

Sample 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 members of _____ United Church of Christ at a regularly-called meeting, held on _____, voted to enter into covenant with you, a servant of God, to become pastor and teacher of this church beginning on _____.

I. TERMS OF CALL

This is an agreement between _____ United Church of Christ in _____, _____ and the Reverend _____ called as Senior Pastor. All parties execute this agreement in good faith.

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

Believing that the cause and mission of Christ's church will be forwarded under your pastoral and spiritual leadership, we join in this agreement.

Our church calls you to accept this pastoral office by recognizing and acknowledging with us the responsibilities and duties as our pastor, including those described in our Articles of Incorporation 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 Minister's Code," which include the right and responsibility of participation and leadership in the mission of the United Church of Christ, the ecumenical church, and the community.)

As a congregation, we wholeheartedly commit ourselves to the following terms of the covenant as we call you to be pastor and teacher.

II. RELOCATION EXPENSES

Our church will pay reasonable relocation costs to move you and your family from _____, _____ to _____, _____. It is your responsibility to secure written estimates of the costs involved and submit them to our Church Council/Governing Board so that we can adequately plan and execute our part of these logistics. Relocation costs include the expense of advance home hunting trips for you and family, moving your household goods, mileage for transporting your automobiles, and meals and lodging for you and your family enroute. These costs will not exceed _____.

Our church will reimburse you in the amount of _____ for the cost of your required Criminal Background Check document.

III. SALARY AND HOUSING

Because our church is committed to fair and just compensation, we provide 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 _____, our church will pay a cash salary of \$_____. The treasurer of our church will make these payments on a semi-monthly basis.

Housing Allowance

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

OR

Parsonage

Our church will provide a parsonage with all utilities. We will attend to regular maintenance on this home, including lawn care and snow removal. A portion of your cash salary in the amount of _____ will be identified as a non-taxable furnishings allowance.

IV. BENEFITS

Annuity Plan

Our church will pay, on your behalf, an amount equal to 14% of the pension basis to your account in the Annuity Fund of the United Church of Christ. The pension basis equals total cash salary plus housing allowance. Using the information in this agreement, the pension basis for this year is _____ and the annual contribution is _____.

Health and Dental Plan

Our church will provide coverage for you and your eligible immediate family in the United Church of Christ Health Insurance and Dental Plan.

Social Security and Medicare Offset

Our church will compensate you for the portion of Social Security and Medicare we would pay if you 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 IRS. The current percentage equals _____ of cash salary and housing allowance, and will be paid to you on a quarterly basis.

Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan

If you are eligible to participate, our church will contribute 1.5 % of the salary basis to the Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan of the United Church of Christ on your behalf. Using the information contained in this agreement, the annual contribution for this plan is \$_____ (1.5 % of the salary basis).

V. OTHER PASTORAL MINISTRY EXPENSES

Our church recognizes that to call forth the gifts God has given you to lead our church faithfully, we must provide both resources and support that will assist you in remaining vital, creative, and energetic for this ministry on our behalf. Therefore, our church will provide you the following pastoral ministry support and reimbursement for expenses incurred while you are conducting ministry on behalf of this church.

Professional Expenses

Our church will reimburse you 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 your service to this church. You may submit expense items for reimbursement on a monthly basis.

Conference, Association and Wider Church Meetings

Our church values your participation in the wider church. Thus, we will reimburse reasonable expenses for attendance and participation in our United Church of Christ national, conference, association, and other meetings. 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 included as a portion of professional expenses.

Continuing Education

Our church encourages and supports your opportunities to participate in clergy in-service and continuing education programs to strengthen your 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. We expect you to discuss with the Church Council, in advance, the nature, timing, and programmatic impact of these opportunities so that we can negotiate with you the dates and types of events that best support our church's programs and your needs for development.

Travel Costs

Our church will reimburse you, at the Internal Revenue Service mileage rate established each year, for using your automobile in fulfilling the duties of the pastoral office. It is your responsibility to keep a log of mileage for appropriate services in case of a tax audit. There are also times when other 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 up to \$_____ for this year to cover such costs.

VI. SABBATICAL LEAVE

Our church will provide you with a sabbatical leave of _____ months after _____ years of full-time ministry with our church. During your sabbatical, we will pay your full salary and benefits. We expect you to share with the Church Council, at least one year before beginning the sabbatical, the developing plans for time away. In your absence, we covenant 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 you will also, use the time to reflect on our mutual ministry in Christ and how we can live more fully into our call as Christ's church. Upon your return, we will invite you to share an overview of activities and learnings from your sabbatical with the church. Unless otherwise agreed before the sabbatical, we expect that you will continue as our pastor and teacher for at least one year after your return.

VII. WEEKLY SCHEDULE, VACATION, FAMILY 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 your attention to matters often beyond your control. In addition, we recognize your need each week to take time for self and family. Therefore, we encourage and support your ability to manage the equivalent of _____ days off per week for rest, relaxation and time with family and friends.

Vacation

Our church provides you _____ weeks of vacation leave during each 12 months of service. The congregation is responsible for our church programs, worship life and each other during your vacation.

Parental Leave

Parental leave is extended if you and your family experience the birth or adoption of a child. You will receive _____ days of parental leave so that you can care for self and family. Parental leave does not accrue and unused leave is not payable upon termination.

Personal/Compassionate Leave

Our church realizes that life is not always predictable or within our 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 you with up to _____ days of compassionate leave per incident. Compassionate leave does not accrue and unused compassionate leave is not payable upon termination.

VIII. DISABILITY AND DEATH BENEFITS

Disability Benefits

Initial Disability. If you become disabled and unable to meet pastoral responsibilities while serving our church, we are responsible for paying full salary, housing, and benefits for _____.

Period of Disability. If disability prevents you from performing pastoral responsibilities longer than _____ days, the church anticipates that the United Church of Christ Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan will become effective.

Death Benefits

In the event of your death while serving our church, we will provide your 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 your family by our Church Council/Governing Board, and our Conference/Association minister, and the association committee on the ministry.

Disability and Death Benefits

If death occurs during the first 90 days of your disability, the church will provide your 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. REVIEW OF PASTORAL CALL AGREEMENT

Through our Church Council/Governing Board and in accordance with our church's budget cycle, the church will negotiate with you, annually, to update this agreement, keeping in mind increases in the cost-of-living, possible merit increases in salary, and consequent increases in benefits based on salary and housing.

X. OFFICE PROVISIONS

We agree to provide you with an easily accessible office, and to be sensitive to your needs for adequate support staff, appropriate surroundings and equipment.

XI. EVALUATION OF OUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY

Our church accepts its responsibility to live faithfully and in covenant with you, our pastor and teacher. Accordingly, at the end of our first year together and every year thereafter, we covenant to study, review and evaluate the priorities and total ministry (including staff) of our church. The Church Council will establish or assign a committee with responsibility to conduct this evaluation and make report to the Church Council.

XII. MEDIATION PROCEDURES

Our church acknowledges that even as we pledge our faithfulness to God, one another and you, there may be times when difficulties within our relationship begin to overwhelm us. In those instances, we covenant with you to seek the support, advice, and wisdom of our association, conference or regional minister, or our association committee on the ministry, in order that we actively work to maintain the goodness of our relationship and the goodness God has placed within it. Either you or the Church Council, representing our congregation, can request such a consultation, if in the opinion of either, our relationships are becoming ineffective or unhealthy.

XIII. TERMINATION OF PASTORAL CALL

Our church recognizes that relationships are always changing and that many reasons can lead to a separation. Thus, either party can terminate this pastoral call

agreement giving at least 90 days' written notice to the other or upon other terms to which we both mutually agree.

XIV. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PULPIT

Notwithstanding any of the other responsibilities outlined for our pastor in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of this church or in the other resources referenced on the first page of this document, in accepting pastoral leadership we also accept your freedom of expression in the pulpit as it pertains to matters of faith and faithfulness according to the insight of scripture, the work of the Holy Spirit, the traditions of the United Church of Chris, and the context in which we live our lives.

AGREEMENT

In witness thereof, we have signed our names on this ___ day of _____ 20____.

For the congregation:

Moderator/President: (Signature) _____

Date _____

Clerk/Secretary: (Signature) _____

Date _____

Treasurer: (Signature) _____

Date _____

Pastor-Elect's Acceptance:

Signature _____

Date _____

(Note: Affix church seal here, if available)

Four copies; one each to the following:

Pastor-Elect

Association Church and Ministry Committee

Associate Conference Minister

Local Church