

- We will welcome all who seek membership in our church without regard to their economic, cultural, ethnic, or marital status.
- We will seek to minister in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ to all people, in our community and world.
- We will encourage understanding and harmony among the whole body of Christ and will show evidence of our sincerity through involvement in cooperative endeavors.
- We will provide for periodic constructive evaluation of the life and ministry of our whole congregation.
- We will, in the event of any tensions or problems arising between us, promptly seek to resolve them in a spirit of mutual respect and Christian understanding with help from our American Baptist Region.
- We will conclude pastoral and staff relationships in a spirit of Christian love and understanding.
- We will recognize our relationship and responsibility to our denomination, and through time, talent, and money will seek to give support to our mission.
- We will honor, respect and esteem the high call of God on our pastor recognizing that the pastor is gifted to preach, teach, lead, and equip us for ministry. (Eph 4:12)

Prepared by the Ministers Council, 2001
Revisions 2006

Together In Ministry

The Body of Christ

The Ministers Council
American Baptist Churches USA



TOGETHER IN MINISTRY

"**Together In Ministry**" reflects the New Testament concept of the Christian Church as a partnership among its members. Our Church heritage has set apart certain of these partners for particular roles in shepherding the People of God, as ordained Clergy.

"**Together In Ministry**" encourages the partnership of clergy and congregation, pastor and people, to be the Body of Christ in carrying out Christ's purpose and ministry for us, together.

Partnership is relationship; relationship is enlightened, enriched, and enforced by covenanting together in local church ministry. "**Together In Ministry**" presents commitments for the pastor and for the congregation, and mutual standards for their life and ministry together.

We commend this statement to your prayerful reflection and adoption.

There are three sections to the document: the Pastor's Commitment, the Congregation's Commitment, and Together in Ministry (which expresses mutual commitment).

The Pastor's Commitment

Taken from
Ministerial Leaders Covenant
and Code of Ethics

Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church...

- I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our American Baptist Churches; I will not accept a position in the American Baptist family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/ constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the denomination. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.
- I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my American Baptist colleagues, and other Christians.
- I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.
- I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.
- I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ministerial status.

- I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for ministerial and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.
- I will recognize my primary obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called, and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry.
- I will personally and publicly support my colleagues who experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, national origin, physical impairment or disability.
- I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.
- I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my ministerial leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make ministerial contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without his/her request and/or consent.
- I will hold in confidence and treat as confidential communication any information provided to me with the expectation of privacy. I will not disclose such information in private or public except when in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is

outweighed by my well-founded belief that life-threatening or substantial harm will be caused.

- I will not sue my ministerial status position or authority knowingly to abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate, or take advantage of anyone, especially children.
- I will report all instances of abuse as required by law to the appropriate agency. In any case involving persons working in ABC ministry, I will also report the circumstances to the appropriate regional and/or national denominational representative.
- I will show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.

The Congregation's Commitment

Congregational Covenant
and Code of Ethics

Affirming our commitment to Jesus Christ and the Church, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit...

- We will, when seeking pastoral leadership for our church, work with our American Baptist Region, include resources recommended by the Region, and conduct all negotiations with integrity and openness to God's leading.

- We will not discriminate in the selection of qualified leadership with regard to age, race, gender, marital status, national origin, and physical impairment or disability.
- We will recognize and assume the responsibility of providing adequate and appropriate financial support for our pastor.
- We will provide our pastor with the necessary facilities and time for work and study.
- We recognize our pastor's need for physical and spiritual renewal and will provide adequate periods of time for vacation and spiritual renewal.
- We will provide financial assistance for our pastor's participation in appropriate continuing education events.
- We respect the privacy of the pastor's family and/or residence and will not make unreasonable demands on them, nor require different standards of conduct of them.
- We will recognize the freedom and obligation of the pastor to proclaim the truth as he or she understands it.
- We will seek to support our pastor without comparison to previous leadership.
- We will call on our pastor for all pastoral services. At the initiative of our pastor, other pastoral leaders may be invited to share in such services. We will promptly inform our pastor of illnesses and other special needs requiring pastoral care.

- We will affirm the call, preparation, and commitment of our pastor, and will give support through prayer and encouragement; we will support our pastor's leadership in our church, our community, and the larger mission of Christ.
- We will observe these principles in relationship to other members of our church staff, consistent with their responsibilities.
- We will covenant together to pray regularly for our pastor.

Together in Ministry

Recognizing that we, as pastor and people, are called together in the ministry of Christ...

- We will work together to create an effective ministry that will renew, strengthen, and enable the whole people of God to minister within our congregation, in our community, and to the whole of God's world.
- We will accept our responsibility for the moral and spiritual development of our community and will strive to live up to the standards of Christian citizenship consistent with Biblical teaching.
- We will be sensitive to the moral and ethical soundness of every program or project we are asked to support.
- We will meet all of our financial obligations and endeavor to maintain an honorable credit reputation in our community. We will deal with integrity in all our transactions.