

## Southwest Association, Michigan Conference

### APPLICATION AND COVENANT FOR EXEMPT MINISTERIAL STANDING

Exempt Standing is a ministerial standing for an Ordained Minister who continues to affirm their ordination and commitment to the United Church of Christ, but who chooses to no longer or is no longer able to engage in public ministry. This application outlines the roles and responsibilities of Exempt Standing as part of the mutual discernment between an Ordained Minister and the Southwest Association (SWA) Committee on Church & Ministry before Exempt Standing is granted. Exempt Standing may transfer across Associations and/or may be held in an Association separate from the Association where the minister holds Local Church membership.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**I am requesting Exempt Standing because I am not currently engaged in public ministry, and I have discerned that I will no longer seek a call or opportunities for public ministry. Initials: \_\_\_\_\_**

I understand that I am still subject to the support and oversight of the Committee on Church & Ministry through Exempt Standing, and am required to do the following:

- maintain membership in a UCC congregation
- continue to embody the ethics of the most recent version of the UCC Ministerial Code
- participate in the ongoing oversight of the Committee on Church & Ministry, including annual Information Reviews, Situational Support Consultations, and Fitness Reviews
- be responsive to communication from the Association and Conference as I am able.

In conversation with the Committee on Church & Ministry, I recognize that by maintaining Exempt Standing I will refrain from:

- seeking ministerial positions
- entering into call agreements
- providing pulpit Supply
- officiating at weddings and funerals except for those of family members
- serving on committees of the Association, Conference, National or global settings of the church.

**By maintaining Exempt Standing, I understand that I am exempt from certain ongoing requirements of Ordained Ministerial Standing including periodic vocational support meetings, boundary training, diversity training, and continuing education. Initials: \_\_\_\_\_**

As a UCC Minister with Exempt Standing I may continue to:

- participate in the life of my Local Church
- Attend annual meetings of the Association and Conference when possible
- Co-officiate at the sacraments at the invitation of an active authorized minister
- Attend SWA Clergy lunches and other fellowship activities with colleagues

In full understanding of the parameters of the status of Exempt, I covenant to refrain from engaging in pastoral activities save for the activities indicated above and from serving in a professional ministry capacity (even if temporary) while maintaining Exempt Standing. If I discern a call to serve in a professional ministry capacity again, I covenant to meet with the Committee on Church & Ministry to request an end to Exempt Standing and will complete any required boundary trainings as a prerequisite for reentering into active ministry.

I understand that Exempt Standing can be held by an Association different than the Association of Local Church Membership. If I relocate while maintaining Exempt Standing and join a Local Church in my new location, I may request a transfer of standing to the new Association but am not required to do so.

The Association covenants to continue to communicate with me regarding all required oversight processes, Association and Conference annual meetings, and other business of the Association.

*Following a discernment conversation with the Committee on Church & Ministry, please sign and date this form. This form will be added to your Ministerial File and reported to the Michigan Conference.*

***Exempt Status is not official until the Committee on Church & Ministry has approved and signed this document.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Authorized Minister*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Committee on Ministry Representative*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

**Always contact your Association and/or Conference when:**

- **Your address or contact information changes**
- **You have personal or professional concerns and need support**

Please sign and return this page to the SWA Registrar:

Rev. Ken Arthur, SWA Registrar  
Phoenix Community Church  
2208 Winchell Ave.  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008