

DEVELOPING THE TERMS OF CALL WITH A PASTOR

When a local church, conference, church agency, or other organization calls a minister to a new position, it is customary that the terms of call be agreed to in written form. Guidelines for preparing written terms of call are provided here. Usually the terms of the call are negotiated prior to the actual election of the person. Following the election the terms are put in written form to which the parties affix their signatures.

Many conferences of the United Church of Christ have standardized "Terms of Call" formats which they recommend to local churches for their use. If your conference does not provide a standard terms of call document, then you may develop one using the following information and sample statements.

The terms of call should list expenses and benefits which the church will provide. These include salary; housing; pension; health, life, and disability insurance; travel allowance; moving expenses; Social Security allowance; reimbursement for expenditures related to the pastorate; vacation; study leave time and money; evaluation procedures; and ways of terminating the call, including death and disability. These are the standard items in a commitment a church makes to have a pastor. Examples of these items are shown in the following outline.

Sample Introductions

- A. St. John's United Church of Christ of Maplewood, Minnesota, having heard the recommendation of its Search Committee, has voted to extend to the Reverend Jane Doe of Middletown, Montana, a call to become its pastor effective September 15, 1988.
- In extending this call, the congregation understands that the pastor will have the freedom of the pulpit in matters of faith and ethics according to the dictates of the Word of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, the traditions of the United Church of Christ, and the realities of the world.
- B. Dear Mr. Juan Gonzales:
- At a meeting of St. John's United Church of Christ of Maplewood, Minnesota, held on April 20, 1988, you were properly elected as pastor of our church. The duties of the office of pastor are in part outlined by our church constitution, a copy of which you have, and by the customs and usages in the pastoral office of the United Church of Christ, which includes participation and leadership in denominational programs.
- C. The Call of the Reverend Yosuke Mori to become pastor of St. John's United Church of Christ, Maplewood, Minnesota. Having sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit and believing that God has called us to share in a mutual and common ministry in Christ, the people of St. John's, at a regularly called meeting of this congregation, held on April 20, 1988, voted to enter into covenant with you to become the pastor and teacher of this church, effective September 1, 1988.

Believing that the cause and mission of Christ's Church will be forwarded under your pastoral and spiritual leadership, we enter into this agreement with you.

We recognize and acknowledge that your responsibilities and duties as our pastor shall be those outlined in the attached job description of the pastoral office and in the constitution and bylaws of St. John's United Church of Christ, as well as by the customs and practices in the pastoral office of the United Church of Christ, which include the right and responsibility of participation and leadership in the mission of the United Church of Christ, the ecumenical movement, and the community.

D. Dear Mr. Greenhorst:

As clerk of St. John's United Church of Christ of Maplewood, Minnesota, I am pleased to inform you that at a duly called meeting of our congregation held on April 20, 1988, it was voted unanimously to extend to you our call to become the pastor of this church beginning September 15, 1988.

Sample Terms of Call

A. The congregation agrees to support the Reverend Jane Doe with prayers, loving criticism, and stewardship of time and talents.

B. Salary

- B1. St. John's Church agrees to pay a cash salary of \$21,000 and to review salary annually.
- B2. Pay a base cash salary of \$21,000 per annum, paid in 12 regular installments.
- B3. The base cash salary is \$21,000 per annum, paid monthly. The salary arrangements will be reviewed annually by our church's Pastoral Relations Committee prior to the drafting of our church's annual

budget, giving specific consideration to length of service, effectiveness of leadership, and increase in the cost of living. The first salary review will be scheduled in September 1989.

C. Housing

- C1. St. John's Church agrees to provide a housing allowance in the amount of \$8,000 annually.
- C2. Provide and maintain a parsonage for the pastor and pay for the cost of all utilities and repairs except for personal telephone toll calls. In order to maintain the property, an annual inspection of the condition of the parsonage will be made by the Property Committee and its recommendations for maintenance and improvements made to the governing board.

Prior to the pastor's move into the parsonage the following repairs and decorating will be completed by the church:

- a. Paint the kitchen, living room, and main bath in colors selected by the new pastor.
- b. Install a new 30-gallon water heater.
- c. Have all carpeting in the house professionally cleaned.

D. Annuity

- D1. St. John's Church agrees to pay into the Ministers' Annuity Fund of the United Church of Christ 14% of the base salary and housing allowance.
- D2. Pay into the Ministers' Annuity Fund 14% of base salary plus parsonage valued at 30% of base salary.

E. Family Protection Plan

- E1. St. John's Church agrees to pay 1% of the salary basis to the pastor's

Family Protection Plan for life and disability insurance.

F. Health Insurance

- F1. St. John's Church agrees to pay for group health insurance for the pastor and family through the denominational health insurance program.
- F2. Pay for your coverage under the ministers' group health insurance plan, or for other medical insurance for you and your family as will be arranged by mutual agreement.

G. Vacation

- G1. St. John's Church agrees to provide one-month vacation with pay annually.
- G2. The pastor will be given four weeks' vacation with pay each year. The church will provide supply preachers during the pastor's vacation.

H. Continuing Education

- H1. St. John's Church agrees to provide two weeks' leave for continuing education each year.
- H2. The pastor will be given two weeks' leave and up to \$250 annually for continuing education. The nature of the continuing education is to be worked out with the Pastoral Relations Committee.

I. Sabbatical Leave

- I1. The pastor will be granted three months' sabbatical leave at full pay in addition to annual vacation after six years of service in this church, during which time the church will provide for the service of the parish through interim service. The precise time and plan of the leave shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Deacons. It is understood that the granting of sabbatical leave will be for a program of spiritual and intellectual refreshment.
- I2. St. John's Church agrees that at the end of five years of full-time ministry in

the same parish the minister shall be entitled to three months' sabbatical with full salary (plus vacation) for a course of study mutually agreeable to both minister and governing board. During the sabbatical the church agrees to underwrite the cost of supply pastoral services. It is understood that the pastor shall remain as pastor for at least one year following the sabbatical leave.

J. Disability or Death

- J1. In case of disability because of sickness or accident, the church shall be responsible for the pastor's full salary and benefits for the first three months of disability. This includes the base salary and housing allowance, ministers' annuity fund, Family Protection Plan, and health insurance. After three months the Family Protection Plan will become effective. Agreement shall be reached between the governing board and the pastor's family regarding the continued use of the parsonage following the three-month period from the date on which the disability was determined to have begun, or death occurred.

K. Automobile Expenses

- K1. St. John's Church agrees to reimburse the pastor for automobile expenses incurred in the performance of pastoral duties at 22¢ per mile.
- K2. The church agrees to reimburse for automobile expenses incurred in the performance of pastoral duties the sum of \$2,400 annually.

L. Professional Expenses

- L1. Recognizing that there are additional expenses incurred in the performance of your pastoral responsibilities and improving your pastoral skills for the benefit of our church (such as conference and association meetings,

retreats, etc.) our church has established a "Pastor's Expense Account" in the amount of \$200 per annum to cover these costs. This will not be counted as additional salary, but as part of our church's normal operating expenses.

- L2. St. John's Church will provide reimbursement of professional expenses up to \$150 per year.
- L3. The church will provide reimbursement for professional expenses as follows:
 - a. Books and subscriptions—
\$100 annually
 - b. Conference annual meeting and other meetings—
\$75 annually
 - c. Pastoral supplies and equipment—
\$100 annually

M. Moving Expenses

- M1. St. John's Church agrees to pay the moving expenses from the present location to Maplewood, Minnesota.
- M2. The church will pay your moving expenses, including cost of transportation, meals, and lodging for you and your family.
- M3. The church agrees to pay the moving expenses up to \$5,000 for your move to this parish.

N. Termination

- N1. This pastoral relationship may be terminated by either the church or the pastor by giving two months' written notice. If either the church or the pastor feels there is unfairness in the termination of this call, either party has the right to refer the matter for hearing to the association committee on the ministry.
- N2. It is understood that this covenant agreement between the minister and

this church can be terminated by either party with at least 90 days' notice, or upon other terms mutually agreed upon.

O. Evaluation

- O1. It is understood that the pastor and the governing board shall extensively study and review the priorities of the church and the effectiveness of the mutual ministry at least every three years using the resources of the conference and/or association and not in relation to salary review.

P. Conflict

- P1. It is understood that the conference minister and the association committee on the ministry shall be consulted at the request of either the pastor or the church, should the relationship between them be strained or in jeopardy.

Sample Conclusions

A. If these Terms of Call are agreeable to you, and receive the approval of the committee on the ministry of the association, we shall proceed with you and the association to formally install you as our pastor and teacher.

Trusting that the above terms are agreeable to you as our pastor-elect we hereby affix the signatures of our president and clerk to validate this call.

President _____ Date _____

Clerk _____ Date _____

Having prayerfully considered the call of St. John's United Church of Christ, I do accept the call and the conditions included in it as stated above. In accepting the call I covenant to proclaim the Gospel, to join with the congregation in its faith and ministry, and exercise the pastoral office with love, faithfulness, and prayer.

Signed _____ Date _____

B. This call shall be effective when approved by the church, the association committee on the ministry, and the pastor-elect. We expect this to be accomplished, and your ministry to commence in our church on August 1, 1988.

We look forward to a significant and fruitful ministry together, and promise you our wholehearted cooperation, love, and prayers to this end.

For the church:

Moderator _____ Date _____

Chair of the Search Committee _____ Date _____

For the Central Association, Minnesota Conference:

Signature of Association Representative _____ Date _____

Signature of the Pastor-Elect _____ Date _____

Procedures to Be Followed

Typically in the United Church of Christ, once there is verbal agreement between the church and the ordained minister, the church completes the terms of the call letter. It sends one letter to the pastor-elect, one to the association or conference office, one to the association committee on the ministry, and retains one copy. In some cases it forwards three copies to the association committee on the ministry for review and the committee

signs them and sends them on to the pastor-elect. The pastor-elect signs all three, retains the original for his or her files, and forwards one of the copies to the association committee on the ministry and the other copy to the church. Upon receipt by the church of the copy bearing all three signatures of endorsement, the church can consider the call officially accepted and in effect.



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NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 6

COMMENTS: Per your phone request
sending sample "Call to a Pastor" letter.

DATE: 7/2/90

TIME: 11:15 AM

If you do not receive all the pages, please call as soon as possible.