

CCDL

Centre For Church
Development & Leadership



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Resource Spotlight

Three Resources for Leaders of Smaller Congregations

The majority of our United Church congregations are small membership congregations (defined as fewer than 100 regular participants). In her short paper [‘The Smaller Congregation’](#), Alice Mann of the Alban Institute demonstrates a keen understanding of the dynamics at work in smaller membership congregations as she outlines six key options available to them:

- shift from full-time to part-time clergy;
- merge two or more congregations;
- form a multi-congregational cluster;
- secure a lay pastor or locally ordained clergy;
- grow to a size where a full-time pastor is feasible;
- "end well."

For each option, Mann explains advantages and disadvantages, explores the different forms the option might take, and discusses the steps to implementing the option.

Significantly, Mann reminds readers to "stop and look at *all* the options" – no matter how far-fetched and unpalatable some of them may seem. The paper is available as a web-

resource and in downloadable PDF from the Congregational Resource Centre.

This is a very useful document for boards, councils and any church group pondering a faithful way forward into the future.

Mann also facilitates an excellent three-part webinar on the same theme. A recording of the webinar is available at the [Alban Institute website](#). At only US\$30 – and more than one person can sit-in for this price! – the three, one-hour long webinars will be useful for clergy and lay leaders alike.

Another option: you can join other United Church folk discussing these themes by joining the [National Learning Circle ‘Amalgamations / Mergers / Shared Buildings’](#) or contact Ron Ewart directly regarding plans for a local follow-up to the Mann webinar series in a locally-based learning community.

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