***Good Beginnings***

**Dialogue Guide for Starting Well in a New Appointment**

**(Pastor Version)**

**Pastor:**       **Church/Charge**:

**Introduction**

The questions below are intended to shape dialogue between pastors and church leaders in the first few months of a new appointment. Since each pastor may make assumptions about what should take priority in their practice of ministry and each congregation differs in their expectations of what pastors should do, clarity and communication about what each sees as essential can help avoid misunderstandings and prevent conflict. These conversations can also help the pastor and congregation develop shared ministry goals. Please respond to the questions below and share them with your SPRC (or Governance Board if the church uses a single board model of organization). Contrast your responses with those offered by the church leadership who will complete a similar set of questions. Discuss similarities and differences between the two sets of responses as a way of beginning dialogue about shared ministry expectations.

**Part One: Priorities and Motivations**

1. What are the three most important things a pastor should do? Please offer a brief statement about why you have chosen to place each one among your priorities.  
   1.

2.

3.

1. Of all the things pastors are called upon to do, what would you **choose** to spend most of your time doing?
2. Of all the things pastors are called upon to do, what do you spend the most time doing?
3. Of all the things pastors are called upon to do, what do you have the least energy and passion for? Why?
4. What’s the most important thing a church should invest its resources in to witness to Jesus Christ and make a difference in people’s lives?
5. Why are you a pastor?
6. Do you have a personal mission statement or core values that guide and direct how you live and what you do as a pastor?

**Part Two: Availability, Visitation, Communication**

1. When will you be available each week for drop in office hours at the church?
2. Is your practice to take a regular day off? What day? Will you respond to calls, emails or texts on your day off?
3. Are you available to members and constituents of the congregation when on vacation? Under what circumstances?
4. How will you communicate vacation plans to your leadership? How much advance notice will you give? Will you arrange for pulpit supply and pastoral care coverage for emergencies in your absence or expect someone else to attend to this?
5. How often will you visit shut ins and those in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities?
6. Can people expect to get a visit from you when they have a long-term illness, are facing surgery or are hospitalized? What is the best way for people to let you know about these situations?
7. Do you do in home visitation of members and constituents? If so, how will you arrange such visits? What is the best way for people in the congregation to indicate they would like a pastoral call from you?
8. What is your primary way of communicating? What is your preferred way of receiving communication?

**Part Three: Worship Ways**

1. How much time do you need each week to prepare worship, including sermon and worship order?
2. What style of worship most appeals to you?
3. Are you more comfortable planning and leading a particular style of worship?
4. How far ahead do you plan sermons?
5. When can the church secretary or worship media leaders expect material for the weekly worship order?
6. How and how often will you offer communion in worship?
7. Do you want to be in charge of music selection and other details of worship or are you willing to partner with others in worship planning?
8. Are there Seasonal practices (in terms of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter) or holiday observances (Memorial Day. Fourth of July, Thanksgiving) that you would like to see become part of the worship experience in this new appointment? Are you open to continuing practices that already exist here?

**Part Four: What’s Next?**

1. What is your first priority at this point in your new appointment?
2. By this time next year, what is one thing you would most like to be able to say has been accomplished?
3. What are three ministry goals you have for the year ahead?

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_