

## Congregational Development – Urban and Suburban Context

The primary work of the department in the past year has been to develop partnerships with various congregations and to provide partnership grants to support differing congregational growth and development goals. Grants have clear “strings attached” that is, with specific and measurable goals identified, including clear financial goals for a congregation, e.g., in number of pledges, in amount of pledges and clear ministry goals, e.g. growth in Average Sunday Attendance, establishing new mission or ministry initiatives. Grants for this past year were made to:

- St. Matthew’s, Raytown - \$13,000 grant - Transition to new rector following long interim – congregation has redesigned worship and has clear focus on attracting new members.
- St. Augustine’s, Kansas City - \$12, 600 grant - Resources supported stable clergy leadership and supported efforts which have reversed decline and now provide a clear set of goals for renewed growth and development. St. Augustine’s is here to stay!
- St. Anne’s, Lee’s Summit - \$4,000 grant - Resources support transitional clergy leadership in advance of the congregation entering into a search for a new rector. Expectation is that the work the congregation is and will accomplish will enable it to be well-positioned to begin that search come the first of the new year
- Sudanese Congregation - \$4,000 grant - Resources support and help in this congregation as it continues to grow in its new setting at St. Paul’s Church, Kansas City (funds support mission and ministry, facilities costs are absorbed by St. Paul’s in its support of this community of faith). The expectation is that in the near future this congregation will take action to petition to become a congregation in the Diocese of West Missouri. This congregation serves a very large Sudanese community in the metropolitan area, and in the four-state region.
- St. Mary, Kansas City - \$10,000 grant – Grant supports a pilot advertising and marketing program designed, in the words of the grant application, “. . . to implement elements of a marketing campaign designed to draw visitors to St. Mary’s with the expectation that a substantial proportion will become new members. The congregation has set a goal of net growth of 50 members over the next two to three years.” As a pilot project the “learnings” will be shared with the diocese to the benefit of other congregations. Data trends of ASA and new members will be tracked by Urban/Suburban for at least two years as one measure of outcomes.

In 2012 the Department would seek to continue to work where there are presently existing partnerships and to initiative new partnerships with growing congregations as means of enhancing that growth. Such initiatives would be designed to be “pilot” projects so that what is learned can be shared throughout the diocese. Such efforts would focus on congregations in

growth not decline. In addition, grants requests will be explicit as to how the ministry to be accomplished connects with the Baptismal Covenant.

Building vibrant and vital communities of faith are essential in that such communities are the “ground” in which the baptized are formed and grow in the faith and are the communities from which they are sent forth into the world to live out their baptismal vows.

Submitted by Archdeacon John McCann