

New Ventures in Community Ministries 2022 Grants

(Amy Fallon, Scott Ferguson, Bill Nesbit)

To Review:

Only three (3) church formally submitted applications for NVCM grants to the 2022 year, down from four (4) from last year. The 2022 applicants were:

- All Saints and Ascension, Northwoods
- Christ Church, Rolla
- Holy Communion, University City

As the deadline for Phase I approached, and even after, there were several requests for extensions, ranging from a week to four. The week extension was granted although the church, in the end, chose not to submit. Unfortunately, the grant process did not allow for the longer extensions, and I say unfortunate because several of the proposed ideas, albeit in very abstracted form, would have been well worthy for consideration. All were encouraged to apply for next year.

While the final number of three was lower than expected, the reasons are understandable. One reason is quite logical. Covid is still having a great impact on our churches and communities and given that the core purposed of the grants is to create ministries that create relationships and community among the church members and their neighbors, it still has to be a challenge even to conceive of such projects much less to realize them.

Another reason is purely speculative. The grant application is involved and may present obstacles for parishes that are understaffed, or for those whose responsibilities for such matters fall on a few shoulders even in the best of times. Perhaps, a review of the process might be in order. For example, currently, they tend to be as detailed as the Phase II applications, which speaks to the process. So, to ease the initial burden, the application process might begin a month earlier and Phase I be streamlined even further to focus on being true abstracts of ideas. Then, to allow the parishes to bring them to fruition, grant more time between the Phase deadlines and perhaps even provide the resources of council's grant team or volunteers in diocese with grant writing experience for those parishes which might benefit.

The Applicants

As the grant guidelines outline, the criteria for being awarded grants are 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" and be designed to be "do-able, manageable, replicable, and sustainable by

congregations." NVCM grants may be awarded in consecutive years, with the maximum of two. Grants funds are available mid-January and are distributed upon request.

Of the three, only the application of **All Saints and Ascension** did not qualify for Phase II, as their project clearly fell under a capital improvement. When completed, the space may serve as a home for a NVCM grant, but not at this time.

Christ Church, Rolla, asked \$10,700.00 to start a Laundry Love ministry, following the model established originally in California and adopted by many churches nationwide, including those of Holy Communion and Church of the Transfiguration, which was awarded a NVCM grant last year to expand its program. Their goal is to be self-sustaining after a year. All the criteria were met.

Holy Communion, University City, asked \$25,000.00, as a second-year grant request, to continue to develop and expand its Grace Gathering, a ministry established last year to provide a worship space and supportive community for individuals and families who are uncomfortable with traditional settings due to their disabilities. The amount requested is the maximum but as an ambitious but important initiative that, if successful, can be a wonderful resource not only to other parishes in the diocese but also to the broader community of those with special needs, the subcommittee deemed the full request well worthy. All the criteria were met.

The total of grants, \$35,700.00, awarded is considerably lower than the funds currently available, \$104,774.00. The unused difference will be added to next year's amount.

I want to thank Amy and Bill for serving with me and a special thanks to Janis Greenbaum who – once again! – did a wonderful job assisting with the preparing the materials with the new logo and for "getting the word out". Steps were made to market the grants through the new website, but she and I agree that more should and can be done and with the available funds projected, it will be worth it!

Report submitted by Scott Ferguson