A Covenant of Closure
at the Dissolution of a Pastoral Relationship
between
The Reverend Christina Jensen and the First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca, Michigan

We, the members of the session of the First Presbyterian Church, agree to request the Presbytery of Lake Huron to dissolve the pastoral relationship with the. Rev Christina Jensen for the following reasons and on the following terms:

1. The Reason(s) for the Dissolution: (*usually identified as one of the following; please identify which applies, adding the requested specifics on the space provided*)

~~a) Voluntary Dissolution (Resignation): The pastor requests that the relationship be dissolved in order to accept another position, retire, or for some other personal reason. Be specific.~~

b) Involuntary Dissolution (Negotiated Termination):

~~1. Reduction in Work Force: Either the pastor or the session may request there be a peaceful and appropriate end to a relationship resulting from 1) the elimination of a position, 2) budget limitations, 3) a changing ministry environment or 4) other circumstances arising out of no fault of the pastor.~~

~~2. Separation for Cause: The pastoral relationship may be dissolved as a result of judicial action or the presbytery determining that *"the church's mission under the Word imperatively demands it"* (G-2.0904). The presbytery may also dissolve a pastoral relationship for cause when requested by a congregation and approved by presbytery. Separation for cause may include but is not limited to 1) documented unsatisfactory performance, 2) abuse or misconduct, 3) insubordination, 4) neglect in the care and use of church property or funds, 5) conduct inconsistent with presbytery standards or ordination vows. Separation for cause must be clearly documented and thoroughly substantiated. When a minister formally renounces the jurisdiction of the church (G-2.0509), the presbytery shall immediately dissolve the pastoral relationship.~~

c. Irreconcilable Differences: Most involuntary dissolutions are the result of failed attempts to resolve differences about leadership style and/or other causes. These cannot be classified as separation for cause because there are no significant documented failures to perform. A significant number of members no longer believes that the pastor can minister effectively to the congregation's needs. A separation is negotiated because the mission of the church is being negatively impacted.

2. The Time and Date of the Dissolution:

a) All pastoral functions and ministerial duties (funerals, weddings, counseling, worship leadership, etc.) by the Rev. Jensen at and with members of the First Presbyterian Church will cease on __-October 31, 2021 at __5:00 p.m.__.

b) The obligations of the the First Presbyterian Church to the Rev. Jensen will cease on _October 31, 2021 at __5:00 p.m.__ unless specifically stated in this Dissolution Agreement.

c) The pastoral relationship will end on a date set by the congregation and approved by the Presbytery of Lake Huron.

1) The congregational meeting will be held on __September 19, 2021___.

2) The Presbytery Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation will meet to act on this Dissolution Agreement on __September 23, 2021_____.

**(*The Presbytery has the final authority to dissolve any pastoral relationship (G-2.0901). The Standing Rules of the Presbytery of*

***Lake Huron authorize the Commission on Ministry to dissolve a pastoral relationship in cases where the congregation and pastor concur. The date of final dissolution needs to be set after the meeting date of either the Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation or the Presbytery.*)**

d) This Dissolution Agreement is complete and final when the presbytery (or the Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation acting on behalf of the Presbytery) has voted in favor of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship.

3. The Terms of the Dissolution:

First Presbyterian Church agrees:

a) to pay the previously agreed effective cash salary and benefits through the date of dissolution (i.e. termination of the pastoral relationship) on ___October 31, 2021_____.

b) ~~to compensate for any unused accrued vacation (up to four weeks) through the date of dissolution on _____(*Date*).~~ *Incorporated into severance agreement in (g) below.*

c) to reimburse any allowances (auto, medical, etc.) through the date of dissolution _October 31, 2021, but will not authorize reimbursement for any newly incurred expenses incurred after the date of dissolution or beyond the prorated amount of the allowance.

d) to reimburse any continuing education expenses through the date of dissolution _October 31, 2021, but will not authorize reimbursement for any newly incurred expenses related to continuing education and/or book purchases incurred after the date of dissolution or beyond the prorated amount of the allowance.

e) to pay to the Board of Pensions the requisite percentage of effective salary which may be fixed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for participation in the pension/major medical plan through the date of dissolution on __October 31, 2021__, and to inform the Board of Pensions in a timely manner of the change of status.

f) to the following conditions and specific dates relating to any other obligations, including loan repayment, shared equity, manse usage & departure, office equipment use & return. (*List below or on a schedule attached to this agreement*)

_____**NONE**_____

_____

First Presbyterian Church also agrees:

g) to provide continuation of salary, housing allowance, and benefits through the Board of Pensions for the Rev. Christina Jensen for up to six months (through April 30, 2022), or until she obtains a full-time call (whichever comes first). This amount may be offset by compensation obtained through a part-time call or secular employment by action of the Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation, and is contingent upon Rev. Jensen making a good faith effort to pursue a new call. Unused annual vacation may be used prior to October 31, 2021. No compensation shall be offered for unused vacation after October 31, 2021.

h) its Session shall not offer disparaging comments or opinions about Rev. Jensen in communications with other churches and shall limit any criticism to matters discussed in this covenant and the Listening Team report.

i) to recognize that the ending of any pastoral relationship brings necessary changes to both the departing pastor and the congregation, resulting in a needed time to say good-bye, a time to formally end the pastoral relationship, and a time to alter previous patterns and relationships between the pastor and church members. Therefore as part of this Agreement, the session agrees to plan an event to recognize the ministry the Rev. Christina Jensen and to give church members a time to say good-bye, to be held at the church and prior to the date of dissolution.

The Rev. Christina Jensen agrees:

j) to remove all personal items from the office and property of the church (and the manse) and

agrees to return all church property, including any keys, to the Clerk of Session by _October 31, 2021_ at ___5:00 p.m.__.

k) that she will not attend or participate in the worship services and /or other activities or programs related to the First Presbyterian Church beginning on __November 1, 2021_ and continuing for a period of one year, and will discourage members of her family from doing so as well. The participation of family members is under the jurisdiction of the Session. Requests for exceptions by mutual consent shall be identified here, subject to the approval of the Commission on Ministry and the named Moderator of the Session (G-2.0905):
_____**NONE**_____
___

l) to refrain from engaging in conversations which offer opinions or criticism about programs or policies, congregational life or church staff, and or future planning or staffing at First Presbyterian Church, including on social media.

m) After the one-year period (See #3), the Rev. Christina Jensen may officiate at services for members of First Presbyterian Church, or at services within the church property, only upon invitation from the moderator of the session (G-2.0905).

The Presbytery of Lake Huron's Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation shall:

n) interpret this Covenant of Closure to the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca, MI

o) the Presbytery's agent in reminding the parties to this Covenant of Closure of the principles of the Covenant in the event any transgressions are reported to it,

p) shall be the sole and final arbiter of any complaints or alleged violations, and

q) note this agreement in the Minutes of the Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation.

Nothing in this Dissolution Agreement shall be construed to invalidate the existing policies of the Presbytery of Lake Huron concerning clergy separation ethics, which shall remain in full force relative to this dissolution.

We the undersigned have negotiated this Dissolution Agreement in good faith and have every intention of being faithful in fulfilling it.

Approved by the session of the First Presbyterian Church in Ithaca, Michigan on _____ and attested to with the following signatures:

Moderator of Session: _____ Date: _____

Clerk of Session: _____ Date: _____

The Rev. _____ Date: _____
(signature of the subject of the pastoral dissolution)

COM Representative: _____ Date: _____

Date approved by the congregation: _____

Date approved by COM: _____

Date approved/disapproved by Presbytery: _____

Presbytery's Stated Clerk: _____ Date: _____