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3 **A COVENANT FOR CHURCH YOUTH MINISTRIES**  
4 **A Prudential Resolution**

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6 **Submitted by the Eastern Association of the Ohio Conference**  
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8 **SUMMARY**  
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10 This resolution calls upon local churches to adopt a set of promises to provide support to persons who work in  
11 youth ministries.  
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13 **BACKGROUND**  
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15 The Covenant for Church Youth Ministries<sup>i</sup> is a set of eight promises that churches adopt when considering the  
16 practices and principles they will use in nurturing and supporting people, both paid and volunteer, who work  
17 with youth. (Youth are defined using the UCC guidelines – ages 13-18.)  
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19 **1. We will pray and support.**

20 We believe that our youth workers need spiritual support in their work with young people.

21 We promise to pray for our youth workers and keep their needs a high priority in church prayer life.  
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23 **2. We will acknowledge the importance of gifts and God's call.**

24 We believe that gifts and call are best discerned in the context of the faith community.

25 We promise to provide opportunities for prayerful discernment.  
26

27 **3. We will provide opportunities for retreat and reflection.**

28 We believe that taking time to think and pray is just as essential for our youth workers as organizing  
29 events and meeting young people.

30 We promise to provide opportunities for our youth workers to use part of their schedules for retreat,  
31 reflection, worship and personal development.  
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33 **4. We will provide ongoing training and development.**

34 We believe that maintaining the gifts and skills of the youth workers is an ongoing process and that it is  
35 important to continually invest in professional development.

36 We promise to set aside time and money to provide this for our youth workers.  
37

38 **5. We will give a full day of rest each week.**

39 We believe that taking regular time off helps maintain our youth workers' passion and energy for their  
40 work with young people.

41 We promise to actively encourage our youth workers to take a day away from their role each week.  
42

43 **6. We will share responsibility as a priesthood of all believers.**

44 We believe that having a youth worker does not release the rest of the church from our responsibilities  
45 toward young people.

46 We promise to encourage everyone to play a part in volunteering, praying for and supporting young  
47 people.  
48

49 **7. We will celebrate and appreciate.**

50 We believe it is vital to acknowledge what our youth workers are doing and the commitment they have  
51 made to work with young people in our church.

52 We promise to make sure our youth workers know they are appreciated and we will celebrate their  
53 achievements.

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55 **8. We will strive to be a just employer.**

56 We believe it is important to have clear structures and procedures for recruiting and employing youth  
57 workers, and to provide supportive management structures which are fair and just.

58 We promise to follow non-exploitive practices in the way we employ our youth workers.  
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60 **THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL RATIONALE**

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62 The more spiritually alive and refreshed a youth worker is, the better example they will be to young people.  
63 Well-managed and supported youth workers do better youth work and often stay longer in their role in a church.  
64 The Covenant is a way for churches to think about how they're supporting a youth worker spiritually and  
65 practically. It is meant to be a helpful way for churches to think through the key issues in employing a youth  
66 worker.

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68 When Paul writes to Timothy in the New Testament, he clearly places on him a responsibility to train himself,  
69 especially in 'godliness'. But Paul's advice and guidance in 1 Timothy isn't just about character and spiritual  
70 life, it's also about skills. Paul advises him on ways of managing members of the congregation, on pastoral  
71 warning signs he needs to monitor and about inter-generational conflicts.

72  
73 Paul believes that Timothy needs to continue to grow not only in faith, but also in understanding, skills and  
74 experience. In effect Paul is behaving as an excellent employer. He is aware that Timothy is going to face  
75 challenges in his work, and so he wants to make sure he's equipped for the task ahead.

76  
77 The same challenge exists for churches today who employ a youth worker. Alongside their spiritual growth,  
78 churches need to think about ongoing training and development for their worker. Whatever qualifications they  
79 arrive with, the church has a responsibility to continue to invest in them and develop their skills, just like in any  
80 profession. After all, youth workers may face tough pastoral situations and often need to know how to counsel  
81 young people with complex needs, including dealing with child protection issues. They may need to learn new  
82 skills like speaking in public, leading small group programs or mentoring; and they almost certainly will need to  
83 know how to develop a strategic plan for their work. All of this requires ongoing professional training.

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85 Add to that, the challenges of a fast-changing culture. Youth workers need to be able to understand the  
86 implications of developments in areas like technology and the internet, educational and youth policy, legislation  
87 on health and safety and so on.

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89 **RESOLUTION**

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91 WHEREAS, the Twenty-eighth General Synods believes that youth workers need spiritual support in their work  
92 with young people;

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94 WHEREAS, gifts and call are best discerned in the context of the faith community;

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96 WHEREAS, taking time to think and pray is just as essential for our youth workers as organizing events and  
97 meeting young people;

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99 WHEREAS, maintaining the gifts and skills of the youth workers is an ongoing process and that it is important  
100 to continually invest in professional development;

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102 WHEREAS, taking regular time off helps maintain our youth workers' passion and energy for their work with  
103 young people;

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105 WHEREAS, having a youth worker does not release the rest of the church from our responsibilities toward  
106 young people;

107  
108 WHEREAS, it is vital to acknowledge what our youth workers are doing and the commitment they have made  
109 to work with young people in our church;

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111 WHEREAS, it is important to have clear structures and procedures for recruiting and employing youth workers,  
112 and to provide supportive management structures which are fair and just;

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114 | THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, the delegates to the Twenty-eighth General Synod of the United  
115 Church of Christ adopt this Covenant for Church Youth Ministries.

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117 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-eighth General Synod encourage local churches to adopt this  
118 covenant and implement it as policy and practice for employing, nurturing and supporting youth workers-both  
119 paid and volunteers they minister to and with youth.

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121 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that by adopting this Covenant for Church Youth Ministries the Twenty-eighth  
122 General Synod encourages local churches to make the following promises:

- 123  
124 1. to pray for our youth workers and keep their needs a high priority in church prayer life;  
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126 2. to provide our youth workers opportunities for prayerful discernment of gifts and call;  
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128 3. to provide opportunities for our youth workers to use part of their schedules for retreat, reflection, worship  
129 and personal development;  
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131 4. to set aside time and money to provide initial and ongoing training and professional development for our  
132 | youth workers\_;
- 133  
134 5. to actively encourage our youth workers to take TWO FULL DAYS away from their role each week;  
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136 6. to encourage the people of the local church to volunteer with, to pray for and to support youth;  
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138 7. to show appreciation for and celebrate the achievements of our youth workers;  
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140 8. to follow fair and just practices in the employment of our youth workers.

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142 **FUNDING**

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144 Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the  
145 affected agencies and the funds available.

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147 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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149 Local Church Ministries is requested to implement this resolution.  
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<sup>i</sup> This “Covenant for Church Youth Ministries” is inspired by and adapted from “The National Charter,” a similar set of promises promoted in the United Kingdom by two organizations: The Association of Christian Youth and Children’s Workers, and Youthwork, a collaboration of organizations working to resource and inspire Christian youth work. The Eastern Ohio Association of the United

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Church of Christ obtained permission from these UK organizations to draw upon and modify the contents of “The National Charter” for use in this General Synod resolution.