



## Letter to Congregation Concerning Covenant for Departing Pastor

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ and the congregation’s council have signed a covenant, which helps us understand our relationship with one another as we move forward without them/her/him.

When a pastor leaves a congregation or retires, it is not appropriate for them/her/him to continue to function in a pastoral role. This is difficult and sometimes painful for us to understand. However, if we remember that part of our call as people of God is to care for the body of Christ and not injure different members of it, we might find it easier to accept. For instance, if a pastor does a funeral for one family because they were so special, why won’t the pastor perform a baptism for a different family? It is easy to see how hurt feelings would not only affect one family’s feelings toward the former pastor, but perhaps also feelings within the Body of Christ between the two families.

It is important for us to understand that as of \_\_\_\_\_, Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are no longer our pastor, but they/she/he will pray for our continued and future mission and ministry, and for a strong and fruitful partnership with our future pastoral leader. Therefore Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**cannot:**

- Come back to perform weddings, funerals, or baptisms;
- Visit the sick and the homebound;
- Continue in any counseling relationship with a parishioner;
- Be involved in any way in the call process (helping with the profile, recommending candidates, commenting on a particular candidate);
- Support or give advice to anyone involved in a congregational disagreement;
- Return to lead worship services (unless down the road they/she/he is invited back as a “former pastor” to participate in a special event, such as a church anniversary).

We give thanks to God for the time Pastor(s) \_\_\_\_\_ was with us, and we pray for them/her/him as they/she/he now goes forth to serve God and the church in new ways. We are working with the synod office to find an interim pastor and hope to eventually enter into the call process for a new pastor. We trust that God will send us a new leader who will be called to serve God and the ministry of this congregation during the next stage of our ministry.

In Christ,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council President