Why a Small Church Needs the Redemptive Works Framework

A case for faithful, practical, and redemptive action with Dr. David Hietala

A small church does not need a grand vision statement as much as it needs a faithful way forward. Your church is not a corporation selling a product or exchanging services for transactions. You are a community called by Christ to proclaim the Gospel, care for people, and participate in God's work of redemption and restoration. Your planning, therefore, must be shaped not simply by what you hope to accomplish, but by **how faithfully you do the work and how your work reflects the grace you proclaim.**

The challenge is real. Small churches can easily begin to believe that limited membership, aging congregations, scarce resources, or declining energy mean that meaningful ministry is beyond their reach. Yet these limitations do not diminish your calling. They make discernment all the more important. The question is not whether you are large enough to do everything, but whether you are attentive enough to recognize what God has placed before you and faithful enough to respond.

The Redemptive Works framework offers a practical way forward. Rather than imposing a corporate vision or prescribing a program before understanding your congregation, Dr. David Hietala begins by listening. He helps your church identify its enduring theological commitments, understand the experiences and concerns of your members, and hear from neighbors and others you hope to serve. This process brings forward possibilities that emerge from your actual people, circumstances, blessings, and needs—not from an idealized picture of what a church ought to become.

That distinction matters especially for a small congregation. **Your church needs efforts that are *small enough to achieve and big enough to matter*.** You need to recognize what is already faithful, discover what has been overlooked, and identify practical opportunities for ministry that fit your capacity while serving real needs. Redemptive Works helps you move from uncertainty and scattered activity toward shared understanding, thoughtful choices, and achievable action.

Dr. Hietala's six-step process—Listen & Discern, Look Inside, Look Outside, Explore What's Emerging, Adopt & Develop, and Launch & Tend—provides a disciplined path without becoming a rigid formula. It invites your congregation into the work, including voices that are often unheard. It helps your leadership distinguish what must never change, what can change, and what must change. It allows your church to consider options and their tradeoffs before adopting new ambitions, inviting responsibilities, and beginning the work—and then supports you through timely conversations, check-ins, and thoughtful adaptations as new practices take root.

Most importantly, **the framework insists that your methods must be as redemptive as your goals.** You cannot claim to serve people while overlooking them, burn-out volunteers while speaking of compassion, or pursue restoration through blame and defensiveness. The process itself must embody dignity, truthfulness, patience, humility, confidentiality, and care. Success is not merely launching new efforts; it is making grace visible in ordinary practices, relationships, and decisions.

Dr. Hietala brings structure and facilitation to this work while respecting your church's genuine authority. He listens before advising, honors your confessional foundations, protects the voices of participants, and offers counsel without taking decisions away from those responsible for them. Your church remains accountable to its own theology, commitments, leadership, governance, and calling.

Your church should explore Redemptive Works not because you are incapable of moving forward on your own, but because your calling is too important to approach casually. A small church can make a meaningful difference. With Dr. Hietala's guidance, you can listen more faithfully, discern more wisely, choose more realistically, and develop practices that care for both those doing the work and those receiving it.

The question before your church is not simply, *"What should we do next?"* **It is,** *"Who are we called to love, and how can we make God's grace visible along the way?"*

Begin the *conversation* with Dave today.