



## PASTORAL TRANSITION COVENANT

The intention of this covenant is to act as a reminder of the importance of the relationship between pastor and congregation. To ensure a healthy transition from the current appointed pastor to the new appointed pastor all must exercise great self-restraint in order to allow for a relationship where the newly appointed pastor has the best opportunity to be effective in the service of our Lord Jesus. As the keepers of “order” in the church, Elders are charged with setting the example for all transitions in both word and deed.

### **The expectation of the exiting Pastor includes a responsibility to:**

- Allow ourselves time to grieve the end of a pastoral and congregational relationship.
- Demonstrate “Radical Hospitality” in welcoming the incoming pastor, and providing essential information about the congregation that will aid the transition.
- Bear the primary responsibility for maintaining healthy boundaries as the “former pastor.”
- Discourage intentional contact with former members where the new pastor is criticized. Be supportive of your successor in all online commenting, texting, phone calls, etc.
- Understanding that, for the sake of the ongoing ministry of the church, some people may need to “unfriend” on Facebook or “unfollow” on Twitter and/or find ways to remove undue social media visibility.
- As a former pastor, you will not come back and function in a pastoral role in your previous mission field, unless invited by the current pastor. This is especially true in the case of weddings, funerals and hospital visits.
- Exit in a timely manner and leave the parsonage in better shape than you found it. Provide the Trustee and Pastor Parish Chairs a list of needed repairs or maintenance items and use what political capital you have to make certain the parsonage meets the needs of the new pastor’s family.

### **As covenant partners, both new appointed pastors and exiting pastors are expected to:**

- Hold one another in prayer.
- Either speak positively or remain silent in public or private communications regarding one another. We are in a covenant as United Methodist Pastors.

**Adopted by Clergy Session  
Arkansas Annual Conference 2014**