

# Seven Steps for Leaving a Ministry Wisely

Credit: Ken Sande, 2017, adapted

- **State Your Intentions and Reasons**  
Be clear about your plans and assure congregants of the ministry's bright and beautiful future.
- **Plan Your Goodbyes**  
Be intentional about planning several opportunities for small group goodbyes
- **Affirm the Good in the Setting**  
Affirm that your leaving is not personal and the ministry will survive your departure
- **Disconnect and Be Transparent About it**  
Be clear about why this is important and be consistent in your actions
- **Offer an Exit Interview with Ministry Leaders**  
Leave on a good note and with a blessing for their future
- **Find a New Place to Worship or Serve**  
Don't hang around or allow others to hang onto you.  
Get supervision, especially if you feel needy or torn about leaving.
- **Resolve Outstanding Conflicts**  
Clear the air, ask for and be willing to give forgiveness - bury hatchets and plant gardens

# 7 Ways We Build Trust - One Marble at a Time

Brene Brown

“BRAVING”



1

## Boundaries

I set healthy boundaries and respect others' as well. I'm willing to say "no."

2

## Reliability

I'll do what you say I'll do.

3

## Accountability

I will own my mistakes, apologize, and make amends.

4

## Vault

I won't share information or experiences that are not mine to share or that are not requested.

5

## Integrity

I will choose courage over comfort, right over what is fun or easy. I will practice my values.

6

## Nonjudgment

My needs and your needs are accepted as stated.

7

## Generosity

I will extend a generous interpretation to the intentions, words, and actions of others.

**THREE-WAY COVENANT**  
RETIRED MINISTER, LOCAL CHURCH, AND  
LOCAL ASSOCIATION OF THE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

This Three-Way Covenant is established between an Authorized Minister who has retired, their Local Church of membership, and the United Church of Christ as represented by an Association or Conference. This relationship is known as a three-way covenant, with each party accountable to and for the others. The purpose of this covenant is three-follows:

1. to strengthen, support and sustain the ministries of all the partners that share in this covenant;
2. to encourage mutual participation and accountability of and for the life of each by the others;
3. to observe, nurture, celebrate, and call forth the ministry of the Authorized Minister.

Rev. \_\_\_\_\_, as an authorized minister of the United Church of Christ who is not serving as pastor of the congregation, covenants:

To \_\_\_\_\_ (*local church of membership*):

1. Membership in good standing with \_\_\_\_\_ (*local church of membership*), including financial support for the general ministries of this church and a commitment to earnest prayer for the well-being of this congregation and its ministry; public recognition of membership in this Body of Christ;
2. The preaching and teaching of the Gospel, the exercise of pastoral functions, the administration of rites and sacraments of the Church only at the express invitation of the congregation's current pastor and agreement of the covenantal retired partner;
3. Continued adherence to the UCC Ministerial Code and the Manual on Ministry;
4. Faithful support of the pastor(s) of this congregation, publicly and privately.

To the \_\_\_\_\_ *Association of the Heartland Conference UCC*:

1. Participation in Association Annual Meetings, Ministerium gatherings, and Conference events of interest to the minister or in furtherance of this covenant;

2. Cooperation with the Association Committee on Ministry, including the Annual Information Review and periodic in-person interviews as requested by COM, Annual Association Meetings and scheduled events when possible.

\_\_\_\_\_, as the church of membership covenants:

with *Rev.* \_\_\_\_\_:

1. Gratitude for God's call to you in retirement;
2. Prayers for your continued discernment of call;
3. Pastoral care, support, and accountability as a member of this Local Church;
4. Public recognition of *Rev.* \_\_\_\_\_ as a minister with standing in the United Church of Christ.

To the \_\_\_\_\_ *Association of the Heartland Conference UCC*:

1. Appropriate documentation of *Rev.* \_\_\_\_\_ as an authorized minister with ministerial standing;
2. Fidelity to the covenants of mutual accountability as articulated in this document.

The \_\_\_\_\_ *Association of the Heartland Conference UCC* covenants:

To *Rev.* \_\_\_\_\_:

1. All of the rights and responsibilities of an authorized minister in this Association.
2. Clear communication of this Association's/Conference's requirements for good ministerial standing (including but not limited to approved boundary training and continuing education every \_\_\_\_\_ years) and of any policies supplemental to the Manual on Ministry that have been established by this Association/Conference. The requirements shall be until otherwise warranted and agreed

\_\_\_\_\_ (boundary training)

\_\_\_\_\_ (continuing education)

\_\_\_\_\_ (other)

\_\_\_\_\_ (other)

To \_\_\_\_\_ (*local church of membership*):

3. Belief in the local church as the locus for mission and ministry in the United Church of Christ and thankfulness for your support of *Rev.* \_\_\_\_\_ in retirement;
4. Appropriate support and oversight of all ministers in three- or four-way covenants with your congregation.

Additional Provisions:

We trust in God's presence with us as we seek to be faithful to this covenant:

\_\_\_\_\_, Authorized Minister Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, Moderator, Local Church Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, Representative, \_\_\_\_\_ Association Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by \_\_\_\_\_, Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: "A Sure Foundation: Resources for the Relationship Between Pastors and Congregations." Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization (MESA) Ministry Team, 2018 UCC (adapted)