

Dickinson Fund Discernment News: *October 11, 2015*

The Conversations Continue The Dickinson Fund Discernment Committee held its third open discussion this past week with parishioners who submitted ideas for uses of the Fund. All interested parishioners are welcome to attend and contribute to any of these discussions, which are designed to help the Committee gain a deeper understanding of the various ideas and suggestions and how we might move forward with them.

The Schedule of Conversations The Committee met on October 8th with a number of parishioners to discuss ideas involving the establishment or support of a school in Paterson. Earlier discussions included one on college scholarship ideas on September 23rd, and various operational and staff ideas on September 30th. The upcoming scheduled conversations are centered on a number of themes that appeared in multiple submissions:

Tuesday, October 13th – Afterschool Program Ideas
(Committee Room)

Thursday, October 22nd – Ideas Involving Music (Garden Room)

Wednesday, October 28th – Financial Management Ideas
(Committee Room)

All meetings will be held at 7:30 pm in the locations noted above. Conversations with those whose ideas do not fall within these themes will be set up separately.

A Reminder of What We Have Discerned Thus Far The Committee remains committed to evaluating ideas based on 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 early discernment work that took place in 2014, 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 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*