

# Two Sample Covenants for Staff Transitions

Adapted from work done by Association for UU Music Ministries leaders, with support from Jan Gartner, circa 2015. These are examples. Specifics will depend on

## 1. Covenant between Departing Staff Member (DSM) and New Staff Member (NSM)

*This is for situations in which the professional will no longer be participating in the life of the congregation.*

As professional colleagues, we make this covenant with one another:

- We will maintain a professional relationship based on mutual respect for one another.
- We will hold as our highest priority the health and ongoing ministry of the congregation, understanding that congregations are especially vulnerable in periods of staff transition.
- The DSM agrees to refrain from intentional contact, both personal and professional, with members, friends, and staff of the congregation. [Name exceptions.] Furthermore, the DSM will help their partner to also refrain from intentional contact with members, friends and staff.
- The NSM will not contact the DSM unless permission is first obtained from [the minister or president].
- The DSM will not take inappropriate advantage of the previous professional relationship and will not share confidential information learned in the course of their staff work.
- The DSM and NSM agree to share our covenant with the board, staff, and lay leaders who may benefit from understanding its terms.

This covenant has evolved from conversation and negotiation between the departing professional and new professional.

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New Professional

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Date

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Departing Professional

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Date

## 2. Covenant between Former Staff Member (FSM) and New Staff Member (NSM)

*This is for situations in which staff member will continue to be part of the congregational community – physically, virtually, and/or on social media.*

As professional colleagues, we make this covenant with one another:

- We will maintain a professional relationship based on mutual respect for one another.
- We will hold as our highest priority the health and ongoing ministry of the congregation, understanding that congregations are especially vulnerable in periods of staff transition.
- FSM agrees to encourage members of the congregation to speak to the NSM or other appropriate persons for answers to current questions and concerns relating to the ministry area in which they formerly served.
- In the spirit of right relations, the FSM and NSM agree to bring any of their own questions and concerns relating to their ministry area directly to one another.
- The FSM agrees to support the NSM by refraining from accepting positions on policy-making bodies in the congregation until their successor has had the chance to establish themselves in the role. (This may be two years or longer after the DP's professional leadership has concluded.)
- The FSM agrees to refrain from accepting or volunteering for roles in the ministry area in which they served as staff unless formally requested to do so by the NSM.
- The FSM will not take inappropriate advantage of the previous professional relationship and will not share confidential information learned in the course of their staff work.
- The FSM and NSM agree to share our covenant with the board, staff, and lay leaders who may benefit from understanding its terms.

This covenant has evolved from conversation and negotiation between the former professional and new professional.

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New Staff Member

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Date

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Former Staff Member

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Date