Agreement between Congregation and Departing Pastor

When a pastor leaves a congregation, there are boundaries to be honored and awareness that need to be clear for the former pastor and the congregation he/she served. This statement is an agreement for both the congregation and departing pastor to accept and honor.

Relationship between Pastor and Congregation
It is a holy relationship that pastor and people share while the pastor is under call to a particular congregation. While under call, there are expectations and responsibilities that the pastor holds which clearly provide for ministries and the mission of the congregation. From them, many relationships develop which are keenly impacted when the pastor departs.

However, when a pastor departs, whether for a call to another congregation, retirement or other service, s/he is expected to no longer provide pastoral services to the people of the congregation. Likewise, the congregation and its individual members are to understand they are not to ask the former pastor to provide services and care that once marked the relationship. Those services are to be undertaken in relationship with pastors currently under call to the congregation.

Thus, the Trinity Council has adopted the following statement regarding the future relationship between the congregation and the pastors that will depart in 2016. (Pastor Jim Page will depart March 13 to begin a new call with the people of Apostles Lutheran Church, Brandon, FL and Pastor Kurt Jacobson will retire and move out of the community no later than July 31, 2016).

Agreement Between Congregation and Departing Pastor

The Council of Trinity understands that the following responsibilities and boundaries go into effect when a pastor is no longer under call to the congregation. At that time, former pastors will no longer provide pastoral services to the congregation, corporately or individually.

Additionally, the people of Trinity will:
- not ask a former pastor to preside as a baptism, funeral or wedding (in the church building or elsewhere);
- not ask a former pastor to make hospital or nursing home visits;
- not seek out a former pastor for counseling.

Requests for pastoral services are to be directed to pastors under call to Trinity. While letting go of the relationships with former pastors is a challenging aspect of transition, there is important wisdom and faithfulness in honoring this agreement.

Former pastors may be invited back for congregation-wide celebrations which arise, such as anniversaries or significant milestones in our ministries. At such times and with clear understanding, former pastors may be invited to provide some pastoral function that fits within the context of the celebration. Additionally, pastors currently under call to Trinity may desire to invite former pastors back for other worship and fellowship activities of the congregation.