

## **WELCOMING A NEW PASTOR by DS Tom Choi**

### **BEFORE YOUR NEW PASTOR ARRIVES**

1. Have members of the church (certainly the SPRC) send notes, e-mails, or other expressions of welcome and support. They are greatly appreciated. This includes the pastor's spouse and children, as applicable.
2. The leadership of the congregation should send as much materials about the church as possible: the mission and/or vision of the church and any written or established goals or vision plans; a written history of the church; the most recent charge conference report; annotated photos of the church and members (a pictorial directory is particularly useful); membership directory; financial reports/summaries; information about the community around the church. If your new pastor is new to Hawaii, information about Hawaii and local culture is also very useful, such as our custom of removing shoes when entering homes.
3. Check with the district office about travel arrangements, shipping of household and vehicle, and other details, such as setting up health insurance, etc.
4. Remember that the receiving church is responsible for a percentage of the moving costs: if a trans-Pacific move, it is 80% conference, 20% church. All over land, 70% conference, 30% church, but the latter is usually much cheaper.
5. Find out some of the technical/practical needs of the new pastor: e.g., does he or she need a new computer? Wifi is a must for clergy. This should be set up in advance.
6. Make sure that housing is arranged and livable before your pastor arrives, such as securing a rental, painting and repairing the parsonage, providing necessary furnishings.
7. At annual conference, have your delegates arrange for opportunities for meeting with the new pastor. It is very nice to arrange for lei during the introduction of new clergy at the district meeting.

### **WHEN YOUR NEW PASTOR ARRIVES**

1. Have as many people as possible show up for the arrival (e.g., the airport), with lei, if possible.
2. Fill the refrigerator and pantry of the pastoral residence with some basic items, such as milk, juice, fruit, cereal, etc., plus some prepared meals (find out the dietary preferences/restrictions in advance; a pot roast is awkward for a vegan) for a few days. Flower arrangements are also nice, especially personally assembled arrangements.
3. On the first Sunday, it is suggested to use the service for welcoming from the Book of Worship. Present lei. Gifts for the pastor's spouse and children are especially nice.
4. Arrange for a tour of the church campus including the clean and tidy desk. This should include where all the water mains, electrical panels, etc. are located. It is usually the pastor who is around when those things are needed to be found.
5. Within the first three months (but as early as possible), arrange an all-church event where the history of the church is explained by the memory of the people (which is more important than what actually happened). An alternative is to have several smaller groupings which introduce the pastor to the membership.
6. By the end of the three months or no later than the end of the calendar year, work with the pastor in developing goals and objectives.
7. Important principle: the first three weeks sets the tone of the first three months which sets the tone of the first three years. Help identify possibilities for a "quick, easy win."

#### WHEN YOUR PASTOR DEPARTS—some suggestions as situations vary greatly

1. A farewell reception or lunch on the final Sunday, which should be before Annual Conference. Make sure that the district office and conference office have the move authorizations and details completed.
2. A love gift for a farewell (some churches set aside money each year).
  - The best way is to put out a message to the congregation (secretly, if possible) and ask for monetary gifts and sent to a designated person. If by check, they should be made out in the pastor's name, NOT to the church; otherwise, it would be considered taxable income to the pastor (I have heard the argument that it would allow for a tax deduction for the pastor, but rarely are gifts given in an amount that would change an individual's tax liability).
  - The names of givers are recorded so they might be listed (but not the amounts); this isn't always done.
  - The total amount is taken to a bank - usually the bank where the church has an account - and one bank check is made to payable to the pastor.
3. Farewell gifts to the pastor's spouse and/or children (preferably non-bulky and easy to pack).
4. Memorabilia (preferably non-bulky and easy to pack). Cards and other personal notes are very welcome.

#### WELCOMING A WOMAN PASTOR - INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS FROM FEMALE PASTORS FROM OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

1. Please use the address "Pastor" from the beginning.
2. Respect the pastor's voice - literally and figuratively.
3. Refrain from commenting on the pastor's appearance or how the pastor dresses.
4. Refrain from physical touch without permission.
5. Remember that this is your pastor, and not your mother, sister, daughter.
6. Try not to put expectations on a female pastor that would likely not be put on a male pastor, such as expecting that a female pastor must bring a potluck dish.
7. Good for all pastors but especially a female pastor: allowing for a healthy balance between ministry and family life.
8. While protecting the pastor is important, it must not be seen as "rescuing someone who is helpless."
9. The General Commission on the Status and Role of Women has an excellent resource: [welcomingawomanpastor.org](http://welcomingawomanpastor.org).