

This New Church Covenant Recognizes:

[Insert name of new church] of [general church location(s)] as a [Fellowship/Pre-NCD/NCD] of the Presbyterian Church (USA) through the support and oversight of the Tri-Presbytery New Church Development Commission of the Presbyteries of Cherokee, Greater Atlanta, and Northeast Georgia

A. The purpose of New Church Development is to provide for missional faith communities in the Reformed tradition that bear witness to Jesus Christ as they live and proclaim God's Kingdom in the world.

All new and developing expressions of church will participate in the Great Ends of the Church (Book of Order G-1.0200) in unique ways informed by their context (s) of ministry:

1. The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind
 - Allowing the Great Commission of Jesus to shape every area of their life together, new churches see their first, foremost and final calling to be that of helping people to hear, experience, and respond to Christ's call to new life and discipleship.
2. The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God
 - Taking Christian baptism as a sign of both new life and divine calling, churches help people discover and utilize gifts and abilities for ministry, relationship, and service in the Church's mission of bearing witness to God's kingdom in the name of Jesus and in the Holy Spirit's power.
3. The maintenance of divine worship
 - As the church's most clearly defining activity, vital worship is at the heart of community life, including prayer, the reading and proclamation of scripture, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, opportunities for self-offering (including financial gifts), and relating to one another and the world.
4. Preservation of the truth
 - Churches proclaim the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as revealed through the Scriptures, discern the movement of the Spirit, and seek to live into the new things that God is doing in the church and in the world.
5. Promotion of Social Righteousness
 - Following the example of Christ's servanthood, churches follow God's call into the world, through ministries of evangelism, compassion, service, and advocacy.
6. The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world
 - Churches cultivate and exhibit a sense of the holy in their life together and in their interactions with the world. By helping members to identify and live in ways that foster biblical faithfulness and integrity in all relationships, including practices of loving respect and hospitality in times of both agreement and disagreement, churches offer an incarnational and missional presence in their community and the world.

B. Each new church will work with the NCDC's Oversight Advisory Team and their liaison to discern and develop leadership (including staffing, as appropriate) and ministry practices (including organizational structures) that reflect and serve the church's Great Ends as well as the congregation's unique missional objectives. These forms and structures will remain open to change and adjustment called forth by new experiences and spiritual discernment.

C. As part of its journey with each new church, the Tri-Presbytery NCDC will:

- Pray daily for the spiritual and numeric growth of the new churches and their leaders
- Provide continuing education, mission enrichment, and spiritual support opportunities for organizing pastors, leaders and members, including the Annual New Church Development Celebration, discernment conversations, leadership training, and special conferences and events
- Establish regular contact with the new church to provide support, mutual transformation in mission, and appropriate oversight between the congregation and the PCUSA, including:
 - The appointment of a liaison with particular gifts to support the church and visit the congregation in-person at least quarterly. (See the OAT Mission and Ministry policy)
 - An Annual Meeting consisting of the pastoral leader of the new church, members of the NCDC, the new church's liaison, and other congregational leaders designed to reflect on the new church's mission and ministry, and respond together to the new church's particular challenges and opportunities by identifying goals and objectives for the next calendar year (See the OAT Mission and Ministry policy)
- Authorize the Oversight Advisory Team (OAT) to act as a session for the new church until such a time as the new church is prepared to appoint a session (G-10.0102 and G-9.0503a2) during chartering
- Provide opportunities for material support of new churches by:
 - Serving as faithful stewards of the new church mission support of our three presbyteries and their churches
 - Recommending qualified new churches for PCUSA Mission Program Grants and special awards, and assisting the new church leadership in applying for such support
 - Nurturing relationships between new churches and constituted congregations, leading in the development of covenants between new churches and congregations with whom they share space/hospitality and ministry partnerships
 - Providing special grants for new churches that have identified unique needs and opportunities to live out their vision and goals in mission as a new church
 - Providing special grants for continuing education of new church pastors and leaders
 - Supporting the new church in requesting funds from alternative sources
- Testify to the PCUSA and others as to the transforming power of mission of new church ministry, seeking opportunities for greater support, collaboration and partnership between vital new and constituted (chartered) churches
- Collaborate with new churches in generously sharing best practices for Christian ministry and discipleship formation in an effort to renew the church and world
- Assist the new church toward becoming a vital congregation of the PCUSA, a leader in the denomination that generously shares its gifts with its sister congregations
- Work with the congregation to appoint an appropriately gifted leader to serve as the moderator of the new church leadership team in the absence of a pastoral leader
- In situations where warranted or requested, discern with the congregation as to whether its ministry meets the objectives of a growing missional new church, and as a result may recommend the dissolution of formal oversight relationship between the congregation as a recognized Fellowship, Pre-NCD or NCD of the PCUSA

D. As part of its journey as a new church of the PCUSA, the new church will, through the leadership of the pastor and Leadership Team will:

- Develop a missional church that embodies the Great Ends of the Church in its relationships and ministry;
- Prepare and provide its annual Ministry Report to the liaison and collaborate in preparing for its annual Advisory Meeting with the NCDC
- Develop a Vision Statement for the church's ministry through discernment and collaboration with the leaders and members of the church, and the NCDC
- Develop an evangelism strategy that invites and equips people of all ages to live as disciples of Jesus Christ
- Identify goals and ways of life that promote self-sustainability and self-propagation
- Serve the community through evangelism and service
- Appoint a treasurer trained to keep regular financial reports of the new church's income and expenses
- Participate in a stewardship program that emphasizes tithing
- Contribute financially and through in-kind donations of support and leadership to the mission of the NCDC
- Provide opportunities for communication and support between the NCDC and the congregation, and vice-versa (such as inviting the liaison to pray for the congregation during worship, or facilitating a special training for leaders of the church)
- Participate in the Annual NCD Celebration, encouraging members of the congregation to attend and support the mission and fellow leaders of new church development
- Maintain good communication with the NCDC through staff, and liaison contact, responding to emails or telephone calls, asking for help and clarification as important moments of discernment in the life of the church, and making good effort to meet together for collaboration and support
- Participate in at least one leadership or continuing educational opportunities per year provided by the NCDC

E. The new church pastoral leader will also:

- Attend presbytery meetings regularly, but not less than twice a year, seeking opportunities to serve the PCUSA with her/his and her/his congregation's unique gifts
- Cultivate in the congregation a missional understanding of the connectional church, one that seeks offer the congregation's gifts to the denomination at large
- Identify ways to serve other new churches, including offering financial and in-kind stewardship to the NCDC on a yearly basis
- Cultivate a Reformed (PCUSA) understanding of church polity and governance
- Participate in at least one leadership event of the NCDC per year
- Take appropriate responsibility for worship leadership (W-1.4005)
- Administer sacraments as authorized by the OAT
- Meet with the OAT as requested
- Provide organizing pastoral oversight as prescribed in the Book of Order (including G – 14.0552)
- Provide entrepreneurial leadership to the congregation, and cultivate excellence in leadership, membership, stewardship, and discipleship, inspiring, equipping, moderating, and leading members of the congregation to realize the mission of the congregation and invite others into discipleship
- Identify and work with a professional NCD mentor /coach approved by the OAT
- Be courageous and faithful in this ministry, serving God's people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love

The signatures below indicate commitment to fulfilling this covenant in our mission together:

Signature of Pastor _____ Date _____

Signature of Liaison _____ Date _____

Signature of Leadership Team Member _____ Date _____

Signature of OAT Member _____ Date _____