

Date: December 10, 2019

Proposed Action: Approve a three year Strategic Initiatives Fund Grant in the amounts of Year 1, \$25K; Year 2 - \$20k; Year 3 - \$15k to support Christ Lutheran Church, Nashville, TN to continue providing integrated, multicultural ministry to the communities it serves.

Background and Rationale:

Application for Grant from Strategic Initiatives Fund to support Christ Lutheran Church, Nashville TN to continue providing integrated, multicultural Ministry to the communities it serves.

A three-year request for \$25k, \$20k and \$15k would help Christ Lutheran to improve the building that houses these ministries by improving insulation and decrease the cost of utilities. These funds would also support those ministries by providing needed materials and dedicated space to do ministry on behalf of the communities surrounding the church and the Hispanic and Kiswahili ministries that gather inside during the week.

These funds will help support ministries to provide housing for Work Groups that work out of the Mission House: The Mission House can sleep ~20 people and has a full kitchen and space to meet and relax. Disaster Response Volunteers doing recovery work in the area and Student groups doing volunteer work in nonprofits in Nashville have used this space as a launching pad into the communities they are coming to serve.

The ministries that are currently housed in Christ are as follows:

Disciples of Christ, Pastora Justina Rivera

Disciples of Christ, Spanish speaking congregation with major youth and children ministries. They have been at Christ for almost three years.

We provide space for worship and ministry activities at a reduced rate and also use of musical equipment, microphones, sound system, paper goods, copier usage.

We join together for some of the youth and children's activities such as VBS, Santa's Workshop, Nights Alive Middle School retreats.

San Matias Anglican, Father Robert Carvajal.

San Matias has been worshipping at Christ for about 14 years.

We provide space for worship and ministry activities at a reduced rate and also use of musical equipment, microphones, sound system, paper goods, copier usage.

We have over the years done joint services on Maundy Thursday and share worship and musical resources especially during Holy Week. We have done VBS together. We share together in Santa's Workshop. San Matias helps with building maintenance and helped with the remodeling of the Nave extensively in 2012. Some of their youth have taken music lessons from our parish musician.

Kiswahili Lutheran Mission, Pastor Esther Ngomuo.

KLM grew out of an outreach of Christ Lutheran. In 2012 it was approved to be a SAWC by the Synod and appointed Pastor Esther as mission developer for the community.

We provide space for worship and ministry activities and also use of musical equipment, microphones, sound system, paper goods, copier usage. We also provide administrative support and advocacy assistance. Our ministries are intertwined in many ways. Many participants of KLM are also members of Christ Lutheran Church and attend regularly in Sunday morning worship. We provide Sunday School and funding for youth ministry leadership. Many participate in the life of Christ community through worship leadership, fellowship and work days.

These ministries serve a large multi-cultural population of Hispanic and African National (Swahili-speaking refugees) people, many of whom are economically disenfranchised and cannot fully support themselves nor give back to the church in offerings. The people of Christ provide emotional, financial and educational support to the entire family. Some of the men, in response, have been able to provide help with renovations of the Nave and the educational space, having knowledge and skills for renovation and construction.

It is the hope of Christ Lutheran that they will be able to decrease their carbon footprint by making the necessary changes to the building to make it energy efficient so that more of the offerings go to support of ministries than to paying the utilities. At this point they are awaiting the results of an energy audit done by the Tennessee power provider and will make the necessary changes to the building to respond to the audit.

I asked Pastor Morgan Gordy to tell us what happens every week at Christ Lutheran and what would end if the building were not there.

Every week we have Square Dancers dance on Mondays and Tuesdays; Indigenouse Mexican Dance on Thursdays; Jazz Jam on Saturdays, Bible Study and Catechism on Fridays and Saturdays. Afterschool program conducted by Kiswahili Lutheran Mission meets every Saturday 10-12 in our parish hall and uses the class rooms and nursery as well. ESL classes occur once to twice a week in the daytime.

The Nashville Food Project has classes and meetings in our parish hall. They also lease part of the back acreage for farming and community gardens – some of our members from the refugee community have garden spaces there. This relationship has been in place for the last 5 years. They will be moving off site to donated land by the city next year. They will help us transition to a church coordinated community garden at that point. The Neighborhood Association meets here quarterly. Occasionally interfaith justice focused events such as Forum on the Death Penalty, Poor Peoples Campaign, are held here for the community. We opened our doors to host a Winter Prom for the LGBTQI+ teens in our community. We have regular nights of music and/or art that is open to the community. We have a Trunk or Treat every year on Halloween that the community enjoys and participates in. We also throw a Mardi Gras party and invite the neighborhood and all of the communities connected with Christ. This building is used!

For nearly 6 years we have housed Lutheran Services in Tennessee, now Inspiritus. We provided space and storage for their ministries and office without fee. Effective December 9, 2019, they will move into their own building in Nashville. At that location they will be providing space for a brand new ministry serving the LGBTQIA+ community and the people living in the low cost housing

developments in the area that will be led by a new Pastor who has been a long time member of Christ Lutheran (Dawn Bennett)

We have a food pantry and also provide emergency assistance as funds are available. We support two other food pantries with regular monthly food drives.

The ministry reach of Christ Lutheran Church is wide and deep and multicultural. The funds requested would be a godsend to provide the necessary supplies needed to continue these ministries, make necessary environmental changes to the building so that it is energy effective and continue to benefit the many people who depend on the love and presence of Christ Lutheran Church in Nashville.

Respectfully submitted for consideration

Pastor Patti Axel

Pastor Patti Axel
Assistant to the Bishop & Director for Evangelical Mission