*(A template)*

MINISTRY AGREEMENT

**Name of Church**

**City, State**

and

Name of Pastor

**INTRODUCTION**

 This congregation calls or appoints a Vacancy Pastor [VP] to serve in the same way as every regularly called pastor of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He is charged to fulfill all of the duties and responsibilities typically associated with the office of the public ministry in this place, and to provide a continuity of pastoral care as this congregation prepares for its next resident pastor.

 The role of VP is different from the norm in that it is an interim position. The VP will typically serve the congregation until the next resident Pastor has accepted the call to serve and is on-site.

 An Intentional Interim Ministry (IMM) has specialized training while a Vacancy Pastor has experience and general pastor skills.

MINISTRY DESCRIPTION OF THE VACANCY PASTOR

As the pastor of this congregation, the VP is authorized and obligated to...

• administer the Word of God in the congregation. He will preach and officiate at the Divine Services, ensure that adult Bible classes and catechism classes are appropriately led, work with the Sunday School in training teachers and teaching children, oversee the doctrine and teaching of the congregation;

• administer the sacraments in accordance with their divine institution;

• perform the functions of a Pastor in counseling, pastoral care, visiting the sick and dying, admonishing the indifferent and the erring;

• guard and promote the spiritual welfare of the members of this congregation through catechetical instruction in the Christian faith of adults;

• guide the congregation in applying Christian discipline;

• promote and guide the mission activity of the congregation locally through the congregation's own evangelism efforts, as well as globally through the District and Synod;

• assist the congregation in adopting administrative policies and procedures that will help it in its work;

• serve the congregation as an example of Christian conduct, endeavor to live in Christian unity with the members of the congregation and all others in the Synod, and by the grace of God, do everything possible for the encouragement of the congregation and the upbuilding of Christ's church.

While he is serving this congregation, the VP will also...

• work with the congregation and the District in accomplishing any possible vacancy goals;

• help strengthen ties between the congregation and the District;

• prepare the congregation to receive its new Pastor;

• provide for appropriate closure to the vacancy ministry.

SPECIFIC MINISTRY TASKS

1. Worship and Official Acts

 a. The VP will lead the worship planning (preparation of worship components,

 bulletins, and the like) in conjunction with the congregation’s Director of Music.

 b. The VP will preach and lead worship a minimum of three weekends each month, with

 one weekend per month ‘off’. He will work with the Elders and District personnel in

 arranging for worship coverage for any weekend he is not present.

c. The VP will normally arrange and conduct the official acts for the congregation (baptisms, weddings, funerals) and will ensure that these are entered into the congregation’s records.

d. The VP will ensure that a shut-in ministry is maintained and that information about shut-in members is prepared for the next resident pastor.

 e. To the extent that there is permission, the VP will ensure that hospitalized members are visited and/or otherwise provided ministry contact.

2. Adult Bible Classes

a. The VP will likely lead one Sunday-morning adult class of 4 to 6 weeks duration between August and December of 2030.

b. It is unlikely that the VP will lead any other class(es) from August to December of 2030.

3. Adult Membership Class

 If a need presents itself, the VP may lead a 6-week membership class for prospective members in the autumn of 2029.

4. Junior Confirmation Class

 Initially, the VP will not be involved in the confirmation instruction of St. John’s

 confirmation-aged youth members.

5. Meetings

 a. The VP will likely schedule a weekly staff meeting, with day/time to be agreed with

 other staff. This meeting will serve to acquaint the VP with St. John’s ministry and to

 coordinate the ministry of the congregation.

b. The VP will meet with the Elders and Leadership Council, unless he is out of town when those meetings are scheduled.

c. The VP may meet with other individuals and groups as a need arises and as his schedule permits.

6. Day-School Ministry

 The VP will attempt to maintain a weekly presence at the day school. He will likely lead chapel worship twice between August and December, 2029, and will engage with the school principal concerning other points of contact.

7. Office Hours and Administrative Responsibilities

 The VP will normally maintain office hours from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, though there will be some flexibility involved. The congregation will be informed about the VP’s office availability. The VP will work with office staff to ensure that routine administrative tasks are addressed.

8. On-Call Status

 The VP will agree to an on-call status regarding emergency or other urgent contacts.

9. Circuit/District Responsibilities

 The VP will be expected to represent St. John’s at functions normally associated with

 the office of Pastor (e.g., circuit meetings, district events)

10. Other Tasks and Responsibilities

 Every vacancy ministry is unique and typically evolves over time. Ministry tasks and

 responsibilities may change over time as well. Significant changes to the above list of tasks which could change the ministry time commitments more than approximately two (2) hours per week need prior approval from both the VP and the board of elders.

11. Other Personnel Issues

 The Employee Manual of St. John’s Lutheran Church will guide any special circumstances of employment not covered by the above listings, pro-rated as appropriate.

12. While the VP can answer general questions on the call process, the Circuit Visitor and District President will guide the call process.

**UNDERSTANDING OF ST. JOHN’S LUTHERAN CHURCH**

The congregation obligates itself...

• to receive the VP as a servant of Jesus Christ, to give him the honor and support that the Word prescribes, to work with him in word and deed, and to support him with diligent, faithful assistance and prayers;

• to make faithful and regular use of the means of grace;

* Regularly pray for the VP and family as well as the next full-time Pastor to be called.

• to support the VP with the following provisions:

*[Note: The following provisions assume a 30-hour-per-week ministry commitment.]*

1. Salary

For the initial, 5-month period of this agreement, a salary of 20,000 on a monthly basis will be provided. (60% designated as salary, 40% designated as housing). Recommended salary guidelines are on the Northern Illinois District website. Assistance can be found in Concordia Plan Services.

2**.** Ministry-Related Mileage Reimbursement

Mileage for ministry-related activity will be reimbursed to the VP at the current

 (2029/2030) IRS rate. This will be documented by the VP in line with IRS guidelines,

 will be reimbursed monthly, and will be separated from salary payments for tax reasons

3. Additional Ministry Support

 The congregation agrees to compensate worship/preaching support for those occasions when the VP is absent. If it should happen that the VP is absent more than one weekend in a month, the cost of worship/preaching support beyond one weekend will be reimbursed by the VP. For renumeration of Supply Preachers see NID website.

TERM OF AGREEMENT

This agreement will extend from (beginning date), to (end date). If a resident pastor is called and is in place prior to (5 days before end date), the VP will serve until the new pastor is installed. This agreement will be reviewed after three months and every three months thereafter.

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(for name of Church)

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(date)

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(vacancy Pastor)

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(date)