Pastoral Partnership Proposal

First Presbyterian Church of Vassar and Vassar First United Methodist Church

Our Shared Beliefs and History:

We believe that our purpose as a church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We believe we are called to love and worship God with all our hearts, souls, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. To that end, we believe that our individual congregational callings are not to recruit Presbyterians or United Methodists, but to grow in our faith and work in partnership with God and with each other to bring hope and healing to the Vassar Area community.

Our two congregations have a long history of partnerships to serve our community: from programming like a shared youth ministry, to missional outreach like the Crop Walk and Backpack program, to shared worship services and combined vocal and bell choirs. We believe we are stronger when we cooperate and partner with each other.

Proposal:

Because of our historical success of witnessing and worship together, we are proposing a new partnership as outlined by this proposal. Each congregation will, as they have in the past, continue to retain their unique identity in the community, but will partner together for the agreed upon pastoral services.

Partnership Overview:

Both churches will continue to operate as independent congregations including but not limited to: having their own governing board to administer the church, maintaining their own physical property and assets as they deem appropriate, keeping separate membership rolls, finances separated from the other.

The proposal provides one more shared service in the spirit of past shared services: pastor services. The specific duties provided to the First Presbyterian Church of Vassar are outlined below. The Pastoral services and expectations for the United Methodist Church will continue as outlined by the Book of Discipline and by the expectations of the Bishop and the Cabinet for the appointment.

Pastor's Duties and Responsibilities for the Vassar Presbyterian Church:

Time Structure:
20 hours/week, pastor in pulpit 42 Sundays per year. Sundays not in the pulpit include:

- Four (4) weeks paid vacation, including Sundays.
- Two (2) weeks paid study leave, including Sundays
- Four (4) weeks on the 5th Sundays of the month

Pastoral Duties:
To provide a balanced ministry of preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and organizational leadership to the congregation, and enable the church to grow to its full potential in spiritual vitality by leading members and introducing others to Jesus Christ.

Core Practices:

- Develop a lifestyle of prayer that encourages a culture of prayer.
- Be diligent in the study of Scripture.
- Practice habits of community and cultivate relationships that provide for spiritual friendship, mentorship, and accountability.
- Engage in on-going education as a preacher and steward of the Gospel.

Specific Duties/Responsibilities:

1. Preaching, teaching, prayer, and worship (45% of time)
    - Prepare and deliver biblically faithful sermons as led by the Holy Spirit.
    - Lead congregational worship services.
    - Participate in virtual worship services.
    - Celebrate the sacraments as approved by the Session.
    - Provide direction, short and long range planning support, and creative input to the worship service, in conjunction with the Worship and Music Ministry Team.
    - Utilize a lay worship leader each week.
    - Teach at appropriate opportunities, resource and develop teachers, and develop initiatives to encourage spiritual growth, learning, and challenge.
    - Promote biblical stewardship.
    - Pray for the congregation, publicly when appropriate and privately.

Compensation:

In return for providing the above pastoral services for the Presbyterian Church, starting Jan 1, 2025, a yearly compensation package will be awarded in the amount of $40,225.00. Funds included to assist with the pastor's salary, mileage reimbursement, continuing education and professional development, health and retirement benefits. The funds shall be paid to the Vassar United Methodist Church on a monthly basis (As of January 1, 2025, $3,352.00/month) to supplement the pastor's compensation package currently paid through the UMC.

Non-cash compensation such as paid vacation and study leave will be commensurate with the UMC position.

Support, Supervision and Accountability:

The pastor shall be supported, prayed for and evaluated by the members of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC). Membership of the SPRC shall contain appointed representatives from both congregations with 2 members appointed by the Session. The SPRC shall meet at least quarterly with the pastor present at all meetings. Yearly the SPRC will evaluate the pastor's effectiveness using the UMC Clergy Review process (The 2021 form is attached) and set pastoral goals for the upcoming year in conjunction with the pastor.

Future Compensation:

The SPRC shall set future compensation packages adhering to the minimum salary guidelines set by the Michigan Area Conference of the UMC. (2021 Table attached) Future changes in the pastoral compensation including but not limited to salary, health benefits and retirement will be shared equitably between both congregations.

Future Appointments:
When in the course of the pastoral tenure the pastor is required to itinerate through the UMC, future appointments for both congregations shall be made by the Bishop and Cabinet of the Michigan Area Conference of the UMC. The newly appointed pastor will provide pastoral services for both congregations as outlined in this agreement.

A new pastor appointment will be required to submit to a background check through the Presbytery, and an interview with the Presbytery Committee On Ministry.

2. Pastoral Care (45% of time)

    - Visits and calls to those in the hospital, nursing homes or assisted living, in rehabilitation facilities, or at home.
    - Marriages, baptisms, funerals, and associated counseling
    - Support confirmation preparation
    - Individual or group interventions.

3. Administration (10% of time)

    - Moderate the Session.
    - Moderate congregational meetings.
    - Present an annual report to the Session.
    - Hold office hours 1/2 day a week or by appointment.

Division of Responsibilities of Pastor and the Congregation:

Pastor Duties:		Congregation Duties:
Preaching and Prayer	Shared	Preaching and Prayer
Pastoral Care	Shared	Pastoral Care
Administer Sacraments		Lead Worship
Ecumenical Worship Services		Lead Committees/Teams
Moderate Session and Congregational Meetings		Youth MInistry
Outreach	Shared	Outreach/Fellowship
Sunday School and Children's Messages When Needed		

Dissolution of Partnership:

If either church wishes to dissolve the partnership, it shall be submitted in writing before Jan 1st of the calendar year with the partnership terminating on the subsequent Jun 30th . This will allow ample time for both churches to reassess their clergy staffing requirements and seek suitable replacements. The pastor's appointment will run from July 1 - June 30th each year.

Future Hope:

As the framers of this proposal, it is our hope that providing shared pastoral services will create and foster additional opportunities for shared worship, outreach, discipleship and mission work in our community. We pray both congregations continue to grow in their faith and witness to Jesus Christ.

First Presbyterian Church of Vassar: Chair Mary Kennard, Sue Campbell, Steve Franko, Lynn Franko
Vassar First United Methodist Church: Pastor Scott Sherrill, Art Reimus, Pat Middlin, Chuck Parsell

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Approved by the Session of the Vassar First Presbyterian Church on, 19 December 2024.

Dennis Irish, Pastor, Vassar First United Methodist and Vassar First Presbyterian Churches

Stephen Franko

Stephen Franko, Elder and Clerk of Session, Vassar First Presbyterian Church

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