

LETTER OF CALL

[Sample Letter, Commissioned Minister, Northern California Nevada Conference United Church of Christ]

To: _____ [Name of Commissioned Minister]

From: _____ [Name of Church]

Having sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit and believing that God has called us to share in a mutual ministry, the people of _____ Church of _____ voted on _____ [date of vote], at a regularly called meeting, to call you to _____ [position title] effective _____ [starting date].

We pledge you our respect, trust, and fidelity and will support you with prayers, loving criticism, and stewardship of time and talents. We ask your respect, trust, and fidelity as well as your supportive prayers, loving criticism, responsible leadership, and adherence to the Commissioned Minister's Code of Ethics of the United Church of Christ.

In order that you may be freed of temporal cares, we extend to you in compensation:

A. Cash Salary \$ _____

The salary arrangements will be reviewed annually prior to the drafting of the church's annual budget, giving specific consideration to length of service, effectiveness of leadership, increase in the cost of living, etc..

B. Housing Allowance \$ _____

The Commissioned Minister carrying out an essential ministry of the church may designate a portion of her/his cash salary to cover housing expenses in accord with IRS guidelines.

C. Annuity \$ _____

14% of Salary and Housing will be paid to the UCC Annuity Fund

D. Disability Income Benefit Plan \$ _____

1.5% of Salary and Housing will be paid to the Disability Income Benefit Plan which provides for disability insurance.

E. Group Term Life Insurance \$ _____

Through the UCC Pension Boards.

F. Health and Dental Insurance \$ _____

UCC Health and Dental Insurance for you and family/household [as applicable] will be paid in full.

G. Self Employment Tax \$ _____

Because ordained and commissioned ministers serving UCC congregations are considered to be self-employed with regard to matters of social security, the church will compensate you for the amount equal to the employer's portion of social security for a lay employee. This amount is to be applied to your self-employment tax obligation and will be recorded as taxable income on your W-2 Form.

We further extend the following considerations:

H. Work Week

Dividing a day into three “units,” morning, afternoon and evening, full-time professional work is usually 11-14 units per week. We urge you to take two full three-unit days off per week, not counting holidays, and to work an average of 12 units per week, understanding that there will be weeks that demand more time and weeks where additional time off can be taken to maintain a healthy balance.

I. Service to the Wider Church and Community

We recognize that your ministry extends beyond service to the members of this congregation. We expect that you will give a portion of your work time to the United Church of Christ Association, Conference, and/or national settings, and to ministry within our community.

J. Vacation

One month per year.

K. Study Leave

In addition to vacation, two weeks per year at full compensation. This can accumulate each year to a maximum of six weeks. The goals of the leave will be jointly agreed upon by you and the church council. Study Leave has no monetary value except as actually used.

L. Sabbatical Leave

In addition to vacation and study leave, you shall be granted three months of sabbatical leave after five years at regular pay, during which time the church will provide for the service of the parish through interim service. It is understood that the granting of this leave will be for a program of spiritual and intellectual refreshment. The goals and reporting will be jointly determined by you and the church. You will commit to at least one year of service following sabbatical leave. This will have no compensatory time or monetary value except as actually used and will accrue again in five years. Adjustments to the above must be in writing and mutually agreed upon by church and minister.

M. Maternity/Paternity Leave

The church will follow the guidelines as described in the clergy compensation guidelines approved by the Northern California Nevada Conference and/or be guided by the Conference Personnel Policy.

N. Disability

In case of disability because of sickness or accident, the church shall be responsible for the pastor’s full salary and benefits until the Disability Income Benefit Plan becomes effective, or for 90 days whichever period is shorter.

O. Moving Expenses

The church agrees to pay moving expenses from your present location, _____, to _____, including cost of meals, transportation, and lodging for you and your family en route.

P. Automobile/Travel Expenses

The church agrees to reimburse you for travel expenses incurred in the performance of pastoral duties, including involvement in Conference and Association activities, at the rate allowed by the IRS.

Q. Professional Expenses

The church agrees to provide in its annual budget reimbursements for professional expenses as follows.

Conferences and Retreats (including full expense for Conference Annual Meeting, Association & Conference meetings and events for pastors)	\$ _____
Study Leave	\$ _____
Books, Subscriptions, Computer Software, etc.	\$ _____

R. Termination

This agreement between you and this church can be terminated by either party with at least 90 days written notice or upon other terms mutually agreed upon, except in the case of loss of ministerial standing. Loss of ministerial standing will result in immediate termination of this call agreement.

S. Review of Ministry

You and the Church Council shall study and review the priorities of the Church and the effectiveness of our mutual ministry at least every three years and not in relation to salary review.

T. First Year Review of Expectations

10-18 months after you have begun your ministry among us, you and the church council will engage in a review of expectations, facilitated by Section D of the Conference Committee on the Ministry and/or our Associate Conference Minister.

U. Pastoral Relations Committee/Pastoral Support Committee

A group of church members shall meet with you regularly to support you in your ministry and to advise you regarding issues and concerns of the congregation.

V. Conflict

The Conference Minister or Associate Conference Minister shall be consulted at the request of either you or the church, should our relationship become strained or in jeopardy. The assistance of Section D of the Conference Committee on the Ministry and/or an outside consultant may likewise be sought.

Acknowledgement

Both Church and Minister acknowledge that we have reviewed the United Church of Christ's Commissioned Minister's Code and the section on Ministerial Accountability contained within the *UCC Manual on Ministry* and the *Northern California Nevada Conference Supplements and Appendices*, and will abide by those standards.

