

## Small Church Typology Information Packet

*“The size of congregations, prevents us from using one program and one style of leadership for all church situations.*

*The size of a congregation acts as a key variable in those factors that determine the structure, functions, and style of relationships in its group life.”*

**Arlin J. Rothauge – *Sizing Up A Congregation for New Member Ministry*** New York, NY: Episcopal Church Center, 1983

### Key Questions:

- ◆ How do we do things here?
- ◆ How do we include new people?
- ◆ What leadership style is expected?

***Family size congregations*** have up to 50 adults and children at worship. They operate like an extended family, organized around one or two key leaders, who are often not elected to the session. Relationships are more important than anything else in the family size congregation, and the pastor often serves part-time, leading worship and offering pastoral care. Decisions are likely to be made informally by consensus so long as the key leaders of the congregation are involved.

***Pastoral size congregations*** have between 50 and 150 in worship. They are made up of several family and friendship groups, unified around the pastor who plays a key role in the decisions and ministry of the congregation. Decisions are likely to be made based on the pastor's interests and skills.

***Program size churches*** have 151-350 in worship. They are organized around programs serving the needs of the members for nurture, involvement and mission outreach. Decisions are made by the session with involvement by the pastor and other staff persons. Committees are likely to play a key role in program-size congregations.

***Corporate size churches*** have 350-1,000+ in worship. They are organizationally complex and the pastor in this size church often functions as a CEO. Staffing reflects the complexity of the organization, with a cadre of specialists providing excellent quality programs and services to a number of different constituencies. In order to provide opportunities for greater intimacy, corporate size churches often offer a variety of small group experiences focused on particular needs or stages of life. Decisions are likely to be made by the senior staff with the blessing of the session.

## Building An Effective Ministry Together

### REVITALIZATION OF MINISTRY

AFFIRMATION

BUILDING  
RELATIONSHIPS

CELEBRATE  
VICTORIES

VISIONING  
“What is God calling us to  
be and do now?”

PLANNING

PROGRAMMING

DOING MISSION  
TOGETHER

### PASTORAL AUTHENICATION

HONEYMOON  
(6 months +/-)  
“Our new pastor”

BUILDING  
RELATIONSHIPS  
(1 year +/-)

TESTING  
(18 months +/-)

“Our pastor??”

Conflict and exit  
(2 ½ years)

or

SPIRITUAL  
LEGITIMATION  
(2-3 years +/-)  
“Our pastor”

WORK LOAD AND  
STRESS BUILD-UP  
“Pastor! Pastor!”

Burn-Out and Exit  
(5 Years +/-)

or

PARTICULAR  
AUTHENTICITY  
(5 years and after)  
“You preach, we fix the  
roof)

### PRESBYTERY COM SUPPORT

NEW PASTOR  
WELCOME &  
ORIENTATION

PASTOR AND SESSION  
CHECK-IN  
Expectations for shared  
ministry, covenant

TRIENNIAL VISIT

MISSION STUDY

ONGOING SUPPORT  
THROUGH  
CLERGY COLLEAGUE  
GROUP

## Church Size Typology Matters

**Church size typology impacts ...**  
Congregational dynamics

Leadership style

Inclusion of new members

Pastoral Expectations

### Leadership Style and Pastoral Expectations

**The Family Church needs**  
**The Favorite Uncle**



**The Pastoral Church needs**  
**The Favorite Hostess**



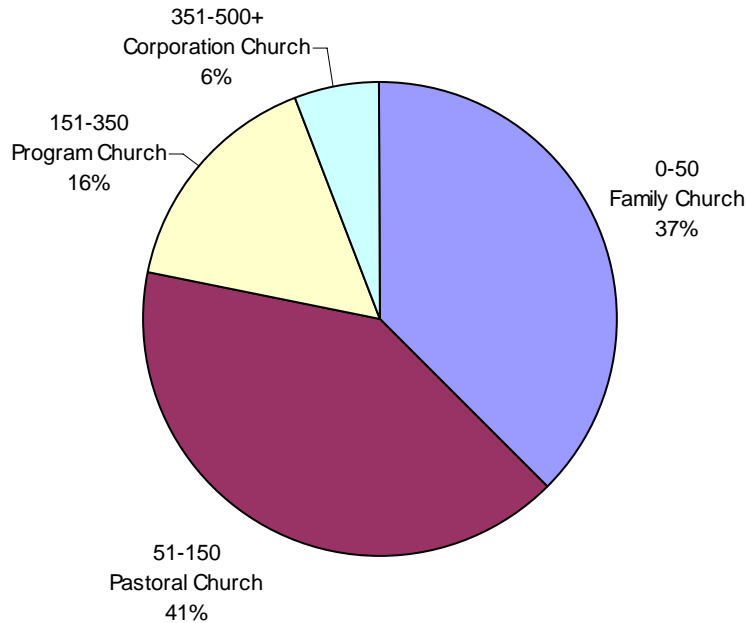
**The Program Church needs**  
**The Orchestra Conductor**



**The Corporation Church needs**  
**The Flight Crew**



### PCUSA Church Size Distribution



Other Resources:

**Size Transitions in Congregations** by Beth Ann Gaede (Editor), Arlin J. Rothauge (Introduction) 2001

**The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations** by Alice Mann Alban Institute Publication, 1998

**Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition** by Alice Mann Alban Institute Publication

**Congregational Resource Guide on the web**  
<http://www.congregationalresources.org>

**How to Minister Effectively in Family, Pastoral, Program, and Corporate Sized Churches**, by Roy M. Oswald, Senior Consultant, The Alban Institute Congregational Resource Guide article 0132

In a recent Leadership Journal that did a survey of 109 growing smaller churches, it showed that there were 15 common characteristics. The growing churches exhibited a majority of these traits?

- The pastor and members were involved in community activities.
- They were located in towns of 2,500 people or more.
- They were fewer than ten miles from a Wal-Mart.
- The population was in transition.
- They were being pastored by younger pastors.
- The church was very friendly, not just friendly.
- The church was open to new methods.
- Evangelism was a number one priority.
- The atmosphere of the church was open and safe for newcomers.
- The church had multiple children's ministries
- Mentoring activities were available for newcomers.
- A high percentage of members were involved in ministry.
- Evangelism was the strongest skill of the pastor.
- Guests were welcomed and treated as though they were members.
- The church had written plans and goals.

Dan Davenport 06/25/04  
Evangelical Covenant Church

## MODELS FOR SMALL CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Churches too small to pay a full-time pastor??

Churches needing to reconnect with their community?



Leadership Possibilities:

A tentmaker or bi-vocational pastor - an ordained PCUSA minister who earns part of her/his income from other employment.

See <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/models/tentmaking.htm>

A cooperative ministry – several churches that share in ministry together in a community or region.

See <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/cooperative.htm>

Share a pastor with a Formula Partner – 2 or more partner churches in a community share an ordained minister from one of the partner denominations (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America, and the PCUSA).

See <http://www.pcusa.org/ministers/orderlyexchange.htm>

A Commissioned Lay Pastor – a PCUSA elder, trained and commissioned by the presbytery to serve pastoral functions.

See <http://www.pcusa.org/clp/>

*New Times, New Call; A Manual of Pastoral Options for Small Churches*, PCUSA 2003 <http://www.pcusa.org/smallchurch/resources.htm>

## A Tentmaker pastor leads congregation in bold venture

*God can do, pastor says:  
Ours is not to wonder 'Y'*

***Indiana church moves into fitness facility,  
gives members a spiritual workout***  
by **Toya Richards Hill**



**JEFFERSONVILLE, IN** — In the midst of sweaty athletic workouts and fitness routines, God’s presence can be felt on any Sunday morning at the Clark County YMCA. That’s where a small but faithful band of believers goes to worship at 10 a.m. And it’s where Grace United Presbyterian Church is transforming itself from what it was to what it intends to be.

Back in Grace United's heyday — some 30 or 40 years ago — the folks who are now members of the church were part of a thriving congregation at 555 Rev. Charlie Pye led worship in Grace United's rented space at the Clark County YMCA.

Eastern Boulevard in nearby Clarksville. They owned their own building and kept the doors open with a plethora of activities. In the 1970s, “People spilled out of the church,” said the Rev. Charlie Pye, Grace United’s part-time pastor, a certified public accountant who maintains a practice in Louisville. He also is classified as a tentmaker within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). But times changed, and the kids grew up and left the congregation. The pews became ever emptier and the offering plates followed suit. An extra hit came in early 2004 when one of Grace United’s major givers moved away.

It was time to make a change, and Pye was the person to help Grace United do it. A third-year student at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary at the time, Pye came to the church in 2002 as a student supply pastor. That turned into a stated supply position after he was ordained in 2003.

“We really needed to do something,” said Pye, whose congregation then had about 25 members. At the rate the church was going, its reserves wouldn’t last more than three more years.

The session discussed various options, including merger with another congregation and selling or renting the church space. Ultimately, Grace First made a more radical move: It stayed on its own, sold its building and moved to the YMCA.

In February 2005, the congregation moved into rented space in the Y. Two months later, Grace United sold its building to an auction house. The sale netted more than \$100,000. The changes didn’t suit everyone. Membership dropped even further, to about 20 people, Pye said.

The members who were willing to make the change, however, were pleased. And now, under Pye's leadership, they are patiently waiting for God to usher them into the next Rev. Charlie Pye phase of their church life.

“I miss the building ... (but) I don't think the church is the building,” said member John Trueblood, a lifelong member of Grace United who was baptized there. “It's the Holy Spirit that you feel.”

“The church was very insulated for a long time,” Trueblood said. “I think our attention now is to be more a part of the global community.”

Pye is not concerned at the moment about where the church is or its still-small membership, or the fact that it is still operating at a deficit. He says the congregation is growing its faith and expanding its trust in God — something toward which it has made great strides simply by moving to the Y.

If you look at how Grace First is faring in those two areas, “we're doing well,” he said, adding: “As our faith grows, we become infectious.”

If the process ripples as Pye expects, people wanting “to feel God's presence” will join those already strong in their faith.

That sits well with Linda Norwood, who grew up in Grace United and is now the clerk of session.

“I envision the old with the new,” and creative ministry that includes different music and fresh ideas, she said. “Charlie has brought the challenge for new things and open-mindedness.” Pye, born and raised a Jew before joining the Presbyterian Church in the early 1990s, is so open-minded about his call to Grace United that he goes once a week to a coffee shop in Jeffersonville to “hang out,” meet people and invite them to his church.

Grace United also has a Web site, [www.GraceUnitedpc.org](http://www.GraceUnitedpc.org), and distributes flyers advertising “sermons that speak to today's problems in today's language!”

Pye also would love to tap the growing Asian and Hispanic populations of Southern Indiana. If the congregation were to grow to about 50 families, he said, it probably would be time to transition out of the YMCA space to a new building.

“This model will work up to about 50,” he said, but if it goes past that, “Something has to happen.” Clearly there's no rush. The uncertainty of the situation is what continues to energize Pye. We don't know what will happen, he said with a smile, and “that's the great thing about God.” God's answer is always “far greater” than anything we could have imagined, he said. “That's sort of what happened on Easter morning.”

*For more information about Grace United Presbyterian Church, call the Rev. Charlie Pye at (502) 727-9852, or email him at [cpye@graceunitedpc.org](mailto:cpye@graceunitedpc.org).*