

## Ministry with Multiple Congregations

	Cluster ministry	Shared ministry	Resource ministry	Regional ministry
<b>Congregations</b>	3 to 5	3 to 5	3 to 10	10 or more
<b>Leadership pattern</b>	Minister and Church Councils	Minister and Church Councils, Key lay leaders	Minister and lay-led congregations	Lay-led congregations with Ministerial support
<b>Contact with congregations</b>	1 to 2 weeks	1 to 3 weeks	1 to 4 weeks	4 to 12 weeks
<b>Pastoral Role</b>	Pastor to congregational members and leaders Support for elders and carers Responsible for counselling and crisis care	Pastor to congregational members and leaders Support and training for elders and carers Responsible for counselling and crisis care	Pastor to congregational leaders Training for leaders and carers Responsibility and referral for counselling and crisis care	Pastoral resource for congregational leaders Training for leaders and carers Training for counselling and crisis care
<b>Liturgical Role</b>	Regular worship planning, worship leadership and preaching in each congregation (every 1-2 weeks) Support from lay preachers and lay worship leaders	Regular worship planning with lay leaders, shared worship leadership, preaching in each congregation (every 3-6 weeks) Supporting lay preachers and worship leaders	Training lay leaders in worship planning, supporting lay preachers. Occasional preaching in each congregation (eg. quarterly)	Training and supporting lay worship leaders and lay preachers. Infrequent preaching in each congregation (eg. annually or biannually)
<b>Sacramental Role</b>	Regular presiding at sacraments, weddings and funerals. Support from elders and leaders.	Regular presiding at sacraments, weddings and funerals. Support from elders and leaders. Some lay leaders preside at sacraments.	Occasional presiding at sacraments in each church. Training of lay celebrants for sacraments. Regular presiding of lay leaders at sacraments. Regular presiding at weddings and funerals. Training of lay funeral presiders.	Infrequent presiding at sacraments in each church. Training of lay celebrants. Occasional presiding at weddings and funerals. Regular presiding of lay leaders at sacraments and funerals. Training of lay funeral presiders. Some lay leaders preside at weddings.
<b>Organisational Role</b>	Regularly involved in planning, leading or supporting programs and events in each congregation. Regularly supports local leaders and members in programs and projects.	Regularly involved in initiating, supporting or guiding programs in each congregation. Regularly support local leaders in programs and projects.	Regularly involved in supporting or guiding leaders of programs in each congregation. Regularly involved in coaching people in organisational roles.	Regular mentoring and coaching of key leaders who oversee program organisation. Regular provision or organising of training for leaders in organisational roles.
<b>Administrative Role</b>	Involved in advising and supporting lay people in administration weekly. Undertakes congregational administrative tasks frequently.	Regularly involved in advising and supporting lay people in administration. Regularly giving oversight to congregational administration.	Maintains regular contact and support for lay team administration people. Involved in coaching these people in administration roles.	Occasional contact with people in administrative roles in each church. Provides advice as needed. Provides advocacy between region and synod as needed.

<b>Missional</b>	Pioneering and encouraging local mission growth. Making local mission connections.	Pioneering and encouraging local mission growth. Making local mission connections. Coaching local mission leaders.	Pioneering key community connections. Training & coaching local mission mission.	Training of local mission leaders. Regional exploration of mission opportunities and connections.
<b>Educational Role</b>	Regular leadership of study groups and teaching events. Regular provision of educational resources.	Regular leadership of study groups and teaching events. Regular provision of educational resources. Occasional training of leaders for particular educational events. Mentoring/coaching of some key lay leaders.	Regular leadership of gathered teaching events. Regular provision of educational resources. Regular training of leaders for educational roles. Regular mentoring/coaching of key lay leaders.	Occasional leadership of gathered teaching events in congregations. Regular referral to educational resources. Regular training of leaders for educational roles. Regular mentoring/coaching of key lay leaders, including educational planning.
<b>Conciliar Role</b>	Regular meeting with each church council. Regular liaison with presbytery on behalf of each congregation.	Meeting with each church council on most occasions. Support to congregational leaders in liaising with presbytery.	Meeting with each church council no more than quarterly. Support congregational leaders in liaising with presbytery only as needed.	Only meet with church council for specific planning, training or pastoral agenda. Liaise with presbytery on regional needs and plans.
<b>Ecumenical Role</b>	Relates to other denominations, clergy and church leaders in each location regularly.	Relates to other denominations, clergy and church leaders in each location as needed.	Relates to other clergy particularly on sacramental matters, missional initiatives or pastoral crises. Contact with other denominations regional staff.	Regular contact with other denominations regional staff, particularly for education and mission initiatives. Relates to local clergy as requested by congregations.
<b>Community Role</b>	Regularly connects with leaders and members of each town in relation to pastoral, educational and missional role.	Regularly connects with leaders of each town in relation to pastoral, educational and missional role.	Connects with town leaders in support of congregational mission as needed. May initiate connections between church and community leaders.	Connects with regional community, non-government and government agencies and leaders for the sake of community development, education and mission.

The purpose of this table is to encourage conversation about the nature of ministry with multiple rural congregations. The table describes some of the shifts in role, responsibility and tasks that occur as a minister works with increasing numbers of congregations in a rural setting. The language of Cluster, Shared. Resourcing and Regional, is a somewhat arbitrary attempt at labelling. All ministry ought to be “resourcing” ministry.

The table is descriptive, not prescriptive: it is a generalisation of what takes place, but is not a recipe for what should occur, since that varies over time and from place to place.. While the table is about the role of a minister, the descriptions are about frequency of contact with each congregation (ie. ‘infrequent presiding’ means that any one congregation rarely has the resource minister celebrating the sacraments for them, and that the resource minister does not see their role as trying to be a celebrant as often as possible.) Comments are welcome!

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