Memorandum of Agreement Between Warren Wilson College and Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church

I. Introduction

Warren Wilson College and Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church have a long and significant shared history (see Appendix). Warren Wilson College (WWC) was initially established as the Asheville Farm School in 1894 by the Women's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as a school to educate young men from rural Appalachia. Today WWC is an independently run, nationally recognized coed liberal arts college, drawing students from around the world. Although the Church and the College pursue different missions, the two communities continue to share a set of core values that serve to strengthen both institutions.

The Church and College have been intertwined since the College's earliest days. Though the congregation has worshipped in several locations on campus, the current Chapel was built by the hands of students, faculty, staff, and spouses. From its founding to the present day, the mission of the congregation has been centered around embodying the love of God, whose grace extends to all people equally, and who calls us to strive for peace, justice, and dignity for all.

Historically, the Church and College were connected because pastors were also members of the faculty, and Church organists and Choir Directors also taught in the Music Department and directed the College choir. These connections created a symbiotic relationship which inspired creative programming throughout the campus.

The College's educational program, once called the Triad, is unique in higher education, and consisted of three interwoven strands of experience: academics in the liberal arts tradition, a campus-wide work program, and community service (an extension of the concept of Christian service to others). This mission was further infused with a commitment to environmental conservation and sustainability. Missionary connections throughout the world brought international students to campus (at one point comprising 25% of the student body), which promoted cross-cultural understanding. All these values trace their roots to the College's history and founding philosophy, inherited from what is now the Presbyterian Church (USA). The College's mission has evolved into Our Progressive Promise for All - Education in Action for the Common Good. This promise includes a commitment to inclusive excellence for all, which is consistent with the Church's teachings of acceptance, love and grace.

For the first 80 years of WWC's history, the College and the Church functioned as one institution. During these years the congregation consisted primarily of members of the College community. In 1972 the Presbyterian Church formally turned over the administration of the College to an independent Board of Trustees, and the two institutions - Church and College - began to function more independently. Today, many members of the WWC community still consider WWPC their spiritual home, but a large percentage of church membership is comprised of residents from the

wider community. Church programming is always open to the College community, and many College activities take place in the Chapel and Fellowship Hall.

The two institutions continue to value the importance of higher education and to share a commitment to environmental stewardship, sustainability, inclusivity, service to others, social and economic justice, human rights, civil liberties, and to the practice of non-violent, peaceful resolution of conflict. The Church continues to strive to be a spiritual home for students seeking a purposeful and meaningful path in the world.

II. Purpose

The purpose of the covenant between WWC and WWPC is two-fold:

1. To celebrate our shared past and establish guidelines that will enable the two institutions to live into a shared future in which roles, expectations and responsibilities are clearly defined and will persist throughout changes in personnel and membership.

2. To help the two institutions realize their potential for mutually energizing, mutually beneficial partnerships and collaboration, particularly in programmatic areas where our separate missions intersect or overlap.

III. Scope

To fulfill this two-fold purpose, this covenant will:

1. Delineate shared programming opportunities in the areas of education, spiritual growth and community service, drawing on the respective resources of the college and the congregation. (See section IV below.)

2. Establish clear lines of communication between the two institutions. (See section V below.)

3. Delineate a clear understanding of the shared use of, and fiduciary responsibility for, the Ohler Spiritual Center (OSC). (See section VI below.)

IV. Shared Programming Opportunities

Out of our shared values, both the College and the Church will continue to seek points of connection and collaboration in our programming. In entering into this Covenant, we hereby reaffirm our commitment to share and utilize the resources of each community in ways that serve to strengthen our respective missions.

While the theology and practice of WWPC is rooted in the Christian tradition, the congregation shares a mutual interest with the Office of Spiritual Life of WWC in nurturing the development

of students and members across all faith and spiritual traditions. Intentional efforts toward this goal, shared by these neighboring and intertwined communities, may include (but not be limited to) the following:

1. Christian Campus Ministry — jointly framed as an outreach from WWPC and a supported program of the College's Office of Spiritual Life. Both institutions are committed to ensuring ongoing and regular opportunities for students to gather for theological exploration, engaging worship, and ecumenical fellowship.

2. Interfaith Worship and Service — in noteworthy times of crisis or celebration, the Office of Spiritual Life and WWPC have collaborated to host interfaith services in the College Chapel that are open to the full campus and church communities. Similarly, the two institutions have collaborated on interfaith service projects and trips focused on supporting the poor, healing the sick, protecting the natural environment, and working towards a more just and peaceful world. We commit to maintaining this venerable tradition of interfaith worship and service indefinitely.

3. Speakers and Artists — our many overlapping values and commitments lead both institutions to offer unique opportunities for members of our communities to engage with artists and thought-leaders who engage our minds and spirits. The college and church further covenant to identify gifted members within our communities as resources for ongoing moral, religious and ethical education and spiritual growth.

4. Honoring Our Shared Heritage, Celebrating Our Shared Future — in keeping with long tradition, the church and college communities will continue to gather together for special services during the academic year to celebrate and remember our shared story, which continues to unfold.

5. Communal Support — as colleagues, friends, and neighbors, the college and the congregation will continue in formal and informal ways to support the work and mission of each institution and the individuals that comprise them.

V. Communications and Document Review

A Covenant Committee comprised of two representatives from the College (Controller and the College Chaplain/Director of Spiritual Life, unless otherwise chosen by the College President) and two representatives from the Church (Church Pastor and Chair of the Administration Ministry Team, unless otherwise chosen by Session) will meet at least once a year to review progress on implementation of the covenant and any related space use or operational issues. The pastor of the Church will call this meeting in the first quarter of each year.

The Covenant Committee is intended to facilitate open communication between the relevant leadership of the College and the Church, and to provide a means for resolving day-to-day operational and financial questions regarding the OSC. The Covenant Committee is not a policy

making body, however. Financial or operational requirements or recommendations that are not clearly addressed by the terms of this Covenant will be brought to the Church Session and College Board of Trustees for review and approval.

VI. Shared Management of the Ohler Spiritual Center

The OSC was named by the College Board of Trustees in 2010. It is comprised of the College Chapel, the Ransom Fellowship Hall (Upper and Lower), and the Christian Education complex that extends off the Fellowship Hall. The College owns the land and buildings making up the OSC; the space within belongs to the Church. Today all three of the buildings are used to varying degrees by the College and the Church, but recent usage patterns underscore the importance of the space use agreement set forth in this covenant.

The Chapel: The Chapel has always been home to WWPC. Students were once expected to attend Sunday morning services in the Chapel, but that requirement has long since been lifted. The College does still host community-wide lectures and public events in this space, but today the congregation is the primary user of the Warren Wilson Chapel.

The Fellowship Hall: The monies to build the Fellowship Hall were originally provided by Christiana Ransom, with the stipulation that "the primary purpose of the Fellowship Hall (Upper and Lower) is to serve the needs of the Church."

Today, the Upper Fellowship Hall continues to play an important role in the life of the congregation. But due to its unique size (the UFH is the only medium-sized assembly room on campus), and with the blessing of the congregation, the College now relies on the use of the Upper Fellowship Hall to host a variety of faculty, staff and ceremonial gatherings throughout the year.

Due to its own unique size and configuration (and again with the blessing of the congregation), the Lower Fellowship Hall has become a locus of the College's Spiritual Life and Wellness programs.

The Christian Education Complex: As its name suggests, the CE complex is currently used by the congregation as the locus of its Sunday morning educational programs. It is home to the Church staff offices and the Chapel work crew. It also features a nursery area used mainly by the church on Sunday mornings, and a variety of rooms used for Church committees and other groups throughout the week. It is used occasionally by the College. This part of the building was built by the members of the Church in 1965, and remodeled when the Fellowship Hall was attached to it.

This agreement includes a formal Covenant for the Shared Management of the Ohler Spiritual Center. This agreement recognizes the independence of the Church and College, and their separate missions, but also recognizes the possibility for mutually beneficial and synergistic programming opportunities borne of our close proximity, our shared history, our shared values, and our shared use of the buildings that comprise the Ohler Spiritual Center.

room and Faculty Parlor combined to allow for adequate seating. Revival meetings were held sporadically, a new experience for many members of the faculty.

By 1933, the FSPC had flourished to the point that members wanted to erect a log chapel. However, the Board of National Missions firmly denied the request for funding to build the chapel; so, alumni and friends donated all the money, and staff and students worked on it after the end of the work day. The chapel was entirely constructed by various staff and student work crews. It was named for Miss Elizabeth Williams, a retired Farm School faculty member beloved by many students.

In 1947, the name of the Williams Chapel was changed to the Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church, reflecting the name change of the college. As one long-time member recalled, "What kind of Christianity was taught there? Love. Community. A sense of our equality and of our interdependence. Of sharing in God's grace. Of expectations that all of us would do our part to help make the world a good place to be. A respect for our differences--for people of various races, nationalities, backgrounds and convictions..." The Chapel was also home to the WWC Theater, and the site of many academic convocations.

As an integral part of the Warren Wilson campus, the Church followed the school in setting precedent and taking risks. The congregation stood alongside the college through the years of constant change, when the college was breaking racial and cultural barriers that dominated southern society. In a school dedicated to tolerance, opportunity, and hard work, the Church served as the moral backbone, inspiring students and staff to continue to serve humankind with dignity and love.

By the late 1950s, Warren Wilson, now a Junior College, set its eyes on expansion. Under the leadership of President Arthur M. Bannerman, Warren Wilson aspired to become a fully accredited, four-year institution. This meant larger, more capable facilities across campus to accommodate a larger campus community. The Elizabeth Williams Chapel, which had served as a meeting place for more than two decades, was already filled to capacity each service.

Rather than expand the old chapel, as originally proposed, a group of people decided that the time had come to build a new chapel. Fund-raising committees, together with a gift from the Pew Memorial Trust, provided the money needed to begin construction on the A-frame sketch. After some debate over the location of the new structure, a spot was chosen next to the Randolph House, on what were then the tennis courts.

With the resources in place to begin construction, Charlie Sappenfield of the Asheville architecture firm Bertram King was hired to create the final design. As with the construction of the Williams Chapel, campus work crews and community members provided a vast majority of the labor. From clearing and grading the land to installing most utility services, students and volunteers invested sweat, time, and love into their new place of worship. Materials for the building came from as far away as British Columbia and as close as Bee Tree Valley.

International students were encouraged to bring stones from their native countries to build walkways; alumni of Farm School and the Junior College contributed their skills (often learned

or sharpened during their time as students). A pipe organ was installed, which would eventually grow to become one of the finest in the region.

By 1963, though still unfinished, the new chapel was the site of Warren Wilson's 1963 Commencement. A year later, the new building was dedicated. Following the tradition of the Williams Chapel, the new structure continues to serve as an assembly hall for a wide variety of events. A few years later, a Christian Education Building was added to house classrooms, church offices, and other facilities for church and school-related activities.

During the 1960s there was a titanic shift in American culture, and that shift permeated into the very marrow of Warren Wilson College. The civil rights movement and the Vietnam War protests created a more questioning, activist, and secular student body. To be sure, many students and faculty still came from Christian backgrounds. But new faculty considered themselves academic professionals rather than Christian missionaries. Moreover, an increasing number of students, particularly those from overseas, came from non-Christian traditions. In this new atmosphere compulsory attendance at religious activities other than the Sunday morning worship service was dropped and even that requirement came under fire. Finally in 1969, the college granted seniors the privilege of optional attendance: two years later it extended the privilege to the rest of the student body.

But even as the college's commitment to the outward aspects of its religious heritage came into question, its dedication to the spirit of Christianity remained strong. Above all else the relatively peaceful transition to an intercultural, interracial community was the most telling evidence that the college was Christian in spirit as well as in name.

Former President Douglas Orr, commenting on this shift, said, "I always felt as if the college didn't leave the church as much as the college began embracing a more pluralistic society and campus community. The student body became of 80 percent out-of-state students and many denominations and faiths represented in the student body. The college's Jewish students observed the Seder (an inspiring example for students of other backgrounds and traditions). There was the addition of service-learning to one-hundred hours, and this program stood in partnership with the Warren Wilson Church. And yet the college remained grounded in the basic founding values of its Presbyterian mission: social justice, service, internationalism, educational quality and community. And while the campus community continued to grow in size, diversity and secularism, the number of Presbytery covenant relationships was expanded, an always active church/faith relations office built friendships and ties, and there was very significant support by Presbyterians and the Presbyterian churches in the successful Centennial Campaign."

Throughout the 80s and 90s, the two institutions continued to live into their separate but parallel missions, though admittedly with some overlap. The Rev. Fred Ohler continued to serve as the pastor of the Church, the head of the Department of Religion and Philosophy on campus, and Chaplain for the student body.

Following in a tradition of distinguished predecessors, Dr. Steve Williams arrived on campus in 1981 to serve as church organist. He joined the Music Department Faculty in 1982 and became Director of Music and Organist at Chapel in 1985.

To meet the expanding needs of a growing, pluralistic student body in 1991 the college called the Rev. Dr. Andy Summers to serve as the Ralph W. and Orleen Beeson Chaplain/Minister to Students. As such, Andy was tasked with oversight in three areas of student life: Spiritual Formation, Counseling and Service. Andy also worked closely with Fred Ohler and the Church's Committee on Mission to the Community to help students make connections with church programs and to feel welcome in the congregation.

December 1994 marked the end of the era in the life of the congregation and in its relationship with the college. The Rev. Fred Ohler retired after almost 40 years of distinguished service to the college and the church. Two years later, after a national search, the congregation called the Rev. Rob Martin to serve as their Pastor. Rob continued to work with Andy Summers to serve the spiritual needs of the campus community, but, unlike Fred, he did not hold a position on the college's faculty.

With their new minister in place, and with funding provided by Christiana Ransom, the congregation set about construction of the new Fellowship Hall complex, sited between the Chapel and the existing Christian Education building. In making her gift, Mrs. Ransom accorded the church priority use of the new building, but over the years the congregation has gladly made the space available to the college on an as needed basis.

In 2008, and after 16 years of service to the college, Andy Summers passed away suddenly, after a brief illness. Rev. Leah McCullah arrived in the summer of 2008 to fill the newly named position of Director of Spiritual Life. After a three-year tenure, Leah left the college and the Rev. Dr. Jeanne Sommers, already teaching religion courses, filled the newly vacated position on an interim basis. In 2012 the college restored "Chaplain" to the job title and hired the Rev. Dr. Brian Ammons to serve as the Ralph W. and Orleen Beeson Chaplain and Director of Spiritual Life. Brian left the college in December 2020, and in January 2021, the college hired Rev. Shannon Spencer to fill this role.

Meanwhile, on the church side, Rev. Rob Martin left the Warren Wilson Church in 2003 after an eight-year tenure, to take a new call in California. In July of 2005, the congregation called the Rev. Steve Runholt as their pastor.

Two years later, the congregation undertook the first major renovation to the Chapel since its completion in 1964, installing a new roof, along with new lights and a new sound system in the sanctuary. In a gesture of goodwill and ongoing partnership, the college shared 50% of the cost of these improvements.

The congregation also independently undertook a $150,000 renovation to the Schantz-Walker-Angerstein organ, raising an astounding $325,000 toward these overall improvements.

To commemorate Fred Ohler's 38 years of service to the church and college communities, and in recognition of his immeasurable influence on generations of students, in 2010 the college Board of Trustees designated the Chapel, Fellowship Hall, and Christian Education Complex the Ohler Spiritual Center.

In 2013, the congregation and college again partnered on a second phase of renovations to the Chapel, including the installation of a new HVAC system; newly expanded, handicapped

accessible restrooms; major improvements to the parlor area to increase its functionality and accessibility; and minor improvements to the chancel area to make it, too, handicapped accessible and safer.

Rev. Steve Runholt retired on Dec. 31, 2023. Rev. Margaret LaMotte Torrence served as Transitional Pastor for the 2024 calendar year, during which a Mission Statement was developed. The Church purchased, for the price of $28,550, a Yamaha C7 7.5' grand piano for the sanctuary. Rev. Laurie Furr-Vancini assumed the Transitional Pastor position in January of 2025, and will guide the congregation in the search for a new permanent pastor.

Clearly a long, distinguished history binds these two institutions together. For decades the church and the college functioned as one institution. Today, even as the two learning and worshiping communities pursue their separate missions, they continue to share a core set of values and programmatic opportunities that bind them together.

COVENANT AGREEMENT
Between Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church (USA), Inc., and Warren Wilson College for the Shared Management of the Ohler Spiritual Center (2025 Revision)

This covenant provides the framework for the shared operation, staffing, maintenance, and improvement of the Ohler Spiritual Center (OSC) based upon the purpose and scope of the agreement developed between Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church (the Church) and Warren Wilson College (the College).

I. Operating Costs

1. The Church and the College will share equally the cost of utilities for the OSC.
2. The College will pay the cost of labor for College work crews cleaning, maintaining, and repairing the OSC; the Church Administrator, who is paid by the Church, will supervise the work crews for the chapel.
3. The Church and the College will share equally the cost of contract cleaning services for the OSC.
4. The Church and the College will share equally the cost of materials for regular maintenance and repair of the OSC; when materials from existing college supplies are used, the Church will pay half of the cost of materials only when the College submits an invoice to the Church.
5. When the College facilities work crews cannot provide timely maintenance or repair services in emergency situations, the Church and the College will share equally the costs of outside contractors to perform those services.
6. The College and Church each have the right to use all parts of the OSC, with mutually approved restrictions (for example, Sunday morning use of the OSC by the church, and MFA use of the Fellowship Hall during program sessions); the parties agree to cooperate to facilitate the activities of both institutions. The Church Administrator will schedule the use of the OSC in cooperation with the College scheduling representative, except that the College will designate a person to schedule activities in the lower fellowship hall in cooperation with the Church Administrator.
7. The Church and the College will each retain the rental fees associated with the portions of the OSC for which they have scheduling responsibilities; the Church agrees that the fees it receives will be maintained in a fund that is to be used for maintenance and repair of the OSC.
8. In the event of a longer term (more than two months) rental arrangement, the Covenant Committee will meet and agree, based upon the facilities involved, how to divide the rental income.
9. The College will provide for grounds maintenance and landscaping around the OSC.
10. The College will provide for building security.

11. The College will include insurance for the OSC and the organ and other college property in the OSC as part of its property and liability policies. The Church will provide and pay for liability and contents insurance for its personnel and its property that is located in the OSC.
12. The Church will pay for maintenance of the organ using funds designated for that purpose. The College agrees not to sell the organ without the approval of the Church Session. In the event the organ is sold, the College agrees to reimburse the Church for monies spent on organ maintenance and repair in the previous 24 months.

II. Staff

1. The Church will pay the full salary and benefits package for all members of its staff.
2. Should the College wish any member of the Church staff to provide services not covered in the Church-College Covenant and its attachments, the College may, if the Church Session approves, enter into a separate contract for those services.

III. Major Renovations and Capital Improvements

1. When both institutions agree, the Church and the College will share equally the cost of major renovations and capital improvements.
2. When it is not in the interest of one of the institutions to fund a major renovation or capital improvement, the second may, with the approval of the other, fund all or a major part of the project costs.

IV. Covenant Committee

The Covenant Committee will meet at least once a year to review progress on implementation of the shared management agreement and any related issues.

V. Length of Shared Management Agreement

This agreement will begin when signed by representatives of the Church and the College. It shall remain in effect for five years at which time it may be renewed or amended for a period to be recommended by the Covenant Committee.

Appendix: A Brief History of Warren Wilson College and Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church and their Relationship

The genesis of Warren Wilson College grew out of the conviction of Presbyterian women that the poor in Appalachia deserved educational opportunities.

In 1877, the Presbyterian Church General Assembly established the Women's Executive Committee for Home Missions. The Women's Executive Committee had two primary foci-evangelism and education. By 1894 the Women's Board had established 123 schools in the United States and eighty-five churches had grown directly or indirectly from their work.

One of those 123 schools was the Asheville Farm School. Founded on November 30, 1894, the Asheville Farm School was located on a 420-acre farm in the Swannanoa Valley, N.C. The Asheville Farm School began with its roots in the earth and its hands raised towards the heavens. From its inception, faith and the idea of a cooperative Christian community pervaded the spirit of the campus at all levels. Students, staff, faculty, and administration joined together with members of the local community to share their love and devotion to their fellow human beings through Christ and the Presbyterian Church.

When the Asheville Farm School opened in 1894 it enrolled 25 students and there were three faculty members, with a three sided curriculum that focused on education, work, and morality. At its inception the Asheville Farm School offered courses through an eighth grade level. Over time, more advanced courses were offered, with the first high school class graduating in 1924.

Not only did the boys at the Farm School supplement their education with skills they could take back to farms in their home region, they were also expected to participate in regular religious activities, such as Bible study and prayer meetings, in order to create well-rounded young men.

In 1942, the school merged with the Dorland-Bell School, a Presbyterian institution for young women in Hot Springs, N.C. Junior college classes were added and the new school was named for the Reverend Dr. Warren H. Wilson, a leader in Presbyterian rural mission work.

Prior to the mid 1920s there was no church on campus so the entire Farm School Community—staff, students, and teachers—walked two and a half miles across field and forest to attend services at the Riceville Presbyterian Church on Old Farm School Road. This arduous walk was ultimately replaced by worship services on campus, held anywhere the congregation could find space to meet. The services were led by preachers who were serving the Asheville mission schools.

In 1925, the superintendent of the school, Louis Burch, appealed to the French Broad Presbytery to establish a permanent church on campus. On November 22,1925, a committee of three local pastors met on campus to establish a Farm School Congregation. Sixty-one charter members made up the first official congregation.

The Farm School congregation had finally found a home. However, the FSPC had no proper meeting place to worship and the congregation shuffled from building to building, depending on what was available on a given day. Sunderland Hall served as a popular space; its recreation

VII. Duration of Covenant

It is the intent of the Church and College that this covenant relationship will continue indefinitely, while recognizing that the detailed shared management agreement may require periodic adjustment. The duration of the management agreement is specified as five years in section V. The provisions of any part of the covenant can be changed at the recommendation of the Covenant Committee and with the approval of the Session and Board of Trustees. Should either institution wish to dissolve this covenant relationship it will give to the other written notice at least two years in advance of the dissolution. However, it is hoped that the desire to work together to realize our shared values will endure.

WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

By: _____ 4.29. , 2025

Damián Fernández, President

By: Jean W. Veilleux 4.29 , 2025

Jean W. Veilleux, Chair of the Board of Trustees

WARREN WILSON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

By: _____ March 30 , 2025

Laurie Furr-Vancini, Transitional Pastor

By: Sally Broughton March 30 , 2025

Sally Broughton, Clerk of Session

Approved by WWPC Session (Governing Board) _____