

## Options for Small Struggling Congregations

Traditional	Strengths	Challenges	Options	Considerations
<p>Dual or tri-parishes</p> <p>One pastor serves two or three congregations</p>	<p>-we are familiar with this</p> <p>-depending on council set-up could require fewer lay leaders</p>	<p>- often more than one council</p> <p>- often still needs too many lay leaders</p> <p>-calling together</p>	<p>-often each cong has own council</p> <p>-some also have a 'joint council'</p> <p>OR</p> <p>-one council over all congs</p> <p>-each cong supplies some members for a joint council</p>	<p>-Is it best for each to keep own charitable number?</p> <p>-should they merge as one cong?</p> <p>-congs may need streamlined constitutions</p>
Multi-point situations	Strengths	Challenges	Options	Considerations
<p>One congregation worshipping in various sites</p>	<p>-economies of scale with work load</p> <p>-do more things together than could individually.</p> <p>- support each other</p> <p>- less volunteers needed</p>	<p>-each former cong still sees itself as a separate cong</p> <p>-worship times</p> <p>-challenge of meeting together, especially for calling</p>	<p>-if locations are close enough-do you alternate worship locations?</p> <p>-if points get small enough do they sell buildings?</p> <p>-ease of planting new points</p>	<p>-several congs merge as one cong</p>
<p>Multi-point parish/multi-pastor</p>	<p>-each keeps their own identity</p> <p>-multi pastors means greater skill pool</p> <p>-as one pastor ages work load readjusts</p>	<p>-each keeps own identity</p> <p>-pastors will need to learn to work together</p> <p>-members cannot 'choose' their favourite pastor</p> <p>-still requires many leaders</p> <p>-calling pastors</p>	<p>-merge as one parish</p> <p>-other ministry points?</p> <p>-Parish Council?</p> <p>-Annual Board of Elders retreat/meeting for whole parish?</p>	<p>-pastors will need to get along</p> <p>-one senior pastor</p> <p>-streamlined constitutions?</p> <p>-unity and harmony amongst leadership and pastors is key</p>
<p>One large congregation joins with smaller struggling ones</p>	<p>-although large financially stable congregation does not need the smaller ones—they need larger</p>	<p>-Smaller ones to be made to feel 'second class'.</p> <p>-Calling together.</p>		<p>Small ones get 'absorbed and overwhelmed ' by larger one.</p>

Multi-point	Strengths	Challenges	Options	Considerations
One congregation desires second worker but can only afford half., neighbouring congregation can only afford half a worker	Joining solves both	Joint agreement on calling		
Circuit joins together to call pastors and provides the pastoral needs of all congregations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-can work in rural &amp; urban</li> <li>-economies of scale provides better stewardship</li> <li>-deeper talent pool among pastors/staff and leaders</li> <li>-can accomplish more together than apart</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-too many cooks in the kitchen</li> <li>-calling together</li> <li>-adopt streamlined constitutions?</li> <li>-congregational-ism can lead to divisive party spirit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-congs can keep identity</li> <li>-starting new church plants is easier</li> <li>-amalgamation, or adjustment of pastoral resources easier</li> <li>-streamlined constitutions for each location needed</li> <li>-circuit council?</li> <li>-this prepares us if current trends continue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-how to change attitude of ministry as working together rather than only in each cong?</li> <li>-Senior pastor?</li> </ul>
“Circuit Rider”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Christians in small rural areas without churches receive Word and Sacrament</li> <li>-buildings not required</li> <li>-many together may be able to support ministry of a pastor</li> <li>-outreach? Even in large cities where building costs prevent establishing new churches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-forming identity &amp; keeping ministry going</li> <li>-small groups sensitive to loss of members but also able to more easily begin new groups</li> <li>-pastor may cover very large area</li> <li>-wear and tear of cars, and on pastors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-use of technology</li> <li>-portable Communion kits and altar?</li> <li>-model for “home” mission?</li> <li>-model for future if current trends do not abate?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pastor may only visit once a month or quarter</li> <li>-calling &amp; organization?</li> <li>-sustainable in long term?</li> </ul>

See also: "What About Vacant, Isolated, or Small Congregations?", <https://www.lutheranchurchcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2020/04/11.1-Vacant-Isolated-Small-Congregations.pdf> LCC website, under “Resources” tab