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Installation Service

It's happened more often than not. A vacant church is assigned a new pastor by the conference president at times with the assistance of the executive committee. The president then informs the pastor and the head elder of the change and the date of transition. (There are stories of pastors discovering they are moving in a public camp meeting announcement.) The pastor and family shows up on the appointed first Sabbath, signs the guest registry, the greeter remarks, "Oh! You're our new pastor." In Sabbath School through furtive glances, the new pastor and family are sized up. Suits rumples. Tie's crocked. Dress is frumpy. Does he sing? Later on the platform, the elder stumbles through a sort of introduction. Then the pastor preaches his first sermon which is throughly evaluated at various members dinner table. It's happened too many times.

Suggested below is an alternative to the traditional introduction of a new pastor. A representative from the conference attends the first Sabbath of the introducing the new pastor to the congregation. The formal installation of a pastor with a liturgy which includes commitments expressed by both pastor and congregation can be valuable in marking the transition of a pastor and family to a new church. Prior to the liturgy the following symbolic actions can take place:

- The clergy couple are invited to stand together on the platform. Flowers are presented to the clergy couple from the congregation.
- The new pastor is given a key to the church.
- Pens can be presented (a cheap form of a computer)
- The pulpit is "given" to the pastor. Clearly state in the hearing of the congregation that the pastor is responsible for what happens from the holy desk. The responsibility is given to the pastor by the conference. The pastor chooses who preaches and preaching content. It must be used to clearly present the redemptive good news of Jesus Christ.

The liturgy follows with the representative from the conference leading out. Be sure to have sufficient copies of the Service of Installation for the congregation to use. In the service, affirmations and commitments are made by the congregation and the pastor. The prayer said by both congregation and pastor is significant. Following the prayer the elders and/or members of the church board come forward welcoming the new pastor to their congregation. A hymn can be sung during the time of greeting. At times an additional prayer presented by the conference representative for the new pastor and the congregation, would be appropriate. The elders would be invited to kneel with their new pastor and place their hands of blessing upon her/him during the prayer.

On anniversary occasions of the installation, the pastor and congregation may wish to reuse the instillation liturgy as a means of renewing their commitments to ministry together.

Service of Installation

Fallbrook Seventh-day Adventist Church - Pastor Gerald Jones

Furness: Friends, we have gathered today to welcome your new pastor, Gerald Jones, and his family into your ministry and fellowship.

People: We welcome Pastor Jones as God's servant and shepherd for this time and in this place and we welcome his family.

Furness: Who are you to welcome him?

People: We are part of the body of Christ who are called God's chosen people. We worship in this place.

Furness: As God's people, you are also called to ministry.

- People: Indeed we are. For we gather together in common worship. Our church doors are open to all who seek spiritual nurture. We are here to sustain one another when burdened, to extend the hand of charity, and to loose the bonds of bigotry, malice, hatred, and illwill. We are here to share the good news of God's love in deed and in word and to seek knowledge, that each generation may grow in wisdom.
- Furness: The coming of Gerald to the pastoral ministry of this congregation marks a new step in the life of this body. As members at Fallbrook, what work do you request from your pastor? Pastor Jones, do you accept this task?
- People: We ask that you guide us in our worship and instruct us in our learning.
- Jones: By the grace of God, I will.
- People: We ask that you sustain us in our suffering and share with us in our joys.
- Jones: Through God's unfailing love, I will.

People: We ask that you challenge us in our deliberations and abide with us in our frailties.

Jones: In God's power, I will.

Furness: You have heard the pledges of the one you have requested to be your pastor. I now ask you, "Will you receive him and his family in love? Will you respect, and support him as one that is duly called by God."

People: We pledge to Pastor Jones our support for his ministry among us. We will dedicate our talents and gifts in cooperative service, so that our congregation will be complete and not lacking in any good thing and live as Christ's healing agents in this church and community.

Furness: I have heard your pledges as God's people in this place. Let us pray asking the Spirit of God to assist us in filling our calling to His service.

Prayer: (Congregation and Pastor Jones)

Spirit of God, join us together this day in our shared ministry which proclaims the life and witness of Christ. May we pledge to love each other, to agree to disagree, to restrain from speaking unkindly of others, and to avoid all forms of unfaithfulness.

Bless our pledges as we minister together and seek to nurture harmony as pastor and congregation. May we witness your gifts in one another. May we grow together in joy and wisdom as we venture forth together praising your Spirit.

When there is an associate pastor to install and the senior pastor requests assistance with the installation, one might amend the installation service as follows:

Service of Installation

Yucaipa Seventh-day Adventist Church – Pastor Eddie Sanker

Furness: Friends, today we welcome your new associate pastor, Eddie Sanker, and his family into your ministry and fellowship.

People: We welcome Pastor Sanker as God's servant and shepherd for this time and in this place and we welcome his family.

- Furness: Who are you to welcome him?
- People: We are part of the body of Christ who are called God's chosen people. We worship in this place.
- Furness: As God's people, you are also called to ministry.
- People: Indeed we are. For we gather together in common worship. Our church doors are open to all who seek spiritual nurture. We are here to sustain one another when burdened, to extend the hand of charity, and to loose the bonds of bigotry, malice, hatred, and illwill. We are here to share the good news of God's love in deed and in word and to seek knowledge, that each generation may grow in wisdom.
- Furness: The coming of Eddie as one of your pastors marks a new step in the life of this body. As members at Yucaipa, what work do you request from your pastor? Pastor Sanker, do you accept this task?

People: We ask that you guide our youth, to work closely with our senior Pastor, to assist in our worship and teach us as we learn more about our God.

Sanker: By the grace of God, I will.

People: We ask that you sustain us in our suffering and share with us in our joys.

Sanker: Through God's unfailing love, I will.

People: We ask that you challenge us in our deliberations and abide with us in our frailties.

Sanker: In God's power, I will.

Elsey: As a pastor on our church staff, will you assist your senior pastor and staff in the work of leading, training, planning, and maintaining the objectives and projects of this church?

Sanker: Indeed I will, for God has called me to this ministry. By his grace I will serve this congregation.

Furness: You have heard the pledges of the one you have requested to be your pastor. I now ask you, "Will you receive him and his family in love? Will you respect, and support him as one that is duly called by God."

People: We pledge to Pastor Sanker our support for his ministry among us. We will dedicate our

talents and gifts in cooperative service, so that our congregation will be complete and not lacking in any good thing and live as Christ's healing agents in this church and community.

Furness: I have heard your pledges as God's people in this place. Let us pray asking the Spirit of God to assist us in filling our calling to His service.

Prayer: (Congregation, pastors and Pastor Sanker)

Spirit of God, join us together this day in our shared ministry which proclaims the life and witness of Christ. May we pledge to love each other, to agree to disagree, to restrain from speaking unkindly of others, and to avoid all forms of unfaithfulness.

Bless our pledges as we minister together and seek to nurture harmony as pastors and congregation. May we witness your gifts in one another. May we grow together in joy and wisdom as we venture forth together praising your Spirit.