

Building Blocks for Rural Ministry

by: Joyce Sasse

August 2009

Over the past 15 years, rural church leaders around the world have tried to analyze the life and work of the local congregation, and help each other strengthen their outreach in the midst of changing circumstances.

At occasional gatherings, rural church folk share ideas about how they can work in the local community. They may examine the following questions:

What is unique and special about what you do in your local congregation?

- What are the ways various denominations can work together to serve your community?
- How can we cope with the continual need for parish leadership (both clergy and laity)?
- Are "rural" events helpful?

Workshops, geared to helping with specific issues, often prove invaluable. The subjects might include:

Creative worship in small communities

- Living in a local Shared Ministry parish
- Working together as teams in a church
- Agreeing or disagreeing together in a small community
- Communion - what it means and how to do it
- Being the small church of tomorrow

These gatherings invite participants to exchange ideas, learn things and make network connections. Such gatherings have been held in Australia and New Zealand for a number of years, and are now held on a regular basis in various parts of rural Canada.