Samford University
Center for Congregational Resources

Shepherding Through Decline

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18

What is painful about shepherding a church in decline?

What are the lies the Enemy tells you about your role in a declining church? How does it feel to hear, "as you are being faithful, you are not the problem"?

Why might God call a particular church to close its doors? What might He have in store for the pastor and for the congregation?

Answer the question posed in the video: if your church no longer existed, what would the community miss? How might your answer spur you towards new ministry?

Jesus, you promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against your church. If there were no one to praise you, the rocks themselves would cry out in worship. And yet, so many congregations struggle to keep the doors open. We know that our congregation is your Bride, your Beloved; we also know your Body is so much bigger than us. Jesus, you said you are the Way—would you show us the path forward? You are the Truth—would you help us to face our situation honestly? You are the Life—would you trample down death in us and among us? All this we ask in your strong name, you who are mighty to save. Amen.