

**A Covenant of Understanding Between  
The Session of University Presbyterian Church  
and Robert E. Dunham  
effective at his retirement as pastor, May 31, 2017**

This covenant is intended to describe the changes in roles and responsibilities that will take effect as the pastor retires and to clarify what the parties may expect to happen, and not to happen, during and after this transition.

The larger church offers important guidance in helping pastors and churches think through such pastoral separations, and the changes described below are based on Presbyterian polity as described in *The Book of Order*, pastoral ethics defined in part by the "Separation Ethics" document provided by The Presbytery of New Hope Manual for Commission on Ministry, and wise practice. Specifically, the larger church has long seen it fit to help both the retiring pastor and the church negotiate a separation by formally terminating "pastoral services" of any departing pastor.

Such stepping away does not indicate in any way the retiring pastor's lack of interest in or fondness for the congregation, but rather underscores the importance of letting the relationship lie fallow, so that a new relationship may form. It is the intention of both the retiring pastor and the Session to prevent divided loyalties within University Presbyterian Church and to avoid pressures on the retiring pastor, the interim pastor, and the new pastor both during the interim period and after a new pastor is called.


1. The pastor's retirement signifies that his pastoral and administrative duties at University Church will end at midnight on May 31, 2017. His final Sunday leading worship will be May 21, 2017.
2. The Transition Team will be responsible for bringing a recommendation of interim leadership for the Session's advice and consent, to serve until the next pastor is called and installed.
3. The retiring pastor agrees that he will not officiate or assist at any baptism, marriage, or memorial service at University Presbyterian Church (or at any services for families of University Presbyterian Church at other venues).
4. The retiring pastor agrees that he will no longer make hospital visits or offer pastoral care to members of University Presbyterian Church. His role will be within the normal limits of community activities and friendship, but will not include the provision of pastoral care, which will be the responsibility of the continuing and interim pastoral and program staff.
5. The retiring pastor may exercise his ministry in other congregations and venues as invited, but will not seek or encourage the presence of members of University Presbyterian Church on such occasions.

6. The retiring pastor and his spouse will not attend worship services or other events at University Presbyterian Church.
7. The retiring pastor will bear the primary responsibility for maintaining healthy boundaries. He expects to offer unqualified support to present and future leaders of University Presbyterian Church.
8. The retiring pastor and spouse will be independent of the church office and staff, except for the routine forwarding of mail or other courtesies provided to New Hope Presbytery members and correspondents.
9. The retiring pastor is hereby released from all obligations to University Presbyterian Church described in his Call. In addition, all authority vested in him and held by virtue of that call is terminated upon his retirement.
10. If desired by the new pastor, the retiring pastor and the new pastor may meet for the purpose of a knowledge transfer or "pastor-to-pastor" debrief. The purpose of such a meeting would be to help preserve the strengths and assets of the church, yet allow the new pastor to function without interference.
11. The retiring pastor will refrain from email interactions with church members; he will also refrain from comments on church members' Facebook pages and other social media posts, and will make no posts about University Church.
12. No changes will be made to any of these items without the mutual agreement of the retiring pastor, the new pastor, and the Session.
13. The retiring pastor promises to pray for the new pastor and the church leadership in the months and years ahead.



Pastor

1/12/2017  
Date



Clerk of Session

1/12/2017  
Date