

A Covenant of Understanding Between  
the Session of Northridge Presbyterian Church and Rev. Ben Dorr

who will depart as pastor effective July 3, 2018. This letter is intended to describe the changes in role and responsibilities that take effect as the pastor departs and to clarify what the parties expect to happen, and not happen, based on church polity and good practices.

It is understood that the purpose of this covenantal statement is to affirm that Rev. Ben Dorr and Northridge Presbyterian Church give thanks to God for a long and productive time together, but that it is our commitment that the next pastor of Northridge can enjoy the same depth of relationship and faithfulness in ministry. For this to happen, it is necessary for a former pastor to "step back" and make room for that healthy new relationship to grow. Therefore, the church and the pastor agree on the following:

1. The pastor's departure signifies that his/her priestly, pastoral, and administrative duties at Northridge will end at midnight on July 3, 2018.
2. We understand that this applies also to the interim period before the next pastor is called and the session will make provision for the interim period.
3. The departing pastor agrees that he/she will not officiate or assist in any baptism, marriage, or memorial service at Northridge, or elsewhere for members of Northridge, after July 3, 2018 but may occasionally attend them as a worshiper.
4. The departing pastor will no longer be able to make hospital visits or offer pastoral care to members. His/her role will be within the normal limits of friendship and community activities, and will not extend to pastoral care, which will be the continuing responsibility of the church's pastoral staff.
5. The departing pastor expects to exercise his/her ministry in other congregations and venues as invited, and in other ways as opportunities present themselves. It is the intention of the session to prevent divided loyalties within Northridge and to avoid pressures on the departing pastor during the interim period or after the next pastor is called.
6. The departing pastor and his/her spouse (if applicable), will not attend church worship or social events unless and until mutually approved with the session in advance.

7. The departing pastor and his/her spouse (if applicable), will not speak or listen to criticism of the clergy, staff, or church leaders. He/she is expected to offer unqualified support to present and future leadership.
8. The departing pastor and his/her spouse (if applicable), will be independent of the church office and staff, except for routine forwarding of mail or other courtesies provided to the members and correspondents, and others if appropriate.
9. Because social media is a common way of communicating among members, the departing pastor will refrain from frequent posts and may consider taking a hiatus from social media.
10. If, after a suitable period which has been agreed upon by the new pastor and the session, the departing pastor wishes to review any of these items, he/she may initiate a review with the consent of the session, provided that the new pastor is willing to concur.
11. The keys to the church facility will be symbolically returned to the session by the departing pastor at his/her last regular service, which is Sunday July 1, 2018.
12. The departing pastor is hereby released from all obligations to Northridge described in his/her call. In addition, all authority vested in him/her and held by virtue of that call is terminated upon his/her departure.
13. If desired by both parties, the departing pastor and new pastor may meet for the purposes of knowledge transfer or a "pastor to pastor debrief." The purpose of such a process is to preserve the strengths and assets of the church, but always allowing the new pastor to function without interference.
14. The departing pastor promises to pray for the new pastor, the church leadership, and the congregation.

Date: June 26, 2018

Departing Pastor: Benjamin Dow

Clerk of Session: Marissa Lenton