

**SAMPLE CALL AGREEMENT**  
**between an Authorized Minister and a Local Church**  
**of the United Church of Christ**

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The call to \_\_\_\_\_, extended by \_\_\_\_\_:  
AUTHORIZED MINISTER LOCAL CHURCH

Having sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and believing that God has called us to share in the mutual ministry of Christ, the members of \_\_\_\_\_ United Church of Christ at \_\_\_\_\_, at a regularly called meeting of this congregation held on \_\_\_\_\_, voted to enter into covenant with you to become a minister of this church as our \_\_\_\_\_, beginning on \_\_\_\_\_. All parties execute the following agreement in good faith.  
NAME ADDRESS DATE POSITION TITLE  
DATE

We recognize that your responsibilities as our minister and our responsibilities as a congregation shall be those outlined in our local church Constitution and Bylaws, and that of the United Church of Christ's Constitution and Bylaws and its Manual on Ministry (noting especially the Minister Codes and "The Local Church in Relation to Its Pastor" in Section 1 of the Manual on Ministry).

We consider this position to be full-time/part-time (1/4 time, 1/2 time, 3/4 time). The terms of this call are contingent upon your holding ministerial standing with the \_\_\_\_\_ Association of the \_\_\_\_\_ Conference of the United Church of Christ. Should ministerial standing be suspended, revoked or transferred for any reason, this agreement can be terminated immediately by the Church Council representing our congregation.  
CIRCLE ONE CIRCLE ONE IF PART-TIME  
NAME NAME

# FAITH FOUNDATIONS OF A CALL AGREEMENT IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Covenant.** We are a church based in covenant. When a church calls a pastor, it covenants to compensate fairly, and the pastor covenants to serve faithfully.

**Stewardship.** We are accountable for the wise use of the church's resources, both human and material, therefore the church should be an intentional steward in the raising and the expenditure of funds, and the pastor should be an intentional steward in the use and renewal of his/her life in ministry.

**Christian Love.** Because the connection between pastor and people is a sacred trust, open, caring, healthy relationships are essential for the well-being of the local church. Salary and benefits negotiations, new and annual, should be carried out with candor and clarity, and with loving, supportive, mutual respect. As Christians, we are called to compensate all persons fairly, regardless of age, gender, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, disabilities, marital or family status.

## TERMS OF CALL AGREEMENT

Because our church, \_\_\_\_\_, is committed to fair and just compensation, and in recognition that our faithful support will assist you, \_\_\_\_\_, in remaining vital, creative and energetic for this ministry, we provide the following financial and professional care. All benefits listed here are annual and will be pro-rated during the remainder of the current year. We commit ourselves to the following terms of the covenant as we call you into ministry among us:

## RELOCATION EXPENSES

Our church will pay reasonable relocation costs to move you from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. It is your responsibility to secure at least two written estimates of the costs involved in this move and to submit the estimates to our Church Council so we can adequately plan and execute our part of these logistics. Relocation costs include the expense of one advance home hunting trip for you and your family, the move of your household goods, mileage for transporting your automobile(s), and lodging for you and your family en route. These total costs will not exceed \$\_\_\_\_\_.

## SALARY AND HOUSING

Compensation guidelines are provided by [individual conferences](#) of the UCC.

**Salary:** Beginning on \_\_\_\_\_, our church will pay a cash salary of \$\_\_\_\_\_ on a (CIRCLE ONE) semi-monthly/monthly basis.

**Housing:** Our church will provide a parsonage *or* a housing allowance.

*If a parsonage*, our church will pay all utility and maintenance costs of the parsonage, including that of basic telephone/internet service, lawn care, and snow removal.

*If housing allowance*, our church will provide an allowance of \$\_\_\_\_\_/month, which is non-taxable in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines and which we will approve annually for tax purposes. Housing allowance is understood to include the costs of all utilities, maintenance and furnishings, in addition to the mortgage/rent for your primary residence.

Sample formulas for calculating SALARY BASIS (salary plus housing):

*Sample formula:*

Cash Salary	plus	Value of Parsonage (calculated at 30% of salary)	equals	<b>SALARY BASIS</b>
\$35,000 full-time		\$10,500 annually		\$45,500 annually

*Sample formula:*

Cash Salary	plus	Housing Allowance (calculated at 33% of salary)	equals	<b>SALARY BASIS</b>
\$35,000 full-time		\$11,550 annually (or \$962.50 monthly)		\$46,550 annually

*Sample formula:*

Cash Salary	plus	Housing Allowance (calculated at 1% per month of median-priced standard 3-bd home in community)	equals	<b>SALARY BASIS</b>
\$35,000 full-time		if a median-priced house in the community sells at \$100,000, then the church's minimum housing allowance would be $\$100,000 \times 1\% = \$1,000$ per month or \$12,000 annually		\$47,000 annually

*Calculate your minister's SALARY BASIS here:*

Cash Salary	plus	Value of Parsonage or Housing Allowance	equals	<b>SALARY BASIS</b>

## FINANCIAL BENEFITS

**Annuity:** Our support of your ministry includes your future well-being, and so we invest ourselves in the financial security of your retirement. Our church will pay, on your behalf, an amount equal to 14% of the Salary Basis (cash salary + housing allowance/value of parsonage) into your account with The Pension Boards. Using the information in this call agreement, the annual contribution for \_\_\_\_\_ (year) is \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**Health and Dental Insurance:** Our church will pay, on your behalf, the full annual premium for you and your eligible immediate family members in the United Church of Christ Medical and Dental Benefits Plan. *For employees in their first employment relationship with the UCC, application for coverage must be made within 90 days of employment or evidence of insurability will be required.*

**Social Security and Medicare Offset:** Our church will compensate you for the portion of Social Security and Medicare that we would pay if you were an employee of the church; the Social Security Administration designates ordained ministers as self-employed persons. The amount of wages subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes is established annually by the IRS. This offset will be paid to you on a quarterly basis; the offset is taxable income to you.

**Life Insurance and Disability Income Plan:** If you are eligible to participate in and you complete an application with the Pension Boards, 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 for \_\_\_\_\_ (year) is \$\_\_\_\_\_. *For employees in their first employment relationship with the UCC, application for coverage must be made within 90 days of employment or evidence of insurability will be required.*

## PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY EXPENSES

**Professional Expenses:** Our church will reimburse you for professional expenses up to \$1,500 annually. Professional expenses include such items as journal subscriptions, hosting expenses for church guests, professional dues, vestments, attendance of wider church meetings including registration, room and board (see below), and other legitimate costs incurred as a result of your service to this church. You may submit expense items monthly for reimbursement.

*Reimbursable professional expenses for part-time positions = \$1,000.*

*For both full-time and part-time positions:* A one-time reimbursement in the amount of \$160 will be provided when your ministry with us begins, for the cost of the Criminal Background Check that was required for your Ministerial Profile.

**Conference, Association and Wider Church Meetings:** Our church values and expects your participation in the wider church, thus we will reimburse reasonable expenses for participation in our United Church of Christ national, conference, association, and other meetings. The amount established to support these expenses is incorporated into the professional expenses noted above.

**Continuing Education:** Our church encourages and supports your ongoing professional growth through participation in collegial learning groups (e.g. "clergy clusters" or "communities of practice") and in continuing education programs to strength your ministry among us. Therefore we budget \$1,000 and two weeks paid leave (including two Sundays) for those opportunities and expenses. We expect you to discuss with the Church Council, in advance, the nature and timing of these opportunities so that we can negotiate with you the dates and types of events that best support our church's ministries and your needs for ongoing development.

*Continuing education budget for part time positions = \$1,000 and one week paid leave (including one Sunday).*

**Mileage:** 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 accountability to the church and to the IRS. We have established up to \$2,500 to cover annual mileage expenses.

*Mileage reimbursement for a ¼ time position = \$1,000; ½ time = \$1,500; ¾ time = \$2,000.*

## **COPYRIGHT AGREEMENT**

Church and minister acknowledge that sermons and other original written and spoken theological reflections authored by minister (collectively, "the works") are ecclesiastical events and moments which are the product of deeply personal spiritual reflection, prayer and discernment by minister. Church and minister agree that regardless of when and where such reflection, prayer, discernment and preparation of the works, occurs, whether or not on church premises or using church facilities and whether or not during regular church hours of operation, the content of such works remain personal to minister, with minister retaining all ownership, copyright, and other legal interests in such works and having unfettered discretion to reprise or republish such works for other purposes and at other times, and to alone have claim to any financial benefits that may attend thereto. Church and minister do not intend for this acknowledgment and agreement to constitute the conveyance by church to minister of either a taxable or tax-free excess benefit, but rather to reflect the ecclesiastical reality of the formation and ownership of these works. In consideration of minister's employment by church, minister hereby grants to church an irrevocable, non-exclusive, worldwide, sublicenseable, transferable and royalty-free license to use, reproduce, distribute, create derivative works of, publicly perform and publicly display such works (whether solely or jointly with others) in any media now known or hereafter known. Such license shall continue in effect (I) while minister is employed by church and (II) thereafter, with the consent of minister, which consent of minister will not be unreasonably withheld or delayed. In no event shall use of such works by church be for purposes of its commercial gain; provided, that any such use in the ordinary course of church's stewardship campaign shall not be considered a prohibited use for commercial gain. Church and minister agree at this time to amend the terms of the agreement regarding such works at any time and in any manner as minister in her sole discretion deems advisable to better and more fully reflect the intent of the parties expressed herein.

## **TIME BENEFITS**

**Weekly Schedule:** We recognize 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 24/7 to matters beyond your control. We expect that your work schedule will average 40-50 hours weekly, understanding that additional hours may be required but will be examined if an excess of 55 hours per week becomes a habit for you or for us. Therefore, we wholeheartedly support your need to take time for self-care on a



regular basis, and we encourage your faithful management of two days off per week for rest and rejuvenation.

*For the call of a part-time minister, we encourage your faithful management of a 10-12.5 hour work week (¼ time position), a 20-25 hour work week (½ time position), or a 30-37.5 hour work week (¾ time position). We anticipate that we will honor your limited time best if we agree in advance as to the 3-5 days each week (respectively) when you are available, allowing for the occasional emergency.*

**Vacation:** Our church provides you four weeks of vacation time during each 12 months of service, including four Sundays. The congregation is responsible for our church programs, worship life and each other during your vacation. Service to the wider church (such as summer camp leadership, mission trips, and National/Conference/Association meetings) is not construed as vacation time. Vacation time does not accrue. Pay for unused vacation time may be negotiated upon termination.

*The vacation time provided for part-time positions is four times the hours weekly worked (e.g. for a ¼ time position, annual vacation = 4 x 10-12.5 hour work week) including four Sundays.*

**Parental Leave:** Parental leave is extended if you and your family experience the birth or adoption of a child. You will receive twelve weeks of paid 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 and Sick Leave:** Our church realizes that life is rarely predictable or easy; therefore, leave time is available to you for special circumstances. We expect that you will communicate promptly with the Church Council should these circumstances arise and leave time be needed. In the event of your illness, we provide up to 12 days of sick leave per 12 months of service; sick leave can accrue up to 120 days across the years of your ministry with us, though accrued sick leave is not payable upon termination. (For extended illness, see "Short-Term Disability.") In the event of circumstances such as but not limited to the illness of a dependent, the death of a family member, or a personal crisis, we provide up to 5 days of personal leave per incident, not to exceed 10 days per 12 months of service. Personal leave does not accumulate. Sick time and personal leave are not meant to be utilized as additional vacation time.

**Sabbatical Leave:** Our church will provide you with a sabbatical leave of three months after five years of full-time ministry with our church. *A part-time minister is eligible for two months of sabbatical leave after seven years of 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 invite you to share with us an overview of activities and learnings from your sabbatical. 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.

## DISABILITY AND DEATH

**Short-Term Disability:** If you become disabled or experience an extended illness and you are unable to meet your ministerial responsibilities during the time of this call agreement, we expect that you will use all accrued sick and vacation time as well as the annual allowance of personal leave during the waiting period of the Short Term Disability plan of the Pension Boards (approximately 30 days). Thereafter, we will pay only benefits (annuity and insurance premiums) until the expiration of Short Term Disability benefits. Disability, health benefits and leave time are provided in lieu of benevolence offerings, in the best financial interests of both you and the church.

**Long-Term Disability:** If disability prevents you from performing your responsibilities to our church beyond the expiration of Short Term Disability benefits (or beyond six months from the date of disability or injury, whichever comes first), and you have qualified to receive Long Term Disability under the terms of the Pension Boards plan, then the Church Council, in prayerful consultation with you, the congregation, the Conference or Association Minister, and, as appropriate, the Association Committee on Ministry may consider a revision or termination of this call agreement.

**Workers Compensation:** You are obligated to report a workplace injury to the Moderator/President of the church as soon as is practicable. In the event that an injury or illness is compensable under workers compensation law, workers compensation shall be the primary benefit. Short-Term and Long-Term Disability benefits, when eligibility is established, will be adjusted in accordance with Pension



Board Health and Disability Plan documents. As with Short-Term Disability, we will pay only benefits (annuity and insurance premiums) for a total of six months from the date of injury or illness.

**Death:** In the event of your death while we are in this covenant, we will provide your immediate family - in addition to salary earned but not yet paid - full cash salary, housing, health and dental benefits, and Social Security and Medicare offset for 90 days from the date of death. Further provisions may be considered and will be discussed with your family by our Church Council, our Conference or Association Minister, and, as appropriate, the Association Committee on Ministry.

## WE FURTHER COVENANT:

**Freedom and Responsibility of the Pulpit:** Notwithstanding any of the other pastoral responsibilities outlined in our church Constitution and Bylaws, in the United Church of Christ Constitution and Bylaws and Manual on Ministry (noting the *Minister Codes* and *The Church in Relation to Its Pastor* in Section 1 of MOC), and in the Three-Way Covenant we establish together with the Association/Conference, in accepting pastoral leadership we also accept your freedom of expression in the pulpit as it pertains to matters of faith and faithfulness, trusting you to be responsible to the insight of scripture, the work of the Holy Spirit, the traditions of the United Church of Christ, and the contexts in which we live our lives.

**Review of Ministry:** The church will examine the priorities, visions, stresses, and effectiveness of our congregation's ministries and of your ministry among us every three years at minimum. (Three recommended resources include *Completing the Circle: Reviewing Ministries in the Congregation* by David McDahill, *When Better Isn't Enough: Evaluation Goals for the 21st-Century Ministry* by Jill M. Hudson, and *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers*.) As an ongoing part of this review, we will negotiate annually with you through our Church Council to update this call 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.

**Mediation Procedures:** Our church acknowledges that, even as we pledge our faithfulness to God, to one another and to 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 or Conference Minister and our Association Committee on Ministry in order to restore the goodness of our relationship and the goodness that God has placed within it. Either

you or the Church Council, representing our congregation, can request a Situational Support Consultation if, in the opinion of either, our relationships are becoming ineffective or unhealthy.

**Termination of Pastoral Call:** Our church recognizes that relationships are always changing and that many reasons can lead to a separation. You may terminate this pastoral call agreement with 90 days written notice to the Church Council, during which period you shall continue to perform your duties under this agreement; you will not receive salary for the number of days less than 90 that you are unavailable to fulfill your pastoral duties, unless the Church Council excuses you by written resolution. The church may choose to terminate this call agreement by a vote of the Church Council acting on behalf of the congregation (unless alternate procedures are outlined by church constitution and bylaws) and in accordance with relevant state and federal labor laws. Such a termination would not be made lightly or secretly, and we promise to consult with Association/Conference staff and/or to seek outside wisdom and assistance before such a vote.

In mutual witness and agreement, we sign our names on this \_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_:

Moderator/President: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk/Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by \_\_\_\_\_ Association/Conference

Association/Conference Minister: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Copies of this call agreement are made and distributed to: Authorized Minister, Local Church, and the Association/Conference for keeping with the minister's file.*