASTORAL CALL AGREEMENT

On this day, _____, in _____, having sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit and believing that God has called us to share in a mutual and common ministry in Christ, the people of _____ United Church of Christ at a regularly-called meeting of this congregation, held on _____ voted to enter into covenant with a servant of God to become a pastor and teacher of this church beginning at a date yet to be determined no later than _____.

I. TERMS OF CALL

This is an agreement between _____ United Church of Christ in _____ and _____ called as _____. All parties based the execution of the agreement upon their good faith.

The terms of call outlined in this agreement are contingent upon your holding Ordained Ministerial Standing (Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing) (Licensed Standing) with the _____ Association of the _____ Conference of the United Church of Christ. Should Ordained Ministerial Standing (Ordained Ministerial Partner Standing) (Licensed Standing) be suspended, revoked, or transferred for any reason, this agreement can be terminated immediately.

Believing that the cause and mission of Christ's church will be forwarded under the pastoral and spiritual leadership of _____, the congregation of _____ United Church of Christ joins in this agreement.

Our church calls the pastor to accept this pastoral office in our church by recognizing and acknowledging with us the responsibilities and duties as our pastor including: outlined in the attached position description; those included in the constitution and

bylaws of this church; and those by the customs and usages of the pastoral office of the United Church of Christ as defined in the *United Church of Christ Manual on Ministry*, particularly sub-sections entitled, “The Local Church in Relation to Its Pastor,” and “The Ordained (Licensed) Minister’s Code,” which include the right and responsibility of participation and leadership in the mission of the United Church of Christ, the ecumenical movement, and the community.

As a congregation, we wholeheartedly commit ourselves to the following terms of the covenant as we call our pastor and teacher. The terms of this agreement are for a _____ (full-time or part-time) commitment, which although there will be fluctuations, we expect _____ hours per week to be adequate to meet the terms of this agreement.

II. RELOCATION EXPENSES

Our church will pay reasonable relocation costs to move the pastor and family¹ from _____, _____ to _____, _____. It is the pastor-elect’s responsibility to secure written estimates of the costs involved and submit them to our Church’s _____ so that we can adequately plan and execute our part of these logistics.

Relocation costs include the expense of _____ (# of trips) advance home hunting trips for the pastor-elect and family, moving their household goods, mileage for transporting their automobiles, and meals and lodging for the pastor-elect and family enroute. These costs will not exceed _____.

¹ *Family* as used in this document refers to the pastor and, if applicable, the immediate family members who reside with the pastor-elect or who consider the pastor-elect’s home their permanent residence.

III. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Our church will reimburse the pastor the \$140.00 cost of providing a criminal background check as part of the preparation of their Ministerial Profile provided to our Search Committee.

IV. SALARY AND HOUSING

Because our church is committed to treating our pastor fairly and justly, we honor our God and one another by providing the following financial care. All figures listed in this section are annual amounts and will be pro-rated during the remainder of the current budget year.

CASH SALARY

Beginning on the yet-to-be-determined start-date, our church will pay \$_____ (cash salary) annually, as cash salary payable on a _____ (frequency of payroll cycle) basis. The treasurer of our church will make these payments.

HOUSING

(select one option)

A HOUSING ALLOWANCE IS PROVIDED

Our church will provide a housing allowance, in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines, of \$_____ per annum. Your housing allowance includes the costs of your housing, all utilities, maintenance, and furnishings.

A PARSONAGE IS PROVIDED

Our church will provide a parsonage for the pastor and family, including the cost of all utilities, maintenance and taxes. As discussed with the pastor-elect, we have made the following repairs and improvements to the parsonage so the parsonage is suitable and attractive:

Our church will provide an Equity Allowance of \$_____per year.

V. BENEFITS

HEALTH AND DENTAL BENEFITS

Our church will pay _____ (% or other) of the contribution costs required to provide health and dental coverage for our pastor, and, if applicable, the pastor's immediate family who are eligible, in the United Church of Christ Health and Dental Benefits Plans.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE OFFSET

Our church will compensate our pastor for the portion of Social Security and Medicare tax we would pay if pastors were permitted by the Internal Revenue Service to be paid as an employee of the church. This amount is the percentage established annually by the Internal Revenue Service. The current percentage equals _____% of cash salary and housing allowance and will be paid to you on a _____ (frequency of payment) basis.

PENSION PLAN

(Select one)

A HOUSING ALLOWANCE IS PROVIDED

Our church will pay, on the pastor's behalf, an amount equal to _____ % of the pension basis to the pastor's pension account in the Annuity Fund of the United Church of Christ. The pension basis equals total cash salary plus housing allowance. Using the information contained in this agreement, the pension basis for this year is \$_____ (calculated pension basis) and the annual contribution is \$_____ (contribution rate x pension basis).

A PARSONAGE IS PROVIDED

Our church will pay, on the pastor's behalf, an amount equal to _____% of 140% of the pension basis to the pastor's pension account in The Annuity Fund of the United Church of Christ. The pension basis equals total cash salary plus 40% to add the value of the parsonage. Using the information contained in this agreement, the pension basis for this year is \$_____ (calculated pension basis) and the annual contribution is \$_____ (contribution rate x pension basis).

LIFE INSURANCE AND DISABILITY INCOME BENEFIT PLAN

If the pastor is eligible to participate, our church will pay 1.5% of the pension basis to the Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan of the United Church of Christ on the pastor's behalf. Using the information contained in this agreement, the pension benefit for this year is _____ (calculated pension basis) and the annual contribution is \$_____ (1.5 % of the pension basis).

GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

If the Pastor was enrolled in the Group Life Insurance Plan prior to December 31, 2002, our church will pay \$50.00 a year to that plan, in addition to the standard Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan mentioned above.

VI. OTHER PASTORAL MINISTRY EXPENSES

Our church recognizes that to call forth the gifts God has given our pastor-elect to lead our church faithfully, we must provide both resources and support that will assist the pastor in remaining vital, creative, and energetic for this ministry. Therefore, our church will provide for our pastor and teacher the following pastoral ministry-expenses and reimbursement for expenses incurred while the pastor is carrying out the ministry of this church.

PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES

Our church will reimburse the pastor for professional expenses not to exceed \$_____per annum. Professional expenses include such items as books, journals, entertainment expenses for church guests, professional dues, vestments, and other legitimate costs incurred as a result of the pastor's service to this ministry. The pastor may submit expense items for reimbursement on a _____ (frequency of payment) basis.

CONFERENCE, ASSOCIATION, AND OTHER WIDER CHURCH MEETINGS

Our church values our pastor's participation in the wider church. Thus, we will pay reasonable expenses for attendance and participation in our United Church of Christ denominational, conference, association, and other meetings.² When these events occur during a time we regularly gather for worship, the church will make other provision to provide leadership for our worship services. The amount established for meeting expenses is \$_____ for this year.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Our church encourages and supports our pastor's opportunities to participate in clergy in-service training programs and continuing education programs to strengthen the pastor's ministry in this church. Therefore, we have budgeted \$_____ annually for the cost of the educational opportunities, not including travel costs, which are addressed separately below. It is the pastor's responsibility to discuss in advance with the Church _____(pastor/parish relations committee or other appropriate body) the nature, timing, and programmatic impact of these opportunities so that we can negotiate with the pastors the dates and types of events that best support our church's programs and needs for development.

TRAVEL COSTS

Our church reimburses our pastor for using the pastor's automobile in fulfilling the duties of the office. The church pays for miles driven at the Internal Revenue Service mileage rate established each year. It is the pastor's responsibility to keep a log of mileage for appropriate services in case of a tax audit. There are also times when other

² Travel costs to such events are handled separately. See "Travel Costs."

transportation means will be necessary, as well as the cost of room and board while attending conference, association, and wider church meetings as well as continuing education events. Therefore, we have established \$_____ for this year to cover such costs.

VII. SABBATICAL LEAVE

Our church provides the pastor with a sabbatical leave of _____ months after _____ years of full-time ministry with our church. During the sabbatical, we will pay the pastor full salary and benefits. It is the pastor's responsibility to share with (the Church Council at least one year before beginning the sabbatical the (name of governing board or pastor/parish relations committee), at least one year prior to beginning the sabbatical, the developing plans for time away. In the pastor's absence, we covenant with integrity to care for our church, our programs, our worship life, and each other. Further, we covenant not to use this time to accomplish or decide alone what we have not been willing or able to do together. We will, and we expect the pastor will also, use this time to reflect on our mutual ministry in Christ and how we can live more fully into our call as a church of Jesus Christ. Upon the pastor's return, we will invite the pastor to share with the church an overview of activities and learnings from the sabbatical. Unless otherwise agreed before the sabbatical, we expect that the pastor will continue as our pastor and teacher for at least one year after the return.

VIII. WEEKLY SCHEDULE, VACATION,
FAMILY LEAVE, AND COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

We realize that the demands of church life come at all hours of the day and night and that the covenant with our church requires the pastor's attention to matters at times often beyond control. In addition, we recognize the pastor's need each week to take time for self and family. Therefore, we encourage and support the pastor's ability to manage the equivalent of _____ days off per week for rest and relaxation and to be with family.

VACATION LEAVE

Our church provides our pastor and teacher _____ days of vacation leave during each twelve months of service. The congregation is responsible for our church, our programs, our worship life, and each other during the pastor's vacation leave.

FAMILY LEAVE

Family leave is extended to our pastor if the pastor and family experience the birth or adoption of a child. The pastor receives _____ days of family leave so that the pastor can care for self and family. Family leave does not accrue and unused leave is not payable upon termination.

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

Our church realizes that life is not always predictable or within our own control. Therefore, in the event of special circumstances, compassionate leave is available. We understand special circumstances to include the death of an immediate family member, sickness, or personal crisis. We provide our pastor with up to _____ days of

compassionate leave per incident. Compassionate leave does not accrue and unused compassionate leave is not payable upon termination.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Initial Disability. If the pastor becomes disabled and unable to practice pastoral responsibilities while serving our church, the church is responsible for paying full salary, housing, and benefits for the first 30 days of disability.

Period of Disability. If the disability prevents the pastor from performing pastoral responsibilities longer than 30 days, the church anticipates that the United Church of Christ Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefits Plan would become effective. The Pastor is eligible for Short Term Disability benefits after the first thirty days. The Short Term Disability benefits will continue for 22 weeks at which time, if still disabled, the Pastor will be eligible for Long Term Disability. During the 30 day waiting period and the 22 weeks of Short Term Disability benefits the church would be expected to pay Health, Dental, Annuity and Insurance contributions.

Permanent Disability. If it becomes apparent that a disability will keep the Pastor from performing pastoral responsibilities for longer than 22 weeks or permanently, the church will negotiate with the pastor or a responsible member of the Pastor's family regarding the possible continued use of the parsonage (if applicable) for a mutually agreed upon time period beyond the initial period of disability.

DEATH BENEFITS

In the event of the pastor's death while serving our church, the church provides the immediate family, in addition to salary earned but not yet paid: cash salary and housing for the current month; cash salary, housing, Social Security, and Medicare offset for a period of _____ days; and the cash value of any vacation leave earned. Further provisions, if necessary, may be considered and will be discussed with the pastor's family by our _____ (governing body or other appropriate body), and our association or conference minister, and the association committee on the ministry.

DISABILITY AND DEATH BENEFITS

If death occurs during the first 90 days of the pastor's disability, the church provides the pastor's immediate family with up to _____ days of cash salary, housing, health and dental benefits, and Social Security and Medicare offset for both the initial period of disability and for a death benefit.

IX. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS

Through our _____ (governing board or other appropriate body) and in accordance with our church's budget cycle, annually, the church negotiates with the pastor to update these financial agreements, in accordance with increases in the cost-of-living, consequent increases in benefits dependent upon salary, efforts to attain Conference Compensation Guidelines, and possible merit increases in salary.

X. MINISTRY AND PASTORAL/PARISH RELATIONSHIP EVALUATION

Our church accepts its responsibility to live faithfully and in covenant with our pastor and teacher. Accordingly, at the end of our first year together and every _____(number of years) thereafter, we covenant to study and review the priorities of our church regarding our program and administrative goals; the pastor's relationship with our congregation; and the stated goals agreed to with the pastor in the position description, for the effectiveness of our mutual ministry.

XI. MEDIATION PROCEDURES

Our church acknowledges that even as we pledge our faithfulness to God, one another, and our pastor and teacher, there may be at times when difficulties within our relationship begin to overwhelm us. In those instances, we covenant with the pastor to seek the support, advice, and wisdom of our Conference Minister, and/or (our association committee on church and ministry) (the Ministerial Standing and Standards Committee and/or the Church Standing Committee), in order that we actively work to maintain the goodness of our relationship and the righteousness God has placed within it. Either the pastor or the _____(governing board) representing our congregation can request such a consultation, if in the opinion of either, our relationships are becoming ineffective or unhealthy.

XII. TERMINATION OF PASTORAL CALL

Our church recognizes that most relationships do not last forever. We also acknowledge that many reasons can lead to a separation. Thus, this pastoral call agreement can be terminated by either party giving at least _____ days' written notice to the other, or upon other terms to which we both mutually agree.

XIII. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PULPIT

Notwithstanding any of the other responsibilities outlined for our pastor and teacher in the attached position description and other resources referenced on the first page of this document, in accepting pastoral leadership we also accept our pastor’s freedom of expression in the pulpit as it pertains to matters of faith and faithfulness according to the dictates of the Word of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, the traditions of the United Church of Christ, and the context in which we live our lives.

XIV. AFFIRMATION OF THIS PASTORAL CALL AGREEMENT

Believing that God has led _____ to be our pastor and teacher and that, with God as our helper, both the pastor and the _____ United Church of Christ will remain faithful to the terms outlined in this pastoral call agreement, we affirm and validate all parts of this pastoral agreement.

Signature of Pastor-Elect

Name of Pastor-Elect

Date

Signature of Moderator/President of the Congregation

Name of Moderator/President of the Congregation

Date

Having witnessed the covenant between _____ and
_____ United Church of Christ to enter into this pastoral call agreement, we
affirm and celebrate the ministerial covenant undertaken on behalf of the United Church
of Christ.

Signature of Association or Conference Representative

Name of Association or Conference Representative

Date