[SAMPLE COVENANT OF CALL AGREEMENT FOR A LESS THAN FULL-TIME POSITION]

Provided by the American Baptist Churches of New York State

*Items in green may or may not apply to a given situation.*

Believing that God has called us to share in a mutual ministry in Christ, the members of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, New York, at a regularly-called meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, voted to enter into covenant with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to become the church’s pastor beginning on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

I. TERMS OF CALL   
This is an agreement between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, New York and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(*name of person with title, if ordained*)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ called as pastor. Believing that the cause and mission of Christ’s church will be forwarded under *his/her* pastoral and spiritual leadership, the congregation joins in this agreement.

*The terms of call outlined in this agreement are contingent upon the pastor holding or expeditiously pursuing recognized ministerial standing with American Baptist Churches of New York State. Should ministerial standing be suspended or revoked for any reason, this agreement can be terminated immediately by a congregational vote.*

The church calls the pastor to accept the responsibilities and duties as pastor, including those described in our Articles of Incorporation (if applicable) and Bylaws of this church and those by the customs of the pastoral office of American Baptist Churches USA. These include the responsibility of participation and leadership in the mission of the Association, the Region, the denomination, and the wider Body of Christ. The church further expects that the pastor sign and abide by The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches (attached) and complete and sign the Statement of Personal Conduct (attached). A call to this church’s ministry is contingent upon a background check completed and reviewed by the search committee or the appropriate church officer.

II. PASTORAL BUDGET AND WEEKLY MINISTRY NEEDS

NOTE: All figures listed in this section are annual amounts and will be pro-rated during the remainder of the current budget year.

The terms of call for this pastoral work is understood by all parties to be a less than full-time position. It is acknowledged that the pastor may be dependent on sources of income other than those provided in this call agreement. The congregation understands they offer a call that does not provide for a pastor to be solely employed by this church and will work collaboratively with the pastor to ensure appropriate time commitments and limits are observed to support a healthy balance of ministry work and employment beyond the congregation.

The position shall be considered part-time, expected to be the equivalence of \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week. The total pastoral compensation budget (including salary, housing, benefits, and Social Security offset) will not exceed $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the present year.

By mutual agreement, the pastor directs this amount to be designated as:

Cash Salary

Beginning on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the church will pay a salary of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on a (*weekly / biweekly / semimonthly/ monthly*) basis.

Housing Allowance

The church will designate $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the above salary as housing allowance, at the pastor’s discretion, in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines. This housing allowance may include the costs of housing, utilities, maintenance, and furnishings.

*The church will provide the pastor with a church-owned parsonage. The church will assume responsibility for the maintenance, upkeep, and utility costs for the parsonage. The fair rental value of the parsonage along with the cost of utilities and any additional designated housing allowance shall be considered the housing allowance for all calculations in this covenant.*

Compensation and Weekly Schedule

By agreement, the church expects \_\_\_\_ hours per week devoted to the ministry of the church. Church leadership and the pastor shall develop a job description that outlines the duties expected to be fulfilled. It is understood that a minimum of ten hours per week will be given to the needs of the preparation and delivery of weekly Sunday preaching and related worship needs. If congregational needs of a given week exceed reasonable limits, the pastor has discretion to work less time the following week to compensate for the extra time expended. Also required will be the commonly expected special services requiring the pastor’s leadership and presence.

If the pastor is employed by other employers, it is understood that immediate availability for congregational care cannot be expected at all times. The congregational leadership will work collaboratively with the pastor to ensure the ministry of the church is not solely upon the pastor.

A helpful guide for weekly schedule: *up to 15 hour work week (¼ time)*

*20-25 hour work week (½ time)*

*30-35 hour work week (¾ time)*

*35+ hour work week (full time)*

*Social Security and Medicare Offset*

*The church will compensate the pastor for the portion of Social Security and Medicare tax an employer would pay if the pastor were a non-clergy employee of the church. This amount is the percentage established annually by the IRS. The current percentage equals \_\_\_\_ (presently, 0.765%)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_of cash salary and housing allowance. This amount will be included in the regular paycheck.*

III. BENEFITS   
  
*MMBB*

*The church will pay, on the pastor’s behalf: (1) an amount equal to 16% of salary and housing allowance or (2) a retirement only contribution of $ \_\_\_\_\_\_ into the pastor’s account into the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of ABCUSA.*

*Health and Dental Plan*

*The church will provide coverage for the pastor and eligible immediate family.*

*Future Designations*

*The minister may choose to negotiate with church leadership in the future to have a portion of their salary reallocated to fund the provision of benefits.*

IV. OTHER PASTORAL MINISTRY EXPENSES

The church recognizes that to call forth the gifts God has given the pastor to lead the church faithfully, they must provide both resources and support that will assist the pastor in remaining vital, creative, and energetic for this ministry. Therefore, the church will provide the following reimbursement for expenses.

Professional Expenses

The church will reimburse the pastor for professional expenses not to exceed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per annum. Professional expenses include such items as books, journals, entertainment expenses for church guests, professional dues, meetings, and ministry related travel. The pastor will submit expense items for reimbursement on a monthly basis.

The church values the pastor’s participation in our American Baptist Churches national, regional, and other meetings. When these events occur during a time the church regularly gathers for worship, the church will make other provision to provide leadership for worship services, upon approval of church leadership. The amount established for these meeting expenses is included as a portion of professional expenses.

Continuing Education

The church encourages and supports the pastor’s opportunities to participate in continuing education programs. The church has budgeted $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ annually for the cost of educational opportunities. The church expects the pastor to discuss with church leadership, in advance, the nature, timing, and programmatic impact of these opportunities so that they can negotiate the dates and types of events that best support the church’s programs and the pastor’s needs for development.

V. WEEKLY SCHEDULE, VACATION, FAMILY AND COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

Weekly Schedule

The church realizes that the demands of church life come at all hours of the day and night. The church recognizes the pastor’s need each week to take time for self and family. Therefore, the church encourages the pastor to take the equivalent of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days off per week for rest, relaxation and time with family and friends.

Vacation

The church provides the pastor four (4) weeks of paid vacation leave per year, accrued at one week for every three months served. The congregation is responsible for the church programs and worship life during vacation. A reasonable amount of time devoted to sharing in state and national work, continuing education experiences, giving leadership at camps and conferences, and similar activities shall not be considered as part of the vacation period. Church leadership, in consultation with the pastor, will determine if unused vacation days can be carried over from one year to the next and if a departing pastor will be compensated for unused vacation days.

Personal/Sick Leave

The church realizes that life is not always predictable or within our control. Therefore, in the event of special circumstances, compassionate leave is available. The church understands special circumstances to include the death of an immediate family member, sickness, or personal crisis. The church provides the pastor with up to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days per year. Compassionate leave does not accrue, and unused compassionate leave is not payable upon departure of the pastor.

VI. REVIEW OF PASTORAL COMPENSATION

Through the Church Council/Governing Board and in accordance with the church’s budget cycle, the church will negotiate with the pastor, annually, to update the financial aspects of this agreement, keeping in mind increases in the cost-of-living, possible merit increases in salary, and consequent increases in benefits based on salary and housing.

*VII. OFFICE PROVISIONS*

*The church agrees to provide you with office space, either in the church or parsonage. All equipment, files/passwords, keys, and other items provided by the church or integral to the church’s ministry must be returned at the end of a pastoral call.*

VIII. EVALUATION OF OUR CHURCH’S MINISTRY

The church accepts its responsibility to live faithfully and in covenant with the pastor. Accordingly, at the end of the first year together and every year thereafter, the church covenants to review and evaluate the priorities and total ministry of the church. The church will establish a Pastoral Relations Committee with responsibility to conduct this review evaluation.

IX. MEDIATION PROCEDURES

The church acknowledges that even as we pledge our faithfulness to God, to one another and to the pastor, there may be times when difficulties within our relationship begin to overwhelm us. In those instances, the church covenants with the pastor to seek the support and guidance of our Regional Executive Minister in order that we actively work to maintain the health of our relationships. Either the pastor or an elected body of church leadership can request such a consultation, if in the opinion of either party, our relationships are becoming ineffective or unhealthy.

X. TERMINATION OF PASTORAL CALL

The church recognizes that relationships are always changing and that many reasons can lead to a separation. Thus, either the pastor or the congregation can terminate this pastoral call agreement by giving at least 90 days’ written notice to the other or upon other terms to which we both mutually agree. The pastor is an at will employer under New York State law.

AGREEMENT

In witness thereof, we have signed our names on this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_.

For the congregation:

Moderator/President:(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Pastor-Elect’s Acceptance**: (**Signature) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_