**The Unitarian Universalist Church of Tippecanoe County**

**West Lafayette, Indiana**

**Ministerial Covenant** 1

As partners in professional ministry at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tippecanoe County, as colleagues who aspire to a relationship of mutual care and respect, and as advocates of excellence and integrity in ministry, we, Reverend Jennie Barrington [Settled Minister] and Reverend Emily Manvel Leite [Minister of Religious Education], covenant with one another to strive for the following:

**SHARED AND SEPARATE MINISTRIES**

We commit ourselves to ministering, as individuals and as a team, with the whole congregation. We recognize and support our specific areas of focus, our different styles of ministry, and our individual calls to ministry—while working towards shared ministerial goals and a model of shared ministry. We will speak well of each other and our ministries. We will respect and make room for each other’s leadership. We will share ideas freely and give credit where credit is due for work done. We will be curious and learn about each other’s strengths, gifts, and challenges of ministry.

**BOTH HIERARCHY AND TEAM**

While we are both ministers and colleagues and we commit to treating each other accordingly, we recognize that the Settled Minister supervises the Minister of Religious Education. Ultimately, the final decision in matters of ministry to this congregation rests with the Settled Minister. Open and frank discussion on issues and decisions is not only acceptable, it is expected. Once a decision is reached, however, we will both support it. Disagreements and challenging questions should be reserved for private conversations. The Settled Minister also has a responsibility to support the Minister of Religious Education’s ministerial identity within the congregation and amongst the staff.

1 This document was originally crafted by Craig Schwalenberg and Drew Kennedy, then revised by Dena McPhetres and Drew Kennedy, then revised by Dena McPhetres and Elaine Peresluha, then revised by Jennifer Nordstrom and Dena McPhetres. It was based on covenants graciously shared by Kelly Crocker, Michael Schuler, and Scott Prinster of First Unitarian Society of Madison, WI; by Justin Schroeder and Theresa Schwartz of Unity Church-Unitarian of St. Paul, MN; by Lindsay Bates and Jennifer Innis of Unitarian Universalist Society of Geneva, IL. Language was also added from Lynn Ungar of Church of the Larger Fellowship.

**RESPONSIBILITY TO CONGREGATION AND EACH OTHER**

We recognize that we share responsibility for ministering to this congregation. We will create our schedules (preaching, hours, vacation, etc.) collaboratively, keeping in mind the needs of the congregation and our individual needs. Again, the final decision on these matters lies with the Settled Minister.

We acknowledge that Rev. Jennie’s and Rev. Emily’s professional roles and responsibilities each have a specific focus and area of expertise. Rev. Emily is a part-time, contract minister with a focus on UU Religious Education for Children and Youth, whereas Rev. Jennie is the full-time settled minister who serves as lead minister for the congregation and in the wider community. We acknowledge several ministerial responsibilities that are not part of Rev. Emily’s job, including: preaching, attending committee meetings [other than the R.E. committee and Program Council]; doing social justice advocacy in the wider community; advising the finance committee, stewardship team, or board; and providing guidance to the board and congregation regarding the church’s overall vision and mission. Ensuring that the pastoral care needs of the congregation are being met is Rev. Jennie’s primary responsibility, but Rev. Emily will naturally provide occasional pastoral care for children, teens, and families within her role as MRE. The development and implementation of the R.E. program’s mission and vision is Rev. Emily’s primary responsibility in collaboration with UUCTC’s R.E. committee, families, and volunteers. Rev. Jennie and Rev. Emily agree to stay in good conversation with each other regarding the mission and vision of the R.E. program and the overall congregation. Rev. Jennie will coordinate with Rev. Emily to co-lead rites of passage for children and youth, potentially including Child Dedication, Bridging, and Coming of Age ceremonies. Memorial Services and Weddings are not part of Rev. Emily’s responsibilities. Rev. Jennie and Rev. Emily agree that we will share this covenant with the congregation so that they may better understand the specific responsibilities, strengths, and gifts, as well as the limits, boundaries, and constraints, of our ministerial roles.

**CELEBRATING THE STAFF’S MINISTRIES**

We will strive to appropriately recognize and support the work of our non-ordained colleagues, whose efforts, while often less visible and acclaimed, contribute enormously to our more visible efforts. We will work together to promote healthy and respectful staff relationships.

**COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK**

We will continually work to cultivate a relationship of honesty and trust, seeking feedback and using one another as sounding boards. We commit to receiving this feedback in the spirit it is offered—colleague to colleague, with honesty, compassion, and good will. We will guard against triangulation and other unhealthy forms of feedback between each other and in the congregation as a whole. We will do our best to learn and accommodate each others’ preferred communications styles and to own our own preferences.

**PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES**

We will help each other to maintain meaningful and appropriate professional boundaries, including the setting of limits, in the interest of maintaining our mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being and enhancing our work and relationship with the congregation. This commitment includes an intention to keep, and to help each other keep, a Sabbath.

**PROBLEMS**

When problems arise or conflicts with this covenant are perceived, we commit to raising the issue promptly so we can learn from each other, make amends, and improve our ministries. If I feel you have broken our covenant, I will talk with you directly. I will name your behavior and how I feel about it, but not assume that a single action defines who you are as a person. I will be clear with you about what I would like you to do differently, and what, if anything, I need from you in order to make our relationship whole again. If I realize that I have broken our covenant, I will go to you directly to apologize. I will name what I did wrong and what I intend to do in the future. I will ask you if there is anything you need from me to make our relationship whole. If you come to me to tell me I have broken our covenant, I will listen harder to what you have to say than to my own defensiveness and embarrassment. I will be more invested in making our relationship whole than in being ‘right.’ We encourage each other to seek professional counsel outside the congregation to facilitate and improve our individual and shared ministries. If we come to a difficult place in our personal or professional relationship, we will enlist the aid of a mutually agreed upon person or persons outside of the congregation to address the issues and heal our relationship.

**CHANGES**

We recognize that our ministries, our relationship, and this congregation, will change; as such, so will this covenant. We commit to revisiting this covenant and modifying it as needed [annually, at least].

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Reverend Jennie Barrington, Settled Minister (date)

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Reverend Emily Manvel Leite, Minister of Religious Education (date)