

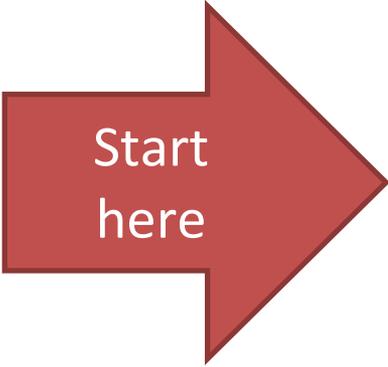
# Where Are We?

*Welcome to an important conversation about the life and ministry of your congregation or ministry site! This booklet is a self-guided resource intended to help you identify where your congregation or ministry site is in living out its purpose. Being clear about that can help leaders turn their attention to appropriate stewardship of the ministry at this time and place.*



*Start at the red arrow on the top of the next page, and follow the flowchart by answering the questions as honestly as you can (given the limited choices printed in this booklet). Continue on the journey where your answers lead you until you arrive at one of the four conversations in the back. All four are important, but one is likely most important for your congregation or ministry site to have.*

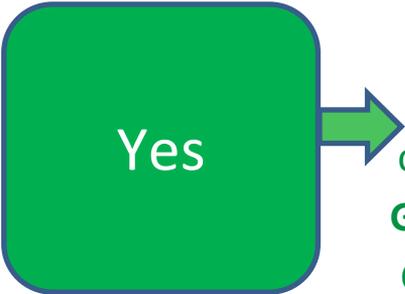
*With you in Christ on the journey... +Kurt*



Start  
here



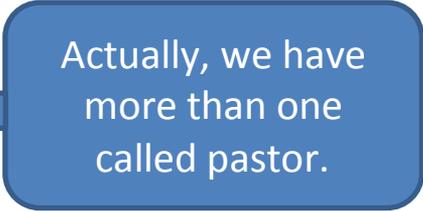
Do you  
have a  
called  
pastor?



Yes

OK. Let's talk about how your ministry program is currently fulfilling the purpose of a congregation, found in \*C4.02. **Go to page 4**, and complete the Congregational Vitality survey.

OK. Let's talk about collaborative ministry with multiple congregations and/or multiple pastors. **Go to page 4** to find the Congregational Vitality survey.



Actually, we have  
more than one  
called pastor.

No

OK. Let's talk about the challenges congregations without a called pastor might face. **Go to page 5**, and identify those that you are currently facing.

OK. Let's talk about what it takes to call a pastor. **Go to page 6**, and learn more about the call process.

Not at the moment, but we intend to call a pastor

Well, technically, our pastor is under contract.

OK. Let's talk about why a congregation might enter into contract ministry. **Go to page 7**, and see if you can find your reason.

# Congregation Vitality Survey

- We provide Word and Sacrament ministry every week.
- We steward the Gospel of justification by grace through faith, preaching and preserving the Good News of Jesus for future generations.
- We have baptisms and receive new members several times a year.
- We serve our neighbors, providing care and advocacy, especially for the poor and powerless.
- Our members are growing in faith and hope and love through regular educational opportunities for children, youth, and adults.
- Our members live out their baptism in their daily lives.
- We're always looking to gather with other Christians in prayer and action.

If you checked 5 or more boxes, join **Conversation #1** on page 8.

If you checked 4 boxes or fewer, join **Conversation #3** on page 10.

# Congregation Challenges

- We don't have Communion as often as we would like.
- We have supply preachers that vary from excellent to unhelpful.
- We haven't had a baptism for years.
- Most of our members don't live in our congregation's neighborhood.
- We don't have regular educational or faith formation opportunities like Sunday School or Bible Study.
- We wonder what it means to live out our baptism in daily life.
- We seldom gather with other Christians for prayer or care of the neighbor.

If you checked 5 or more boxes, join **Conversation #4** on page 11.

If you checked 4 boxes or fewer, join **Conversation #3** on page 10.

# Calling a Pastor

We have recently interviewed several candidates, but we're waiting for just the right fit.

We have been without a called pastor for a very long time.

We can't afford to call a pastor on our own.

Our Call Committee is a good cross-section of our congregation.

Our pastor left for another call or retired.

Our pastors don't seem to stay for more than 3 years.

Our pastors typically stay for a long time.

We're not particular – we just need a pastor.

If you checked most of the boxes on the left, join **Conversation #2 on page 9.**

If you checked most of the boxes on the right, join **Conversation #4 on page 11.**

# Pastor Under Contract

Our pastor retired after many years of service in our congregation, so we have an interim pastor.

We have been in the call process for a long time, and we have had several interim pastors one after another.

We prefer our own part-time interim over joining with other congregations to call a pastor.

Our pastor left for another call, so we have a part-time interim pastor on Sundays while we're in the call process.

It's funny, but our part-time retired pastor has served us longer as an interim than any of our recent called pastors has!

Our pastor is actually from another denomination.

If you checked most of the boxes on the left, join **Conversation #2** on page 9.

If you checked most of the boxes on the right, join **Conversation #4** on page 11.

# Conversation #1

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*These conversation starters, thoughts and insights are intended to help a vital congregation affirm and build on its current ministry.*

- How do we welcome new members and find ways to integrate them into meaningful ministry?
- How has adding staff grown our ministry in the past?
- What have been our best creative ways to provide quality faith formation and education for our members?
- What new ministries outside our walls might God be calling us to?
- Jesus said, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required.” (Luke 12:48) What does this mean?

# Conversation #2

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*These conversation starters, thoughts and insights are intended to help a congregation in the call process tend to that work well.*

- How have we been praying for our Call Committee and its work?
- The prophet Samuel said, “The Lord does not ... look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7) What pastoral heart would serve us best?
- What does a review of our budget over the last three years communicate to a prospective pastoral candidate?
- They say “patience is a virtue.” How might that apply to the call process?
- Does our Call Committee reflect our congregation well?

# Conversation #3

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*These conversation starters, thoughts and insights are intended to help new, renewing and collaborative ministries find their way forward with grace.*

- Ecclesiastes says “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.” (Ecc. 4:9) How is our shared ministry with other congregations a real blessing to us all?
- Is it easier to get out of a rut, or to avoid getting into it in the first place?
- How can we let a clear sense of God’s call shape our ministry going forward?
- What new thing do we see God doing among us? (Isaiah 43:19)
- What help do we need so that we can bear the pain of our members who want to keep everything the way it is (or was)?

# Conversation #4

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*These conversation starters, thoughts and insights are intended to help congregations facing great challenges to do so with faith and hope and love.*

- Who founded this congregation? When? Why? And what did our neighborhood or community look like then?
- What do we see when we look in the mirror now?
- How might a congregation still be a blessing to other ministries while it draws to a graceful ending?
- What did Jesus mean when he said to Nicodemus, “You must be born again/born from above”? (John 3:7)
- If our ministry did come to an end, who would care for our people? For our community?

- The Reverend Peter D. Asplin is the Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Vitality
- The Reverend Sarah Lee-Faulkner is the Assistant to the Bishop for Call Process and Mobility
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Prepared for the 2017 Southwestern  
Pennsylvania Synod Assembly