

**A Covenant of Understanding Between
The Session of the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian
and Joseph Welker Jr
effective at his retirement as pastor, June 30, 2021**

This covenant is intended to describe the changes in roles and responsibilities that will take effect as the pastor retires and to clarify what the parties may expect to happen, and not to happen, during and after this transition.

The larger church offers important guidance in helping pastors and churches think through such pastoral separations, and the changes described below are based on Presbyterian polity as described in *The Book of Order*, pastoral ethics defined in part by the “Separation Ethics” document provided by The Presbytery of New Hope Manual for Commission on Ministry, and wise practice. The Book of Order offers important guidance in the matter of transitions: (G-2.0905) *“After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.”*

Specifically, the larger church has long seen it fit to help both the retiring pastor and the church negotiate a separation by formally terminating “pastoral services” of any departing pastor.

Such stepping away does not indicate in any way the retiring pastor’s lack of interest in or fondness for the congregation, but rather underscores the importance of letting the relationship lie fallow, so that a new relationship may form. It is the intention of both the retiring pastor and the Session to prevent divided loyalties within Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian and to avoid pressures on the retiring pastor, the interim pastor, and the new pastor both during the interim period and after a new pastor is called.

1. The pastor’s retirement signifies that his pastoral and administrative duties at the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian will end at midnight on June 30, 2021. His final Sunday leading worship will be June 27, 2021
2. The Interim Pastor Search Committee will be responsible for bringing a recommendation of interim leadership for the Session’s advice and consent, to serve until the next pastor is called and installed.
3. The Transition Team will oversee the processes and issues that arise during the transition. They will seek the Session’s advice and consent as needed. They will also work with the Personnel Committee in providing support for the ongoing staff and the Interim Pastor.
4. The retiring pastor agrees that he will not officiate or assist at any baptism, marriage, or memorial service at the Kirk of Kildaire except for those already scheduled or upon invitation of the moderator of the Session.

5. The retiring pastor agrees that he will no longer make hospital visits or offer pastoral care to members of the Kirk of Kildaire. His role will be within the normal limits of community activities and friendship, but will not include the provision of pastoral care, which will be the responsibility of the continuing and interim pastoral and program staff.
6. The retiring pastor may exercise his ministry in other congregations and venues as invited, but will not seek or encourage the presence of members of the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian on such occasions.
7. The retiring pastor will be permitted to lead the fall Holy Land trip from October 16-31st since it was postponed due to COVID
8. The retiring pastor will turn in keys and key fobs by August 1st. He will also be permitted access to work email until November 1st in order to manage emails relating to the Holy Land Trip and any personal emails. He will not respond to work emails following retirement except in cases when needed to pass on information as needed.
9. The retiring pastor and his spouse will not attend worship services or other events at the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian Church.
10. The retiring pastor will bear the primary responsibility for maintaining healthy boundaries. He expects to offer unqualified support to present and future leaders of the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian.
11. The retiring pastor and spouse will be independent of the church office and staff, except for the routine forwarding of mail or other courtesies provided to New Hope Presbytery members and correspondents.
12. The retiring pastor is hereby released from all obligations to the Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian described in his Call. In addition, all authority vested in him and held by virtue of that call is terminated upon his retirement.
13. If desired by the new pastor, the retiring pastor and the new pastor may meet for the purpose of a knowledge transfer or “pastor-to-pastor” debrief. The purpose of such a meeting would be to help preserve the strengths and assets of the church, yet allow the new pastor to function without interference.
14. In matters relating to the life of the church, the retiring pastor will refrain from email interactions with church members; he will also refrain from comments on church members’ Facebook pages and other social media posts, and will make no posts about the Kirk of Kildaire.
15. The retiring pastor agrees to repay the loan made for the downpayment of housing by June 30, 2022 as described in the promissory note.

16. The Kirk of Kildaire agrees to provide compensation for unused vacation as described in the Personnel Manual.
17. No changes will be made to any of these items without the mutual agreement of the retiring pastor, the new pastor, and the Session.
18. The retiring pastor promises to pray for the new pastor and the church leadership in the months and years ahead.

Pastor

Date

Clerk of Session

Date