**A NEW MINISTRY: The Small Church Collaborative**

**The Challenge**

Small churches are an important voice in a small town or a local neighborhood. Our present system of one-pastor-for-each-church does not work for these small churches.

**A Solution**

A Small Church Collaborative will provide pastoral support for small local churches and allow each one to focus on their connection to their town. Several churches together will hire a full-time pastor and possibly an administrative support person for a designated term. Each church will gain more pastoral leadership from the collaborative than they would otherwise be able to financially support.

**The Mission of the Collaborative**

Three to four churches share a full-time designated term pastor. The pastor works with each congregation to develop a vision for their future, including how they will serve their local community, how will the find financial stability, and development of lay leadership. Online Sunday worship will be available every week, with each congregation designing, and leading, worship once a month.

For a designated term the work begins with each congregation finding their “why”, building up the leadership to be able to engage the community, and then determining where to go from here. At the end of the designated term the church may choose to stay in the collaborative or may decide to engage in search for their next pastor.

**What a church gains from the collaborative**

* Online worship with your collaborative partners every Sunday.
* Once a month worship hosted by your worship leaders, based on your congregation’s worship format.
* Pastoral Care as needed.
* Discipleship Studies (bible study, book groups, spirituality groups, etc.) on a regular basis.
* Children’s programming as required by your church’s membership.
* Support for leaders, councils, and boards, and leadership development programming.
* Expertise in outreach and community organizing.
* Unlike a quarter or half-time pastor, the shared pastor will be available full-time.
* Help create a pilot program that may help churches throughout the mainline.
* Maintain your congregation’s distinctive ministry to your local town.

**What a church gives to the collaborative**

* A part-time pastor’s salary
* You will have pastoral presence for your specific worship service at least once a month with pastoral support for worship planning other Sundays.
* Online worship will also be available if the congregation wishes or your members can create worship. The pastor of the collaborative will help with either of these options.
* For maximum flexibility, appointments with the shared pastor can be made with phone calls, emails, zoom meetings, or in person. Any of the churches various offices may be used at different times.

**Ashburnham Model Offers:**

* Energetic and engaging small church Pastor with pastoral experience and training in new ways of doing church
* Financial procedures and oversight provided by the Central Massachusetts Association
* Ashburnham church is within a 20 minute drive from our church

**Details to be worked out will include:**

* Oversight for the collaborative
* Pastoral Relations Committee/Pastor Parish Relations Committee to support the pastor
* Weekly/monthly/yearly schedule: office hours and Sunday services
* Vacations
* Educational opportunities and scheduling
* Holiday services schedule
* Technology and support for live-streaming or sharing with other churches
* Financial accountability
* Options for conflict resolution

**Small Church Collaborative**