

## New Ventures in Community Ministry Committee Report for Convention 2021

Right Reverend sir, clergy, lay delegates and guests, thank you for this opportunity to tell you about the work being done through the New Ventures in Community Ministry. My name is Liz Yount and I was asked to chair the committee this year. Before we get started, I want to thank those who worked on the committee with me, Janet Thompson and Scott Ferguson. Once again, we were a committee with diverse backgrounds and I believe this helps us to be especially thoughtful in the decisions we make.

For those who are not familiar, I wanted to give a quick overview of the mission, history, and sources of funding for the New Ventures in Community Ministry.

First, the mission of the Diocesan Outreach Endowment Fund through the *New Ventures in Community Ministries Grants* is to inspire congregations to dare great things for God by developing new ministries and visions in response to changing social needs throughout the diocese.

The Diocesan Outreach Endowment Fund was established as a result of the generosity of Missouri Episcopalians through pledges to the Making All Things New Capital Campaign. Its purpose was to challenge congregations to make a difference where they are and to improve the quality of life in and with their communities, to identify pressing social needs and to design strategies to meet those needs.

This work is to be accomplished by funding grants which are meant to support projects involving new ministries and new visions in the

neighborhoods of poverty, in the city, and in small communities and rural areas. These projects (which may include new aspects of existing programs, as well as entirely new projects) are to be do-able, manageable, replicable, and sustainable by congregations.

A grant request is a two-step process in which the committee used the following thought process based on the mission and guidelines of the Outreach Endowment Fund.

- First, the project had to be new, or a new aspect of an existing project. As such, we also considered projects that were making a second year request for a project that had already received its first year of funding.
- We looked for projects that serve the poor, the needy, the lonely and disconnected, the aging, children and youth, and the suffering
- We wanted to make sure the projects were do-able, that is that we believed it was highly likely that the project could be successfully completed with the funds provided and when successful, it could be replicated by other churches
- Lastly, the project had to be sustainable. We wanted to make sure there was a reasonable plan in place that the project would continue beyond the first year, and that the New Ventures grant would give them the help needed to get the project started.

I also wanted to give a brief overview on the funding source for New Venture's grants and please allow me to summarize. In the past, and as a result of legislation at the 79th General Convention in Salt Lake City when each dioceses assessment to the national church was reduced to allow more funds to be available for local ministry, the 176<sup>th</sup> Missouri Diocesan convention passed resolution G-176 which directed that the savings from the reduced assessment paid to the national church be

allocated to the New Ventures in Community Ministry for those three years. This time period has expired and these additional funds will no longer be available. However, this past year a resolution was passed by Diocesan Council allowing for 5% of the market value of the corpus based on a 3 year rolling average be used to fund grants, so the program continues with adequate funding. As a final comment, unused funds from any given year roll forward and are available for use in the following year.

At last year's convention, there were 8 grant recipients and I wanted to update you on their status:

First, there was Christ Church Cathedral who started a program with a part-time social worker to work with the homeless population in St. Louis City.

Christ Church Rolla successfully initiated a program to provide backpacks filled with toiletries to the homeless and poor in the community. To date they have passed out more than 200 backpacks.

Church of the Good Shepherd wanted to use their garden to grow relationships with three separate organizations using their organically grown food. Some preliminary initiatives were started, including planting seeds with St. Luke's Episcopal preschool children. Ultimately, they had to close down because of COVID, however their hope is to return, and resume and complete their program in 2021.

Church of the Transfiguration received funds as a second year grant for their Laundry of Love Program. They too were affected by COVID and had to shut down operations after the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020. In that time, they did serve 80 clients, while doing over 560 loads of laundry.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church undertook a Mobilizing the Faith workshop expansion specifically around the issues of racial inequity. When COVID

hit, they pivoted their focus to create a COVID testing campaign that involved testing close to 1000 individuals in a 60 day period.

St. Paul's Carondelet successfully completed a station of the cross project where they created 12 frames that allowed them to look at their sanctuary in a new way. While the frames are fixed, the pictures inside can be changed to create new exhibits to be shared with their community.

St. Paul's Sikeston increased accessibility to a meditation garden, but their program to receive and respond to prayer requests has been put on hold. This space is especially meaningful because the garden lies between the Church and a hospital and the two organizations treated this as a joint venture.

Lastly we had St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Ferguson who created an Invite, Welcome, Connect Ministry to grow the Church through expanded social media. This proved to be very timely as churches shut their doors. St. Stephen's continued the offering of their services through social media, sometimes exceeding 2000 views of a Sunday service.

Now for the 2021 grant year. This year we received 4 Phase I grant requests, all were invited to participate in Phase II, and I am excited to announce that Diocesan Council has approved the granting of over \$71,000 to these 4 programs. The program recipients are as follows:

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Ferguson will receive a 2<sup>nd</sup> year grant to continue their work on the Invite, Welcome, Connect Ministry and to change how people are attracted to the Church.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church also received a 2<sup>nd</sup> year grant to continue their efforts to improve the health and well-being of African Americans by mobilizing the faithful in a neighborhood health coalition.

We are also pleased to fund the Trinity Food Ministry in their outdoor hand washing stations that will be fixed and self-contained with fresh water. They are also going to utilize portable sanitizer stations to help meet the needs of the surrounding population.

Lastly, we are excited to fund Holy Communion's Grace Gathering program. The initiative is to provide a worship space and service celebrating the diverse abilities of all and to provide worship services for those who might otherwise be excluded because of special needs.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the 2021 grant recipients and thank this body for their time and attention.

Submitted by Liz Yount