

LITURGY TO CELEBRATE A FOUR WAY COVENANT

Those persons representing the participants in the covenant come forward:

Ordained Minister

Association Representative

Representative from the Local Church of Membership

Representative of the Ministry Setting

Pastor of the Local Church:

Today as we celebrate the ideals of church and covenant, we also celebrate a very particular covenant.

Members of the Local Church:

We celebrate the Body of Christ, in which we are each part of the other, and part of ministry in this world that God loves. We give thanks for the legacy of Jesus. From that legacy the church extends outward in ministries of care and courage, healing, blessing, touching, feeding, teaching, growing, and leading. Through sacrament and mission, the Spirit of God creates and renews the church across time and place. Leaders are called to serve such a church in many specialized ways.

Pastor:

Ordained ministers in the United Church of Christ are members of a Local Church and hold ministerial standing in the Association to which their Local Church belongs. _____ is a member congregation of the United Church of Christ through its standing in the _____ of the _____ of the United Church of Christ.

As a Local Church, we create and uphold covenants with each other and with our members. Today we bless the Four-Way Covenant of the _____, with _____ who is a member of our church, and with the _____ who employs them in their ministry representing the United Church of Christ.

A brief description of the minister's work may be given.

The intention of a Four-Way Covenant is threefold:

1. To strengthen, support and sustain the ministries of all the partners that share in this covenant.
2. To encourage mutual participation and accountability among partners.
3. To observe, nurture, celebrate and call forth the ministry of the Ordained Minister.

Ordained minister and local church representative are invited to affirm the covenant made with each other.

Minister:

As a member of _____ United Church of Christ, I covenant with this local church that I will:

- Participate in the worshiping life of this congregation whenever possible;
- Financially support the ministries of this church;
- Preach at the request of the pastor;
- Provide articles for church communications regarding my work with the _____;
- Publicly recognize my membership in this local church in duties related to my work;
- Pray for the well-being of this congregation and its ministry; and
- Meet annually with the _____ as we support one another in mutual ministry.

Local Church Representative:

We, the members of _____, do covenant with the _____ that we will:

- Pray for their work with the _____;
- Publicly recognize _____ as an Ordained Minister in mission of the congregation, working on our behalf in the wider church;
- Include materials written by _____ in church communications and annual report; and
- Invite _____ to meet annually with _____ to support one another in mutual ministry.

Affirmations of covenant are spoken by or on behalf of the Association and the ministry setting.

Pastor:

Our other covenantal partners, the _____ and the _____, also provide support for our mutual ministries, with fidelity to covenant and mutual accountability on the part of all.

Association Representative:

The _____ covenants with you to offer support and accountability for this ordained minister in your midst, to celebrate and make visible the importance of specialized ministry in the community that we share, and to promote ongoing covenantal life among all the congregations and ministry settings of the United Church of Christ.

Ministry Setting Representative:

We in the _____ join with you in the United Church of Christ to understand the values of Christian religious ministry and to uphold the expectation of professional ethics as your ordained minister serves in our specialized context. We are grateful for the generations of faith that have brought forward these gifts you share with the wider community.

Pastor:

_____, today I ask you, do you affirm this covenant and its commitments to _____ UCC, the _____ Association, and the United Church of Christ? If so, please say I do.

Minister:

I do.

Pastor:

Members of _____, do you affirm this covenant, and its commitments to _____, to the _____, and to the _____? If so, please say “We do.”

Local Church Members:

We do.

Pastor:

Let us pray:

God, who is made known to us through our relationships with one another, bless the partners who enter into this covenant of ministry for your sake. Grant your loving presence, your spirit of compassion, and your vision for what this world can be as we strive to fulfill the work to which you have called us all. In the name of your Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.