

Suggested Process for Reviewing a Covenant Agreement to Share the Services of A Pastor (Yoke)

Team Members: One or more of COM designee(s), Congregational Development consultant(s), depending on complexity of the situation. Team meets with Amy Fowler in preparation for the meetings described below:

I. Joint Meeting with Both (All) Sessions

A. Review of history (what brought them together)

B. Review of the Terms of the Covenant Agreement

Was the covenant adhered to? What were the benefits of the covenant arrangement? To each congregation? To the community?

What issues or problems arose?

C. Opportunity for Questions – to be answered in this meeting, as appropriate, or to be addressed at the next meeting (when team meets with each Session)

II. Meeting With Each Session

A. What have been their experiences of the covenant arrangement? Positive? Negative?

B. How do these experiences relate directly to the pastor(s) who most recently served the congregations?

C. What is attributable directly to the covenant arrangement?

D. If the Covenant Agreement remains in place, what issues need to be addressed? (Covenant Agreement may be amended and approved by each session) Proposed Covenant Amendments are formulated.

E. If the Session desires to leave the covenant arrangement, what are the other options for pastoral leadership at this time (given the number of members, the budget and assets of the congregation, future plans for the congregation)?

F. Any questions remaining from earlier meeting are addressed completely.

- G. Session votes whether to continue the Covenant Arrangement , with or without proposed amendments to the Agreement, or to recommend to its congregation that the Covenant Agreement be dissolved.**

III. Formalization of the Decisions

- A. If both Sessions vote to continue, the Covenant Relationship remains in place, and the Mission Study may begin.**
- B. If one or more Sessions propose amendments to the Covenant Agreement, each Session acts on these amendments at its next meeting, and communicates its decision to the Team. A Team member may be requested to be present at the meetings in which the amendments are acted upon. Once any amendments have been agreed to by all Sessions, the Covenant Relationship, as amended, is in place, and the Mission Study may begin.**
- C. If a Session recommends to its congregation that Covenant Agreement be dissolved, and the congregation votes in the affirmative in a properly called congregational meeting, that congregation withdraws from the Covenant Arrangement, and a meeting is set with the Team to discuss future options. Beyond this meeting, the COM works with each Session on options for pastoral leadership.**