

Dickinson Fund Discernment News:
September 27, 2015

Conversations and Ideas The Dickinson Fund Discernment Committee has begun discussions with parishioners who submitted ideas for uses of the Fund. Everyone who submitted an idea will be invited to join a conversation with others who submitted similar ideas. The Committee hopes to gain a deeper understanding of their own ideas, as well as their perspectives on other ideas that have been submitted. The first conversation, focusing on proposals for a college scholarship fund, was held on September 23rd.

Upcoming Discussions The Committee has scheduled conversations centered on a number of themes that appeared in multiple submissions. Conversations with those whose ideas do not fall within these themes will be set up separately.

Wednesday, September 30th – Staff and Operational Ideas

Thursday, October 8th – Ideas relating to the support of a school in Paterson

Tuesday, October 13th – Afterschool Program Ideas

Thursday, October 22nd – Ideas Involving Music

Wednesday, October 28th – Financial Management Ideas

While parishioners who submitted ideas will be specifically invited to the applicable discussion, **the Committee welcomes attendance by all interested parishioners.** All meetings will be held in the Committee Room at 7:30 pm.

A Reminder of What We Have Discerned Thus Far The Committee remains committed to evaluating ideas based on the criteria established earlier in this process, including the three concepts, reported in the letter to the parish of March 6, 2015:

1. **Education** (for children and adults, inside or outside the parish, religious or secular)
2. **Spirituality** (with **music** as a means of spiritual growth receiving frequent mention), and

3. **Children and Families** (inside and outside the congregation, with intergenerational engagement receiving special mention).

In addition, in the discernment work that took place in 2014, when every parishioner had multiple opportunities to provide feedback, the Committee found a strong sense across the congregation that however we ultimately use the Fund should:

- Reflect or relate to our identity as a congregation, especially having something to do with families or children.
- Reflect the values and areas of special interest of St. Elizabeth's. Some areas identified were education, music, intergenerational encounters, fellowship gatherings, bread-breaking gatherings, and especially addressing pressing needs, both material and spiritual.
- Be consistent with, and even supportive of, Christian values as the Episcopal Church has understood them.
- Allow for face-to-face engagement and not simply check-writing.
- Have strong potential to involve members of St. Elizabeth's in projects/programs/ministry. This involvement would provide an opportunity for the members' own spiritual growth as well as make a difference to the groups/individuals with whom they work.
- Have the strong possibility of having a lasting impact, rather like a capital investment that produces something over a period of time and is not just a short-time investment.

The Committee is keeping these factors and criteria ever in mind as it continues to explore and discuss the ideas presented by the congregation.

The Dickinson Fund Discernment Committee: Chris Walsh, *Chair*; Debra Anderson, Wendy Broadbent, Rohan de Silva, Dan Etna, Tim Graham, Gaye Thurston, Karla Tombaugh, Sharon Walker, Mary Wynn Seiter, *Senior Warden*, Don Taylor, *Junior Warden*