

A THREE-WAY MINISTRY COVENANT

Among

_____ (*Local Church or Membership*)
 _____ (*Authorized Minister*)
 _____ (*Association*) _____ (*Conference*)

INTRODUCTION TO THE THREE-WAY COVENANT

When an Authorized Minister and a Ministry Setting, in a Local Church, enter into a season of laboring together, the expectation of employment (such as scope of work and compensation) are detailed in a **call agreement** between the Authorized Minister and the ministry setting; a copy of the call agreement should be provided to the Association or Conference for the ministerial file.

The sacred nature of the shared ministry between the Local Church, the Association and the Authorized Minister for the purpose of God’s mission and the relationship expectations of all covenantal partners should be made explicit in writing with a **three-way covenant**.

Accountability for healthy relationships, good communications and mutual concern for all participants should be built into the fabric of the three-way covenant in order to strengthen and encourage the ministry. The authority and power of the three-way covenant rests in the understanding and respect for mutual accountability on the part of each participant.

Three-way covenants outline expectations of an Authorized Minister, the Local Church of membership as the **calling body**, and the Association all in relationship to one another. Covenant – not only in writing but in all forms – is meant to secure the well-being of God’s community and the Body of Christ; covenants are not crafted for the purpose of prioritizing needs or the wants of an individual or the Local Church. In the United Church of Christ, three-way covenants are written to further the mutual ministry of all ministry partners (Association, Local Church and the Authorized Minister) in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

While the specific responsibilities in three-way covenants can vary according to Associations and the Local Church, some basic expectations are important to foster healthy relationships and communications among the covenantal partners and with God:

- **LOCAL CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES** include participation in the Association and Conference Annual Gatherings; support for its members who are Authorized Ministers; faithfulness to remuneration as set forth in the call agreement; Public recognition of the Authorized Minister; regular meetings of Church Council and Pastoral Relations.

- **AUTHORIZED MINISTERS RESPONSIBILITIES** include maintenance of ministerial standing, participation in the life of the Church of the United Church of Christ, faithfulness to the Ministerial Code of Ethics, fidelity to the terms of the Call Agreement; faithfulness in preaching and teaching the Gospel.
- **ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITIES** include appropriate documentation of the Authorized Minister as Authorized with ministerial standing; fidelity to the covenants of mutual accountability; concern and respect for the health and vitality of the Authorized Minister and the Local Church.

On behalf of an Association and the United Church of Christ, a Committee on Ministry has the responsibility for Authorized Ministers. A Committee tends to the functional expressions of the covenantal relationships between Local Churches, Authorized Ministers, Associations; responds to the needs of those who hold standing in its Association; facilitates spaces and communities that nurture growth in ministry; holds accountable Authorized Ministers for effective and faithful ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

ABOUT THE THREE-WAY COVENANT

The United Church of Christ advises that, when an Authorized Minister is called to serve a Local Church, a covenantal relationship be established among the Authorized Minister, the Local Church, and the United Church of Christ as represented by an Association or Conference. This relationship is known as a three-way covenant, with each party accountable to and for the others. The purpose of this covenant is three-fold:

1. to strengthen, support and sustain the ministries of all the partners that share in this covenant;
2. to encourage mutual participation and accountability of and for the life of each by the others;
3. to observe, nurture, celebrate, and call forth the ministry of the Authorized Minister.

COVENANTS OF MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

_____, **as an Authorized Minister of the United Church of Christ**
covenants:

To _____ *United Church of Christ in*
 _____:

- Faithfulness in the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, the exercise of pastoral functions, the administration of rites and sacraments of the Church, and in adherence to the Minister Codes of the Manual on Ministry;

- Membership in good standing with _____, including financial support for the general ministries of this church and a commitment to earnest prayer for the well-being of this congregation and its ministry; public recognition of membership in this Body of Christ;
- Regular meetings with the Church Council and Pastoral Relations Committee to support one another in mutual ministry;
- Fidelity to the terms of _____ call agreement (attached) and dedication to the tasks as set forth by _____ job description (attached), so long as _____ serves as _____ of _____ . Obligations of compensation and employment exist exclusively between _____ and _____ .

To the _____ , _____

- Participation in Association Annual Meetings, Ministerium gatherings, Conference Annual Meetings;
- Adherence to oversight by the Association Committee on Ministry, including the annual Information Review and the triennial Periodic Review.

, as the Local Church of Membership covenants:

To _____ :

- Belief in God's call that has led you to this particular place of mission and ministry
- Adherence to remuneration as set forth in the call agreement and job description;
- Prayers for _____ work with the _____ ;
- Public recognition of _____ a Minister of the congregation;
- Regular meetings with the Church Council and Pastoral Relations Committee to support one another in mutual ministry.

To the _____ , _____

- Appropriate documentation of _____ as an Authorized Minister with ministerial standing;
- Fidelity to the covenants of mutual accountability as articulated in this document.

The _____ of the United Church of Christ covenants:

To _____ :

- All of the rights and responsibilities of an authorized minister in this Association.
- Clear communication of this Association's/Conference's requirements for good ministerial standing (including but not limited to boundary training and continuing

education) and of any policies supplemental to the Manual on Ministry that have been established by this Association/Conference; those requirements are:

(boundary training)

(continuing education)

_____ (other)

_____ (other)

To _____, *United Church of Christ*:

- Belief in the local church as the locus for mission and ministry in the United Church of Christ and thankfulness for your support of _____;
- Appropriate support and oversight of all ministers in three- or four-way covenants with your congregation.

We trust in God’s presence with us as we seek to be faithful to this covenant:

Authorized Minister Signature Authorized Minister Typed Name Date

President Signature _____, _____ Date

Association Representative Signature, _____ UCC Date

Received by _____ Conference Date