



COVENANT BETWEEN THE RETIRING PASTOR AND THE CONGREGATION

A graceful change: What congregations and their retiring pastors can expect of one another.

We _____ and _____ are entering into a new relationship together. As pastor and people, we have walked together through a time that has included joys and celebrations, times of grief and sorrow. We have laughed, cried and perhaps even exchanged a few words we wish we hadn't. Our time has included the full complexities of life, faith and ministry. Now we enter a new phase of that relationship as pastor and people. While we will remain connected by our past experiences, we acknowledge that we are entering a new time. This document describes some of our expectations of each other in this new time.

Generally and fundamentally, we both expect that _____ will humbly relinquish all aspects of pastoral ministry in order that a new, strong, and healthy relationship can develop between _____ and its new pastor.

Specifically, we expect that:

- _____ will not seek, in any way, to influence the transition process, including any attempt to influence the choice of a successor.
- _____ will not be involved in the pastoral ministry of _____ nor will they take any leadership or advisory role (public or private) in _____
- Although it will no doubt be tempting to invite _____ to participate in the significant events in the lives of the people of _____ -including baptisms, weddings, funerals, and anniversaries - we recognize that doing so would undermine both the ministry of the next pastor, as well as the healthy transition into retirement by _____. Therefore, _____ will not extend such invitations and _____ will decline them, if extended.
- _____ and their family will join another congregation.
- Where friendships have been established between _____ and members of _____, we will be thoughtful in how we embrace those friendships as they relate to the congregation, being careful not to let friendships merge into acts normally associated with the pastoral office.

(Other items may be added that are consistent with the particular relationship and mission of this congregation.)

Signature of Pastor: _____ Date: _____
Witnessed by President (Vice President): _____ Date: _____

**After sharing this Covenant with the congregation, please mail a copy of the completed and signed document to the Assistant to the Bishop in the office of the Metropolitan New York Synod, where it will be kept in the departing pastor's file.*