



A SURE FOUNDATION

resources for the relationship
between pastors and congregations

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INTRODUCTION

Dear pastors and congregations,

The Ministerial Excellence, Support & Authorization (MESA) Ministry Team of the UCC National Offices is pleased to share this resource with you: a collection of best practices for the relationship between pastors and congregations. Whether you are entering a new pastoral relationship with a congregation or seeking to deepen an existing relationship, these resources support the healthy ministries of both pastor and congregation. *A Sure Foundation* includes tools for Pastoral Relations Committees, ministry assessment and evaluation, social media guidelines, sabbatical resources, departure ethics, and more, along with recommended resources for additional guidance.

It is our hope that this resource be widely used by ministers serving in local churches as well as the leaders of those churches, striving together to be faithful in ministry. Many of these tools are best practices, not prescriptions for a single course of action. We encourage adaptations that fit your context while remaining consistent with this guidance and with the United Church of Christ's Manual on Ministry.

By encouraging healthy relationships between pastors and the congregations they serve, these resources also serve to support the relationship with the local Associations. While pastors are called and employed by congregations, their ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ is maintained through Associations, which communicate the expectations for professional development through Committees on Ministry. Congregations also hold their standing in the United Church of Christ through their Associations. Therefore these resources assume as foundational the covenantal obligations between ministers, congregations, and Associations.

Many individuals and congregations offered feedback for these resources, and we are grateful for their time, energy, and support of this project. We are also grateful for you and for your ministry on behalf of the United Church of Christ, and we hold you in prayer with faith.

The Ministerial Excellence, Support & Authorization Ministry Team