

A FOUR- OR FIVE-WAY MINISTRY COVENANT

Among

Authorized Minister seeking Dual Standing

Calling Body / Employer

Local Church of Membership

United Church of Christ Association / Conference

Judicatory Body of Original Authorization

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUR- OR FIVE-WAY COVENANT FOR DUAL STANDING

There are occasions when an ordained minister of another denomination is called to serve for a season in a ministry setting of the United Church of Christ. Ordained ministers of another denomination who receive a call to serve in a UCC ministry setting can apply for Dual Standing to the Committee on Ministry where the ministry setting is located. Dual Standing is a temporary standing in the United Church of Christ, valid only for the duration of the call. The application to the Committee on Ministry has requirements listed in Section 2:2 of the Manual on Ministry and, in addition, may include a Four- or Five-Way Covenant with the ministerial setting.

When an Ordained Minister and Ministry Setting enter into a season of laboring together, the expectation of employment (such as scope of work and compensation) are detailed in a **call agreement or contract** between the Ordained Minister and the ministry setting.

The sacred nature of the shared ministry between the ministry setting, the Ordained Minister, the Local Church of membership, the Association and the judicatory of Original Authorization for the purpose of God's mission and the relationship expectations of all covenantal partners should be made explicit in writing with a **four- or five-way covenant**.

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

It should be stated that oversight for ministers with Dual Standing is held primarily in the denomination of origin. However, a minister with Dual Standing is responsible for any requirements of maintaining standing in the United Church of Christ as established by the Committee on Ministry for its ministers (such as boundary awareness training, anti-racism training and attendance at Association and Conference meetings). Not maintaining the requirements for standing may result in the removal of Dual Standing. Dual Standing can be removed by the Committee on Ministry at any time and is not transferable. Dual standing does not grant an ecumenically ordained minister access to the UCC Ministerial Profile or to the UCC search and call system.

Four- or five-way covenants outline expectations of an Ordained Minister, the judicatory of original authorization, the Local Church of membership, the ministerial setting 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. In the United Church of Christ, four-way covenants are written to further the mutual ministry of all ministry partners (Association, Local Church, ministerial setting and the Ordained Minister) in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

While the specific responsibilities in four- or five-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 Ordained Ministers; faithfulness to remuneration as set forth in the call agreement; Public recognition of the Ordained Minister in all ministry settings; regular meetings of Church Council and Pastoral Relations if and when appropriate.
- **DENOMINATION OF ORIGINAL AUTHORIZATION** is expected to be an integral participant in the four or five-way covenant with a minister who has been granted Dual Standing. All expectations for maintaining standing in the United Church

of Christ and the originating denomination are to clearly articulated in the Dual Standing Covenant. Additionally, the denomination of original authorization has the responsibility for accountability and oversight of the ordained minister.

- **ORDAINED 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.
- **MINISTRY SETTING RESPONSIBILITIES** include fair terms of call to an Ordained Minister, written in proportion to the position's scope of work; affirmation as the Local Church as the locus of ministry and mission in the United Church of Christ.

Who should have a four- or five-way covenant on file?

As the landscape of ordained ministry changes and evolves, the Ministerial Excellence Support and Authorization Team along with Committees on Ministry are observing the increasing value of four- and five-way covenants. These covenants are meant to be a record, kept at the Association or Conference, of the covenantal relationships for those ministers serving in United Church of Christ settings with ordinations originating in denominations other than the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) or The United Church of Canada.

Four- and five-way covenants, because of their very nature, may require intentional work and conversation when being crafted. Often an Ordained Minister will be called to a setting where preaching and teaching of the Gospel, performance of rites and conducting the Sacraments of baptism and communion (elements desired for an authorizable call) may not be a part of the call agreement or the contract of employment. In such cases the four-or five-way covenant is an excellent vehicle to broaden the scope of the Ordained Minister's ministry. The Ordained Minister is encouraged

to work with the minister of his/her Local Church of membership to broaden her/his responsibilities and contributions to the ongoing ministry of the Local Church to include opportunities to teach and preach as well as perform the rites and sacraments of the Church.

Occasionally, some ministry settings are unable to sign a formal four- or five-way covenant. In those situations, it can still be possible to create a four- or five-way covenant that outlines support and accountability for both the minister and the ministry setting. In many cases Committees on Ministry are satisfied with a detailed job description from the ministry setting acknowledged or initial by a representative from Human Resources.

ABOUT THE FOUR- OR FIVE-WAY COVENANT

The United Church of Christ advises that, in instances where Ordained Ministers are seeking Dual Standing or are serving in ministerial settings that requires Dual Standing, that a covenantal relationship be established among the Ordained Minister, the calling body, the United Church of Christ as represented by an Association or Conference, the Local Church where the Ordained Minister is a member and the judicatory responsible for the Ordained Minister's original authorization. This relationship is known as a four- or five-way covenant. The purpose of this covenant is:

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 Ordained Minister.

COVENANTS OF MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

[The Ordained Minister seeking or granted Dual Standing, as an Authorized Minister of the United Church of Christ covenants:](#)

To Local Church United Church of Christ in City/State:

- Membership in good standing with [Local Church](#), including financial support for the general ministries of this church, participation in the worshiping life of the

church whenever possible, and a commitment to earnest prayer for the well-being of this congregation and its ministry;

- Submission of articles for the newsletter or other publications regarding their ministry;
- An annual meeting with the Church Council or other representative to support one another in mutual ministry;
- A commitment to preach annually at the request of the pastor;
- Public recognition of membership in this Body of Christ in duties related to their ministry.

To the Association/Conference:

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

To the Calling Body/Employer:

- 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;
- Fidelity to the terms of [her/his](#) ministry and fidelity to the tasks of [her/his](#) employment, as given in [her/his](#) job description from the [Calling Body/Employer](#) (attached), so long as [Authorized Minister](#) serves as [Title and Position](#) with [Calling Body/Employer](#). Obligations of compensation and employment exist exclusively between [Authorized Minister](#) and the [Calling Body/Employer](#).

To the Judicatory of Original Authorization:

- Maintain standing in the denomination of origin to include all requirements for standing and adherence to

all requisites and obligations for accountability and oversight.

Local Church United Church of Christ, as the Local Church of Membership covenants:

To the Authorized Minister seeking or granted Dual Standing:

- Prayers for their work with the [Calling Body/Employer](#);
- Inclusion of materials written by [Authorized Minister](#) in the congregation's newsletter and Annual Report;
- Public recognition of [Authorized Minister](#) as a Minister sent into the world on behalf of the congregation;
- An annual meeting with the Church Council or other representative to support one another in mutual ministry.

To the Calling Body/Employer:

- Collection of an offering contributing to the work of the [Calling Body](#) or a similarly related ministry.

To the Association/Conference

- Appropriate documentation of [Authorized Minister](#) as an Authorized Minister with ordained ministerial standing;
- Annual contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) in recognition of the role of the wider church in the formation and oversight of authorized ministers in the United Church of Christ.

To the Judicatory of Original Authorization:

- To support and care for the [Authorized Minister](#) seeking or granted Dual Standing or ministering in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.
- To create a Pastoral Relations Committee for ongoing support, accountability and oversight.

The Association of the United Church of Christ covenants:

To the Authorized Minister seeking or granted Dual Standing:

- All of the rights and responsibilities of an ordained 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 and procedures
- supplemental to the Manual on Ministry that have been established by this Association/Conference.
- 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 Local Church, United Church of Christ:

- Appropriate support and oversight of all ministers in three-, four- or five-way covenants with your congregation;

To the Calling Body/Employer:

- Inclusion of written updates from [Authorized Minister](#) regarding [her/his](#) work for the [Calling Body/Employer](#) in the annual meeting of the Association.

To the Judicatory of Original Authorization:

- To maintain communication in order to provide a healthy climate for ministry and collaboration.

- To care for and support the Ordained Minister with Dual Standing while serving in a United Church of Christ ministerial setting.

The Calling Body/Employer covenants:

To the Authorized Minister seeking or granted Dual Standing:

- Belief in God’s call that has led you to this particular place of ministry;
- Adherence to remuneration as set forth in the call agreement, common personnel policies and current job description.

To Local Church United Church of Christ in City/State:

- Belief in the local church as the locus for all ministry in the United Church of Christ and thankfulness for your support of Authorized Minister.

To the Association or Conference:

- Fidelity to the covenants of mutual accountability as articulated in this document.

To the Judiciary of Original Authorization:

- To be available, to the judiciary of original authorization, and supportive of the Ordained Minister seeking or granted Dual Standing.

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

_____ Authorized Minister, Name Date:_____

_____ Representative, Name of Calling Body Date:_____

_____ President, Local Church, City/State Date:_____

_____ Representative, Association UCC Date:_____

_____ Representative of the [Judicatory of Original Authorization](#)

Date: _____

Received by _____ [Conference](#) Date: _____