



## 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.*



**LETTER OF AGREEMENT/COVENANT FOR  
INTENTIONAL INTERIM PASTORAL MINISTRY**

**The Metropolitan New York Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**In prayerful conversation, the congregation council and the Intentional Interim Pastor have discussed the Healthy Transitions section of the MNYS Guide for Pastoral Transitions and Call Process, and enter into the following covenant of agreement:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (congregation)

\_\_\_\_\_ (town)

agrees with

\_\_\_\_\_ (pastor)

to serve as

**(INTENTIONAL) INTERIM PASTOR**

on a part-time/full-time basis

from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, on the following mutual promises:

**Together, the congregation and Intentional Interim Pastor will:**

- A. Examine the history of the congregation and work through the transition dynamics that usually follow the departure of a pastor
- B. Intentional Interim Pastor will tell the story of the congregation’s ministry and celebrate contributions of both lay and ordained persons who served the congregation
- C. Intentional Interim Pastor will work together in making a comprehensive evaluation of the congregation’s current mission and ministries
- D. Seek to confirm and identify current issues the congregation is facing and develop ways of dealing with them
- E. Intentional Interim Pastor will examine the congregation’s relationship with the synod, churchwide units, and the resources available for ministry
- F. Align the congregation in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the ELCA and the Metropolitan New York Synod
- G. Work together with the Transition Team to ensure a productive interim ministry experience
- H. Intentional Interim Pastor will prepare for the arrival of the new pastor

During this transition period, agree to engage in the developmental tasks specific to this congregation identified by the congregation council in consultation with the Interim Pastor:

*(Items listed here are examples; please modify accordingly)*

1. Find ways to express the loss of a beloved pastor and to give thanks to God for the pastor's faithful service. The goal is to begin to look forward to the arrival of a new pastor, who will be able to minister in his/her own gifted ways and be received well by the congregation.
2. Participate in leadership development events to increase the level of understanding and the functioning of healthy leading in the congregation.
3. Identify and invite persons who may have gifts of leadership, into leadership positions in the congregation.
4. Develop intentional stewardship emphasis within the congregation.

**The Intentional Interim Pastor will:**

- A. Pray for the predecessor pastor in their new ministry or retirement, for the sake of the mission of the Church.
- B. Speak well of the predecessor pastor and interpret everything they did in the best possible light.
- C. Treat the predecessor pastor with respect as a sibling in Christ and valued pastoral colleague.
- D. Assist the members of the congregation in finding comfort and closure after the departure of the predecessor pastor.
- E. Preach and teach the Word of God.
- F. Preside at worship and administer the sacraments according to the practice of the Lutheran Church.
- G. Provide pastoral care to all members of the parish according to their needs, visit as necessary, and uphold the members in prayer.
- H. Give pastoral leadership for the meetings, activities and organizations of the congregation.
- I. Encourage support of the total ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- J. Be responsible for the recording of baptisms, Confirmations, marriages, funerals, attendance at Holy Communion, and the maintenance of the membership rosters; report the statistics of the parish promptly and fully, as requested by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- K. Agree, under no circumstances, to be available for a regular call to this congregation.
- L. Agree not to be involved in the congregation's call process, except when the synod Bishop requests such participation.
- M. Participate with key leadership of the congregation, the Assistant to the Bishop, and/or appointed synod representative in evaluation of the transitional ministry, on a quarterly basis, and at the conclusion of the transition period.
- N. Attend synodical Interim Pastor meetings.

**The congregation will:**

- A. Commit to the Gospel by faithful participation in worship, learning, and fellowship activities.
- B. Accept the Intentional Interim Pastor, uphold them in prayer, and accord them love, respect and good will.
- C. Expect the Intentional Interim Pastor to preside at baptisms, celebrations of Holy Communion, and other rites of the church.
- D. Adopt the developmental tasks outlined above.
- E. Agree that the Intentional Interim Pastor will not be considered for regular call to this congregation.
- F. Begin the call process only after the interim ministry goals and developmental tasks have been adequately achieved.
- G. Provide for a review and evaluation of the interim ministry on a quarterly basis via the Transition Team, and at the conclusion of the transition period by key leadership of the congregation with the Interim Pastor and the Assistant to the Bishop and/or appointed synodical representative.
- H. Compensate the Intentional Interim Pastor through the agreed-upon end of the contract, plus two weeks in the following ways:
  1. Pay an annual salary of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Pay a housing allowance in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.
  3. Provide a Social Security Allowance of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.
  4. Contribute to the ELCA Pensions Plan in the amount 12% per year, and to the ELCA Benefits Plan according to the regulations of the Board of Pensions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church

- in America, to include Medical/Dental (for the pastor and his/her family), Disability, and Death Benefit for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.
5. Provide car allowance in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year.
  6. Grant \_\_\_\_\_ weeks' vacation per year.
  7. Grant continuing education leave, as needed, particularly as it pertains to Transitional Ministry training, not to exceed eight (8) days per year.
  8. Grant \_\_\_\_\_ days off per week.
  9. Pay expenses, not otherwise provided for, incurred in attending synod assemblies and other official meetings at which attendance is required.

This agreement terminates on the date specified on page one of this agreement or thirty days after a new pastor has declared acceptance of the call to this congregation, whichever comes first; or upon thirty (30) days written notice from the congregation, the Intentional Interim Pastor, or the Bishop of the synod.

This agreement may be extended upon the mutual agreement of the Congregation Council, the Intentional Interim Pastor, and the Bishop of the synod for a term(s) specified by an addendum attached hereto. All financial obligations will be fulfilled by or on the date of termination.

We, the undersigned, accept the terms of this agreement:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Congregation Council President or Secretary Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Intentional) Interim Pastor Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Attested by) Bishop of Metropolitan New York Synod Date

Upon signature of the bishop, copies will be distributed by the synod office:

- i. Original to the Intentional Interim Pastor
- ii. Copy to the Congregation Council President
- iii. Copy on file in the Office of the Bishop