**2017**

**A Covenant**

**The International Council of Community Churches**

**Board of Directors and Board of Trustees with the Council Minister**

**and**

**an Invitation to Member Congregations of the Council**

Seeking the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit and relying on God’s unfailing mercy, the Council’s boards and the Council Minister enter into covenant with one another.

The Present Circumstance

Together we recognize that the community church movement and its visible manifestation the International Council of Community churches, are at a crucial point. A change in servant-leadership within the Council, and a worldwide cultural situation that encourages separation rather than unity, are among the obvious challenges. Yet we recognize that the world needs the movement’s witness of justice, reconciliation and Christian unity, perhaps now as never before. We know that we could allow the movement to falter. But we are assured of God’s presence and mercy and in that faith we are determined to move forward; we will do our part in laboring for the movement’s growth in spirit, influence and numbers.

To that end we covenant and pledge our mutual support and our fervent prayer.

A Covenant and Pledge From the Council Minister

In humbly accepting the call of the Board of Directors to servant leadership in the ICCC as Council Minister, and in accepting the further support of the Board of Trustees in my service, I solemnly covenant and pledge the following:

I will devote to the work of the community church movement and its visible manifestation in the Council no less than the contractual number of hours the position of Council Minister calls for, and relying on God for strength, will offer additional hours as I am able without expectation of additional recompense.

I will be pro-active in my service to the Council, not waiting for invitations to arrive or crises to erupt, but instead I will take the initiative in seeking to develop, extend and make effective the vision and goals of the Council.

I will serve as pastor, recognizing that the servant leaders of our congregations need a friend, confidential counselor and encourager in their work. I will worship with congregations of the Council a minimum of twenty times during a calendar year, whether or not I have been invited to preach, thus showing support for the Council’s pastors and other servant leaders. This will be the first of the three main emphases of my labor with the Council.

I will serve as a promoter, marketer and interpreter of the Council to non-member congregations and their pastoral leaders, as well as to those who are Council members, to the end that the movement will be strengthened through new members and the retention of existing members. This will be the second of the three main emphases of my labor with the Council.

I will serve as administrator, negotiating venues for Annual Conferences; contributing written material to Council publications; working in cooperation with the Office Administrator to assure that all necessary details of Council life are attended to; cooperating with the boards and Vice-Presidential and other committees to assure that our service to the churches is well coordinated; and reaching out to interchurch agencies so that our ecumenical witness remains vital. This will be the third of the main emphases of my labor with the Council.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, when planning visits to Council congregations, I will notify in advance the appropriate regional Trustee, and any member(s) of the Board of Directors who reside within the region. I will do so praying that it will be possible for the officer(s) to arrange meetings with the leadership of non-member congregations, so that together we may communicate and interpret the vision and goals of the Council to them, to the end that they will choose to join the Council and become active members of the community church movement. [An example of “extraordinary circumstances” would be the funeral of a Council servant-leader held at such short notice as to preclude arranging additional appointments or meetings.]

I will support the Council financially with the knowledge that my financial support is a means of providing an example for the entire Council, who through the Board of Directors have entrusted a position of servant-leadership to me.

God willing, I will serve until relieved. I anticipate that the Board of Directors will form a search committee without delay, and that my term of service will not extend beyond two years.

A Covenant and Pledge From the Boards of the ICCC

In calling the Rev. Donald H. Ashmall to the office of Council Minister, we as the ICCC Board of Directors and the ICCC Board of Trustees, and as individual members of the boards solemnly covenant and pledge the following:

Each of us will devote at least ten hours per month to the direct service of the Council for at least the next three months. We understand that our initial responsibility within such hours of service will be communicating in person or by telephone with those who have expressed their commitment to the community church movement. The purpose of these visits and calls will be to share a message of encouragement and a solicitation of prayer for the movement and for the Council as the movement’s visible manifestation. We understand that emails may be a supplement to other communication, but that the more personal gesture of a personal visit or telephone call is needed for the Council at this time. As we discover through our contacts any pastoral or other needs that should be addressed by the Council Minister, we will notify the Council Minister in timely fashion.

The Council Minister has assured us that except under extraordinary circumstances he will notify the regional Trustee and any members of the Board of Directors who may live in the region, of his plans to visit churches, clergy and/or area or regional meetings in the region. Each of us upon receiving such a notice will make a vigorous, good-faith effort to arrange a meeting with the pastor (and where possible lay officers) of one or more congregations not currently members of the Council. We will accompany the Council Minister to those meetings and make vigorous good-faith efforts to follow up with further contacts, to the end that non-member congregations may wish to join the Council and support the community church movement.

Each of us will make vigorous good-faith efforts to attend area/regional meetings in our own regions; to assist as appropriate in planning meetings of excellence; and to invite the pastors (and where possible lay officers) of non-member congregations to attend such meetings with us.

Each of us will support the Council in prayer and by financial contribution. We understand that our financial situations differ from person to person and we know that the amounts each of us gives will be held in confidence, but we recognize and affirm that some measure of financial support is a means of providing an example for the entire Council, whose members have entrusted to us our positions of servant-leadership.

In the case that personal circumstances make it impossible for any of us to keep the above pledges, we will withdraw from board membership and where possible make recommendation regarding a successor to the Board of Directors in its capacity as the appointing agency to fill unexpired terms of office.

An Invitation to Covenant to the Congregations of the Council

Recognizing the independence of each congregation within the Council and the capacity of each congregation to make decisions as the Spirit of God moves, the boards and the Council Minister humbly and respectfully invite each congregation of the Council to join in covenant with us:

To support the community church movement in prayer during the worship services of the congregation and to invite members of the congregation to pray for the community church movement and for the Council as its visible manifestation in their daily devotions.

During worship services of the congregation, to pray specifically for other congregations who are a part of the community church movement, and to take steps to inform those congregations so that they may be encouraged in the knowledge that they are being upheld in prayer.

To share the congregation’s joys and concerns with the Council and its congregations so that others may be in prayer for and with the congregation.

To welcome representatives of the Council as they visit the congregation; and to invite representatives of the Council to worship with the congregation, especially on significant occasions.

To make a vigorous and good-faith effort to be represented in number at Council gatherings in the area and/or region and at Annual Conference, so that the fellowship may be strengthened.

To pray for the servant-leaders of the Council on a regular basis, that they may be led by God’s Spirit to excellence in service to our Lord and to our congregations.

To support the community church movement by generously sharing talent with other Council congregations, within the limits of ability and opportunity.

To support the community church movement by generously sharing treasure seeking to meet and exceed any suggested measure of financial support of the Council as the visible manifestation of the movement, within the limits of ability.

To seek out other independent churches and ministry centers currently unaffiliated with a wider fellowship, and to share with them the vision and goals of the community church movement.

***Signature page follows----***

By our dated signatures we declare that, relying on God’s presence and guidance we the Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees of the Council together with the Council Minister enter into covenant with one another and with the congregations that form the Council.

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                  {Signature}                                           {Position of Servant-Leadership in the Council}

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                  {Printed Name}                                                                {Today’s Date}

By the dated signatures of our servant leaders, we as congregations declare that, relying on God’s presence and guidance we enter into covenant with the other signatory congregations, and with the boards and the Council Minister of the International Council of Community Churches.

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                  {Signature}                                                            {Printed Name of Congregation}

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       {Printed Name of Signatory}                                                       {Today’s Date}

Please sign and date a copy of this signature page and return it by postal mail to Council House. A collated copy listing all signatories will be prepared and mailed to each signatory individual and congregation prior to the 2017 Annual Conference. The address for Council House appears below.