



The
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of*
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA



SHAPED BY **FAITH**

POSSIBLE CHURCH MODELS & MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

MERGER AND CLOSURE

In this Model, two or more congregations are merged to become one new Church. One site is chosen and the the other sites are sold in order to fund the new church. Resources are combined.

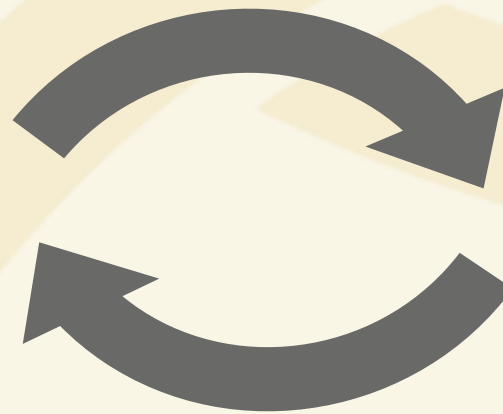
Benefits

- Can lead to long-term stability
- Greater efficiency of resources and finances
- Can lead to full-time clergy

Drawbacks

- Loss of local space, influence, culture, history (grief)
- Longer travel times to church
- Must form new identity

YOKED CONGREGATIONS



YOKED CONGREGATIONS

Yoked Congregations share a clergy person but operate semi-autonomously. They keep finances and vestries separate. They operate with different focuses, separate identities and differing leadership

Benefits

- Can be very locally/communally focused
- Regional or traditional identities remain
- Sense of self-determination

Drawbacks

- Two or more buildings to fund, etc. resources dwindle faster
- Priests time/focus can be split
- Less of a “critical mass”

THE MINSTER MODEL

In this model one larger church is the “hub” with several smaller congregations in the region. A group of clergy work together to pastor all of the congregations. Resources are shared to support the work of a regional ministry. One head priest supervises other priests, deacons and lay ministers.

Benefits

- Clergy have colleagues
- Community/Regional focus and Shared Purpose
- Shared costs

Drawbacks

- Multiple sites to pay for
- Can lead to competition for attention

MULTI-SITE

In this model several churches combine to form one church with multiple sites. One vestry and clergy.

Benefits

- Can have a full-time clergy
- Shared purpose/Focus/resources

Drawbacks

- Sites must be creative in planning worship
- Hard to find a common identity
- Must resource multiple buildings, etc.

NON-PROFIT PARTNERSHIP

In this model one or more parishes partner with non-profits or establish non-profits that help address pressing issues in their community. The clergy works for the non-profit and the church in separate relationships or the churches lease buildings during the week to non-profit and help support non-profit with volunteer ministry. Examples are, childcare/youth or eldercare, health and spirituality, affordable housing, hunger ministries, substance abuse, ending violence prison ministry, Latino ministries, evangelism, civic/govt agencies.

Benefits

- Shared costs with non-profit
- Community serving focus
- Can empower lay ministry
- Entrepreneurial spirit

Drawbacks

- Loss of control of buildings
- Split-focus
- Lots of negotiations
- Must establish links
- Must be entrepreneurial

ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

In this model, an Episcopal and Lutheran (or Moravian) congregation come together to share a clergy. They can either merge and form one Episco-Lutheran or Luther-Palian congregation. Or they can keep their separate identities and share clergy.

Benefits

- If they merge, they can share costs
- Larger group of clergy to pull from
- Ecumenical work is gospel work

Drawbacks

- Can be a stop-gap
- Have to Negotiate worship styles, norms, etc.

HOUSE CHURCH

In this model, congregation members gather at the home of another member (or rotating members) for worship and fellowship. This model can be used in conjunction with other configurations to help support regular gatherings (i.e. during summer months or as part of a minster).

Benefits

- Enables regular gatherings & promotes lay leadership
- Alleviates high building costs
- Promotes familial relationships with church members

Drawbacks

- Not feasible during pandemic
- Creating sacred space in someone's home – making it feel like “real” church

VIRTUAL CHURCH

In this model, worship services are streamed, either live or pre-recorded. Multiple platforms are available, enabling the parish's identity and message to reach a wide range of worshippers, both in the immediate and wider community. This model can be used in conjunction with other potential configurations, even Convocation-wide.

Benefits

- Reaches wide-range of worshippers – EVANGELISM!!
- Increased potential for sharing responsibilities
- Deepen connection with homebound parishioners – everybody can go to church!

Drawbacks

- Technology & Production requirements
- Increased workload to produce in addition to in-person worship